



Brainerd Public Schools

Opportunity. Innovation. Success.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Blueprint 181

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Brainerd School Board Approves Ballot Questions and Finalizes Cost of Facilities Plan

Cost to owner of median valued home is \$7 per month if entire plan is approved by voters

Brainerd, MN (January 8, 2018) The Brainerd Public Schools Board of Education has finalized the bond referendum language that voters will see on ballots this spring and the cost to taxpayers if voters approve each of those questions. After three years of research, public input gathering, review and analysis, the Board of Education approved final ballot question language as part of the official document it must submit to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) before it can put the school facilities plan to local voters. This document, called the Review and Comment, is a highly-detailed 55-page document outlining the needs in Brainerd Public Schools, how the Board of Education plan addresses those needs and the cost to local taxpayers if approved. The District will submit the Review and Comment document to MDE this week. You can see this document at www.blueprint181.org.

“All of our school buildings need health, safety and educational adequacy improvements, and we need more space to accommodate continued enrollment growth,” said newly-elected School Board Chair Ruth Nelson. “Student enrollment is expected to grow 7 percent over the coming decade. Growth is a good thing for our entire community and we need to make sure we continue the Brainerd Public Schools tradition of strong schools to meet the needs of our growing community. The Blueprint 181 plan does this.”

The Blueprint 181 plan will be presented to voters as three ballot questions on April 10, 2018, with early voting beginning on February 23. Questions One and Two address necessary health, safety, and educational adequacy improvements at the Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary School buildings. Question Two must be passed in order for ballot Question Three regarding a new performing arts center to pass. The tax impact for the owner of



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a district home valued at \$156,200 (the median value in the district) would be \$7 per month if all three ballot questions pass.

Among the highlights of the Board of Education's Blueprint 181 plan:

- Construction of a new elementary school to replace the current Baxter Elementary
- Repurposing of the current Baxter Elementary building to meet growing demand for Early Childhood programs
- Renovation and expansion at Garfield, Harrison, Lowell, Nisswa and Riverside to address growing enrollment, educational adequacy needs, and safety and security concerns
- Renovation of Washington Educational Services Building (WESB) for Early Childhood, Fun 'N' Friends, and administrative offices
- Renovation and expansion of the current Brainerd High School North Campus to house grades 9-12, with updated pool and activities space
- Repurposing the current Brainerd High School South Campus for current Lincoln Education Center (LEC) and Transitions programs and deconstruction of LEC building
- Renovation of Brainerd Learning Center to house expanded alternative programs for middle and high school students
- Improving parent and bus drop-off/pick-up areas and safety and security at Forestview Middle School
- Construction of a new performing arts center

"We are committed to providing opportunity and innovation in all of our schools – and helping all local students find a path to success in school and in life," said School District Superintendent Laine Larson. "This commitment comes out of the trust placed in us by local community members and what we hear from residents about their expectations for our schools."

Community input was gathered through eight community listening sessions, more than 25 school district staff listening sessions, more than 100 presentations to local community groups, and through nearly 1,800 responses to phone and online surveys this fall.

Community members can continue to offer comments, ask questions, and find information about Blueprint 181 by visiting www.blueprint181.org, emailing blueprint181@isd181.org, or by calling 218-454-6900. A schedule of informational presentations about the Blueprint 181 plan and the bond referendum is being developed and will be released soon.

The mission of the Brainerd Public Schools, in partnership with the community, is to ensure all students achieve their individual potential by providing the highest-quality programs and resources to prepare learners for an ever-changing global society.

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