



Carlton Public Schools Community Update
Working together to make our schools better!
February 1, 2017

Continuing to follow our 2014 Strategic Plan and Priorities, the Carlton School District is moving forward - focused on our vision and commitment to educate, empower and inspire all learners.

Our GOAL:

- To move the Carlton School District forward by ensuring our school district provides the best possible learning environments and opportunities for our students.

Our NEW CHALLENGE - Update our high school and reduce building maintenance costs

- The Carlton high school needs to be updated to create better learning spaces and decrease maintenance costs
- A growing number of families continue to leave the Carlton district and choose schools elsewhere because of outdated facilities and concern about the stability and future of our district.

As our school district leadership looks at ways to deal with these challenges, our focus is to make sure any decisions we make will do the most to benefit Carlton students, families, our district, and our community.

Current OPTIONS the Board is considering to address our facilities challenges:

Option 1: Do Nothing

The option to do nothing would mean to continue to operate as is.

- Maintenance costs will continue to increase unless significant work can be done to update the buildings.
- The district will continue to use dollars from the general fund to pay for building maintenance that limits what we can spend on classroom learning tools such as books, computers, or other school supplies.
- District will experience continued inefficiencies with two sites
- The district will likely see continued declines in enrollment due to uncertainty about our future and the age of our facilities contributing to a perception by some that 21st Century Education is happening here.

Option 2: Repair and Fix our Buildings

This option includes addressing facilities deficiencies and equipment that does not meet current code at both Carlton High School and South Terrace. The high school currently has inadequate ventilation, and both buildings lack fire sprinkling among the many challenges.

- Just repairing and fixing the buildings will allow us to address those needs as well as doing minimal upgrades to our athletic fields for safety and security and would require a levy of \$20,647,438.
- The Minnesota Department of Education advises against renovating facilities if the costs for repairs exceed 60% of the cost of replacement.

Option 3: High School Addition to South Terrace

Carlton is considering the replacement of its middle/high school with a High addition at South Terrace..

- Creating a 70,000 sq ft High School addition to South Terrace would improve space, furniture, address maintenance challenges and require a levy referendum for \$23,486,877.

Is consolidation with Wrenshall an Option?

While to some it may seem like consolidating the two districts could be a way to address Carlton's facility challenges, the complexity of a potential agreement makes it not workable. Leaders in both Carlton and Wrenshall have spent decades evaluating consolidation but have been unable to find consensus on a plan that works for both communities. The first consolidation study was in 1960 and again most recently in 2015 and 2016.



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The work has included community surveys, many hours of discussions and proposals of options, engineering and architectural studies, and preliminary cost estimates of construction for a PK-12 facility in Wrenshall or at South Terrace. Either option would require voter approval of both districts.

The most recent study process on consolidation ended in April 2016 because there continue to be several unresolved key issues between the two districts:

The location of a school:

Both Boards agree that a PK-12 single site school is more cost effective and practical for students and staff. This saves money each year to put into classrooms and other expenses. Consolidation with Wrenshall and having one school (elementary or high school) in each community has also been discussed in depth but the Boards have not been able to find an agreement that works for both districts.

- There are concerns about losing a school in a town and continued inefficiencies in operating a small district with buildings three miles apart.

The configuration of a consolidated districts school board:

The Wrenshall School Board has consistently said they will not support consolidation if all the new district's School Board members are elected 'at large' or based on population districts.

- Carlton School District has a significantly higher population than the Wrenshall School District and this change would reduce our community's voice within a consolidated district.

Similarly, the Wrenshall Board does not support a public vote on consolidation options because of the disproportionate amount of voters in the Carlton district vs the Wrenshall district.

Other key factors that must be agreed upon for the districts to consolidate:

There are other key issues between the two districts that are important but are also unresolved. These include deciding how the consolidated district would pay off existing voter approved debt, the name of the school, how to manage extracurricular activities, staff contracts and seniority lists, etc.

What happens now: Moving forward in 2017 – 2018

The Carlton School District has spent the last few months working with a 16-member Advisory Committee and hearing community input to evaluate a variety of facilities options to create recommendations for our School Board.

In the next few weeks, the School Board will be discussing the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the input from community members and the data our consultants have gathered. The Board would need to make a decision in early May on whether to put a bond referendum on a ballot for our community to vote on August 8, 2017. Early voting would begin June 23.

What's next for Carlton?

The Carlton School District is moving forward with a strong and active vision for the future.

We are enthusiastically focused on continuing to provide high quality educational opportunities for our students, families, district and our community.