

Consultants shared ideas tonight on how Bismarck Public Schools can manage expected growth of nearly 13-hundred more students in the next five years.

Combinations of these options were presented:

- build new elementary schools in north Bismarck and/or Lincoln,
- add on to some existing elementary schools,
- convert Simle Middle School to an elementary school,
- build a new middle school and/or high school,
- renovate the South Central High School/Hughes building on Washington Street into a small middle school or a small high school,
- convert Bismarck High into a middle school, build a new high school, and add on to Century High,
- or close some small elementary schools in favor of larger, more efficient schools.

The costs of the options presented this evening range from 63.5 to 85.8 million dollars. On a \$100,000 home, the cost of an \$80 million bond issue would cost \$90 per year or \$7.50 per month. The last time Bismarck Public Schools asked taxpayers to approve a bond issue was for Horizon Middle School in 1998.

Most people attending tonight's meetings favored moving 6th grade into the middle schools, 9th grade into the senior highs, building new schools, and adding on to schools instead of reusing Simle, Bismarck High or the Hughes building for other purposes.

Concerns were expressed regarding how long it will take to build new schools when most are crowded already. Some people commented that the school district should go for one bond issue now and "do it right the first time" instead of waiting, because of rising construction costs.

The next public meeting is tomorrow at 7 pm at Horizon. Consultants hope to present a recommendation to the School Board on February 13th.