



# PILLAGER SCHOOL PILLAGER COMMUNITY PAW PRESS

This publication is produced at the Pillager School for the whole Pillager community.  
If you have local news, please contact Sue Van Hal at (218) 746-2105 for submission information.

February - April 2019

## School Board Presents Building Referendum to District Resident Task Force



The Pillager School Board, along with Superintendent Malmberg, presented the proposed revised building referendum on January 9, 2019. The board invited nearly 30 district residents that consisted of city and county officials, business owners, parents, senior adults, land owners, former board members, and employees to listen to a presentation regarding the proposed referendum and sought input from the group and answered questions that they had. The presentation covered the revisions and changes that have been made to the failed 2017 referendum, along with the tax and district levy impact, the new open enrollment policy that now closes at each grade level when the number of students reaches 105, past district maintenance, and more.



The members of the task force were then asked to complete a summary sheet to share with the board if the presentation was understood or not and what could be done differently. They were also asked if they would recommend bringing the referendum to the residents for a vote and with what recommendations. All of the summary statements from the members felt the presentation and questions were answered and understood while 21 out of 22 members felt the board should bring the revised proposal to the district residents for a vote.

The board will now make a decision after looking at the summary statements from the task force at the January regular board meeting on

**Look for an early edition of the May newsletter (delivered around April 15) with complete information about a planned May referendum vote.**

## School Board Receives Good News on Tax Impact to Residents on Referendum

At the January board meeting the school board gave the approval for Widseth, Smith, and Nolting to submit the review and comment plan to the Minnesota Department of Education for approval for a May referendum vote. Ehlers Public Financing Advisors, which serves the Pillager Public Schools, reviewed the proposed plan and recommended to the Board the plan for funding the project and also estimated the cost impact to the residents. Ehlers informed the Board this past week that the net tax capacity for the District grew by 11.4% since the failed vote in November of 2017. When the net tax capacity grows, the cost is shared by more people, which in turn will lower the amount that each individual or commercial property pays.

The total cost of the failed (one question) referendum in 2017 was \$13,200,000. The tax impact of a home valued at \$150,000 in 2017 was an estimated \$102.00 per year and on a home valued at \$300,000 was estimated at \$235.00 per year.

The revised plan will have two questions this May. The first question will seek vocational space upgrades, additional elementary classrooms, remodeling of needed spaces, and maintenance needs for \$8,490,000. The second question will ask for a 350-seat auditorium for \$5,900,000. The total cost of both questions will be \$14,390,000.

If both questions were to pass this May, the estimated tax impact of a home valued at \$150,000 will be an estimated \$72.00 per year, a decrease of \$30.00 from the 2017 referendum. A home with a value of \$300,000 will cost an estimated \$166.00 per year, a reduction of an estimated \$69.00 for the year. Commercial, agricultural and seasonal property will also see the same reduction of the impact. In summary, the residents would be actually passing a higher valued referendum in May costing them less dollars than the one that failed in November of 2017.



## *A message from Mr. Malmberg, Pillager School Superintendent*

### **District Resident Referendum Update**

On Wednesday, January 9, the school board and I met with twenty-eight district residents who agreed to serve on a district task force committee. The purpose was to share a presentation and information of the recent board work for consideration of a revised referendum plan.

The task force was made up of area business leaders, city and county representatives, former board members, parents and grandparents, staff members, and others who participated in this process in previous years. The members of the task force were given a chance to ask several questions on the proposed referendum and to also share any concerns with board members.

The board members shared the following information at this meeting.

- District strategic plan that was created in 2015
- Organizational and Facility Analysis completed by Worner and Associates in 2015
- Long Term Facility Analysis that was completed by Widseth Smith Nolting in 2016
- The open enrollment policy that caps the number at 105 students per grade.
- Results from the School Perception survey done this fall of 2018
- Revised proposal for referendum
- Current and past levy information and the tax impact of referendum
- Effect of increasing the Long Term Facility Maintenance Levy versus referendum
- District plan moving forward and possible date for the referendum
- Question #1 – will seek for approval for \$8,490,000 for maintenance and classrooms:
  - Five additional elementary classrooms and elementary music room
  - Additional special education area
  - Remodel and widen hallway entrance and create additional school nurse space
  - Exterior maintenance including roof repair of 1999 and 1992 additions, some door and window replacement, and brick and mortar work and repair
  - Updating vocational spaces (metals, woods, pro-start culinary kitchen, CTE areas, etc.)
- Question #2 – will seek approval for \$5,900,000 for a 350 seat auditorium , costume/prop storage, dressing rooms, and off-stage support spaces.

After hearing the presentation, the committee stated that they understood the presentation and recommended to the board that the plan should be sent to the residents for a vote. Watch for more detailed information coming out on the referendum in the near future as well as future community meetings where the revised plan will be shared.

We have a great school here with a great reputation, one that we are all very proud of and one that we look to continue to improve on.

“Go Huskies”