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Cedarburg Board of Education Approves November Referendum
\$59.8M District-Wide Facility Improvements Referendum Would Address Immediate Needs

July 19, 2018 -- Cedarburg, WI -- On July 18, 2018, the Cedarburg Board of Education's unanimously approved a resolution to move forward with a November referendum for \$59.8 million for facility improvements.

This decision comes after a community survey of area residents in May showed 60 percent of the respondents would advise the board to pursue a referendum, in part, because 80 percent of those surveyed believe the Cedarburg School District has a positive impact on their home values.

In June, the Board asked the Long Range Master Plan Team to prioritize the District's facility needs so that it could present the community with a reduced-cost plan that decreased the property tax impact to residents from the original plan, and still addressed the District's most immediate needs. Under the revised plan, the tax impact for a \$59.8 million referendum would be \$58.00 per \$100,000.00 of a home's value compared to the original plan at \$98.00 per \$100,000.00, or close to a 40 percent reduction.

"Now that we've refined the plan to a lower total cost that represents a smaller tax impact, and still addresses the District's key priorities, the Board felt it was a more prudent time to move forward with a referendum," said board member Kevin Kennedy. "Historically, Cedarburg has been a community that is supportive and even proud of its schools and the outstanding results they deliver to our community. We were able to conduct a transparent process, gather meaningful feedback, and through multiple iterations, present a plan we feel comfortable advancing to the community."

Throughout the process, the Board's goal was to develop a facilities improvement plan that focused on these key priorities:

- Capacity to handle increasing enrollments
- Teaching and learning environments
- Safety and security

"We are excited by the positive feedback we've received so far, and we are looking forward to the opportunity to address our most urgent needs. All but one of our schools are already at capacity and the projections of increased enrollment pose imminent space issues," added Superintendent Todd Bugnacki.

A referendum at \$59.8 million addresses growth from projected new enrollments and places emphasis on career-oriented education, especially in science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM), in addition to enhanced safety and security items. All five schools in the District would receive necessary updates.

"If voters decide to approve a \$59.8 million referendum the District's mill rate is projected to be \$9.68, which would allow Cedarburg School District to maintain its spot as the second lowest mill rate amongst districts in Ozaukee County," said District Business Manager Ben Irwin. "A referendum passing in November would coincide with the District paying off other debt obligations and helps keep the overall tax impact lower for residents and business owners. Even with the increase in mill rate, taxes would still be projected to be lower than they were in 2015."

Based on 2016-17 fiscal data, Cedarburg School District has the lowest cost per pupil in Ozaukee County, with a rate of \$11,860 per member. This rate is also well below the state average of \$13,182 per student.