

## Facilities Task Force Update

For the past five plus months, I have been working with a community group of more than 30 people, a construction manager, and an architect to look at the future facility needs of the GFW School District. This committee was developed in response to the failed bond referendum in November of 2017, which asked district residents to support renovating or upgrading each of the current buildings in the district.

There have been occasional updates on the progress of the facilities task force committee over the past couple months. My goal is to continue to keep the communities of GFW informed of the process and the work the committee has been going through to reach a potential recommendation that will go to the school board.

One of the significant changes the committee has identified from the past referendum is having a criteria of moving the district from the three current sites down to either one or two sites. Some of the reasons for this include increased educational opportunities, ongoing facilities maintenance of three older buildings, operating costs for three sites, and efficient use of district staff. Though the committee acknowledged the importance of a school building in each community, they felt it was necessary to make changes in order to help GFW continue to exist and provide the best education possible to our students.

Once the committee identified its objectives/criteria in November, the construction manager, architect developed ten possible scenarios along with preliminary cost projections based on the group objectives. The options included one site new construction and the various combinations of two site programming that could be done within the three communities. The combinations included options of renovating current buildings and some new buildings.

After committee members had the opportunity to discuss and ask questions on those ten options and their preliminary costs, they reduced it to four options, which were: 1) a one site PreK-12 building likely in a central location, 2) Having a PreK-2 program at the current GFW Elementary School and a new 3-12 building on a new site in Gibbon, 3) Having a PreK-2 program at the current GFW Elementary School and converting the current GFW Middle School into a 3-12 building, 4) Converting the current GFW High School into a PreK-6 building and the current GFW Middle School into a 7-12 building.

At the most recent meeting on Wednesday, February 6th, the group worked in both small group and as a large group to identify the pros and cons of each of the remaining four options. They also were given projected tax impact information based on the preliminary costs of each of the options. Following these conversations, members voted the options down to two potential plans. They are a one site PreK-12 building likely in a central location and the plan to convert the current GFW High School into a PreK-6 building and the current GFW Middle School into a 7-12 building.

The next step will be for the group to look at the tax impact of each option in more depth along with additional conversations on the pros and cons of each one. The goal of the group was to bring a recommendation forward to the school board and the committee is nearing that end.

You can look for an article in two weeks that will address some of the common questions I have received regarding the current facilities, educational programming, and what are the facility needs of the district.