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Yorkville schools holding sessions on new school facilities, building to possible referendum

Zediker: ‘We won’t be able to solve our overcrowding issue with the current budget’

By Joey Weslo

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(File photo) Yorkville School District Superintendent Matt Zediker presents student enrollment data during a public session at Autumn Creek Elementary School in Yorkville. The district will hold three more sessions this spring. (Provided by The Yorkville School District 115)

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With too many students for too little classroom space, some big upgrades are coming to Yorkville School District 115. To ensure the facilities expansion reflects the community's priorities, the district is hosting a series of public sessions to explore proposals designed by their committee.

There will be three public sessions as part of the district's "Community Feedback in Motion: Building a Solution Together" tour. Attendees will be able to provide feedback and help shape the district's future.

The sessions will all be at 7 p.m. April 29 in the Yorkville High School library, May 8 in the Yorkville Middle School auditorium and on May 20 at Autumn Creek Elementary School.

The third session is a primarily Spanish-speaking one.

Superintendent Matt Zediker said the sessions are an important step in developing the Facilities Master Plan upgrades. The district's steering committee used feedback from the community collected during public sessions last autumn to design a variety of expansion options to best meet the public's insights and the challenges facing the district.

The investment from the community is likely to be sizable. The proposed facility upgrades will most probably result in an upcoming public referendum requesting greater public funding.

"We won't be able to solve our overcrowding issue with the current budget," Zediker said. "As we're thinking about major renovations or building new buildings, we probably will be headed towards a referendum. Depending on where the community is with the referendum, it will determine how many of our issues we can solve with this plan."



(file photo) Yorkville School District Superintendent Matt Zediker holds a public listening session at Grande Reserve Elementary School in Yorkville about the future of the district's school buildings. The community feedback helped shaped facility expansion proposals being readied for the board. (Provided by the Yorkville School District 115)

The community's population growth has vastly outpaced classroom capacity space and investments in facility expansions. The Facilities Master Plan is being designed as a long-term solution to ensure students have all the room and resources they need to develop.

“The community shared about the overcrowding in all of our schools,” Zediker said. “At virtually every listening session we heard a need for a performing arts auditorium and the need for an athletics field house. People also asked for more green space for the kids and more parking.”

Several options are being explored with the district’s recent $2 million purchase of a 100-acre property, located a quarter-mile west of the current high school campus.

In the short-term, the district is building $3 million temporary polebarn classrooms to house overflow students outside elementary schools. The district also will be transporting kids away from their closest school to another within the district with adequate space to better balance their resources.

Zediker said transparency and open communication with the community is the best way to ensure everybody is informed about the necessary construction and the priorities that need to be addressed.

“This isn’t phases of work, this is one complete facility master plan,” Zediker said. “We are going to address as many challenges that the district has within this plan. It’s important the community can see the milestones we’re projecting to hit so they can see how the plan benefits our kids, the schools, and ultimately the community.”

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