



**WEST BLOOMFIELD
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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West Bloomfield passes Strategic Visioning Proposal

West Bloomfield, MI - At its September 18th regular meeting, the West Bloomfield Board of Education passed a Strategic Visioning proposal 5-2 that moved forward several key components for the district's future:

1. Convert all four (4) Elementary Schools to Kindergarten-Grade 5 buildings
2. Close Roosevelt Elementary program at the end of 23/24 or 24/25 school year, depending upon enrollment and reduction of School of Choice
3. Create preschool space at Sheiko (South) and Abbott (North)
4. Demolish the old Roosevelt building and playground
5. Move the district's Magnet Program to Scotch Elementary
6. Move the Administrative and Community Service (ACS) staff to Abbott
7. Keep the current administration building for Preschool and District storage throughout the 2023 Bond
8. Plan for a future bond initiative that includes a new K-5 elementary at the Abbott site to serve North end students, and new educational spaces at West Bloomfield High School

The Strategic Visioning Committee was tasked with planning for the future of WBSD, while considering long-term sustainability, fiscal responsibility, and facility planning. As a District, West Bloomfield must look to the future, and planning is key, especially when faced with declining enrollment in our district, county and state.

Background on the Process

The Strategic Visioning Committee was made up of members of the Board of Education and educators with a combined experience of over 125 years, demonstrating their commitment to our district's educational excellence. Since April of 2023, this committee has collected and analyzed relevant data to prioritize what is best for the district. The culmination of the work was the recommendation the board passed September 18.

The district made extensive efforts to engage with the community throughout this process, holding five input/feedback sessions. As stated by Dr. Dania Bazzi, "We understand the importance of including the input and ideas of the residents and families of WBSD and specifically Keego Harbor. This was not an easy recommendation to make and we understand the emotions surrounding the decision. However, it's crucial to clarify that listening to the community does not always mean we can fully agree with every perspective." Superintendent Bazzi added, "It is important to remember our focus is education, and we are educating students for their future and not our past."

Why close Roosevelt?

The state of the building itself is a significant concern. Roosevelt is over 100 years old, it has become increasingly clear that maintaining it is not a safe or financially responsible choice. Students from the former Roosevelt building have been educated at the former Abbott Middle School site since a second floor ceiling at the Keego Harbor site collapsed in the summer of 2022.

“We must be good stewards of our taxpayer dollars and allocate resources where they will have the most substantial and lasting impact on our students’ education,” stated Jamie Stottlemeyer, Assistant Superintendent of Facilities and Operations.

Timing

Some in the community have asked why the process was rushed. This decision has been under discussion for over a decade with formal studies in 2012, 2020, and this year. Various consultants have consistently recommended this school closure.

“It is essential that we make responsible and thoughtful decisions as a team, and this decision takes into account years of information and previous recommendations that have been available. The Strategic Visioning Committee worked extremely hard to be intentional, data-driven, and mindful of the entire district’s needs,” stated Scott Long, Assistant Superintendent for Learning Services. “Delaying this decision further would not serve the best interests of our students, families, or community as a whole.”

District officials and board members also understand how difficult this decision is for some in our community. There are emotional attachments to the Roosevelt School, and the district stressed at each listening session they do not take those lightly. Officials added that it is essential to balance these emotions with our duty to ensure the safety, quality, and future of our educational programs.

Superintendent Bazzi stressed, “As hard as this decision has been to make, we are confident that it is the right one for the future of our District as a whole.”

Board President Stacy Brickman added, “Not being able to keep all our schools open in the face of declining enrollment does not mean we don’t hear our community. It means we have taken the responsibility of allocating our finite resources seriously. We’re doing the hard work of rightsizing our district in order to protect the quality of the programs we provide and ensuring financial and long term sustainability.”

For more information about The West Bloomfield Strategic Plan, visit <https://www.wbsd.org/about-us/boe/strategic-plan>. For more information about the district, please visit www.wbsd.org.

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