



Elementary Facility Plan Citizen Task Force Outcomes from Meeting 4 – September 11, 2024

34 Task Force members in attendance

Planning/Facilitation consultants in attendance: Mark Roffers and Nick Johnson

District staff in attendance: Cale Bushman, Interim Superintendent; Diana White, Coordinator of Communications & Marketing; Joshua Viegut, Assistant Superintendent of Operations; Julie Schell, Director of Elementary Education; Jon Euting, Assistant Superintendent of Academics; Kara Rakowski, 4K Principal and Early Childhood Coordinator; Tabatha Gundrum, Director of Human Services

Presentations: Consultants presented new tools to aid in Task Force work, including student dot maps, elementary school conditions and characteristics matrix, and a broad scenario evaluation dashboard of closing 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4 schools and how each scenario impacts the five facility option evaluation criteria.

Small group exercise results: The following is a summary of all small group identified pros and cons for each broad scenario of closing 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4 elementary schools. The summary is from ChatGPT – an Artificial Intelligence (AI) program – with consultant modifications for clarity and relevance.

Broad Scenario	Pros	Cons
0 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No changes for students, or • No pros 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not fiscally responsible • Underutilizes school buildings
1 school closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affects a small number of students • Minimal change in Title 1 or AGR • 1:1 school consolidation feasible • Some cost savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial impact limited/insufficient • Perception of targeting one specific area of the District • Continued low use of school capacity
2 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 school consolidation feasible • More efficient building utilization (84% of capacity by 2027) • More balanced class sizes • Not as big of an impact to students and families as below scenarios • More cost savings than just 1 school • Perception of fairness with a school from both the east and west sides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More students impacted • May not be enough financial impacts or savings • Potential for students to travel further and concern for increased bussing costs
3 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong financial savings • Most efficient building utilization (92% of elementary capacity) of feasible scenarios • Balanced class sizes • Opportunities for community repurposing of buildings • Opportunities for new construction as part of solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even more students impacted • Limited flexibility because building utilization projected at 92% in 2027 • Potential for more parental dissatisfaction than above scenarios • More complex implementation regarding 1:1 school consolidation and dividing closures by east and west sides
4 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimal financial savings • Opportunities for community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overutilization and overcrowding of buildings



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Broad Scenario	Pros	Cons
	repurpose of buildings • Opportunities for new construction as part of solution • Potential for increased diversity and balanced class sizes • More resources and collaboration available at each school	• Even more students impacted • Potential loss of neighborhood feel and schools • Risk to AGR funding • Potential for significant capital expenditures • Limited flexibility to adapt to sudden changes

The table below shows the total combined number of pros and cons identified by all of the small groups for each broad scenario. The 2 or 3 school closure scenarios were the two with more pros than cons.

Broad Scenario	Total Number of Pros Identified by Small Groups	Total Number of Cons Identified by Small Groups
0 schools closing	7	12
1 school closing	13	21
2 schools closing	28	11
3 schools closing	25	21
4 schools closing	21	26

The final pages of this “outcomes” document includes the full results of this exercise from each of the small groups.

Groups additionally identified the following other broad components to consider in future facility options:

- Keep middle and high school in mind
- Boundary/attendance area changes need to be on the table
- Build new school building for students from closed schools
- Consider traffic patterns
- Safety, quality paramount in options
- Phased closures (x2)
- 3 school closure as part of a phased approach
- 3-school closure providing opportunity for repurposing one building inside of disposing
- Option to close other WSD facilities that are not schools (e.g., Longfellow)
- All day alternating 4K
- Childcare/wrap-around care
- Shift grades (e.g., 6th to elementary)
- Start time changes
- Increase encore offerings
- Foreign language offerings



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Other comments provided in large group setting and in “parking lot” during meeting:

- Does the per-student operating cost on the elementary school matrix include students attending Red Granite Charter? (The response was “no”, because these represent past costs.)
- What is the current AGR funding per student?
- Do we have data on how elementary schools are utilizing nearby neighborhood resources like parks, community centers, etc.? (The response was “no”.)
- Could 4K/wrap around care be used as a differentiator for our district in attracting other non-resident students? What staff impacts would there be?

Individual member written meeting evaluation responses (following meeting):

1. What do you think went well at this meeting?
 - Great info (summarized) provided
 - Well organized, like small group time
 - Having data to evaluate
 - Meeting went by fast, very interactive
 - Starting to build plans, talking in broad terms - no specific schools named yet
 - Great handouts with very helpful information aggregated for ease in considerations
 - The group discussion is very good
 - All the information shared - it has been so helpful
 - Enjoyed the group discussion. The 0-4 discussion kept us somewhat contained.
 - Presentation
 - Very good information, good data, good discussion
 - Stayed on task, small group work got us to all get on same page with still sharing our opinion
 - Overview
 - The extended collaboration time without looking at individual schools
 - Small group discussion and reporting, comparisons to other school districts
 - I appreciated the consolidation of data
 - Overview table of current schools
 - Talking as a group discussion, data review- numbers help people understand better, growing consensus within the greater group, seeing the district in a new light
 - Good, organized information, presented well
 - More concise information on the 13 elementary schools (operating costs, enrollment capacities, etc.)
 - Meeting was well organized with a clear focus on what needed to be accomplished
 - Food for thought
 - It was nice to have more discussion. The extra information sheets that were given to us helped a lot.
 - Collaboration time within table group to fill in chart
 - Staying on task and paper handouts



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- It was great to have maps and other overview to see on 1 page. Easy to cross-reference schools. Well paced night to review and talk.
2. What could have gone better? How?
- A little repetitive
 - We still have some unknown variables. Cost savings, transportation impacts.
 - Keep beating us with "scope". At times, I feel we wander a bit.
 - Overview of current elementary schools matrix has projections for 2027 but not starting data for reference, needs 2024-2025 data
 - More small group
 - I don't know if we needed as thorough of an explanation on our handouts
 - Still pending facility costs
 - Less talk about numbers. Let us read and ask.
 - Information regarding bussing costs/who rides - how full are the buses
 - More discussion time
 - There should be more whole group moderation. One person seems to focus on and put focus on themselves.
3. Any questions we can answer before or at the next meeting?
- Is there city monies going to parochial schools?
 - How much does AGR and Title 1 funding impact a school? What would be lost if one of these schools would lose that funding?
 - What is effect of closing schools on transportation costs?
 - Cost of bussing now and projected with closure of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 schools.
 - If a referendum were in play and voted for yes close x schools to build 1 new school - can the district use the funds (already) voted on for other projects at our schools?
 - Update overview of current elementary schools data with 2024-2025 data.
 - How would cost savings from closures be utilized?
 - Pause planned improvements until we know what schools are closing or restructuring. So we don't spend money on a closing school.
 - I understand 4K is important, I have a student in 4K, but I don't feel it's a part of the footprint discussion.
 - Can we please explain why we cannot move 5th to middle school? It appears we need to hear the "why" so there is a better understanding. As a staff member, I know the why but again I think it needs to be explained.
 - What would be the food service impacts at each school to be combined?
 - Deferred maintenance costs.
 - Any data on biggest influences on drastic school enrollment changes? School shootings, etc.?



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- If one of the current elementary schools were to be used for all of 4K, would it have to be remodeled a certain way? For example, would they have to have restrooms in each classroom?
- What about projected new-comer students to the Wausau District? We have many families who continue to move into our community.

The following is a complete list of all small group identified pros and cons of each presented broad scenario of closing 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4 elementary schools:

Group 1:

Broad Scenario	Pros	Cons
0 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
1 school closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less students impacted • 1 to 1 consolidations more feasible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families/school feels targeted • Still in financial issue • Utilization of space • Not big enough of change • Very small collaborative and safe improvement
2 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep 6 AGR schools • Not many students impacted • 1 to 1 consolidations... perhaps • Increasing utilization of buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased issues with congestion, pick up/drop off • Double students impacted
3 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting optimal savings • Likelihood of downsizing again not happening • More balanced class sizes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity challenges emerge • Students impacted • Not directly consolidating • Staff drastically impacted
4 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$ looks good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building utilization - OVER • Moving a lot of staff • Less chance of AGR status quo

Group 2:

Broad Scenario	Pros	Cons
0 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult for community support (i.e. referendum requests) • Increased deficits
1 school closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough of a financial impact
2 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential community repurpose • Some financial gain, time to re-assess for future changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough of a financial impact



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Broad Scenario	Pros	Cons
3 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential community repurpose • Potential for newer construction if more closed and infrastructure avoidance \$ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially lose AGR school funding
4 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential community repurpose • Potential for newer construction if more closed and infrastructure avoidance \$ • More cost savings (~approx. \$850k for greater than 3 schools) • Cost of security may be less with fewer schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially lose AGR school funding • Less flexibility to respond to unexpected growth • Impacts more students, families (potentially more bussing, crowding) • Potential need for increased security measure due to larger schools

Group 3:

Broad Scenario	Pros	Cons
0 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are self-evident: \$\$\$, decreasing student population, not using buildings to capacity
1 school closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal student/staff impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not fiscally responsible enough • Not balanced among greater community • Distribution burden/imbalance
2 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East/West balance • Higher school enrollment, increase in efficiency (food, energy, etc.) • Minimal impact to students, residents • More balanced class sizes • Good building utilization (84%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bussing issues • Kids further from home
3 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in items above • Ideal in terms of capacity • Impacting a lot of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bussing (travel) • Would need to be phased in • Impacting a lot of students
4 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most fiscal balance • More resources • Less traveling • More ready resources, more collaboration • Increase diversity in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drastic change that may not be needed for a decade, if ever • Crowding issues • Limits ability to expand 4K • Limits ability to accommodate sudden changes



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Group 4:

Broad Scenario	Pros	Cons
0 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People don't change • Love the neighborhood school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive • Makes us look like we don't know what we are doing • Unbalanced school classes
1 school closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less student impact • Continually reevaluate the success of 1 school • Save money • Not ignoring the problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of fairness • Not enough savings • Families feeling targeted
2 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of fairness of one on each side of the river • Make a change to see if it works and then re-evaluate and then determine savings and success • Baby steps • Less abrasive • Less impact on AGR • Less community impact • Extra space for 4K options and charter schools, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough savings (bus, classrooms) • Burden placed on two schools
3 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial savings • Better use of building capacity • Building utilization would be 92% • Fewer traveling staff • Less bussing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to do it could be a problem • Larger number of kids impacted • Divide school closures by the River • Capital expenditure
4 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital expenditures - that is a guarantee

Group 5:

Broad Scenario	Pros	Cons
0 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No impact on students • Limit objectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not fiscally responsible • Inefficient use of building space
1 school closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some cost savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively insignificant cost savings • Still have low utilization of space
2 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still have options at 84% capacity • Okay % of change • AGR Maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although change, kids will be going together



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Broad Scenario	Pros	Cons
3 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger group could help kids adjust • Overall good capacity 92% • Closer to 300 average • AGR hopefully maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little larger % of kids impacted • Capacity challenges emerge • But could be okay if long term enrollments decrease
4 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closure to fiscal goals • Lots of kids changing may make it easier for everyone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over capacity • Lose flexibility • More kids impacted • Lose AGR

Group 6:

Broad Scenario	Pros	Cons
0 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No cost savings
1 school closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal change • 1:1 school consolidation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal savings • Unbalanced class sizes • 77% capacity • West vs East side
2 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 East/1 West • Somewhat balanced class sizes • 84% capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500 students impacted • Not as much savings
3 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More utilization • Less traveling staff • More balanced class sizes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More change • More impacted students • Less wiggle room at 92% capacity
4 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost savings • Less traveling staff • Improved transportation depending on schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most change • Many impacted students • Boundary shifts/neighborhoods • Over capacity • Overpopulated classes

Group 7:

Broad Scenario	Pros	Cons
0 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No changes in Title 1 or AGR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still in same boat financially • Encore still travels • Unbalanced class sizes
1 school closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only affect 250 students • Little change in Title 1 or AGR • Could be 1:1 swap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential longer travel time • Little financial savings • Still unbalanced class sizes
2 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save some money • Could be 1:1 swap • Could keep AGRs • Could balance class sizes potentially 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More bussing costs



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Broad Scenario	Pros	Cons
3 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance class sizes • Increased cost saving • Could do 1:1 swap • Less encore staff travel • Could have better staff choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased transportation costs • Increased parental anger perhaps • More students impacted
4 schools closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance class sizes • More opportunities • Less encore travel • Easier to fill positions • Save money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased transportation • More students impacted • Lots of disruption • Lots of neighborhood feel gone • Still have deficit