

Hinsdale County School District  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Lake City School Board Hosts Facilities Planning Workshop**

The Hinsdale County School Board continued work on a District 10 Year Facilities Plan Wednesday, November 16, at the Lake City Community School. Ten community members joined Board members Tara Hardy, Rob Hudgeons, and Phillip Virden along with Superintendent Leslie Nichols in a facilitated workshop designed to generate ideas for the production of the Facilities Plan.

Community members represented a broad range of stakeholders including parents, teachers, neighbors, property owners, and local businesses. They included John and Kerry Coy, Patricia Crotwell, Gary Gibson, Grant Houston, Carolyn Hull, Linny Ramundo, Camille Richard, Carolyn Virden, and Nancy Zeller.

Board President Phillip Virden said, “Our Hinsdale County School District team has begun an important process for a ten year facilities plan which involves many components. One of these components was this workshop where data was reviewed and ideas explored. This workshop was extremely positive in providing important initial input.”

Nichols provided a short school history and a summary of curriculum and programs vision. This gave the group a view of possibilities for the idea generation section of the workshop. Nichols noted that the District has earned widespread recognition for excellence in recent years in a building that many recognize as in need of update and expansion.

Examples of learning possibilities that are not currently supported by facilities spaces in the Hinsdale program are music, theatre, outdoor education, online courses, vocational training, and adequate laboratory support. Adequate support for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programs should be considered. Support space improvement possibilities include lunch room, small group instructional spaces, conference spaces, and physical education facilities. Technology support improvements would include increased internet access bandwidth via fiber optics.

David Primus presented a review of data research gathered and developed by the Welborn & Associates team. The information included data from a peer survey of other school districts, the Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), the Hinsdale County Tax Assessor, and the Hinsdale County School District.

The peer survey included responses from 23 school districts and focused on facilities configuration, projects, size, and use. Survey requests were sent to 41 districts, most with less than 200 students, to gather comparative information from other small enrollment districts.

The data was normalized for comparison and presented on a square foot per student basis. It was noted that the Hinsdale District ranked last in comparison to responding peers in absolute facility size and in

size per student for total size, core classrooms, assembly spaces, and gymnasium. Hinsdale was next to last in exploratory classroom spaces and near the bottom in support and library space.

Over half of the responding districts, 14 of 21, reported large facility projects of \$50,000 or more within the last 3 years. Of those projects, ten utilized BEST grants in some combination with taxpayer funding. The BEST program was established in 2008 by the State of Colorado to provide competitive grants to school districts and other educational institutions for new and existing facilities projects.

The survey results also highlighted that Hinsdale had a notable lack of facility space for music, technology, health education, conference, auditorium, and gymnasium. Eleven of 17 respondents noted using their gymnasium for other things in addition to sports, including auditorium, community use, large group instruction, stage, and theatre.

The student enrollment growth projection for Hinsdale District was based on historical growth from 1990 to the present. It showed a modest, but steady, growth over the next 10 years to approximately 121 students in 2026. A variety of other historical and forecast data from the sources mentioned earlier was also provided to the participants.

With the vision and data as the backdrop, the participants broke into three small groups to generate discussion and ideas on exploratory programs and classrooms, large activity spaces (assembly, physical education, sports, and other), and the basis for facility definition and comparison.

Groups reported back for discussion and all participants prioritized the results. These results will be used in the development of the facilities plan, which will be presented in the first quarter of 2017.

The ranking indicated the highest priority from the exploratory spaces discussion to be in technology and STEM space development, along with the need for dedicated nurse space.

The participants indicated priorities for large activity spaces should include multiple-use, avoid duplication of existing resources, provide adequate parking, consider "green" building techniques, and be made available for community use.

Janice Welborn, overall facilitator for the workshop, added, "It was a great work session. The community and Board came to the table focused on the task and were thoughtful in asking good questions and contributing very useful information to the process."

The planning process and workshop was facilitated by a team from Welborn & Associates including Janice Welborn, David Primus, Bernie Krystyniak, and Robin Weidenmueller.

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