

Dear Parents and Community Members:

Like many other districts in our state, the School District of La Crosse has been dealing with declining student enrollment and budget challenges. State funding is tied to enrollment. Thus, the fewer students we have, the less money we receive. In 2002, over 7,700 students attended our schools. Next year, we anticipate serving 6,003 students, a drop of more than 20 percent. This situation has created a budget deficit and threatens our ability to maintain programs and services for students.

At the same time, five of our buildings are more than 80 years old, and significant investments are needed across the District. **Faced with this challenge, the District is developing a strategic facilities plan that details how best to configure our school district for the future.** This plan must reflect the priorities of our taxpayers. Please take 5 to 10 minutes to complete this survey.

To collect your feedback, we are working with School Perceptions, an independent, Wisconsin-based, education research firm with expertise in conducting community surveys. All survey data is returned to School Perceptions. **Your feedback will be confidential.**

PLEASE TAKE THE SURVEY IN ONE OF THE TWO FOLLOWING WAYS

Option 1: To reduce mailing expenses, please go online:

Go to the survey website:

www.Feedback2000.com

Enter your survey code:

Option 2: By Paper: If you do not have internet access, please return the survey to any school office, or mail to School Perceptions, PO Box 607, Slinger, WI 53086.

Additional Surveys: The survey code can be used only once. To obtain additional surveys for other adults in your household, please call the District Office at 608.789.7628.

Please complete the survey before November 8, 2021.

Final survey results will be reported at a Board of Education meeting later this fall and will also be available on the District's website at www.lacrosseschools.org.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely,

Aaron J. J. Engel, Ph.D.

Superintendent

If you would like the survey in a different language or have a disability that makes it difficult to read and/or take the survey, please contact the District Office at 608.789.7628.

- *Para pedir una copia traducida de esta encuesta en español, favor de llamar 608.789.4169.*
- *Yog xav tau daim ntawv ntsuam xyuas no txhais ua lus hmoob, ces thov 608.789.6441.*

Respondent Information

What is your age? 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-64 65+

In which municipality do you reside?

- City of La Crosse Town of Campbell Town of Medary
 Town of Shelby Town of Greenfield Town of Bergen
 Town of Hamburg Town of Washington Other/Do not live in the District

Is your primary residence in the School District of La Crosse? Yes No Not sure

Are you an employee of the School District of La Crosse? Yes No

Do you have children attending school in the District? Yes No

If you do have school-aged children, what grade level are they? (Mark all that apply.)

- Elementary (Grades PK-5) Middle (Grades 6-8) High (Grades 9-12)

Overall Satisfaction How well are we doing in each of the following areas?

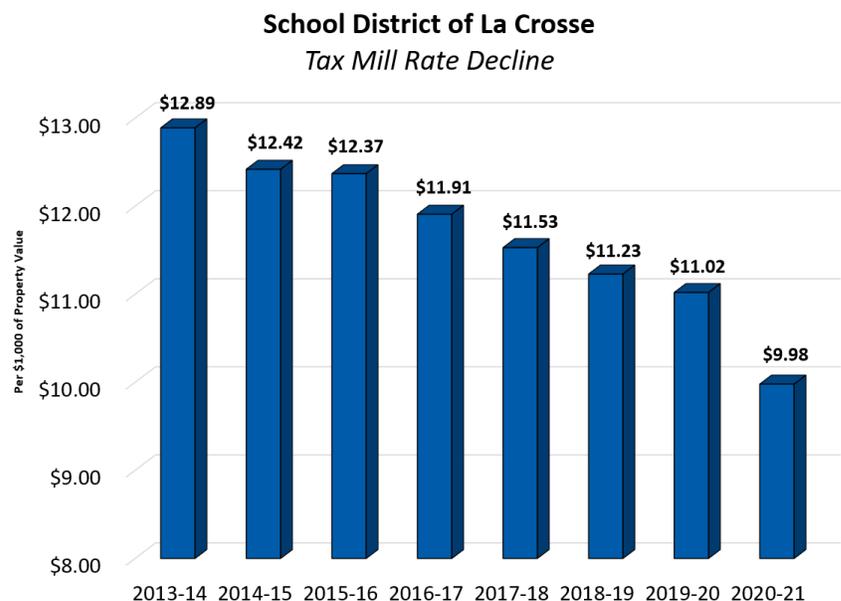
Delivering a high-quality education	<input type="checkbox"/> Great	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/ no opinion
Keeping the public informed	<input type="checkbox"/> Great	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/ no opinion
Managing funds appropriately	<input type="checkbox"/> Great	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/ no opinion
Building pride in the community	<input type="checkbox"/> Great	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/ no opinion

On a scale of 0–10, how likely would you be to recommend the District to a friend or family member?

- 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 Extremely unlikely Neutral Extremely likely

Financial Background

The District works very hard to control expenses and make decisions to improve our finances. In fact, our mill rate (which is used to calculate the school district's share of local property taxes) has **dropped by more than 20 percent over the past eight years, saving taxpayers \$291 for each \$100,000 of assessed property value.**



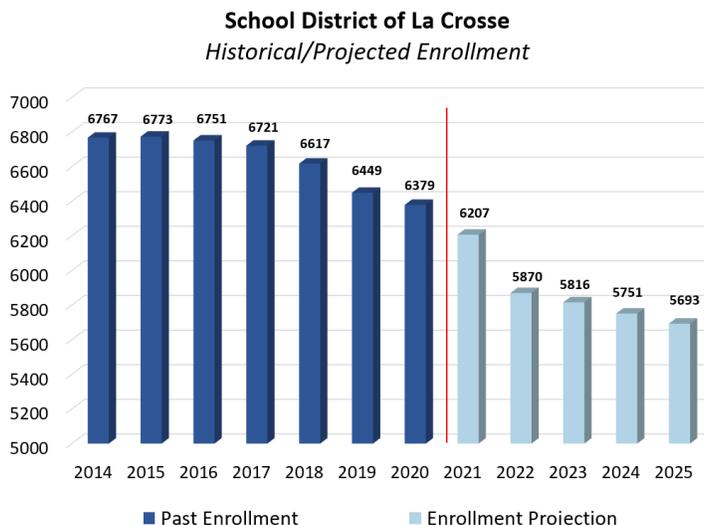
Facility Planning Background

The following sections help explain some of the challenges facing the District.

We have excess capacity.

We currently serve just over 6,000 students in 15 buildings. During the past 20 years, student enrollment has dropped by more than 1,400 students. Based on a recent study, **enrollment will likely continue to decline** for the next ten years.

Additionally, it is not possible to selectively heat and maintain classrooms. **Thus, money is spent on areas that are either not being used or are underutilized.**



Our classrooms and support spaces are outdated.

Teaching and learning have changed significantly since some of our schools were built 80 years ago. These older buildings are difficult to renovate/update. Some issues include:

- Classrooms and labs are too small for both large-group instruction and small-group student collaboration/group work.
- Some schools lack a dedicated cafeteria. In these cases, the gym is used, which requires the daily set-up/take-down of tables and creates scheduling challenges for physical education.
- Dedicated space is needed to better serve students with disabilities.
- Classroom technology does not meet the needs of today's learning standards.

We have difficulty meeting the needs of our high school students.

Having two high schools makes it challenging to provide students equitable access to courses in technical education ("shop") and athletics (because of site limitations). In addition, Advanced Placement/college prep classes and other electives are sometimes not scheduled when they do not meet minimum class size requirements.

Our buildings are aging.

Regular maintenance helps us extend and sometimes exceed the expected lifespan of our schools. Five of our schools were built before 1940. These older schools are more expensive to maintain, heat, and clean. Many building systems throughout the District (such as heating, electrical, plumbing, roofs, windows, etc.) are inefficient and have reached or exceeded their service life.

In addition, because of the age of many of our buildings, we need updates to address Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations, which would improve access to classrooms, support areas, and restrooms.

Facility Planning Background (continued)

We have too many schools.

As seen in the chart below, we are already **the smallest district in Wisconsin with two high schools**. Similar-sized districts typically have two middle schools. We operate three. Similar districts have seven or fewer elementary schools. We have nine.

Comparisons with Similar Districts in 2019 (before COVID)													
	Elmbrook	Wauwatosa	Stevens Point	Fond du Lac	Neenah	Oak Creek-Franklin	La Crosse	Beloit	West Bend*	Howard-Suamico	DC Everest	Verona	Hudson
Enrollment	7401	7231	7159	7050	6702	6472	6449	6347	6309	6101	6017	5741	5609
High Schools	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Middle Schools	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	4	2	2	2	2	1
Elementary Schools	5	9	9	9	9	7	9	6	5	5	7	4	6
Total	9	13	13	13	12	10	14	11	8	8	10	7	8

*West Bend operates two high schools in one building.

Right-sizing

The District believes maintaining all our schools is not a smart use of taxpayers' dollars. To help save money, the District is planning to close the Hogan Administrative Center in the next two years. Longer-term, we would like to develop a facility plan to right-size our District by:

- 1) **Closing buildings:** To reduce operating costs and eliminate future maintenance expenses.
- 2) **Consolidating operations:** To improve efficiencies and provide more opportunities for students.
- 3) **Renovating/building schools:** To create more modern and supportive learning environments.

Please note, if the District pursues the plan as described above, we will maintain the same class size policy.

<p>Would you support a long-range plan to right-size our District based on the actions above?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/need more information
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Comments/suggestions/questions:

If the community supports pursuing a plan to right-size the District, we would like your feedback at each building level.

Middle School Level

School	Year Built Additions	2020-21 Enrollment	Capacity	Maintenance (\$ millions)
Lincoln	1924 1958, 1973, 1991, 1997	319	484	\$5.1 M
Logan	1939 1957, 1962, 1971, 1979, 1986, 1998	412	758	\$6 M
Longfellow	1939 1946, 1965, 1973, 1997, 2018	523	692	\$7.4 M

Summary: The middle school level is the most urgent need across the District. Some of these issues include the following:

- Remodeling options with these older buildings are very limited and costly.
- Each site is small, with limited parking and green space. The average site is 4.2 acres, and the recommended size for a middle school is 15 to 20 acres.
- It is more expensive to heat, clean, and maintain three schools, when only two are needed.

Closing one middle school would make it easier to share staff and provide students with more consistent and expanded programming.

Would you support a plan to consolidate from three to two middle schools?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/need more information
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Comments/questions/suggestions:

High School Level

School	Year Built Additions	2020-21 Enrollment	Capacity	Maintenance (\$ millions)
Central	1967 1988, 1996	1020	1560	\$2.9 M
Logan	1979 1987, 1994, 1996, 1997	781	1072	\$3.0 M

Summary: If the community supports right-sizing the District, we will need to decide if we should continue to run two high schools or consolidate to one. If we move to one campus, we would:

- Need to find a centrally located large parcel of land.
- Save money annually, as a result of having one less building to heat, clean, and maintain.
- Be able to convert the Logan and Central buildings into middle schools. This would immediately upgrade the experience for our 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students, including better access to career and technical education spaces, music and performance areas, higher quality athletic facilities, and more modern classrooms.
- Be able to provide students expanded access to elective courses and technical education (shop) classes, such as automotive, culinary, agriculture, modern manufacturing, and robotics.
- Be able to provide more equitable access to performance spaces, aquatic centers, and collaborative learning spaces.

Would you support the District exploring consolidating to one high school campus?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/need more information
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Comments/suggestions/questions:

If a new high school was built, we could maintain our two high school programs with the same names, mascots, and unique identities in one building. This approach would be similar to how the West Bend School District is configured (East and West). These two high schools exist in the same building. Although this option brings its own unique set of challenges, we could maintain two separate athletic programs, while still making more classes available for students and better utilizing specialized areas such as a pool and auditorium.

If the District consolidated to one high school campus, what advice would you give?	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain two high schools (Logan and Central) in one building <input type="checkbox"/> Create one consolidated high school <input type="checkbox"/> I would support either configuration <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/need more information
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Comments/suggestions/questions:

Elementary School Level

Buildings	Year Built Additions	2020-21 Enrollment	Capacity	Maintenance
Emerson	1939 1956, 1972, 1992, 1993	299	346	\$3.6 M
Hamilton/SOTA I	1961 1984, 2021	290	315	\$1.3 M
Hintgen	1968 1971	285	388	\$2.0 M
North Woods International	1992	320	345	\$1.0 M
Northside/Coulee Montessori	2014	428	525	\$300,000
Southern Bluffs	1992	313	362	\$1.3 M
Spence	1953 1955, 1962, 1973, 1992, 1994	359	385	\$3.4 M
State Road	1957 1959, 1969, 1989	300	293	\$4.0 M
Summit Environmental	1954 1972	289	360	\$1.7 M

Summary: The elementary school level has the following issues:

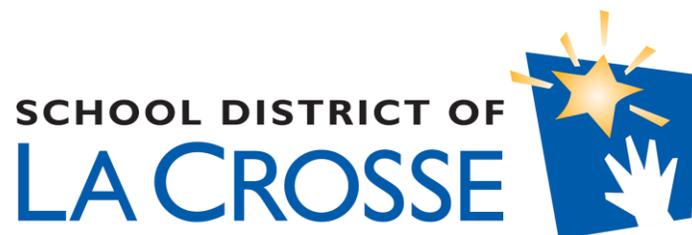
- Several elementary buildings have very small sites, which limits the ability to separate parent/bus traffic and provide adequate parking and playgrounds.
- These older buildings lack flexible learning environments and specialized areas to serve students with disabilities.
- Because of their age, remodeling options are very limited and costly.
- Gyms and cafeterias are outdated and small and do not support the needs of the schools or community.

<p>Would you support a plan to reduce the number of elementary schools?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/need more information
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Comments/suggestions/questions:

Thank you for your participation. We sincerely value your time and input!

School District of La Crosse
807 East Avenue South
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601



Please complete the survey before November 8, 2021.

This publication was produced for the residents of the School District of La Crosse. Due to the overlap of postal routes, residents from neighboring school districts may receive this publication. Given the limitations of bulk mailing, this overlap was difficult to eliminate without significant cost. Thank you for your understanding.