



Union Community School District

200 Adams St.

La Porte City, IA 50651

Phone- 319-342-2674

Fax- 319-342-2393

www.union.k12.ia.us

#UKnighted

“Education to Meet Tomorrow’s Challenges”

July 17, 2024

Dear Families and Staff,

I hope you are having a wonderful summer break! I’m writing today to provide an update on the district’s ongoing facility planning process.

On Monday evening, the Board of Education formally selected a project proposal that includes improvements at all four of our campuses, contingent upon the outcome of a bond referendum that voters will consider on November 5.

The decision follows more than two years of facility planning by the board and administration. We partnered with Denovo Construction Solutions, KCL Engineering and Martin Gardner Architects for a building assessment and feasibility study, which resulted in multiple project options that were considered. A task force was also created to gather feedback from our teachers and staff, and meetings were held with some staff and community members in recent months.

I want to thank everyone who played a role in getting us to this point and for your valuable input. It’s important that we have a shared vision when it comes to improving our schools.

The total estimated cost of this project is \$27.45 million. The district plans to use \$20.5 million worth of general obligation bonds that voters will consider approving in November, in addition to funds Union CSD receives from its Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL) and the statewide one-cent sales tax fund (known as [SAVE](#)).

The most extensive work would be realized at the high school, which last saw significant improvements 13 years ago, focused on areas largely original to the building. A major upgrade to the high school’s HVAC systems are needed, as portions of that system date back to 1953. Additionally, the steam boilers are approximately 20-40 years old and well beyond their life expectancy.

The existing kitchen and cafeteria spaces present operational challenges that should be resolved. The proposed solution calls for relocating these spaces, transforming the existing cafeteria and kitchen into a new library and student center, and remodeling the existing library into a new commons area with a kitchen, public restrooms, and concessions. The new commons area would serve as a central hub for performing arts and athletic events commonly held at the high school.

Renovations would be made to the high school’s science rooms, family and consumer science room, public restrooms, and locker rooms. Plans also include the construction of a much-needed practice gymnasium and secondary locker rooms.

It's important that investments continue to be made in all our district's communities, especially when it comes to student safety and security. That's why the plan calls for improvements to the fire alarm and mechanical systems at both DG Elementary and LPC Elementary School. The current fire alarms, though reliant and safe, do not meet current building codes. The mechanical systems at the elementary schools, which were last upgraded in 2010, will receive preventative maintenance and equipment replacement as needed.

At Union Middle School, the list of projects include roofing repairs and replacements, public restroom renovations, and installing air conditioning in the gymnasium. These improvements were excluded from the major upgrades in 2019.

I want to thank all of you for your continued support of our schools and for your engagement on these important projects. We will continue to provide more information about the district's needs and these projects in the weeks and months ahead, including the creation of a new website that will include answers to frequently asked questions and allow our residents to provide feedback. Go Knights!

Sincerely,

John Howard, Superintendent

