



Residents to Consider Phase II of School Facility Plan

On Tuesday, September 13, residents of the Storm Lake Community School District will vote on a bond issue question. If approved, it would allow the district to move ahead on Phase II of our plan to address space and facility needs in our schools.

Thanks to a voter-approved bond in 2019, the district was able to build a new Early Elementary School. That building is now open and includes kindergarten classrooms, a media center, art and music rooms, a kitchen, a gymnasium, a commons area, and offices. We also built a new Middle School Auxiliary Gym and three additional middle school classrooms. Combined, these projects represented Phase I of our long-term plan.

We are thrilled with how the first phase went and are incredibly grateful to our community for the support. However, as anticipated, we continue to deal with a space crunch in our other buildings. The Board of Education has decided that now is the right time to move forward with the second phase.

If the question on the September ballot receives at least 60 percent voter support, the district would be able to add about 31,141 square feet of additional space to the new Early Elementary School. First-grade students would be moved into this space, thereby easing capacity concerns at the higher grade levels.

The district's long-term plan is to have prekindergarten through first grade in the Early Elementary School, 2nd-5th grade at the elementary school, and 6th-8th grade at the middle school.

It is important to note that an approved bond this September **would not include a property tax rate increase**, as the school district portion of the local tax levy would remain the same. This will be made possible by the district lowering other levies by the same amount of the bond, thereby offsetting any increase in the debt service rate. SLCS D's tax levy rate would remain at \$17.17 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

The total amount of the bond would be \$9.95 million. For more information on the district's facility needs, our long-term plan, and the question on the ballot, please visit www.slcsdbond.org. We look forward to continuing to engage our community around this important issue in the weeks ahead.

David Skibsted is president of the Storm Lake Community School District Board of Education