



Board of Education Column

By Jim Johnson, Board of Education Planning Committee Chair

Planning Committee Update 2023-24 School Year

The Planning Committee of the Fargo Board of Education typically meets monthly throughout the calendar year. Our goal is to make sure the Board as a whole has all the information it needs to make decisions regarding our resources and physical assets. One of the main focuses of the Planning Committee is to work with our administration to develop and update our long-range financial and facilities plans.

At board meetings earlier this year, we approved contracts with facility consultants to assist us in updating our Long-Range Facility Plan. The first phase of the update process began with a Facility Condition Assessment. Over the course of the summer, teams of experts did a detailed analysis of each of our current properties.

The assessment studies included a building-by-building breakdown of the current conditions and future ongoing maintenance and replacement costs, a comprehensive energy audit, and an educational adequacy report. The educational adequacy report examined our buildings through the lens of what are considered today's best practices for elementary and secondary buildings.

Areas that were considered but weren't limited to included:

- Electrical, plumbing, mechanical systems
- Furniture, fixtures, cabinets, flexible seating, etc.
- Physical attributes – flooring, natural light, etc.
- Floorplans, classrooms, small group spaces, gyms, cafeterias, theaters, etc.
- Safety and security systems
- Site plans, bus lane, parent drop off lane, parking, acreage, amenities

While each of our buildings received a unique current and maximum adequacy score, it is important to note that many of our older buildings weren't designed for K-12 education as it is delivered today.

As we plan for the future growth of our district we must also plan for the ongoing maintenance and the upgrade and replacement needs of our existing facilities. Our updated Long-Range Facility Plan will serve as the guide for major brick and mortar capital investments for years to come, based upon our strategic objectives, operating budgets, building conditions and student populations.



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Now that we have completed the Facility Condition Assessment studies, the next phase of the development of our updated Long-Range Facility Plan involves hearing from our Districts stake holders. A Community Steering Committee consisting of 56 members of our community will be working with our consultants over the next several months to develop recommendations for the updated Long-Range Facility Plan.

In addition to the Community Steering Committee, the consultants will work with District staff to coordinate two community forums and two surveys. These will provide additional opportunities for our community to get involved in the process of developing our updated Long-Range Facility Plan.

At this time, we are planning to have the Community Steering Committees final recommendations presented to the Board for possible action this spring.

