



Executive Summary

Recorded on worksheets as a result of the small group work activity
Building Tomorrow Together Workshop #2 • October 28, 2024

On October 28, 2024, about 45 participants joined the second Building Tomorrow Together community workshop at Northbrook Junior High School. This session focused on prioritizing facility improvement options, developed by the Facilitating Team, and gathering feedback on the top two options. Participants worked in 10 small groups to complete three tasks:

Task #1: Prioritize Options

Around the room are boards displaying the four options that were developed by the Building Tomorrow Together Facilitating Team. After learning about these options and how facility improvements are funded, we'd like you to help prioritize them. Take the red and green dots that are in your packet and "vote" with them by placing green dots on the option(s) you would like the Board to consider and red dots on the options you feel should be removed from consideration. You can distribute your dots as you see fit, spreading them among a number of options or placing all of them on one option.

Task #2: Option with the MOST green dots: Option 3

Respond to the following question for the option that was the MOST preferred based on the activity in Task #1.

- 2A. What should the Board of Education consider to improve this option?
- 2B. What, if any, roadblocks should the Board consider if they decide to ask the community to vote on a referendum to implement this option?

Task #3: Option with the MOST green dots: Option 4

Respond to the following question for the option that was the SECOND MOST preferred based on the activity in Task #1.

- 3A. What should the Board of Education consider to improve this option?
- 3B. What, if any, roadblocks should the Board consider if they decide to ask the community to vote on a referendum to implement this option?

The following summarizes the responses from the groups:

Key Insights

1. Prioritization Results

- Option 3 emerged as the most preferred choice with 41 green dots and only 3 red dots.
- Option 4 closely followed, receiving 40 green dots and 19 red dots.
- Options 1 and 2 received less support, with Option 1 garnering significant opposition (63 red dots).

2. Feedback on Option 3

Participants emphasized the importance of framing Option 3 as a balanced partnership between taxpayers and the district. Many groups stressed the need to:

- Showcase how the plan benefits all residents, including those without school-age children, by improving property values and community attractiveness.
- Communicate transparency around funding, including detailed examples of tax impacts, ongoing operational costs, and long-term sustainability.
- Address the environmental and safety benefits of the proposed upgrades, such as using sustainable building materials.
- Specific suggestions included exploring partnerships with local organizations, highlighting successful referenda in neighboring districts, and engaging the community with clear messaging about the impact on home values. One group noted, “We need more messaging for the different demographics and why we should want to vote yes for these improvements.”

3. Feedback on Option 4

While similar themes arose for Option 4, participants focused on:
Enhancing transparency around financing and operational costs.

- Justifying the use of reserve funds versus community tax increases, with one group suggesting a hybrid approach.
- Addressing concerns about future-proofing the facilities, ensuring longevity, and aligning them with evolving curriculum needs.
- Some participants proposed merging elements of Options 3 and 4 to balance cost-efficiency with ambitious improvements.

4. Common Roadblocks

Across both options, participants highlighted potential roadblocks, such as:

- Gaining support from residents without children in the district.
- Addressing concerns about depleting reserve funds and the implications for emergencies.
- Communicating effectively about tax impacts, particularly to those on fixed incomes or facing rising property taxes.
- Suggestions included hosting community meetings to explain the financial strategy and emphasizing the long-term cost savings of acting now versus delaying improvements.

CONSENSUS POINTS

Points of general agreement from the work activity

- Option 3's emphasis on essential improvements resonates as a balanced approach, making it the community's preferred choice.
- Transparent and accessible communication about tax impacts and funding strategies is crucial to gaining widespread support.
- Highlighting property value benefits and community-wide advantages is key to engaging residents without school-age children.
- Combining elements of Options 3 and 4 could provide a middle ground that addresses fiscal concerns while meeting educational needs.
- Future-proofing facilities and aligning them with long-term curriculum goals are priorities for many participants.

This workshop underscored the community's interest in ensuring Northbrook schools remain a cornerstone of educational excellence and a driver of community value.

**For a complete listing of all responses,
see the CW #2 Verbatim Response Document
on the website: northbrook28.net/btttd28**