



## 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"> <li>• Continued long-term financial challenges, which the Task Force will learn more about in August.</li> <li>• Roughly 1,000 empty seats across the District's existing elementary schools today</li> <li>• Decreasing elementary enrollment, with more decreases projected (more information shared at July Task Force meeting)</li> </ul>	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"> <li>• Meeting information, such as presentations, handouts, and notes/outcomes</li> <li>• All communications that are sent out to Wausau School District staff and families related to the work of the Task Force</li> <li>• Reports at Board meetings at key stages in the process</li> </ul>	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 options before the Task Force's September meetings, which will likely include consideration of the District's financial condition.	6/12/24	Task Force Meeting



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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 <a href="#">project Web page</a> 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> <tr><td>Montessori</td><td>1</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>Rib Mountain</td><td>29</td><td>33</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	Montessori	1	12	Rib Mountain	29	33	6/12/24	Task Force Meeting
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		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 the 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 <sup>th</sup> 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
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



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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 <sup>st</sup> 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
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: <a href="https://redgranitecharter.org/">https://redgranitecharter.org/</a>	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting



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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
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



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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
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



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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
22.	Which schools have multipurpose rooms (e.g., gyms also used as cafeterias) versus separate common rooms for different functions?	The following elementary schools have multipurpose rooms (gyms also used as cafeterias): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● South Mountain</li> <li>● Rib Mountain</li> <li>● Hawthorn Hills</li> <li>● Maine</li> <li>● Hewitt-Texas</li> <li>● Grant</li> <li>● Lincoln</li> </ul> The following schools have separate gyms and cafeterias: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Franklin</li> <li>● G.D. Jones</li> <li>● John Marshall</li> <li>● Riverview</li> <li>● Stettin</li> <li>● Thomas Jefferson</li> </ul>	7/10/24	Task Force Meeting



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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
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





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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: <a href="https://www.marathoncountypulse.org/indicators/index/dashboard?alias=LIFEeducation">https://www.marathoncountypulse.org/indicators/index/dashboard?alias=LIFEeducation</a> 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 <sup>th</sup> 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"> <li>1) access for families needing transportation (more parents living in the city required transportation support/didn't have a car)</li> <li>2) building supports for at-risk learners (AGR, title, etc.)</li> <li>3) buildability of the site - sites had enough land and space to build on</li> <li>4) other factors such as additional space needs needed in the K-5 part of the building, anticipated increased enrollment, etc.</li> </ol> <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: <a href="https://www.wausaudailyherald.com/story/opinion/columnists/2017/02/06/wausaus-new-4k-centers-benefit-young-learners/97488818/">https://www.wausaudailyherald.com/story/opinion/columnists/2017/02/06/wausaus-new-4k-centers-benefit-young-learners/97488818/</a>		
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 <a href="#">Community Change and Enrollment Projections Report</a> . 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: <a href="https://www.chalkbeat.org/2022/6/10/23162544/class-size-research/">https://www.chalkbeat.org/2022/6/10/23162544/class-size-research/</a>	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 to substantially larger elementary school buildings. The existing building stock may not allow for this.	8/21/24	Task Force Meeting





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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
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





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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 40%.	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.	Is there city money going to parochial schools?	To our knowledge, no city dollars are used to support parochial schools.	9/11/24	Task Force Meeting
58.	Any data on biggest influences on drastic school enrollment changes? School shootings, etc.?	The biggest influence on the decrease in school enrollment in the WSD and elsewhere are historically low and decreasing birth rates. The general fertility rate in the United States reached a historic low in 2022, and has generally been decreasing since around 2014. Most districts in Wisconsin are experiencing decreasing enrollment as a result. There are different theories on why birth rates have decreased,	9/11/24	Task Force Meeting



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		which include economic uncertainty and concern about societal direction and public health.		
59.	Update overview of current elementary schools data with 2024-2025 data.	The 2024-25 budget year just started in July; we will not have 2024-25 actual cost information until well after the Task Force finishes its work.	9/11/24	Task Force Meeting
60.	Can we please explain why we cannot move 5th grade to middle school? It appears we need to hear the “why” so there is a better understanding.	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. Beyond this, 5th grade education is typically delivered in a manner that is considerably different than 6th through 8th grade education. For example, 5th graders generally learn their non-encore subjects from a single teacher, while grades 6+ generally move to different teachers for different core subjects. Next, in districts where middle schools include grades 5-8, it is typically in buildings where 5th and 6th graders have some physical separation from 7th and 8th graders, as they can be at significantly different levels of development. Such separation would be challenging in WSD middle schools. Finally, and just as a reminder, the School Board directed the Task Force not to consider moving 5th graders to the middle schools.	9/11/24	Task Force Meeting
61.	What is the current AGR funding per student?	For the 2023-24 school year, the WSD received just over \$2,100 per student in AGR funding for students attending qualifying schools and grades.	9/11/24	Task Force Meeting
62.	How much does AGR and Title 1 funding impact a school? What would be lost if one of these schools would lose that funding?	If a school lost AGR funding, they would move into the standard WSD classroom guidelines (larger class sizes K-3). If a school lost Title 1	9/11/24	Task Force Meeting



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		funding, it would lose the additional reading and/or math support provided to that school.		
63.	What is the effect of closing schools on transportation costs? Cost of bussing now and projected with closure of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 schools.	Taking buses to fewer school buildings has the potential to reduce bussing costs, particularly where current buses are substantially below capacity. It is difficult to evaluate bussing impacts with the general closure scenarios shared so far, because so much of bussing depends on specific geography, attendance areas, and travel routes. We hope to have better information on bussing or transportation impacts when we get to specific school closure/consolidation options in October.	9/11/24	Task Force Meeting
64.	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?	No, these funds may only be used for the purposes specified in the referendum.	9/11/24	Task Force Meeting
65.	How would cost savings from closures be utilized?	The District has a projected annual operating deficit of around \$2.5 million by 2027. The savings from elementary school closures could be used to help offset this deficit.	9/11/24	Task Force Meeting
66.	If one of the current elementary schools were to be used for all of 4K (instead), would it have to be remodeled a certain way? For example, would they have to have restrooms in each classroom?	The extent of the remodeling would depend on the school. It is best practice, but not a requirement that each 4K classroom have its own restroom. The four current 4K academies have a mix. General remodeling may be required to make sure that facilities were safe and right-sized for four to five year olds throughout the building.	9/11/24	Task Force Meeting
67.	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?	Possibly, though there is not much data available to determine what the impact would be. The fact that Wausau is an employment center for the region would help—presumably there is a cadre of parents working in Wausau but living elsewhere in the region who might find a	9/11/24	Task Force Meeting



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		City/WSD location for 4K or childcare helpful. WSD would have to hire additional staff were the WSD to run the childcare program. Were there instead a private partner running the program, WSD staff impact may be limited to that associated with managing the relationship.		
68.	What would be the food service impacts at each school to be combined?	There are currently production kitchens at Riverview, Jefferson, Hewitt-Texas, Maine, and Rib Mountain school buildings, but not at the other elementary buildings. The other elementary schools have serving kitchens. The impact of closing one of these buildings on food service would be more transportation of food among buildings. Some building modifications for food service may also be required depending on the facility option selected.	9/11/24	Task Force Meeting
69.	What about newcomer students coming to the Wausau District? We have many families who continue to move into our community.	The enrollment projections in the Community Change and Projections Report provided by MDRoffers Consulting and presented at the 7/10 Task Force meeting included a projection for in-migration into the Wausau School District of new students to the district. So, these students are included in enrollment projections shown in the documents provided in Task Force meetings.	9/11/24	Task Force Meeting
70.	Can we have behavior data for each elementary school?	While there is a current effort to unify, data reporting methodology is not the same at each school. Further, there are behavior issues at every school, which ebb and flow over time. Next, student behavior issues would tend to travel with the student wherever they attend, rather than be a function of the building.	9/25/24	Task Force Meeting
71.	If you were to look at the WSD area, population, and projections, where would you recommend that elementary schools be placed?	Reviewing the student "dot" maps, the WSD's schools are reasonably placed relative to student locations. There just are not as many students per home or household as there were in yesteryear, particularly in the central and the more rural parts of the District.	9/25/24	Task Force Meeting



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72.	How does the WSD market itself for student retention and recruitment?	The Wausau School District markets itself through social media (Facebook & Instagram), on its website, as well as through TV, radio, and newspaper partners. In addition, we advertise on billboards, in newspapers, on TV. We also attend job fairs/community events, where we have a booth, to share information and interact with attendees. We are building relationships with realtors – who can share information with homebuyers. We also place information in the Greater Wausau Chamber Relocation Guide. We were also just featured in a Midwest-wide TV show this past weekend (“Into the Outdoors” on WAOW.	9/25/24	Task Force Meeting
73.	Do we have statistics for which neighborhoods where open-enrollment-out is highest?	The following are the current numbers of WSD resident elementary school students open-enrolling-out to schools in other public districts, by the home attendance area where the students currently live: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Franklin, 14</li> <li>● G.D. Jones, 13</li> <li>● Grant, 8</li> <li>● Hawthorne Hills, 20</li> <li>● Hewitt-Texas, 21</li> <li>● Jefferson, 9</li> <li>● John Marshall, 15</li> <li>● Lincoln, 8</li> <li>● Maine, 25</li> <li>● Rib Mountain, 13</li> <li>● Riverview, 12</li> <li>● South Mountain, 22</li> <li>● Stettin, 28</li> </ul>	9/25/24	Task Force Meeting



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		The majority of the open-enrollments-out are due to families moving into the WSD from other districts but wishing to have their children remain in their schools of origin.		
74.	Which neighborhoods are currently bussing vs. walking?	<a href="#">This link</a> will get you to the map of current walking zones to existing schools. Walking zones would change as schools are consolidated.	9/25/24	Task Force Meeting
75.	Do the teachers or administrative staff have opinions on the changes?	About one-third of the Task Force is made up of current WSD teachers and support staff. Further, the District administrative team has kept in close contact with the elementary school principals, who are the best conduits to teachers who are not on the Task Force. As changes become more focused, we may hear more teacher opinions. The administrative staff continues to be available as a resource to the Task Force, and believes changes are necessary, but remains interested in the Task Force driving the substance.	9/25/24	Task Force Meeting
76.	Is it true that the Hewitt-Texas land was donated with the plan to keep it as a public school?	While WSD staff believe that the land on which Hewitt-Texas is located was, we are not aware of any restrictions on its future use. We searched recorded property records and could find no such restriction.	9/25/24	Task Force Meeting
77.	Would Red Granite Charter be sustainable on its own in the Hewitt-Texas building?	The current enrollment at Red Granite is 51 students and the functional student capacity of this entire building is 220.	9/25/24	Task Force Meeting
78.	Have you talked to D.C. Everest about their desire to look at combined needs with both districts?	The WSD is regularly in communication with the D.C. Everest district on a variety of issues, such as combined professional development, curriculum, best practices, and school closures for weather. Opportunities to combine schools between districts, or combine or reconfigure districts, are very challenging.	9/25/24	Task Force Meeting



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79.	How much would the addition of a gym or cafeteria cost?	Without zeroing on the exact size, school, or any special conditions, adding a gym to a typical elementary school would cost upwards of \$3 million in 2024 dollars. With similar caveats and not including any kitchen enhancements, adding a cafeteria/multi-purpose space to a typical elementary school would cost upwards of \$2 million in 2024 dollars. Not every elementary school in the WSD requires a new gym and/or cafeteria/multi-purpose space. The Overview of Current Elementary School matrix, already shared with the Task Force, lists the schools that currently have a separate gym and cafeteria.	9/25/24	Task Force Meeting
80.	How much is the transience of families in certain areas with higher rates of affordable rental housing factoring into school enrollment fluctuations and decreases among different schools?	Certain neighborhoods and attendance areas do have more rental housing than others, which tends to result in families moving in and out of these areas more frequently than where owner-occupied housing is more prevalent. Neighborhoods with large amounts of rental housing can have surprising stability in student generation on the whole, even as individual families may move in and out. In contrast, student enrollment in owner-occupied neighborhoods can more often rise and fall over time as different generations often move in and out in waves. In general, the area and nation has had declines in birth rates and families with options appear to be more selective on where they live, which for neighborhoods with little to no new housing built, has had a greater impact on enrollment decreases than other factors.	10/8/24	Task Force Member Email
81.	How long are current bus times for Hewitt-Texas?	The longest run in the morning is 43 minutes from the first student pick up to drop off at school. The longest run in the afternoon is 50 minutes from student pick up to last student drop off at home.	10/9/24	Task Force Meeting





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82.	Are student teacher ratios impacted by any of these moves?	There is no proposed change in school district class size policies. If schools are consolidated, there will be more consistency across the district in actual class sizes, plus very small current class sizes will likely grow.	10/9/24	Task Force Meeting
83.	Will there be any further discussion about non-school buildings? Or is this beyond our scope?	The Task Force's scope is focused on making recommendations for current elementary school facilities. If the Task Force wishes to make advisory recommendations beyond this scope, these can be made near or at its last meeting in December.	10/9/24	Task Force Meeting
84.	Does the school district own Thom Field?	Yes, the District owns this 15-acre stadium/park site.	10/9/24	Task Force Meeting
85.	One of the CESA 10 presenters mentioned that he believed the district would be crazy to close certain schools. Will that information be shared with us?	The comment was in reference to the four schools for which CESA 10 had yet to finalize its deferred maintenance assessment at the time of the Task Force's 10/9/24 meeting, which were South Mountain, Jefferson, GD Jones, and Stettin. In general, per CESA 10, lower need for future financial investments in these schools is driven by their size (larger schools=more efficient operations), age (newer for all but a portion of Jefferson), recent significant investment (e.g., additions), condition (low deferred maintenance), and functionality (e.g., all but S. Mtn have individual eating/gym spaces).	10/9/24	Task Force Meeting
86.	When do the WSD loans get all paid off? Since usually it is good to not go back down to zero with borrowing or it makes the next borrowing package look very high, should we be planning to close the next school. etc., and then do an	The WSD is currently in a place where it could take on more debt.	10/27/24	Task Force Member Email





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	addition(s) to accommodate moving students as part of a strategic plan?			
87.	What price was the old East High School sold for?	East High was sold in the mid-2000s for a price of \$75,000.	10/30/24	Task Force Meeting
88.	What happens if we aren't done evaluating options by December or January?	The consultants put forward a proposal to complete this process in nine task force meetings, which they still feel is reasonable given their past experience and level of effort required. The last options will be considered at the 11/13 meeting, and then at the same meeting narrowing of options will begin to occur. The 12/4 meeting will then be used to hone the Task Force's recommendation. Extending the process would go beyond the promise made to Task Force members at the beginning of the process, cost the District more money and time, and require School Board approval. Further, the results of the Task Force's work could affect a Spring 2025 referendum, and the Board and Administration would have to finalize the referendum question by mid-January.	10/30/24	Task Force Meeting
89.	If a new school is built on Thom Field site, are West/East fields big enough?	There would need to be new bleachers at each of the two fields.	10/30/24	Task Force Meeting
90.	Can we take another vote on building another school so that we can move forward?	Task Force members took this vote on their evaluation forms at the end of the 10/30 meeting. Of the 39 members in attendance, 11 members voted that they wanted the Task Force to consider building a new elementary school (at Thom Field) to replace 3 existing elementary schools that would close (John Marshall, Hawthorn Hills,	10/30/24	Task Force Meeting



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		Franklin). This was a similar level of support (i.e., fewer than 1/3 of members) to when the Task Force voted on a more generic proposal to consider building a new elementary school at its 9/25 meeting.		
91.	How are we addressing overcrowding at John Muir? And Wausau West? East side secondary schools are still underutilized.	The recent referendum has eased crowding at John Muir. The School Board has decided to focus now on elementary schools, and that is the Task Force's charge.	10/30/24	Task Force Meeting
92.	Can we get data on how elementary schools are performing academically? Is there any relationship to school size?	Each school has a State-produced report card that you can access here: <a href="https://apps2.dpi.wi.gov/reportcards/">https://apps2.dpi.wi.gov/reportcards/</a> . There seems little relationship statewide between school building sizes and performance.	11/12/24	Task Force Member Email
93.	Do we actually receive enough state or local financial aid for each student to worry if students at John Marshall or anywhere else decide to leave the district if we change their school attendance area?	School districts are generally in a better spot financially when they have more rather than fewer students, especially where the district has space in most classes for more students without adding more teachers or more buildings. The WSD is in this position.	11/12/24	Task Force Member Email
94.	What about another option - Rib Mountain students to shift between South Mountain and Stettin?	This suggestion would not work without Stettin going over its functional building capacity in the next few years and then exceeding maximum capacity in the mid- to late-2030s. Using the neighborhood shifts suggested at the meeting, Stettin (with a 373-414 capacity) would have 373 students in 2027, 387 in 2030, 410 in 2035, and 425 in 2040—all compared to its functional capacity of 373 students. None of the 10 options that have been fully vetted had projected enrollment above functional building capacity. Stettin is arguably the one WSD elementary school where enrollment should remain sufficiently below capacity. This is because the consultant projects about 1/3 of all new	11/13/24	Task Force Meeting



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		single-family housing in all of the WSD through 2040 to occur within Stettin's current attendance area. That fraction would increase to almost ½ if the suggested neighborhoods were to move to a larger Stettin attendance area. Some of these homes will bring more students.		
95.	Would Rib Mountain Elementary students be able to be divided between South Mountain and G.D. Jones if G.D. Jones took Lincoln students and Lincoln was repurposed as a 4K academy?	Not without sending G.D. Jones' enrollment above that building's functional capacity. In the "Lincoln to G.D. Jones" option, the projected 2027 grade <u>5K</u> -5 enrollment at G.D. Jones would be 498 students, compared to that building's functional capacity of 528 students. In the earlier "Rib Mountain to South Mountain/G.D. Jones" option, an estimated 65 students would shift to G.D. Jones. So, if attempted to be carried out together, these options would send G.D. Jones' enrollment above that building's functional capacity.	11/13/24	Task Force Meeting