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# COMMUNITY SURVEY REPORT

SIOUX FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## COMMUNITY SURVEY REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

The Sioux Falls School Board is committed to engaging the entire district community regarding growing enrollment in the district and the challenges of this growth. Following a process that included a series of public-engagement sessions and a 30-member facilities task force, the board conducted a survey, the results of which are detailed in this report.

A postcard survey invitation was mailed to all community members, encouraging them to participate in an online survey. In addition, parents were reminded of the survey via email. In all cases, participants were asked to take the survey online by following a custom survey website address. Paper copies of the survey also were available by request. The survey opened on June 11, 2018 and closed on June 24, 2018.

The survey was administered using the Donovan Group's survey engine. Efforts were made to ensure that all eligible respondents had the opportunity to take the survey, but that no respondents took it multiple times. In accordance with best practices in online research and to protect the survey's security, Internet protocol (IP) addresses were logged, and each survey was time-stamped. There is no reason to believe that anyone has taken the survey more than once.

Finally, it is worth noting that, by design, these data are not based on a scientific sample. As such, they should be treated as qualitative data that are similar to data from a large number of focus groups. Because we used a convenience sample, it would be methodologically inappropriate to carry out a regression analysis or attempt to calculate error. Our response pool is a solid one that provides sound data to the board.

### SURVEY RESULTS

A total of 3,686 community members completed the survey. To complete the survey, respondents must answer all required questions, then click "Submit" at the end of the survey. Most respondents, 58.7%, were parents of school-age children, and most of those parents have children who currently attend a Sioux Falls School District school.

We often find significant differences in opinion between the all-respondent group -- which, as noted, includes most parents of students in the district -- and the comparison group, comprising respondents who are not parents and not employees. In this report, those in the comparison group indicated that they: (1) do not currently have children attending Sioux Falls School District schools; (2) are residents of the district; (3) are not employees of the Sioux Falls School District; and (4) do not have children who are younger than school age. The total number of comparison-group respondents who completed the survey is 780.

It is worth noting that all of the reasonably sized subgroups were analyzed, and comparisons were made between subgroup responses and those from all respondents. If there were significant differences between group responses, and the group was of an adequate size, it was noted in this report.

Below are the questions and statements, and their corresponding responses. Instances in which the subgroup differs from the total group, or in which more analysis is warranted, are indicated in italics. Comparison-group data are in parentheses. Questions that include an asterisk (\*) must be answered for the respondent's survey to be accepted. The response data detailed below are from those who completed the survey, i.e., the respondent answered all required questions and pressed "Submit" to

complete the survey. In addition to the survey conducted online, community members also had the option of taking a paper survey.

Please note that, in some cases, rounding caused the totals for results to be slightly above or below 100 percent. In addition, for some questions in which respondents could choose multiple responses, the total percentage for the question will be above 100 percent.

**What is your age?\***

18 or under	0.5%	(1.3%)
19-25	1.9%	(2.4%)
26-34	15.4%	(10.8%)
35-44	38.0%	(5.9%)
45-54	23.0%	(13.5%)
55-64	11.1%	(26.9%)
Over 65	10.2%	(39.2%)

**Where do you reside?\***

I live in Sioux Falls, within the Sioux Falls School District boundaries	90.5%
I live in Sioux Falls, but am assigned to another school district	5.2%
I am not sure to which school district my address is assigned	0.3%
I do not live in Sioux Falls, but want to voice my opinion	2.1%
Other	1.8%

*Note that while the "Other" field included an open-response box for explanation, no responses were left for those who answered "Other."*

**How long have you lived in the school district?\***

Less than 2 years	3.6%	(4.0%)
Between 2 and 5 years	11.9%	(10.9%)
Between 6 and 10 years	14.4%	(7.9%)
Between 11 and 20 years	27.1%	(14.2%)
Between 21 and 30 years	16.1%	(19.5%)
More than 30 years	22.3%	(43.5%)
I do not live in the district	4.7%	(0.0%)

**Please check all the following that apply to you.\***

I have school-age children (as of the fall of 2018)	58.7%
I have preschool-age children (as of the fall of 2018)	12.6%
I have children who currently attend or have attended a Sioux Falls School District school.	60.6%
I have school-age children who are open-enrolled in the Sioux Falls School District (as of the fall of 2018)	12.0%
I have school-age children who are open-enrolled in another school district (as of the fall of 2018)	1.3%
I have grandchildren who currently attend or have attended a Sioux Falls School District school.	8.1%
I have attended a Sioux Falls School District school.	25.8%
I am a community member who has never had children attend a Sioux Falls School District School.	11.1%
I am an employee of the Sioux Falls School District.	20.2%
I am currently a student at a Sioux Falls School District school (as of the fall of 2018)	0.3%
Other	4.7%

*As respondents could choose more than one response, total percentages exceed 100 percent. Again, this question included an open-response field to correspond with the "Other" responses. Those who responded provided information such as the fact that their children attend an area private school or were related in another way to a current Sioux Falls student.*

**If you have school-age children as of the fall of 2018, which schools will your children attend next fall? (Select all that apply. If you do not have school-age children, you may skip this question.)**

All-City at Jane Addams	0.8%
Anne Sullivan	0.05%
Axtell Park Building	0.1%
Career & Technical Education Academy	0.7%
Challenge Center	1.3%
Cleveland	0.9%
Discovery	6.1%
Edison	5.2%
Elementary Immersion Center (EIC)	0.0%
Eugene Field A+	2.2%

Garfield	0.5%
George McGovern	1.2%
Harvey Dunn	2.8%
Hawthorne	0.4%
Hayward	0.4%
Horace Mann	0.2%
John F. Kennedy	2.1%
John Harris	3.9%
Laura B. Anderson	0.2%
Laura Wilder	1.1%
Lincoln	8.5%
Lowell	0.4%
Memorial	8.5%
Middle School Immersion Center	0.1%
New Technology	1.5%
Oscar Howe	2.9%
Patrick Henry	5.9%
R. F. Pettigrew	4.4%
Renberg	0.6%
Robert Frost	2.4%
Roosevelt	10.4%
Rosa Parks Global Studies/World Language	1.6%
Sonia Sotomayor Spanish Immersion	4.7%
Susan B. Anthony	1.5%
Terry Redlin	0.3%
Washington	5.2%
Whittier	1.8%
Public school outside the district	1.3%
Private school	2.4%
I do not have school-age children	11.0%
My children are homeschooled	0.3%
Other	1.4%

*This question included an open-response field to correspond with the “Other” responses. Those who responded provided corollary information, such as their children’s grade levels.*

**Where do you get information about the Sioux Falls School District? (Select all that apply.)**

Parent organizations	20.8%	(4.2%)
Friends or neighbors	33.3%	(34.9%)
My children and their friends	31.1%	(10.4%)
District mailings	48.5%	(32.8%)
District website	52.3%	(27.3%)
School newsletters (email or hard copy)	57.7%	(6.3%)
District newsletters (email or hard copy)	32.9%	(7.8%)
School-board meetings	10.7%	(12.8%)
Teachers and staff	46.1%	(24.9%)
<i>Argus Leader</i> (online or in-print newspaper)	40.5%	(67.1%)
Local blogs	3.4%	(6.4%)
Local radio	13.4%	(26.7%)
Local TV	40.4%	(69.5%)
KLRN-TV: School Cable Access Channel	4.5%	(5.9%)
Facebook	30.9%	(20.3%)
Twitter	6.9%	(5.1%)
Other	2.6%	(3.1%)

*This question included an open-response field to correspond with the “Other” responses. Those who responded provided corollary information, such as “grandchildren.”*

**I am satisfied with the Sioux Falls School District.**

Strongly agree	23.9%	(24.0%)
Agree	59.9%	(51.1%)
Disagree	7.9%	(9.9%)
Strongly disagree	2.4%	(4.0%)
No opinion	5.9%	(11.0%)

**How would you describe the Sioux Falls School District to someone who is not familiar with it?**

For this question, two themes seem to emerge from the data, as noted below.

### 1) The district is “large”

The words “large” and “big” came up again and again in the responses. The following are some unedited examples of such comments.

- “Large, strong, and dedicated school district that has a lot to offer the needs of all students.”
- “Although it is large, I have felt that the instructors were attentive and available any time I have needed to communicate with them. Being from a smaller town, I am pleased with how the schools help to create a community within the large city.”
- “Class sizes are too large for a community our size.”
- “Very large with opportunities for the needs of all students.”
- “That it is very big. I have generally heard good things about the school my daughter will go to, but am concerned with how large the class sizes are becoming.”

### 2) The district is “very good” or “excellent.”

Respondents used the words “good”, “very good,” and “excellent” to describe the district. The following are some unedited examples of such comments.

- “Very good school, yet most of the newer schools are full.”
- “There are numerous schools within the district that are all very good.”
- “Very good school, yet most of the newer schools are full.”
- “Good schools, clean, overcrowded, concerned about graduation rates.”
- “The Sioux Falls School District is a progressive district committed to excellent education for a diverse student population. Schools are well-maintained, curriculum is thoroughly planned, and supports are in place for struggling, average, and gifted students. Multiple pathways give kids options at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.”

### How familiar are you with the district's facility needs and the process the school board is using to find solutions?\*

I am very well-informed	27.2%	(25.3%)
I have some familiarity with the needs and process	57.6%	(62.8%)
I have no knowledge of the needs and process	15.2%	(11.9%)

### I believe the district's most urgent facility needs must be addressed now.\*

Strongly agree	70.4%	(54.1%)
Agree	24.6%	(32.7%)
Disagree	3.2%	(7.8%)
Strongly disagree	1.8%	(5.4%)

**I would vote “yes” on a referendum question if I felt it was the correct solution to address the district’s facility needs related to enrollment growth.\***

Strongly agree	62.3%	(50.9%)
Agree	32.0%	(34.5%)
Disagree	3.3%	(8.1%)
Strongly disagree	2.4%	(6.5%)

**I would vote "yes" on a referendum question if I felt it was the correct solution to address necessary maintenance and updates.\***

Strongly agree	58.0%	(48.7%)
Agree	35.9%	(38.2%)
Disagree	4.0%	(7.9%)
Strongly disagree	2.1%	(5.1%)

**I would vote "yes" on a referendum question if I felt it was the correct solution to ensure that schools have equitable, flexible learning spaces to meet instructional needs.\***

Strongly agree	58.6%	(49.2%)
Agree	33.7%	(34.7%)
Disagree	5.1%	(9.6%)
Strongly disagree	2.6%	(6.4%)

**I would support the recommendations as outlined by the task force, assuming a cost of \$2 per month or \$24 per year on the average home in Sioux Falls (\$185,000 taxable valuation).**

Strongly agree	58.2%	(47.3%)
Agree	30.6%	(28.2%)
Disagree	6.7%	(14.9%)
Strongly disagree	4.4%	(9.6%)

**I support the recommendations of the task force with the exception of (please explain below).**

There were many different responses for this item, but no specific themes stood out. Some respondents did make note of the financial impact of the solution. The following are some unedited comments left for this item:

- “Once again having to pay where do the poor family's fit into this?”
- “190 million sounds like an awful lot of money & wonder if some cuts could be made in these projects?? I suspect my taxes will go up more than outlined above.”



- “I am not aware of how the bond-issue amount was arrived at and what factors were considered in the economies of possible and alternative construction costs. I admit to being "out of touch" with the task force and studies.”
- “I think that \$24 a year is NOTHING and would like to see much more go to the schools. I would be in favor of more. However, I am aware that I live in one of the states that funds education at a very low rate historically. I would rather this go through than to jeopardize the whole thing. I just wish we could provide more for the schools and incorporate more recess and programs that have worked in other countries that have higher standards of education, like Finland.”
- “No increase in taxes!!!”
- “I am not one for being cheap. I think it's foolish and ill-advised. No one likes to pay more taxes, but it's socially irresponsible and frankly against our vested self-interest to neglect the needs of our child both present and future. Sioux Falls growth is not going to stop and we will need more educational facilities to meet that need.”

**Do you support building a high school on the land donated by Sanford Health, as described above?**

Yes, build on the land donated by Sanford Health	62.1%	(57.1%)
The Sanford Health land is not my first choice, but I support the overall facility solution, as proposed by the task force	28.4%	(27.9%)
No. Choose another location in the northwest quadrant	9.5%	(15.0%)

**Please use the space below to provide any additional information to the board as it considers solutions to address the district's facility needs.**

Again, no strong themes stood out on this item, but for those who left comments, a minor theme related to the land donation came up several times. The following are some unedited responses:

- “I say yes to building on the donated land because it's free but it is a weird location.”
- “If the Sanford donated land provides the land area and access needed for the new high school facility, then it may be the most cost-saving solution. Available land purchases that provide the amount of land needed, accessibility, and in the location needed may be limited.”
- “The district does not need to be indebted to Sanford. We do not need a Sanford High School. Choose a location because it's best for students, not because it's free.”
- “I would be in favor of accepting Sanford Health land as long as there are no strings attached such as demanding what the school board does with the land. If not they should politely refuse. A new school will increase land values of surrounding properties which might result in a conflict of interest concerns of school board members whose spouses own land in that area.”
- “Schools should be located in residential areas. Though that area may eventually have housing, it will remain highly commercial. The gift is a nice gesture, but moving the school west of I-29 would ensure younger students can walk there.”
- “I am not sure of any reason not to take up Sanford on this offer.”

- “The Sanford site is too centrally locates. In 20 years it will be at the very southeast corner of that quadrant. It should be sited roughly straight north of McGovern Middle School.”
- “Though I do agree it would be acceptable to build on the donated land I think it would also be fair to taxpayers to know what conditions come with this donation. I am not aware of the status of land around the STI School area or McGovern middle school but hopefully that has been well investigated too.”

## APPENDIX A

The complete survey as it appeared in paper form and online is below.

### **Sioux Falls School District Facilities Survey**

Dear Community Member,

The Sioux Falls School District values its ongoing partnership with community stakeholders as it seeks to meet its mission “to educate and prepare each student to succeed in a changing world.” As the city continues to flourish as a vibrant economic engine, those successes are resulting in increasing enrollment in the public schools.

As part of the Strategic Plan, the district is seeking feedback from all stakeholders regarding future facility needs.

In an effort to envision an even brighter future for the Sioux Falls School District, the district held three community listening sessions in March and April, and a 30-member, citizen-led Facilities Task Force met in April and May to develop recommendations to address needs.

#### **Now, we want your opinion.**

All residents in the district’s attendance area are invited to participate in the survey, which seeks input on short-term and long-term solutions to a variety of needs identified in the district. Please know that individual responses will remain confidential. The survey will close on June 24. The estimated time required to complete the survey is 15 minutes. We respect your time, and we want to emphasize the importance of your participation.

Information from community members will be used by the board and the Facilities Task Force to determine recommendations and to prioritize solutions. The board will consider bringing forward solutions to the most urgent concerns for voters to consider in a September 2018 referendum.

If you have comments or questions, please contact DeeAnn Konrad, Community Relations Supervisor, at [DeeAnn.Konrad@k12.sd.us](mailto:DeeAnn.Konrad@k12.sd.us) or 605-367-7951.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Sioux Falls School Board and the Facilities Task Force

### **Sioux Falls School District Facilities Survey--General Questions**

We will begin with some general questions. Those marked with an asterisk (\*) are required.

**1) What is your age?\***

- 18 or under
- 19–25
- 26–34
- 35–44
- 45–54
- 55–64
- 65 or over

**2) Where do you reside?\***

- I live in Sioux Falls, within the Sioux Falls School District boundaries
- I live in Sioux Falls but am assigned to another school district
- I am not sure to which school district my address is assigned
- I do not live in Sioux Falls but want to voice my opinion
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**3) How long have you lived in the school district?\***

- Less than 2 years
- Between 2 and 5 years
- Between 6 and 10 years
- Between 11 and 20 years
- Between 21 and 30 years
- More than 30 years
- I do not live in the district

**4) Please check all of the following that apply to you.\***

- I have school-aged children (as of the fall of 2018)
- I have preschool-aged children (as of the fall of 2018)
- I have children who currently attend or have attended a Sioux Falls School District school
- I have school-aged children who are open-enrolled in the Sioux Falls School District (as of the fall of 2018)

- I have school-aged children who are open-enrolled in another school district (as of the fall of 2018)
- I have grandchildren who currently attend or have attended a Sioux Falls School District school
- I have attended a Sioux Falls School District school
- I am a community member who has never had children attend a Sioux Falls School District school
- I am an employee of the Sioux Falls School District
- I am currently a student at a Sioux Falls School District school (as of the fall of 2018)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

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**5) If you have school-aged children as of the fall of 2018, which schools will your children attend next fall? (Select all that apply. If you do not have school-aged children, you may skip this question.)**

- All-City at Jane Addams
- Anne Sullivan
- Axtell Park Building
- Career & Technical Education Academy
- Challenge Center
- Cleveland
- Discovery
- Edison
- Elementary Immersion Center (EIC)
- Eugene Field A+
- Garfield
- George McGovern
- Harvey Dunn
- Hawthorne
- Hayward
- Horace Mann
- John F. Kennedy
- John Harris
- Laura B. Anderson
- Laura Wilder
- Lincoln

- Lowell
- Memorial
- Middle School Immersion Center
- New Technology
- Oscar Howe
- Patrick Henry
- R. F. Pettigrew
- Renberg
- Robert Frost
- Roosevelt
- Rosa Parks Global Studies/World Language
- Sonia Sotomayor Spanish Immersion
- Susan B. Anthony
- Terry Redlin
- Washington
- Whittier
- Public school outside of the district
- Private school
- I do not have school-aged children
- My children are homeschooled
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

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**6) Where do you get information about the Sioux Falls School District? (Select all that apply.)**

- Parent organizations
- Friends or neighbors
- My children and their friends
- District mailings
- District website
- School newsletters (email or hard copy)
- District newsletters (email or hard copy)
- School board meetings

- Teachers and staff
- Argus Leader* (online or in print)
- Local blogs
- Local radio
- Local television
- KLRN-TV: School Cable Access Channel
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement.

**7) I am satisfied with the Sioux Falls School District.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion

**8) How would you describe the Sioux Falls School District to someone who is not familiar with it?**

(open response)

**9) How familiar are you with the district's facility needs and the process the school board is using to find solutions?\***

- I am very well-informed
- I have some familiarity with the needs and process
- I have no knowledge of the needs and process

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**Sioux Falls School District Facilities Survey--District Needs**

The Sioux Falls School District has successfully met the needs of thousands of our community's graduates over the years and has been the educational home to generations of our graduates.

While all our facilities have been well maintained and look new, our newest high schools, built before significant increases in student enrollment, were constructed more than 25 years ago. Washington High School was built in 1992 and Roosevelt High School in 1991. Our other high school, Lincoln High School, was built in 1965. The district's oldest school, Whittier Middle School, is approaching its 100th birthday.

While the district has seen much success over the years, the Sioux Falls schools are challenged by increases in student enrollment.

- The district's enrollment is expected to continue to increase significantly in the foreseeable future.
- In fact, the district has seen an increase in enrollment of 20% in the last decade and expects an increase of 10% in the next 10 years.
- Currently, enrollment in Kindergarten through second grade is 478 students more than the capacity of the district's middle school buildings.
- In addition, enrollment in Kindergarten through third grade is 1,144 students more than the capacity of the current high school buildings.

The bottom line is that many Sioux Falls schools are either at—or over—recommended capacity. Feedback received at the Community Engagement meetings clearly indicates that stakeholders believe the district must act now. Furthermore, while the district's facilities are well maintained, several school buildings require upgrades to bring them within district standards.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement.

**10) I believe the district's most urgent facility needs must be addressed now.\***

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

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**Sioux Falls School District Facilities Survey--District Needs**

As noted, to address these facility challenges, the school board would need to ask voters through a referendum to borrow funds to undertake significant facility projects.

**11) I would vote "yes" on a referendum question if I felt it was the correct solution to address the district's facility needs related to enrollment growth.\***

- Strongly agree
- Agree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**12) I would vote “yes” on a referendum question if I felt it was the correct solution to address necessary maintenance and updates.\***

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**13) I would vote “yes” on a referendum question if I felt it was the correct solution to ensure that schools have equitable, flexible learning spaces to meet instructional needs.\***

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

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### **Sioux Falls School District Facilities Survey--Process and Proposed Solutions**

To address these issues, the Sioux Falls School Board sought to engage the entire school district community about the district's needs in an effort to receive the community’s feedback and to develop a solution.

The process began this winter with three Engagement Sessions throughout the district in which community members were encouraged to participate. Each session included a brief presentation by district staff and a facilitated conversation with community members. Similar sessions were held for the district’s staff.

Following the Engagement Sessions, the board invited community members from across the district to participate in a Facilities Task Force. The task force presented the board with these recommendations to be addressed through a referendum in September.

- A new middle school should be constructed on the school district’s southeast side. The school should be built as soon as possible and opened in 2021, if possible, or 2022.
- The school board should use a robust, transparent engagement effort, similar to the one the task force used, to establish new school boundaries within the district.
- A new high school should be constructed on the school district’s northwest side. The school should be built as soon as possible and opened in 2021, if possible, or 2022. However, the school



should maintain the district's north-to-south boundaries to provide balanced student populations.

- The school board should consider the land gift made by Sanford Health to determine whether its location is appropriate for a new high school.
- The total amount the board should spend on all the projects is \$190 million. The resulting bond levy should be partially offset with a reduction in the current Capital Outlay Fund levy. The combined bond and capital outlay levy should not exceed \$3.00. That will represent a net increase of \$.13 per \$1,000 of taxable value. The approximate annual tax increase on the average home (\$185,000 taxable valuation) in Sioux Falls would be \$24 per year or \$2 per month.
- In addition to constructing the new schools, the board should address necessary facility needs based on the list that was prioritized by the Facilities Task Force.
- A new elementary school should be built and opened by 2024.
- The board should begin to prepare for the eventual replacement of Whittier Middle School through the acquisition of land at its existing location.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

**14) I would support the recommendations as outlined by the task force, assuming a cost of \$2 per month or \$24 per year on the average home in Sioux Falls (\$185,000 taxable valuation).**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**15) I support the recommendations of the task force with the exception of (please explain below).**

(open response)

*(Page Break)*

### **Sioux Falls School District Facilities Survey--Process and Proposed Solutions**

Now, we would like to ask a question about the recently proposed land donation.

The task force has agreed that a new high school should be built in the northwest quadrant of the city. Sanford Health recently donated land in the northwest quadrant for use as a school site. The donated land is located on Westport Avenue between Russell Street and Benson Road. The land is valued at approximately \$3 million.

**16) Do you support building a high school on the land donated by Sanford Health, as described above?**

- Yes, build on the land donated by Sanford Health
- The Sanford Health land is not my first choice, but I support the overall facility solution, as proposed by the task force
- No. Choose another location in the northwest quadrant

**17) Please use the space below to provide any additional information to the board as it considers solutions to address the district's facility needs.**

(open response)

**Thank you for your participation!**