



Dear Community Members, Parents/Families, and Staff:

The Valley City area is a wonderful place to live. As a community, we pride ourselves on working hard, caring for one another, and providing children with an outstanding education. In fact, we've accomplished the following:

- ✓ Our elementary school has been recognized with a **Blue Ribbon**, which is given to select schools across the country for overall academic excellence.
- ✓ Multiple teachers and administrators have won **local, regional, and state awards**.
- ✓ Valley City High School was the **number one high school in the state** according to *U.S. News and World Report*.

Our focus will always remain on our students. At the same time, we also need to develop a plan to update our facilities. The District Facilities Steering Committee identified the potential options that are explored on the following pages. The purpose of this survey is to present facility information and gather your feedback on how we should configure our school district in the future. **Our plans must reflect the priorities of you, our taxpayers. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey!**

To collect your feedback, we are working with School Perceptions LLC, an independent education research firm with expertise in conducting community surveys. All survey data is returned to School Perceptions, and your feedback will remain confidential.

PLEASE TAKE THE SURVEY IN ONE OF TWO EASY WAYS

Option 1: Online –

Go to the survey website: **www.Feedback2000.com**

Enter your survey code:

Option 2: By paper – If you do not have internet access, please return the survey to any school office, or mail to School Perceptions, PO Box 607, Slinger, WI 53086.

The survey access code can be used only once. To obtain additional surveys for other adults in your household or if you need additional support, call 701.845.0483, ext. 1.

Please complete the survey before November 1, 2021.

Final survey results will be reported at a School Board meeting in November. They will also be available on the District's website at www.hiliners.org.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Sincerely,

Josh Johnson
Superintendent

Ryan Mathias
School Board President

Natalie Wintch
School Board Vice President

Darin Anderson
School Board Member

Sherri Horsager
School Board Member

Phil Hatcher
School Board Member

Background Information: Facility Challenges

Recently, the District hired a firm to conduct a thorough assessment of our school buildings. We used the results of this assessment and feedback from community meetings to identify four major themes. (The full assessment report is available at www.hiliners.org/explore.)

1. Major building systems need to be repaired and/or replaced.

- Our heating, ventilation, electrical, and plumbing systems are reaching the end of their service lives, are inefficient, and must be replaced. In fact, some of our heating and ventilation systems do not provide good air quality and are original to their buildings or date to mid-1970s renovations.
- Safety and security updates are needed to better monitor and control visitor access.
- Buildings need to meet both Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and fire codes.
- Windows and doors need to be replaced to eliminate leaks and prevent energy loss.
- Floors are worn, cracked, and need to be replaced.
- Portions of our roof and ceilings leak, especially at the Junior/Senior High building.
- Remaining asbestos must be removed.
- Parking is extremely limited, lots are too small, and pedestrian-vehicle traffic must be improved.
- Estimated cost for major building repairs and/or replacement is \$25 million.

2. Classrooms and support areas are outdated.

- Many classrooms have not been updated since their original construction.
- We lack flexible space for both large- and small-group instruction and project-based learning.
- Classrooms are not designed to handle today's technology.
- The elementary gym and cafeteria share space, which requires set-up and take-down of tables daily and limits physical education programming.

3. We could consolidate our facilities.

- If some of our school facilities are consolidated, we could save up to \$1.5 million per year in annual operation and maintenance budgets.
- Consolidation would improve efficiencies with staffing, maintenance, and operating costs.

4. The District believes this is a good time to address our facility needs.

- In addition to savings from consolidation, there are two additional funding sources:
 - a. \$3 million in federal COVID-19 relief aid
 - b. A matching grant of up to \$10 million from the State of North Dakota (with the District providing \$10 million).
- Interest rates remain near historic lows.
- Construction costs will likely increase over time.

The cost to fix the problems explained above is too large to be covered in the annual maintenance and operating budgets. Therefore, we would need to explore a bond referendum.

What is a bond referendum?

This is a method a district must use to issue debt to pay for major facility projects. Like a home mortgage, a referendum is typically financed over an extended period of time, often 20 years.

Would you support the Valley City Public School District exploring a bond referendum to address the issues above?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure/need more information

Comments/questions/suggestions:

Right-Sizing the District: Facility Project Options

We do not feel operating all our facilities is an appropriate use of your tax dollars. Therefore, we propose “*right-sizing*” our district by doing the following:

- 1) **Closing buildings:** To reduce operating costs and eliminate many future maintenance expenses.
- 2) **Consolidating operations:** To improve efficiencies and provide more opportunities for students.
- 3) **Building/renovating schools:** To create more modern and supportive learning environments.

Taking these actions would save up to ***\$1.5 million per year*** in annual operating expenses. In addition, it could no longer be necessary to spend money on buildings that would be closed. Therefore, based on the facility studies and community input, ***we developed two options to right-size our district.***

Option 1: Build a 4-12 school and renovate portions of Jefferson Elementary

This option would build a 4-12 building with:

- ✓ Classrooms and learning spaces for both small and large groups.
- ✓ Labs for project-based learning.
- ✓ Performing arts center (PAC).
- ✓ Three-court practice gym.

This option would renovate Jefferson Elementary with:

- ✓ More secure entrances with better visitor control.
- ✓ New HVAC systems.
- ✓ New gymnasium.

Estimated cost: \$55 million

Option 2: Build a 4-12 school and renovate Jefferson Elementary

This option includes all the projects from option 1 and add:

- ✓ Three-court competition gym with bleachers (instead of a practice gym)
- ✓ Performing arts center (PAC) with expanded seating and performance technology.
- ✓ Space for District offices and Sheyenne Valley special education offices.
- ✓ Room for future expansions, if needed.

This option includes all the Jefferson Elementary renovations in option 1 and add:

- ✓ Room for future expansions, if needed.

Estimated cost: \$65 million

Both options would close Washington Elementary, Sheyenne Valley Area Career & Technology Center, and the Junior/Senior High School. The **Hi-Liner Activity Center** would continue to be used by the school district for athletics and activities.

Please note that if the community does not support the right-sizing plan, the District would need to continue to spend up to \$25 million maintaining and updating the existing facilities.

Comments/questions/suggestions:

Funding Support

Valley City Public School District voters would need to approve a bond referendum to fund either facility option. As you can see below, bond referendum amounts would be reduced with grant money.

Referendum Estimated Tax Increase Per Year		
Option	1	2
Project Cost	\$55 million	\$65 million
District contribution (grant money)	\$25 million	\$25 million
Bond referendum amount	\$30 million	\$40 million
Annual tax increase per \$100,000 of full true of residential property value	\$212 (\$17.67 per month)	\$282 (\$23.50 per month)
Annual tax increase per \$100,000 of full true of commercial/agriculture property value	\$235 (\$19.58 per month)	\$313 (\$26.08 per month)
Which right-sizing option would you support? <i>(Mark all that apply.)</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> Option 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Option 2 <input type="checkbox"/> I would not support either option. <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not sure/need more information.

At this time, the Valley City Public School District has a debt limit of 5 percent on our assessed property valuation. This means we are allowed to raise up to \$20 million through a bond referendum. Because of project costs, North Dakota laws require voters to approve increasing our debt limit to 10 percent in a separate ballot question.

Would you support increasing the District's debt limit if either option is pursued?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/ need more information
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Comments/questions/suggestions:

Respondent Information *Please check your response to each of the following:*

- What is your age? 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-64 65 and older
- Do you live in the Valley City Public School District? Yes No Not sure
- Do you live within the city limits of Valley City? Yes No Not sure
- Are you an employee of Valley City Public Schools? Yes No
- Do you own property within the District that is taxed as agricultural land? Yes No
- Do you own property within the District that is taxed as commercial land? Yes No
- Do you have children attending our schools? Yes No

Thank you for your participation. We sincerely value your time and feedback!