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Cedarburg Board of Education Recommends Reduced-cost Plan for District Wide Facility Improvements Changes reduce tax impact by nearly 40 percent from initial plan

June 21, 2018 -- Cedarburg, WI -- The Cedarburg Board of Education was presented with a lower-cost plan for district wide facility improvements of \$59.8 million, down approximately \$12.5 million for the original Long Range Master Plan at Wednesday evening's Board meeting. The proposed reductions would result in approximately a 40 percent reduction in the tax impact compared to the original plan presented in the community survey.

A school district 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.

As part of the overall review process, the Board's Building and Grounds Committee asked the district leadership to explore ways to reduce the overall cost, but preserve the key priorities of:

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

"We are pleased that so many people in the community are supportive of the plan to address our key priorities. It is also our responsibility as school leaders to sharpen our thinking and prioritize our most significant needs. We believe these changes likely will result in continued community support for our schools, and that is one of our goals," said Superintendent Todd Bugnacki.

The Long Range Master Plan Team reviewed the initial plans and developed a list of priority strategies to reduce the plan's overall cost. Those strategies included deferring capital replacement projects to operational budgets over the next six to eight years and deferring or eliminating projects that do not compromise the District's overall goals. "By using these strategies, we reduced the estimated cost which decreases the property tax impact on district residents and businesses," said Bugnacki.

The new tax impact for the \$59.8 million plan is \$58 per \$100,000 of a home's value compared to the original plan at \$98 per \$100,000, or close to a 40 percent reduction. "The district will finish paying off significant debt obligations in the coming years which will help reduce the overall tax impact.," said District Business Manager Ben Irwin.

Bugnacki said the reduced-cost plan still addresses growth from projected new enrollments and places emphasis on career-oriented education, especially in science, technology, engineering, art and math, in addition to enhanced safety and security items. The revised plan does not include regular, on-going facility maintenance projects, he said, noting the district remains committed to living within its annual operating budget for those items.

Next steps in the process include finalizing any remaining items in the plan and consideration of potential resolutions at the coming board meetings.