

School Board hears final recommendations from facilities consultants

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After nearly a dozen public input sessions, the Bismarck School Board heard two final recommendations from facilities consultants hired to review the district's long term building needs.

Based on public and school employee input, both options include the following:

- Build 2 new elementary schools on land currently owned by the school system in northwest Bismarck and in Lincoln, which is part of the Bismarck School District.
- Build a new high school in north or northeast Bismarck.
- Then reconfigure the school district into kindergarten through 5th grade elementary schools, 6th through 8th grade middle schools, and 9th through 12th grade high schools.

The difference between the two final proposals is whether to build a new middle school for 800 students, or to add on to Horizon Middle School for 400 students. The difference in cost is about \$22 million. The larger package would cost \$92 a year for every \$100,000 of local property valuation. The smaller proposal would cost \$74 per year for every \$100,000 in property.

The Bismarck School Board wants parents, property tax payers, and others to give them input on these two plans and the costs associated with each at a public meeting Thursday, February 23, at 7 pm at Horizon Middle School.

The Board also directed school administration to develop short term plans to deal with the overcrowding expected in elementary schools in the fall. Kindergarten registration is already up 137 students over this same time last year. Bismarck School Superintendent Tamara Uselman says, "There aren't a lot of good short term options, but we need to be prepared to deal with the crowding, so we will have recommendations for the Board at its next meeting, February 27th."