



Elementary Facility Plan Citizen Task Force Between-Meeting Questions and Responses

#	TASK FORCE MEMBER QUESTION	DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION/CONSULTANT RESPONSE	DATE ASKED	WHAT FORUM?
1.	<u>Why</u> do we need to restructure?	<p>The motivation for restructuring includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued long-term financial challenges, which the Task Force will learn more about in August. • Roughly 1,000 empty seats across the District's existing elementary schools today • Decreasing elementary enrollment, with more decreases projected (more information shared at July Task Force meeting) 	6/12/24	Task Force Meeting
2.	What didn't work with the restructuring last time? We do not want to repeat mistakes so we have community buy-in.	In general, community concerns led to the Board ceasing discussion of the prior restructuring plan in late 2023. The high number of "moving parts" in the past plan, the proposed high school merger, and challenges delivering accurate information appear to have been factors.	6/12/24	Task Force Meeting
3.	How much is the Board of Education informed of our meetings?	<p>The School Board will regularly receive Task Force updates including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting information, such as presentations, handouts, and notes/outcomes • All communications that are sent out to Wausau School District staff and families related to the work of the Task Force • Reports at Board meetings at key stages in the process 	6/12/24	Task Force Meeting
4.	Does the Board or Administration have any preconceived parameters/criteria? Finances?	The Administration advises a Task Force recommendation that is well-considered and resource-efficient. At its August meeting, the Task Force will learn about the District's financial resources and constraints. The Board will be asked to endorse criteria for evaluating different	6/12/24	Task Force Meeting



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		options before the Task Force's September meetings, which will likely include consideration of the District's financial condition.																													
5.	What is the best way to build community trust around this process?	The Task Force approach allows for open, in-depth consideration of different facility options. Transparency during every step of the process is also key. The District will use its project Web page as the repository for all Task Force- and other District-generated information on the process and materials, including the outcomes of all Task Force meetings. The District also intends to use periodic Board check-ins, mass emails, and news releases that highlight the work of the Task Force. The hope is that all Task Force members, Administrative personnel, and Board members are good stewards in accurately communicating the process, options, and eventual recommendations.	6/12/24	Task Force Meeting																											
6.	What are groups, levels, and current attendance at each elementary school, including special education and English as a second language learners?	See MDROffers' Community Growth and Projections Report, which will be posted on the project Web page following the July 10th Task Force meeting for most of this information. Here are the number of English language learners (ELL) and Special Education students (SPED) for each elementary school as of 9/23: <table style="margin-left: 20px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-decoration: underline;">School</th> <th style="text-decoration: underline;">K-5 ELL</th> <th style="text-decoration: underline;">K-5 SPED</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Franklin</td><td>23</td><td>39</td></tr> <tr><td>G.D. Jones</td><td>25</td><td>60</td></tr> <tr><td>Grant</td><td>32</td><td>31</td></tr> <tr><td>Hawthorn Hills</td><td>28</td><td>52</td></tr> <tr><td>Hewitt Texas</td><td>5</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>John Marshall</td><td>21</td><td>46</td></tr> <tr><td>Lincoln</td><td>59</td><td>58</td></tr> <tr><td>Maine</td><td>21</td><td>43</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	School	K-5 ELL	K-5 SPED	Franklin	23	39	G.D. Jones	25	60	Grant	32	31	Hawthorn Hills	28	52	Hewitt Texas	5	4	John Marshall	21	46	Lincoln	59	58	Maine	21	43	6/12/24	Task Force Meeting
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		Montessori 1 12 Rib Mountain 29 33 Riverview 30 71 South Mountain 7 30 Stettin 18 36 Thomas Jefferson 60 45		
7.	Can the Task Force suggest building a new bigger school (to replace 2+ others)?	Yes, the Task Force may consider this among the facility options it considers. Any significant new capital expenditure such as construction of a new/replacement school, or expansion or substantial remodeling of an existing school, would require voter support of a referendum question to enable the District to borrow funds for such a project.	6/12/24	Task Force Meeting
8.	Can Task Force advise that 5th grade shift to middle schools, which was part of the last reconstructing plan? Is Board open to looking at an option of combining schools if there is room at middle schools to move 5 th graders up to middle school? Can the Task Force look at other grade group changes or shifts in the elementary schools or in other WSD schools?	The Wausau School Board's direction is to look at the District's elementary footprint only – leaving our middle and high schools as they are now - and keeping current grade groups in District elementary schools. Practically speaking, were 5th graders moved to the two middle schools, the two middle schools would be operating slightly above their functional building capacities. At the same time, there would be even greater excess capacity in what would become K-4 elementary school buildings. Any grade shifts, changes, or restructurings outside of the elementary schools, and/or involving grades 6-12, are outside of the scope of the Task Force.	6/12/24	Task Force Meeting



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9.	What is research behind community safety (e.g., reduction of juvenile crime) and robust educational programs/schools with family engagement/community services to support communities with diversity and need to have demographic mix?	We do not have and are not immediately aware of any research or studies on this topic. The time to respond to this question would be significant. If more focus to this question were provided, we may be able to respond better.	6/12/24	Task Force Meeting
10.	It was mentioned that at the high school level there were 90 more students per grade than elementary. Where do these students attend elementary school?	This reported statistic is mostly due to significantly greater births in the 2000s than in the 2010s, which resulted in larger current high school class sizes (students born during the 2000s) and smaller current elementary school class sizes (students born during the 2010s). Most current high schoolers attended elementary school in the Wausau School District.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
11.	Are these trends similar in other areas, such as age and demographics?	Yes. Across Wisconsin and the nation, populations are aging, fewer children being born, and school-aged populations are decreasing. This is particularly the case in rural areas and in older and larger cities. Enrollment is increasing in a minority of school districts in Wisconsin, mostly focused around major cities. Most of these districts have a significant amount of new housing, particularly single-family homes.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
12.	Can we as a district monetarily support enrollment numbers with current staffing?	This question will be addressed at the August 21 st Task Force meeting.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
13.	How/why is Hawthorn Hills the highest of students beginning 5K without any previous education?	A large number of students entering 5K at Hawthorn Hills have had 2 years of Head Start programming prior to attending kindergarten. So they do have previous education experience - just not in the Wausau School District.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting



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14.	What is Red Granite Charter school?	Red Granite Charter School is a new charter school opening in September 2024. It is housed in the same building as Hewitt-Texas Elementary School and is guided by the core principles of Public Waldorf Education. For more information, see: https://redgranitecharter.org/	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
15.	What is the state standard (average) for distances from home to elementary school? City vs. rural?	We do not know of any average distance between a person's home and their school. It varies by population density and district land area. We do know that districts generally have an obligation to provide transportation for all students who reside in the school district 2 miles or more from the nearest public school they are entitled to attend. We'll be providing statistics on proximity to school for each of the facility options that the Task Force will consider this fall.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting



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16.	What is the District's class size policy? Can you provide class size per grade at each elementary school?	<p>Overall elementary class size as of today averages 19.3 students per classroom. Class sizes vary significantly by building and grade levels as a result of where our families live and choose to attend (in the case of those asking for alternate school placements). The District's class size guideline maximums by grade are as follows:</p> <p>K-1 = 25 2-3 = 27 4-5 = 29</p> <p>Any building that has a grade level that is at maximum capacity will result in moving new students for that building/grade to a nearby school that has room through our District placement process. We would also consider and analyze potentially adding a section if we do not have reasonable options for placement available.</p>	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
17.	Is there data as to how many individual grade spaces are in each school?	Our recommendation would be to wait for the new facilities assessment to be completed by this fall for a clearer picture of how many individual grade spaces there are in each school.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
18.	Does reported building capacity take Title 1 requirements into account? Is it an option to find other resources to replace Title 1 so we can fill our schools closer to capacity if there would be some closing?	Stay tuned! Information about Title 1 and AGR (Achievement Gap Reduction) - as well as how they work in the Wausau School District will be given at our next Task Force Meeting on August 21st.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting



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19.	What other school buildings have been closed? What happened to them?	Over the years, the Wausau School District closed certain schools to respond to student population shifts, building suitability, and other factors. The former East High School building was converted to apartments in 2005. The former Longfellow School building is now the District's administrative building. The former Irving School building closed in 1970 and now contains offices. A.C.Kiefer was an elementary school sold to a theater group and now rented by the District for special programs. Berlin was an elementary school in the northwest corner of the District that was also sold.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
20.	Why did the elementary school mergers that were proposed previously not succeed?	In 2021, a proposed referendum would have closed Lincoln Elementary School – shifting students and staff to a brand new Grant Elementary School. That referendum failed at the ballot box. Later, community concerns led to the Board ceasing discussion of a subsequent all-District restructuring plan in late 2023. The high number of “moving parts” in that plan, the proposed high school merger, and challenges delivering accurate information appear to have been factors.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
21.	What does historic building designation entail?	The City of Wausau Common Council designated the Grant and John Marshall Elementary School buildings as local historic landmarks. Before any construction, alteration, or removal of these buildings, City ordinance requires a “certificate of appropriateness” from the City Historic Preservation Commission based on standards including the following: “...the proposed construction, alteration or removal would detrimentally change, destroy, or adversely affect any exterior architectural feature of the building which the proposed work involves.” There are hardship allowances, and appeals may be made to an Administrative Review Board.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting



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22.	Which schools have multipurpose rooms (e.g., gyms also used as cafeterias) versus separate common rooms for different functions?	<p>The following elementary schools have multipurpose rooms (gyms also used as cafeterias):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● South Mountain ● Rib Mountain ● Hawthorn Hills ● Maine ● Hewitt-Texas ● Grant ● Lincoln <p>The following schools have separate gyms and cafeterias:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Franklin ● G.D. Jones ● John Marshall ● Riverview ● Stettin ● Thomas Jefferson 	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
23.	Which schools do not have air conditioning?	Franklin, Grant, and John Marshall Elementary do not have air conditioning.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
24.	Is the extra acreage of land by Hawthorn Hills school usable?	This land was gifted to the Wausau School District. This site would be difficult and costly to further develop for either school expansion or some other use like housing. We saw this amid efforts to add a road through that property as part of the most recent referendum. That effort has ceased, in part, due to the high costs associated with it.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting



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25.	Why are there differences in students per square foot in each elementary building? For example, Grant and Stettin appear to have similar square footages but different capacities.	Common area sizes are often different among schools. For example, the Stettin library is much larger than the Grant library.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
26.	How many elementary schools still need a safe and secure entrance?	John Marshall, Franklin, Lincoln, Grant, and Rib Mountain elementaries have yet to be outfitted with upgraded secure entrances, though these buildings do have a locked vestibule to manage entry. The cost of updating entrances can vary widely among schools.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
27.	What 2014 facility study needs have already been resolved as a result of the last 2-3 referendums?	This would be difficult to list out now. This fall's assessment will address this question since the project consultant (CESA 10) will have the 2014 report to work from.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
28.	How many four-year-olds do not attend 4K and what are their demographics?	We do not know exactly how many 4-year-olds living in the Wausau School District do not attend 4K and, therefore, we do not know their demographic breakdown. However, using birth data provided by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, and comparing that birth data to 4K class sizes, we estimate that about 70% of children born in the Wausau School District attend 4K in the WSD when they become eligible.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting



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29.	<p>What are the space needs of Head Start and who funds Head Start? What are the space needs of Early Childhood/4K and who funds these? Can these programs be combined?</p>	<p>Head Start programming is funded through federal grant funds. These funds are awarded through an annual grant application. Current programs are eligible for the grant awards. Head Start offers limited "new" grant funds/awards each year. Wausau has not been eligible for these funds as there is an established grantee (Marathon County Child Development Agency Head Start). The Barrington Center Head Start (located in Wausau) currently operates 6 full day classrooms for 3 and 4 year olds who are eligible for their program. They also have 2 other locations outside of our district so their agency runs a total of 9 classrooms.</p> <p>Early Childhood is funded at a state level. We receive .6 state reimbursement funding per pupil as we provide .5 enrollment and 87.5 additional parent engagement hours for the additional .1 in funding. This follows a similar funding formula as K-12 per pupil reimbursement. Our 4K community partner sites have a schedule of funding outlined in the 4K partner agreement. This funding schedule outlines the per pupil fees that are paid semesterly based on the enrollment counts.</p> <p>We would need more information to understand exactly what the question asker is seeking regarding 4K space needs. There is a lot that potentially goes into that question. Required space includes classrooms for 4K, classrooms for EC, space for therapists, offices space for staff, gross motor space, family meeting space, small group spaces, therapy spaces, and conference rooms. The current room structure/spaces are based on half day 4K programming. Prior conversations around restructuring considered the possibility that 4K could be offered full day. Full day 4K funding has been a state level budget proposal numerous times in the past.</p>	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
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30.	Can we offer daycare (at parent cost) at buildings? This would provide all-day care, bring in money, and increase 4K numbers.	The District has had conversations to consider this option and had proposed space needs for this in the prior restructuring proposal. Child care is not a revenue source so in terms of "bringing in money" that would not be the goal. As a result of past consultations with a child care feasibility expert, the recommendation was to partner with an established child care agency to provide such a service in buildings.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
31.	Could we increase 4K enrollment by bringing wrap around care to the schools?	We are uncertain how we can gather the data to fully support this question. We can only share that there has been a significant decrease in licensed child care providers in Marathon County over the last 5-10 years. This correlates with a decline in 4K enrollment. Here is a link to Marathon County data related to the need for high quality early learning options: https://www.marathoncountypulse.org/indicators/index/dashboard?alias=LIFEeducation Other districts in the state that offer school-based full-day 4K programming options (which is not the same as wrap-around care) often report an increase in 4K enrollment.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
32.	Do east side and west side schools have to stay that way?	If the questioner is referring to whether attendance areas for schools east of the Wisconsin River can only be east of the River, and vice versa, the answer is "no". However, transportation is generally easier when schools and their attendance areas are on the same side of the River given the limited bridges that can be challenging to cross.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting



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33.	What demographic considerations do we need to weigh regarding the combination of schools?	Some of this depends on District policy. Some districts favor neighborhood schools, even if that results in higher concentrations of students of color or poverty in some schools compared to others, while other districts prefer distributing student demographics across schools. The option evaluation criteria endorsed by the Board is intended to help the Task Force decide how to evaluate demographics.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
34.	Will we be given the effects of closing certain schools? Specifically, financially?	The staff/consultant team will do our best to present the financial aspects of each facility option the Task Force may propose or consider, as it is a central option evaluation criteria. More information to be presented at the August 21st meeting.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
35.	What are the group's most important criteria for determining which buildings should close? What are the Board's preferences when it comes to which schools should remain?	The Task Force has been advising the School Board on its criteria for preparing, evaluating, and recommending facility options at its June and July meetings, and the School Board endorsed criteria at its August meeting. The criteria does not get specific on schools to consider for consolidation.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
36.	To address capacity issues projected at the elementary school level, would shifting 6 th graders back to elementary school facilities be an appropriate option?	The Wausau School Board's direction is to look at the District's elementary footprint only – leaving our middle and high schools as they are now. Were the Board direction different and 6th graders were moved from the two middle schools, the two middle schools would have a projected ~1,000 grade 7-8 students in 2027, with enrollment at ~50% of their functional combined building capacity. Horace Mann would have only ~380 grade 7-8 students in a building with a functional capacity of 806 students, while John Muir would have only ~640 grade 7-8 students in a building with a functional capacity 1,134 students.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting



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37.	How do we balance finite resources with logistical challenges, building closures, and District restructures present?	This is a fundamental challenge of the Task Force in making its recommendations. The criteria and Task Force deliberations this fall will attempt to strike this balance.	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting
38.	Are maintenance amounts reflective of what is being done this summer from the last referendum? Are the numbers at some schools higher because they are building elevators? If so, would pneumatic elevators work for code at a lower cost?	In some instances they are and others not. Some of the projected maintenance is not in the 2014 assessment or in the referendum since various new items came up. Numbers at some schools are not higher because there are building elevators. Updating elevators was in the 2022 referendum	7/12/24	Task Force member email
39.	Is there even a consideration for the Holy Name Classic School taking a few kids?	Holy Name, a private school, has a handful of students. The planning consultant did not anticipate any growth in the percentage of students attending private school in the future.	7/12/24	Task Force member email
40.	Only four of the WSD elementary schools offer 4K. I would like to see if we could get any additional information on why those four schools were the ones selected.	<p>Only four of the WSD elementary schools currently offer 4K as those 4 schools are the locations that built 4K academies using prior referendum funding. The academy sites were very intentionally designed as early learning academies. Factors that went into selecting these sites included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) access for families needing transportation (more parents living in the city required transportation support/didn't have a car) 2) building supports for at-risk learners (AGR, title, etc.) 3) buildability of the site - sites had enough land and space to build on 4) other factors such as additional space needs needed in the K-5 part of the building, anticipated increased enrollment, etc. <p>Additional details related to the former facilities task force recommendations were outlined in a January 2013 presentation to the</p>	7/16/24	Task Force member email



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		Board. This article also outlines some of the intentional practices that contributed to building the 4K academies: https://www.wausaudailyherald.com/story/opinion/columnists/2017/02/06/wausaus-new-4k-centers-benefit-young-learners/97488818/		
41.	When looking over information the change and projections report breaks down our area by sections that make up the elementary schools. Is there a map that lists estimates of total students coming from each section? For example, looking at Map 2b, it has neighborhoods and attendance areas. Map 10 then has projected change of EC - 5th grade by 2040. My question would be what is the overall number of students attending from each section?	The number of students projected from each neighborhood (or “section” as referred to in the question) is shown in Appendix D in the Community Change and Enrollment Projections Report . For example, in neighborhood 1 there are currently 21 grade 4K-5 resident students. In 2040, the consultant projected 18 grade 4K-5 resident students in neighborhood 1. Appendix D shows current and projected resident students in each neighborhood, but all of those resident students in neighborhood 1 may not necessarily be attending their neighborhood school as represented in attendance area maps. The consultant shifted some resident students to account for resident students attending WAVE, EEA, NTC Alternative High, Montessori, Red Granite, intra-district transfers, and 4K at community partner sites versus District schools.	7/17/24	Task Force member email
42.	What are numbers of behavioral incidents and percentages of students on free and reduced lunch per elementary?	Free and reduced lunch eligibility generally mirrors City demographics. Behavioral reporting is complex and not directly related to poverty.	7/18/24	Task Force member email
43.	Why were the current class size ranges chosen? Was there research done when deciding these class size ranges?	The District’s class size guidelines evolved over time based on trends and ranges across the District’s schools. The ranges used by the District are fairly typical across Wisconsin. The following link overviews research surrounding class sizes: https://www.chalkbeat.org/2022/6/10/23162544/class-size-research/	8/21/24	Task Force Meeting



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44.	When two AGR (Achievement Gap Reduction) schools are combined, or 1 AGR school is combined with 1 non-AGR school, what happens? Does funding change? Does the school need to re-acquire AGR status?	Based on information from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), AGR status could be retained after merger of a non-AGR school with an AGR school in two ways. If the schools merged and were housed in the existing AGR school, then AGR status would be automatically retained. If the schools merged and were housed in the non-AGR school, then the District could request a contract transfer from DPI. We believe but will confirm with DPI that AGR funding would not be affected if two AGR schools merged with each other, as it appears that funding is based on the number of pupils in AGR schools.	8/21/24	Task Force Meeting
45.	Which schools have sensory spaces, accessible playgrounds, and designated spaces for speech and psychologist? Which schools do not have these spaces?	Many schools have de facto sensory spaces—or could readily provide them—as many are operating substantially below their capacity. Further, each playground has at least some accessible equipment, and the cost of equipment upgrades is minor compared to other factors. District staff do not therefore believe that these are significant factors that differentiate schools for this process.	8/21/24	Task Force Meeting
46.	Does the capacity range of the school include encore rooms?	No. The indicated capacity of each school reflects the number of core classrooms multiplied by the class size policy applicable to that school and grade. When a class attends an encore hour, its core classroom cannot be replaced by another class.	8/21/24	Task Force Meeting
47.	Would fewer elementary schools result in less sharing and less moving of encore teams?	Non-traveling elementary encore teams are fairly rare in the District. While having fewer, larger elementary schools may reduce the amount of travel, it would not likely be eliminated unless the District transitioned	8/21/24	Task Force Meeting



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		to substantially larger elementary school buildings. The existing building stock may not allow for this.		
48.	Are the costs of intra-district student transfers included in the transportation budget?	Intra-district student transfers are primarily a function of the District's small school sizes. The need for transfers, such as for a "bubble" class, is greater where a school has only two sections per grade, for example, than if it had four sections per grade. Even so, transfers are relatively rare. The costs are built into the District's transportation budget.	8/21/24	Task Force Meeting
49.	Is the Wausau School District involved in the Marathon County Transit Workgroup?	No. Doing so would mainly interface with transportation for high school students, which seems beyond the Task Force's work. Good suggestion though.	8/21/24	Task Force Meeting
50.	What changed with elementary school-aged students riding MetroRide? When?	We would appreciate a better understanding of how this question relates to the Task Force's charge or option evaluation criteria before spending more time on a response.	8/21/24	Task Force Meeting
51.	What percent of students at each school are walking students, parent-drop off students, or bussing students? What is the percentage of students at each elementary school that are eligible for bussing but do not ride the bus?	We are working on a map to help provide some of this data. Still, it is important to note that this can be extremely fluid. Some days students might ride the bus, another day they might be dropped off. The same is true with walkers. Some days they might walk to school, other times they might be dropped off.	8/21/24	Task Force Meeting
52.	What is the maximum walking distance to the bus stop by grade?	4K/5K – ¼ mile Other Elementary & Middle School - ½ Mile High School - ¾ Mile	8/21/24	Task Force Meeting



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53.	Which school closures/combination of school consolidations would result in the greatest cost savings for the WSD?	Information provided to the Task Force at its September 11th meeting will have information on annual operating costs. Further, at or before the October 9th meeting, we anticipate having available information on deferred maintenance/repair cost estimates for the elementary schools.	8/21/24	Task Force Meeting
54.	Have other school districts found a way to have childcare be a revenue generator?	We are not aware of any school districts that have found a way to have child care and it be a revenue generator.	8/21/24	Task Force Meeting
55.	Of the indirect roles at our elementary schools, which ones are full-time (offering benefits)? As a percentage of base wages/salary, what's the average benefits load for these positions? (I would assume this to be a much-higher % of base wages for someone on the custodial staff and a lower percentage for someone like a Principal.)	Indirect roles in a school include Administrators, Custodial, Food Service, etc. Benefit load ranges between position groups from roughly between 20% and 60%.	8/23/24	Task Force Member Email
56.	Is there a current bussing map on the District website?	There is not a bussing map on the Wausau School District website. We do have an interactive map showing attendance areas within the Wausau School District.	8/23/24	Task Force Member Email
57.				