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INTRODUCTION
The study was authorized in the fall of 2019 by the Williams County Commission following an August meeting in Williams County among the six school districts, facilitated by Governor Burgum and Lt. Governor Sanford. Levi Bachmeier, serving in the Governor's office at the time, shared notes from this meeting with the authors of this study during an initial meeting to inform the authors' decision to conduct the research. The authors interpreted the notes and translated them into a proposal for the scope of the study. The overall "charge," as interpreted by the authors or principal contractors, is captured below.

1. Provide data, information, and analysis that informs and possibly compels a collaborative process which results in commitments to strategies to create PreK-12 educational solutions and conditions that support:
   - High quality of life for Williams County residents
   - Attraction, retention, and support of a quality workforce
   - Affordable and sustainable housing
   - Equitable access for all students to safe schools where students' social, emotional and physical health are supported
   - Equal access for all families to quality educational opportunities
   - Fair fiscal burden among districts
   - Educational facilities equipped to support 21st Century education
   - A shared vision that will be supported and sustained at the polls

The study included each of the districts with property in Williams County, except for the Divide County District that has a small footprint in Williams County. The following map depicts the districts included in the study.
SCHOOL DISTRICTS INCLUDED IN THE STUDY MAP

The study includes six of the seven school districts with a geographical footprint in Williams County. These districts are identified in the following map. A small portion of Divide County District 1 extends into Williams County, but contains no PreK-12 facilities. It was not included in the study.

CONTEXT

Many factors affect and have created the current realities in Williams County related to the quality of life. Several of these factors, particularly about the PreK-12 education system in the County, are the focus of this study. The emphasis on the education systems in the County is based on a premise, tested in a community perception survey, that quality of schools is highly valued as an essential quality of life issue in Williams County. The primary purpose of the study is to drill down in a number of these school-related areas of importance in the hope that a wealth of data, information, and analysis might illuminate potential pathways forward. In the collection and analysis of the data, the authors simplified the process by reducing it to three questions.

- **What?** – What are the facts? What information can we gather regarding each of the significant areas in the study?
• **So what?**—Upon more in-depth analysis, what do the information and data mean? What are the connections among the different portions of the study? What do patterns reveal?

• **Now what?** Given what the collection and analysis of the data seem to teach us, what does it all mean for the next steps forward? Does it illuminate any potential pathways ahead?

The following graphic outlines some of the inter-related factors that comprise the current context. The report drilled more deeply into each of the areas in underlined italics in the graphic. The other areas are cited, possibly explored on a smaller scale, or have connected resources included in the appendix. They are included as acknowledgement that they are a part of the County’s context, but they were not commissioned as major parts of the study’s scope.
Premise Supported by Community Engagement Survey

One question from the community engagement survey, the results of which are detailed in a later section of the report, bears inclusion here. The following graphic illustrates that the quality of education is the highest valued element from among a list of quality of life issues. This was true in the survey for every subgroup.

**Quality of Life**

The quality of K-12 schools and opportunities for students ranked highest among all three groups in quality of life factors.

![Quality of Life Chart](image)

1,392 total answers given

**WHO CONDUCTED THE STUDY**

Five subcontractors completed work to gather and help analyze data in their area of expertise. Each of their comprehensive reports is part of the overall report. Each of these reports is available for all stakeholders through the Williams County website.

Principal contractors/authors of the study were Dr. David Flowers and Dr. Jeffry Schatz.

Dr. David Flowers is the retired/former superintendent of both West Fargo (2010-2018) and Fargo (1999-2007). During his tenure in West Fargo, a district growing at up to 500 students per year, Dr. Flowers facilitated three long-range facility planning task forces that made recommendations to the school board and community. These resulted in the passage of a series of three bond referendums totaling over $290 million for new and renovated facilities in response to the growth. He was named the ND 2013 Superintendent of the Year. Since retirement in 2018, Dr. Flowers has helped promote innovative practices in North Dakota, including initiation of an Innovation Academy that is in its second year and has supported training teams from over 20 school districts across the state, including from Williston. He has also helped initiate the Teacher Leadership Academy through NDSU and is currently the university liaison/instructor for an academy being conducted in Jamestown/Edgeley.
Dr. Jeffry M. Schatz will assist Dr. David Flowers in the oversight of the project. He retired as a career North Dakota educator, serving 32 years in the K-12 system. For 21 years, he was a teacher, athletic director, and high school principal for the Grand Forks Public Schools. In 2009 he came to Fargo to oversee the construction and opening of Davies High School before being named superintendent in 2012. He has served as an adjunct professor and taught several graduate courses at NDSU and UND. During his tenure as superintendent, Dr. Schatz facilitated the revamping of the district's strategic plan and operational plans and, in 2017, engineered the successful passage of a critically important operation mill levy. Since his retirement in 2018, he has been in high demand as a consultant across the state, facilitating strategic planning efforts for non-profit organizations and school districts. He has and is currently working with over 22 school districts in North Dakota.

The following are the five major areas and the subcontractors selected to complete a study and report for their respective portions. Relevant information about each of the subcontractors is included in the separate sections of the report for which they were responsible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY STUDY AREAS ASSIGNED TO SUB-CONTRACTORS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Leader – Dr. David Flowers</td>
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<td>Project Assistant – Dr. Jeffry M. Schatz</td>
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<td>Curriculum &amp; Student Opportunities</td>
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<td>Dr. Jeff Lind</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Lemar – Brent Bogar AE2S</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kim Kemmer Prime 46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob Schwartz RSP &amp; Associates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Miller &amp; Katie Becker JLG Architects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
In addition to the contractors responsible for the significant subparts of the study, we acknowledge the following individuals and entities.

- **Williams County Commission**—The County had the vision and foresight to facilitate and financially support the completion of the study.
- **Helen Askim**—Ms. Askim was the “point person” for the County and provided outstanding guidance and support during all phases of the project.
- **The Governor’s Office**—Without Governor Bergum’s and Lt. Governor Sanford’s initial facilitation and urging, there would not have been the impetus and momentum for carrying out the study.
- **Levi Bachmeier**—Mr. Bachmeier served in the Governor’s Office as Policy Advisor to the Governor and did the initial outreach to solicit interest in conducting the study and provided support in the early stages of the process.
• **District Superintendents, Board Presidents, and Business Managers**—District leadership were receptive and collaborative when asked by those collecting data and information to assist.

• **Jodi Johnson**—Jodi Johnson serves as the County Superintendent for Williams County and was a valuable resource providing background information and specific information regarding the annexation, reorganization, and dissolution processes.

• **The Department of Public Instruction**—In addition to the voiced support for the project from State Superintendent Kirsten Baesler, specific acknowledgment is due to Adam Tescher, who provided extensive support for the financial area of the study. Finally, it is essential to note that the data infrastructure available through the DPI website assisted a collection of data in several of the significant subparts of the study.

**DELIMITATIONS**

Several subcontractors cited delimitations that should be noted for those consuming the report. Delimitations might include obstacles potentially affecting results, unforeseen changes in methodology, unforeseen challenges, or issues that may affect reliability, validity, or interpretation of the data. Some subcontractors identified no such delimitations. The few that were cited include:

**Demographic and Enrollment Study**

- The ability of each school district to provide for the last five years of student data by the address that matches 99% or greater the information submitted to the State created challenges.
- Varying grade configurations for the school districts made comparisons more difficult
- The unknown economic outlook can affect accuracy or projections.

**Community Engagement Survey**

- Availability of absolute accuracy of household parcels and claimed school district
- Changes in methodology.
- Updating margins of error to reflect the lower number of completed interviews.
- Interviewees’ unwillingness to complete the survey.
- Residents’ unwillingness to be interviewed.

**Financial Study**

- Historical data in the 15-year scope utilized the most recent data available at the time of the study’s commissioning, which was the 2018-19 school year. As the study results were being compiled and the report composed, the current year, 2019-20, became available through DPI, but there was no time to update the entire study. We are presuming for this study that the additional year would not significantly change the trends and observations in the study.
- The County provided raw data regarding the taxable valuation of properties in the County. Still, neither County personnel nor the contractors for the study had the time nor expertise to analyze the data. If done, such analysis would better inform the interpretation of the trajectory of taxable valuation increases in the County during the 15-year historical scope of the study.
RELEVANT INFORMATION, DATA, AND OBSERVATIONS
The following sections of the executive summary glean the most pertinent findings in response to these two organizing questions for each of the five major areas of the study.

- **What?** What are the facts? What information can we gather regarding each of the major areas in the study? This information may be presented in narrative form, in charts or graphs.
- **So what?**—Upon more in-depth analysis, what do the information and data mean? What do the charts, graphs, and data sets tell us? What are the connections between the different portions of the study? What does patterns does it reveal?

CURRICULUM AND STUDENT OPPORTUNITY STUDY
Dr. Jeffrey Lind, University of Mary Professor, gathered information and data regarding the County districts’ student opportunity strengths and areas of need. Dr. Lind retired as assistant superintendent from Mandan and served before that as superintendent in Rugby. Following retirement, he served as a professor at NDSU before the University of Mary. Jeff is a highly respected North Dakota educator and is knowledgeable regarding AdvancEd, the state’s adopted accreditation model, as well as about best practices based on evidence and research to support students’ access to a guaranteed, viable curriculum.

Dr. Jeff Lind’s 67-page report focused specifically on the educational opportunities afforded students through educational programming in each district in the County. The complete Curriculum and Student Opportunity Study is available on the Williams County website. In addition to the availability of core academic programming and curriculum, the report considers student access to career and technical education, fine arts education, extra/co-curricular activities, special education services, dual credit/advanced placement courses, intervention and enrichment programs, and innovative educational delivery models. The report also considers each district's utilization of collaborating partners to meet both core academic needs and curriculum enrichment. While student outcome data was reviewed and is included in the appendix section, this report does not attempt to assess or compare the quality of the districts’ programs. The report focuses on access to the curriculum and the opportunities being made available to students.

**Methodology**
The Williams County K-12 curriculum and student opportunity study have been conducted using a qualitative case study approach. Lead administrators from each district were identified, and they or their designee provided most information used to complete this report. Data was collected in the form of documentary evidence and through questionnaires and interviews with lead administrators. Data collected was continually verified for accuracy through follow up emails and interviews with the district’s lead administrator or their designee. A final member check interview with each district’s lead administrator was conducted to confirm the accuracy of the data collected.
Most data collected for this study was provided directly by the participating districts. Data was also provided by the directors of the Wilmac Special Education Unit, the Great Northwest Education Cooperative (GNWEC), and the Great Northwest Area Career and Technical Center Director (GNWACTC) and interviews were conducted with each. Other sources of data included the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education, and Cognia/AdvancED reports. Information reported is for the 2019-20 school year or most recently available. It must be recognized that language used to describe curriculum and programming, while similar, does vary between districts in many instances and thereby leads to the possibility of misinterpretation. An attempt has been made to interpret and present the data in a way that allows for a reasonable comparison of programming in and between districts.

Format and Content
The report contains a summary of data regarding each of the six school districts in the study, followed by detailed charts outlining curriculum opportunities for elementary, middle, and high school. This includes curricular offerings, remediation opportunities, as well as co-curricular opportunities. The respective sections for each district also describe each district’s engagement in collaborative or cooperative arrangements for the provision of programming and services for special education, career, and technical education opportunities.

Findings and Opportunities
Dr. Lind’s report offers the following findings and opportunities.

- All districts are state-approved and meet minimum expectations of educational opportunity for students and course offerings as required in state at the grade levels for which they are approved.
- Student performance data from currently utilized measures such as NDSA, ACT, or post-secondary attendance rates do not appear to directly correlate to school size or the diversity of the curriculum offered. (Source: ND insights).
- All districts are organized similarly, with elementary schools serving students in grades K-6, middle/junior high schools serving grades 7-8, and high schools serving grades 9-12. Elementary building level configurations in Williston #1 and Williams #8 vary, but their core organizational structures are built around a K-6 model.
- All districts provide access to personal digital technology in a 1:1 device to student ratio in all grades K-12. There is variability between districts in the kinds of devices utilized and the grade levels in which students have access to their device outside of the school setting.
- All districts indicated the desire to provide students a personalized learning experience for students and are making efforts to do so. There is variability in how the districts define personalized learning, and in the resources and mechanisms available to deliver it.
- At the elementary level, there is a high level of consistency between all schools, regardless of size, in the core and non-core curriculum offered to students. All districts provide courses in the required core, visual arts, and music. Because each of the schools operates under a traditional elementary school master schedule, there is substantial similarity in the curriculum provided to students in elementary schools throughout the
county. There is some variability in the delivery of remediation and access to evidence-based interventions due to differences in eligibility for federal Title I funding.

- At the middle/junior high level (7-8), all districts offer a similar curriculum in the required core, and most students experience similar options for elective offerings. However, it is at this level where school size begins to reveal advantages for student choice and more personalized experiences. All schools, regardless of size, do have some elective offerings at the middle level. Still, the size advantages in Williston #1 do provide a more diverse elective curriculum than can be provided in the smaller districts in the county. This is not a criticism of the smaller districts, only a recognition of the realities revealed when considering economies of scale and implications for available programming. It is observed in all districts that electives at the middle level are typically aligned with the fine arts, career, and technical education or other elective programs that are available at the high school level. As Williams #8 continues to grow, there may be increased electives available to its students. Still, without a comprehensive high school and alignment to diverse programming offered there, it may be challenging to grow middle-level elective programs comparable to those available in Williston #1. The establishment of or connection to a comprehensive high school will likely expand curricular and extra-curricular opportunities to middle school students.

- All high schools in the county provide courses in the required core, fine arts, and career and technical education, and all high schools meet state-required graduation standards and credit requirements. However, it is at the high school level where differences in diversity of curriculum and opportunities aligned to student interest and choice become evident. There is variability between high schools in electives offered on-site. Online and distance programming is equally accessible, though not equally accessed by all districts. Students in all schools also have some access to dual credit and advanced placement course work. However, the economies of scale again do become evident, with Williston #1 offering a much broader array of elective on-site course offerings in the areas of career and technical education and the fine arts, as well as a more significant number of courses offered for dual credit or AP. Williston #1 students also have greater access to Williston State College dual enrollment opportunities, though students from the schools do have equal access to online programs. As Williams #8 explores the option of establishing a high school, it is essential to recognize that based upon enrollment projections in the near term, it is likely that the curriculum and offerings it offers will more resemble that of smaller districts in the county as opposed to the more diverse course offerings in Williston #1. An expanded role for the Great Northwest Area Career and Technical Center may be an avenue to address potential inequities.

- Williams County school districts have access to and utilize educational collaboratives that enhance and equalize opportunities for students.
  - Access to special education services is made equitable between all districts in Williams County via the Wilmac multi-district special education unit. All districts are members of WilMac and are provided with the same or similar services for addressing the needs of students with disabilities. Wilmac is an example of highly effective collaboration and sharing of services between districts to serve a high need student population and could serve as a model for the development of other cooperative efforts.
All Williams County school districts are a member of the Great Northwest Education Cooperative and Area Career and Technical Center. While greater access to CTE programming is being made available via the GNWACTC, access may not accurately reflect opportunity. In Williston #1, 100% of CTE programs offered have WHS students enrolled while actual program enrollments are much less in the other county districts. Smaller districts do have a more significant percentage of students participating in CTE courses. Opportunities abound in the area of collaboration to expand access to virtual CTE programming and sharing of services. Still, it will take a coordinated effort among all districts for them to be fully realized. The GNWACTC has the potential to expand opportunities for students greatly, however, thus far, it appears to be a mostly undeveloped and underutilized resource.

Conclusions

- **Consider** reorganization or educational cooperatives as tools to equalize and expand student opportunities
  
  When feasible and geographically reasonable, consider collaboration options of reorganization and educational cooperative agreements to allow for greater curriculum options and personalized learning opportunities for all students, regardless of district of residence. Reorganization or cooperative agreements would seem to be a way to utilize available resources more efficiently and to equalize and increase educational opportunities for students.

- **Consider the creation of a multi-district Virtual Personalized Learning Academy**
  
  Though in different phases of development, all districts expressed a need to pursue a more personalized learning experience for students. This presents an opportunity for collaboration, considering that there currently is variability in how districts define personalized learning and in available resources to develop a strong program. Instead of each district trying to innovate and build their personalized learning systems, the Wilmac multi-district model of services delivery would seem to be a template that could be used to develop a multi-district virtual personalized learning academy. This may include hiring personalized learning specialists to develop personalized learning plans for students and leveraging the already-in-place virtual and on-site services across all districts to connect better students with a curriculum that better serves their individual needs and interests. This model might also be used to expand access to more comprehensive alternative high school options for students outside of Williston #1.

- **Consider an expanded role for the Great Northwest Area Career and Technical Center**
  
  Greater access to CTE options for students is desired. The Wilmac multi-district model of service delivery may also be a way to expand the role of the GNWACTC for the provision of CTE programming to member districts. This could include oversight and delivery of all CTE programs to sites based upon a student's personalized learning plan. The area center would identify core CTE programming provided on-site to all schools and manage magnet programs that could be delivered face-to-face or virtually depending upon identified student’s needs and interests. This would require local districts to be willing to turn over control of their own CTE programs and allow them to come under the direction of the area center. This would also require the center to become more than a
virtual provider. There are examples of this model being effectively implemented in North Dakota schools.

FINANCIAL AND ENROLLMENT STUDY RESULTS
Two subcontractors gathered and analyzed information and data related to the enrollment, financial, and taxation history and circumstances of the school districts in Williams County, as well as a few comparison districts in the state.

Mark Lemer retired this fall as the business manager in West Fargo Public Schools. He has continued working for the district part-time on ongoing construction projects resulting from continued growth in the district. Mark is recognized across the state by legislators, superintendents, and other business managers as perhaps the most knowledgeable person in the state regarding North Dakota school finance. He was instrumental in helping get bond referendums passed in West Fargo and has overseen the details of construction and outfitting of all construction and remodeling projects resulting from the successful bond referendums.

Brent Bogar assisted Mark Lemer in data collection and analytics related to finance and taxation issues. He is a senior consultant with AE2S, an engineering and consulting firm, and is located in Bismarck. Brent has worked on numerous projects for clients regarding funding and fiscal analysis, including the oil and gas tax revenue formula and distributions. He has also worked on behalf of clients to develop communications plans, outreach strategies, and forming coalitions to achieve the client’s goals. Brent spent 13 years as a resident in Williston, and seven years on the City Commission. He is passionate about helping find solutions to provide a high quality of life in Williams County.

The complete report and all tables and graphs reflecting fifteen-year historical data for Williams County school districts as well as comparison districts are available on the Williams County website.

Methodology
The report utilized data from the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Finance Facts for the school districts. The analysis represents 15 years. The time period was chosen at a starting point before the development and growth due to the Bakken oil activity, which began in 2008-2009.

For comparative information, the report includes districts that have similarities such as enrollment and bordering district configuration. The inclusion of the comparative districts is for reference and does not infer similar impacts, needs, or challenges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Large School District Cohort</th>
<th>Small District Cohort</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cass County</td>
<td>West Fargo 6</td>
<td>Mapleton 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Forks County</td>
<td>Grand Forks 1</td>
<td>Manvel 125</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emerado 127</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward County</td>
<td>Minot 1</td>
<td>Nedrose 4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Prairie 70</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Format
The report consists primarily of graphs with comments that interpret points of interest or provide clarification. This was done to provide visualization of the data, making it easy to comprehend and understand trends. Additionally, the data tables used for the graphs are provided as a resource.

Also, the report provides summary observations that synthesize essential findings from the data.

Enrollment
A separate comprehensive report prepared by RSP and Associates explores enrollment some enrollment history as well, plus provides projections. Thus only a few of the enrollment graphs and observations from the Finance Study are shared here.

Overall, in Williams County, school enrollment has more than doubled in the past 15 years based on the data analyzed. Most of that growth in enrollment occurred in the past ten years, coinciding with the period of the Bakken oil and gas development. Before the 2008-2009 school year, the districts in Williams County had a trend of declining enrollment, again highlighting the impact that the oil and gas development has had on school enrollment. Data regarding oil production and pricing was obtained from the North Dakota Pipeline Authority.
The trend of growth in enrollment has continued up even during the period of reduced production due to lower prices in 2014-2015. These factors historically had led to slower or reduced population and enrollment growth, leading to unique challenges in managing the current growth from the Bakken development.
Enrollment History, Williams County Districts - This graph illustrates the changes in the number of students enrolled as of September 10th for the Williams County Schools.

Enrollment of the Williston School District increased from 2,171 to 4,349 students over the 15-year period, which is an increase of 2,178 students or a 100.3% increase.

Enrollment of all other Williams County schools increased from 924 to 1,945 students over the 15-year period, which is an increase of 1,021 students or a 110.5% increase.

All Districts experienced growth during the study period, with a total of 3,199 students over the 15-year period, which is a 103.4% increase.

The increases in the Williams County schools varied from approximately 35% for Eight Mile District to nearly 200% for Grenora and Williams County 8 districts over the period.

Overall, student enrollment during the 15 years more than doubled in William County going from 3,095 students to 6,294 during the period.
**Enrollment History—Large School Cohort** - This graph illustrates the changes in the number of students enrolled as of September 10th for the large districts and comparatives in the study.

Enrollment growth in Williston and West Fargo follow similar trajectories, with both districts doubling in size over the 15 years.

Enrollment growth in Minot and Grand Forks was mostly flat over the 15 years, with changes of 13% and -3%, respectively.

The total enrollment of the large schools in the study increased from 22,102 students to 30,344 students over the 15 years.

Note that the enrollment for Minot 1 is impacted by the transition of South Prairie and Nedrose from Graded Elementary only districts to Elementary through High School districts.
**Enrollment History—Small School Cohort** - This graph illustrates the changes in the number of students enrolled as of September 10th for the small districts.

Enrollment growth in Williams 8, Grenora, and South Prairie all nearly tripled in size over the 15 years.

Enrollment growth in Nesson and Nedrose more than doubled in size over the 15 years.

The total enrollment of the small schools in the study increased from 1,695 students to 3,393 students over the 15 years, an increase of 1,698 students or a 100.2% increase.

Note that the enrollment for Nedrose and South Prairie is impacted by their transition from Graded Elementary only districts to Elementary through High School districts.
Enrollment History—Change Per Year in Williams County – This graph illustrates the enrollment increase (or decrease) in the number of students compared to the prior year for the Williams County Schools.

Enrollment growth from year to year is variable and does not represent consistent linear growth.

Most of the activity shows enrollment increases. However, there are years where decreases in enrollment occurred.

The overall enrollment increase in the Williston School District was 2,178 students.

The overall enrollment increase in all other Williams County schools was 1,021 students.

While each district has had increases in enrollment during the period, the variability of that growth creates challenges for the District’s ability to plan for staffing, space, and building expansions. The variability in enrollment also impacts funding for the Districts from the State as the formula is based on the prior year student enrollment.
**Enrollment History** Summary - Though not all graphs and charts from the Enrollment and Finance Study are included in the Executive Summary, the following are summative observations made by the subcontractors.

---

All Districts in Williams County have experienced significant growth
- A total of 3,199 additional students
- A 103.4% increase in student population
- Highest growth by numbers was Williston 1 with 2,178 additional students
- Highest growth by percentage was Grenora with 193.4% increase

In typical classroom size (25 students) this is equivalent to 128 new classrooms

Williams County Districts growth compared to the State = 103.4% to 11.5%

Growth in the student population has also occurred in many of the Districts included for comparative purposes.
- Large Schools of Williston and West Fargo saw similar growth rates as a percentage
  - A consistent growth trend was noticeable for the Large Schools
- Small Schools of Nesson, Williams County 8, Tioga, Grenora, Mapleton, Nedrose and South Prairie had growth rates exceeding 50%
  - Nedrose and South Prairie converted to K-12 Districts during the study period
  - Small School growth did not follow a consistent pattern of growth

Enrollment growth began in the Williams County school districts at the beginning of the Bakken oil and gas development

Enrollment growth in the Williams County school districts continued during the declines of oil price and production

Long-range planning for facilities and operational budgets, including staffing, should be considered to ensure adequate resources are available for the betterment of education in the County

District planning should consider factors beyond the oil and gas industry that will sustain growth in enrollment with the maturity of the Bakken development occurring
Taxable Valuations

Taxable valuation is a measure of the property wealth of a political subdivision. School Districts rely on taxes on real property for operations, as well as the construction of new facilities. Districts with increased valuations resulting from an added property can spread increases to taxes across a broader tax base to minimize the impact on the individual taxpayer. The School Districts do not set valuations for real property, as that is done at either the city or county on an annual basis.

An increase in valuations within a District does not mean that property taxes collected necessarily increase, as each year, a District must approve a budget and adjust the mill levy based on parameters and limitations established by the Legislature. These adjustments may not directly correspond to the changes in valuation. Changes in valuation result from increases/decreases to existing properties, development of new properties, the creation/expiration of property tax incentives, and from annexations of property from one district to another.

The study looked at total valuations of the Districts, including the comparative Districts for the study period. Additionally, the valuation was analyzed on a per-student basis to provide another perspective for evaluating the information related to taxable value.

Due to industry influence on valuations and development activities, the change in total valuation for the school districts has led to high and low swings to valuations year over year. The impact of planning budgets and potential mill levies for school construction cannot be overstated.

Increases in valuations are related to the development of industrial, commercial, and residential property through Williams County to meet the needs brought about due to the Bakken development. Most noticeably, the increased valuations are seen near the significant communities of the County: Williston (Williston 1, William County 8), Tioga (Tioga 15), and Ray (Nesson 15).

Declines in valuation can be attributed to several factors related to the volatility of the oil industry and its impact on commercial property and residential (primarily multi-family). Due to changes in workforce counts – i.e. when prices declined, apartment and hotel vacancies increased, leading to lower valuations. It should be noted that valuations can fluctuate based on the industry activity, which adds a level of complexity in budgeting and calculating mill levies. This complicates the processes for budgeting and passing bond referendums for construction.
**Valuation History** - This graph illustrates the changes in the total valuation of taxable property in each school district (expressed in thousands of dollars).

The amounts also represent the value of one mill, which is the basis for taxing real property.

The total taxable valuation has increased for all Williams County Schools compared to 2004-2005.

Taxable valuation growth accelerated after 2011-12.

The districts with the most property in proximity to Williston (Williston and Williams County 8) saw the most significant growth in taxable valuation.

Williston and Williams County 8 have the most significant capacity in terms of taxable valuation to support bond referendums as one mill raises a more substantial dollar amount than in other Districts.

While valuations generally increased, several school districts in the study experienced decreases since 2016-2017.

Valuation History Large School Cohort - This table illustrates the total valuation of taxable property in the large school districts (expressed in thousands of dollars).

The amounts also represent the value of one mill, which is the basis for taxing real property.

Taxable valuation has increased for every school district in the study since the beginning of the 15 years.

Williston and Minot have experienced similar declines in valuations since 2015-2016.
Valuation History Small School Cohort - This table illustrates the total valuation of taxable property in the small school districts (expressed in thousands of dollars).

The amounts also represent the value of one mill, which is the basis for taxing real property.

Taxable valuation has increased for every school district in the study since the beginning of the 15 years.

Williams County 8 and Tioga have experienced significant increases since 2012-2013.

Williams County 8, Grenora, and South Prairie all had decreases in valuation in 2018-2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Taxable Valuation (in $1,000's)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nesson 2</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight Mile 6</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams County 8</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tioga 15</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenora 99</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapleton 7</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manvel 125</td>
<td>140,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerado 127</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nedrose 4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Prairie 70</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Graph showing taxable valuation trends over time for different school districts.](image-url)
**Total Valuation—Change from Prior Year** - This graph illustrates the changes in the total valuation of taxable property in each of the schools in Williams County compared to the prior year (expressed in thousands of dollars).

Before the 2011-12, taxable valuation growth was relatively flat.

The most significant increases in taxable valuation occurred between 2013-14 and 2015-16. Since that time, growth has occurred at a slower pace.

The most significant annual dollar increases occurred in Williston for 2014-15, Williams County 8 for 2013-14, and Tioga for 2015-16.

Williston has experienced three years of decreased valuations from 2016-17 through 2018-2019.

Williams County 8 and Eight Mile have had one year of decreased valuation, 2018-2019 and 2016-2017, respectively.

Nesson, Tioga, and Grenora have not had a decrease in valuation during the study period.
Valuation History (Cumulative) For Williams County - This graph illustrates the changes to the cumulative change in valuation of taxable property in the school districts (expressed in thousands of dollars).

The taxable valuation of real property has increased for all districts over the 15-years.

Recent reductions have occurred for Grenora, Williston and Williams County 8.

As taxable valuation rises, the number of mills necessary to retire long-term debt will decrease.
Valuation Per Pupil - This graph illustrates the total valuation of the taxable property divided by the number of students enrolled in the schools in Williams County.

These amounts are computed based on where students are being educated, not where the students reside.

High School students from Williams County 8 who are educated in Williston are included in the student enrollment for Williston.

While it may seem inappropriate to include non-resident students in the divisor, it is up to the school district to provide educational services to fund the construction of school buildings. As such, including them in the numbers for the educating district may be appropriate.

Over the 15 years, the disparity in taxable valuation per pupil has become greater among the school districts.

The most significant impacts during the period occurred for Williams County 8, with a spike in 2015-16.

After 2015-16, the increases tapered off, and several of the districts even saw a reduction.
**Summary of Observations and Analysis Taxable Valuation** - Not all charts and tables from the report are included from the study; observations synthesizing all are included here.

All Districts in Williams County have experienced exponential growth:

- Growth has come from development and building activity throughout the County
- Growth has come from increased valuations of existing property from market conditions

Valuation increases for the Districts in Williams County range from 383.5% to 1609.4%.

Williams County Districts total valuation increase compared to the State = 877.0% to 210.5%.

Valuation changes did not occur evenly for the Districts:

- Williston 1 changes in valuation ranged from -12.5% to 44.4% year over year
  - Overall valuation change for Williston 1 was 563.8%
  - Valuation increases of 10% or more occurred from 2006 – 2009 and 2011 – 2015
  - In the past three years, Williston 1 has had a decline in valuations.
- Williams County 8 change in valuation ranged from -3.3% to 108.5% year over year
  - Overall valuation change for Williams County 8 was 1609.4%
  - Valuation increases of 10% or more occurred from 2008-2016
  - Majority of valuation change occurred since 2013-2014
  - Valuation increased by 108.5% (doubled) from the previous year in 2013-2014

Williston 1, Williams County 8 and Grenora all have had a decrease in valuation in 2018-2019.

Increases in valuation due to development provide Districts with the ability to generate funds without increasing the tax burden on an existing property.

Districts need to be aware of valuation changes and the cause of change to manage budgets and plan for any bond referendum votes that they may plan.
**Mill Levy**
The mill levy is generated by a number of mills, or tax rate, for a political subdivision. One mill equals .001, or 1/1000. A mill levy is calculated based on the budget and property tax revenue necessary for the political subdivision for a given year. Each year the mill levy may change based on valuations, and the political subdivisions budget, including any voter-approved bond referendums that are paid through a property assessment.

The State of North Dakota has provided various levels of funding for local school districts. In 2009 the Legislature made changes to education funding for property tax relief by reducing the number of mills for a school general fund from 185.00 mills to 110.00 mills. Additional property tax relief was approved in 2013, again reducing the general fund mill from 110.00 mills to 60.00 mills. Districts must levy for general fund purposes as part of the education funding formula. The reduction in the mills levied for the general fund was calculated into the State’s funding formula for education to provide the same dollars to a school district, while reducing the property tax portion of a district’s revenue. The impact of the property tax relief provided by the State varies as the value of the relief is impacted by valuation changes as well as voter-approved bond referendums or increases in mill levy authority.

Each school district may have a levy that does not match with the State’s intent on mill levy limitations. This may be due to several factors, one of note for the schools in the study is a limitation of 12% growth annually of dollars levied. The rapid increase in valuation for certain districts and the restriction on the increase of dollars means the mill levy has gone down while the dollars collected has gone up. Additionally, some districts have had public votes to increase mill levies beyond the State’s limitations.

School districts in the state are required to hold public hearings and publish their budget each year. Upon approval of the budget by the school board, it is sent to the county who is responsible for preparing tax statements, collect payments, and distribute the revenue to the political subdivisions.
**Total Mill Levy for Schools** - This graph illustrates the total Mill Levy for each school district in Williams County over the 15 years.

The total mill levy is a summary of the levies for the General Fund Levy, Building Fund Levy, Debt Service Levy, Tuition Levy, etc.

The impact of Legislative Property Tax Relief is apparent from 2008-09 to 2009-10, and again from 2012-13 to 2013-14. These years are noted with the vertical lines in the graph.

Property Tax Relief was based on a reduction in the maximum General Fund Mill Levy from 185.00 mills to 110.00 mills in 2009-10, and from 110.00 mills to 60.00 mills in 2013-2014.

Districts with a rapidly growing tax base see a reduction in the number of mills levied due to a 12% limitation on the growth of dollars collected for General Fund purposes.

The total mill levy has increased for Williston and Grenora beginning in 2013-14, and Eight Mile in 2017-18 to reflect new Debt Service Levies.

During the last three years of the period, the disparity between the lowest and highest total levy has widened from 72.57 mills in 2016-17, 76.71 mills in 2017-18, and finally to 84.18 mills in 2018-19.
**Total Mill Levy Cohort Schools** - The total mill levies reflect Legislative Property Tax Relief that occurred in 2009-10 and again in 2013-14 (represented by the vertical line).

Property Tax Relief was based on a reduction in the maximum General Fund Mill Levy from 185.00 mills to 110.00 mills in 2009-10, and from 110.00 mills to 60.00 mills in 2013-14.

The total mill levy is a summary of the levies for the General Fund Levy, Building Fund Levy, Debt Service Levy, Tuition Levy, etc.

Districts with a rapidly growing tax base see a reduction in the number of mills levied due to a 12% limitation on the growth of dollars levied for General Fund purposes.
Total Mill Levy - Small School Cohort

Nesson 2
Eight Mile 6
Williams County 8
Tioga 15
Grenora 99
Mapleton 7
Manvel 125
Emerado 127
Nedrose 4
South Prairie 70
Total Mill Levy for 2018-19 for Williams County Schools - This graph illustrates the levies that make up the Total Mill Levy for the Williams County schools during the 2018-19 fiscal year.

For most districts, the General Fund Levy comprises the most significant portion of the total levy.

For a school district that is currently building, the debt service levy can add a significant number of mills to the total levy.

The Graded Elementary school districts are levying for high school tuition.

There is substantial variation in the Total Mill Levies of the school districts in Williams County, with Tioga at 51.71 mills and Grenora at 135.39 mills.
Total Mill Levy for 2018-19 for all Cohort Schools - This graph illustrates the levies that make up the Total Mill Levy for each school district during the 2018-19 fiscal year.

For most districts, the General Fund Levy comprises the most significant portion of the total levy.

For a school district that is currently building, the debt service levy can add a significant number of mills to the total levy.

The Graded Elementary school districts are levying substantial amounts for high school tuition.

The total levies range from a low of 51.71 in Tioga to a high of 159.24 in South Prairie.
Total Mill Levy by Category for 2018-19 for All Schools — This table illustrates the individual Mill Levies that are included in the Total Mill Levy for each school district during the 2018-19 fiscal year.

The typical limit for General Fund Mill Levies is 70.00 mills. Williston can levy more than 70 mills due to decreases in taxable valuation since 2015-2016.

The statutory limit for the Miscellaneous Levy is 12.00 mills, and for the Special Reserve Levy is 3.00 mills.

The statutory limit for the Building Fund Levy is 20.00 mills, but each district must establish an individual limit when voting to approve a Building Fund Levy.

Tuition Levies and Debt Service Levies do not have a limitation expressed in mills. The school district is permitted to levy an amount sufficient to cover expenses for each purpose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>District Name</th>
<th>General Fund</th>
<th>Miscellaneous</th>
<th>Special Reserve</th>
<th>Building Fund</th>
<th>Debt Service</th>
<th>Tuition</th>
<th>Total Levy</th>
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<td>12.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>110.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>51-001</td>
<td>Minot 1</td>
<td>70.00</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>22.50</td>
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<td>51-070</td>
<td>South Prairie 70</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>77.24</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>159.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Debt Service Mill Levy for Williams County Schools - This table illustrates the dollar amount of the Debt Service Levy for each school district over the 15 years (expressed in thousands of dollars).

Williams County 8 is the only District that has not levied a Debt Service Mill Levy during the study period. (It should be noted, however, that Williams County 8 has expended funds from their General Fund to support capital construction as illustrated in the General Fund Expenses section of the report).


The amounts reflect the amount necessary to pay principal and interest on the existing debt for school construction.

Since Debt Service Levies do not have a limitation expressed in mills, the school district is permitted to raise an amount sufficient to make annual principal and interest payments.
Debt Service Mill Levy – Cohort Schools

Debt Service Mill Levy - Large School Cohort

March 20, 2020
Debt Service Mill Levy - Small School Cohort

- Nesson 2
- Eight Mile 6
- Williams County 8
- Tioga 15
- Grenora 99
- Mapleton 7
- Manvel 125
- Emerado 127
- Nedrose 4
- South Prairie 70
Summary of Observations—Mill Levy

The State Legislature passed property tax relief by providing more funding from the state for K-12 education and limiting the Mill Levy of school districts:

- Property tax relief by the State in 2009-2010 and 2013-2014 reduced mills by 125.
- Property tax relief may be offset by the passage of bond referendums.
- Property tax relief may be offset by increased valuations.

School Districts total Mill Levy has separate categories for various expenses:

- General Fund is for instructional, administration, and general operations.
- Building Fund is for maintenance and improvements of facilities
- Debt Service mills are for payments related to debt for the construction of facilities.
- Tuition is for payments for students attending school in another District.

General Fund Mill Levy is the majority of total levy for each District when not factoring Debt Service Mills (voter-approved levies):

- Range of 28.1% to 80.2% in 2018-2019 for the General Fund of Total Mills.
- Range of 53.9% to 84.2% in 2018-2019 for the General Fund of Total Mills less Debt Service.

Debt Service Mills are levied by all Districts in Williams County, except for Williams County 8. (It should be noted, however, that Williams County 8 has expended funds from their General Fund to support capital construction as illustrated in the General Fund Expenses section of the report).

In 2018-2019 as a percentage, Debt Service Mills range from 0% (Williams County 8) to 47.9% (Eight Mile 6).

- The state average for Districts with Debt Service Mills is 21.83%
- There are 61 Districts in the State in 2018-2019 with a Debt Service Mill Levy

Due to variations in taxable valuation and Debt Service mill levies, there is significant variation in total Mills. For Williams County schools:

- Lowest 2018-2019 Total Mill Levy is Tioga at 51.71
- Highest 2018-2019 Total Mill Levy is Grenora at 135.39

The dollar amount raised by one mill varies for each District, which impacts the number of mills that must be levied to fund the District. For Williams County schools:

- Lowest 2018-2019 valuation of one Mill is Eight Mile 6 at $11,257
- Highest 2018-2019 valuation of one Mill is Williams County 8 at $127,860
- Average 2018-2019 valuation of one Mill is $62,230
**Revenue and Expenses**

School districts have multiple revenue sources to pay for the services they provide to the community. The state provides the primary source of revenue for school districts in North Dakota through the education funding formula. This share of state funding has increased during the study period through the property tax relief that the Legislature approved and required school districts to reduce mill levies.

Additional revenues are from local property taxes and county, federal & other sources.

The county revenue item for the Districts in the study is from the Gross Production Tax (GPT) formula. The GPT is instead of property tax on oil and gas production in North Dakota. As part of the education funding formula, the school district’s state aid payment is reduced by approximately 75% of the GPT distribution. As an example, Williston 1 has GPT revenue of $4.125 million, and the state aid is calculated to be reduced by 75%, or $3 million. In 2019-2020, the formula will account for debt service mill levies to adjust the total reduction of state aid payments. For districts with debt service mill levies, the reduction will be less than 75%.

Expenses for schools fall into numerous categories. The highest cost is related to salary and benefits for teachers and other instructional staff. Additionally, salary and benefits for support and administration staff, as well as operations and maintenance, make up the next most significant portions of expenses.

Payments for bonds that have been approved by referendum and secured by a property tax mill levy are not included in the General Fund expenses of school districts as they have dedicated revenue sources for payment and are tracked in a special fund for that purpose. If a District has done a building project through its General Fund levy, it is considered a capital project and included as part of the expenses in their budgeting and reports for the General Fund. This is the case for Williams 8.
State Funding Formula—Williams County Schools - This table illustrates the impacts of the funding formula for each district in Williams County for 2019-20.

The State Funding Formula is primarily based on an amount paid for each student enrolled. For the 2019-20 school year, the base payment is $9,839.00 per student. The formula provides weights that are applied against student enrollment for school district size, poverty, Special Education, English Learner programs, summer school, etc.

Adjustments are applied to the State Funding Formula payments that are generated based on student enrollment and weighting factors. These adjustments consider local sources of revenue such as local property tax, tuition for non-resident students, Oil Production, Mobile Home taxes, Telecommunications taxes, etc. These local sources reduce the amount that the state pays by 75% of the amount received locally (adjusted for Debt Service as outlined below).

In 2013-14, there was a conversion from the previous State Funding Formula to the current formula. To minimize the impact of the conversion in the formula, the Legislature implemented Transition Minimum and Transition Maximum payments for eligible school districts. These transition payments provided financial assistance to ease the budgetary impacts on the affected school districts, as further explained in the following bullet.

For 2019-20, three of the school districts in Williams County received a Minimum Transition Payment that provides additional resources beyond the standard per-student payments. These adjustments recognize the financial condition of the school districts before the adoption of the current formula and hold these districts harmless for the changes that occurred. However, this adjustment also provided a benefit to growing districts, since the “hold harmless” amount was provided not only for existing students, but also any student growth that occurred between the baseline year of 2008-09 and 2018-19.

Beginning in 2019-20, the Legislature adopted a provision that eliminated the “hold harmless” amount for student growth that occurred after 2018-19. Also, the Legislature approved a seven-year phase-out plan for the Transition Minimum and Maximum Payments that will begin to take effect during 2020-21.

In 2019-20, The Legislature adopted a provision that adjusts the amount deducted from the formula for Payments instead of Property Taxes. Traditionally, 75% of the amount received by a school district was deducted from their State Aid the following school year. With the new provisions, the 75% is reduced by the portion of the total Mill Levy that is generated from the Debt Service Mill Levy. This allows school districts that are constructing buildings and levying for Debt Service to retain more of the instead of funds.

The Legislature adopted a provision beginning in 2019-20 that specifically will benefit the Williston School District. This provision allows districts that meet specific criteria to charge tuition for non-resident students at the rate of $4,000 per student. The provision also excludes these dollars from the 75% deduction from the formula that would otherwise apply to tuition revenue received.

The Legislature adopted a provision that impacts the amount of local property tax that will be levied and deducted from the State Funding Formula. Currently, there is a wide variation across the State in the amount of local property tax that is deducted from the General Fund Levy. Much of the difference relates to a 12% limitation on the growth in dollars of this levy. When taxable valuations exceed 12% growth, the number of mills
When taxable valuations exceed 12% growth, the number of mills levied is decreased. With the new provision, school districts will need to increase the number of mills collected over seven years until they reach 60 mills.
General Fund Revenue for Williams County Schools - This graph illustrates the revenue sources for each district during 2018-19 (expressed in thousands).

Revenue from State sources is generally linked to the number of students through the funding formula.

County revenue is the Gross Production Tax for the schools received instead of property tax.

Property Taxes generally are the largest source of Local revenue.

State revenue is primarily composed of Student Per Pupil payments and aid for Transportation.

Revenue by Source in $1,000's - Williams County Schools

- Local
- County
- State
- Federal
- Other
General Fund Revenues with Comparative School Districts

Revenue by Source in $1,000's - Large School Cohort

Revenue by Source in $1,000's - Small School Cohort
General Fund Expenses Per Pupil - This graph illustrates the expenses for the Williams County schools during 2018-19 expressed as a cost per pupil

Salary and Benefits for Instruction include teachers, paraprofessionals & other instructional staff.

Salary and Benefits for Support Services include counselors, media specialists & other support staff.

Salary and Benefits for Instructional Purposes represent the largest classification of expenses, except for Williams County 8 due to Capital Projects expenses that were reported in the General Fund.

All districts have transportation expenses for students. However, the smaller districts have a more significant percentage of expenditures for transportation versus Williston 1.

Capital Projects include new construction or renovations of existing buildings paid from the General Fund.

Extra-Curricular expenses include the costs of athletics, including coaches, materials, transportation, etc.
**Transportation** - This table represents summary information regarding student transportation data that was collected by the ND Department of Public Instruction for the 2018-19 school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>District Name</th>
<th>Longest Reported Route (Excluding Special Ed)</th>
<th>Number of Routes Reported (Excluding Special Ed)</th>
<th>Total Number of Miles Reported</th>
<th>Total Number of Student Rides Reported</th>
<th>Total State Aid for Transportation *</th>
<th>Total Cost of Student Transportation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53-001</td>
<td>Williston 1</td>
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<td>Eight Mile 6</td>
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<td>09-007</td>
<td>Mapleton 7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9,056.00</td>
<td>12,800</td>
<td>13,892</td>
<td>54,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-001</td>
<td>Grand Forks 1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>616,865.00</td>
<td>203,496</td>
<td>742,365</td>
<td>1,466,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-125</td>
<td>Manvel 125</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>66,186.50</td>
<td>54,663</td>
<td>89,866</td>
<td>171,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-127</td>
<td>Emerado 127</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>54,050.00</td>
<td>35,850</td>
<td>70,751</td>
<td>61,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-001</td>
<td>Minot 1</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>288,392.58</td>
<td>280,001</td>
<td>403,738</td>
<td>1,662,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-004</td>
<td>Nedrose 4</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>116,550.00</td>
<td>200,900</td>
<td>189,641</td>
<td>251,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-070</td>
<td>South Prairie 70</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>183,050.00</td>
<td>156,850</td>
<td>252,648</td>
<td>420,724</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transportation information reported in 2018-19 is used to generate payments for 2019-20
Summary Revenue and Expenses for Williams County Schools - Although not all graphs and charts from the report are included here in the Executive Summary, the following summary provides observations from the entire report.

- General Fund revenue from the State varies as a percentage from 39.29% (Williams County 8) to 70.08% (Eight Mile 6) in 2018-2019. The average state share is 55.09%.

- General Fund revenue from the State varies per student from $6,335 (Williston 1) to $10,198 (Grenora 99). The average state share per student is $8,140.

- The local share of General Fund revenue varies as a percentage from 14.82% (Eight Mile 6) to 55.43% (Williams County 8). The average local share is 36.6%.

- The local share of General Fund revenue varies per student from $2,040 (Eight Mile 6) to $9,812 (Grenora 99). The average of local share is $5,843 per student.

- Each District receives funding through the County from the Gross Production Tax collected by the State.

- Williams County 8 is the only District with a Capital Project Expense in the General Fund for 2018-2019. This is due to the construction of facilities and not using Debt Service Mills. During the study period, Williston 1, Williams County 8, and Tioga 15 have had capital project expenses recorded in other funds.

- Transportation expenses per student range from $161 (Williston 1) to $1,631 (Grenora 99). The average transportation expense per student is $1,014.

- Total expenses per student for the Districts range from $10,287 (Williston 1) to $18,343 (Grenora 99). The average expense per student is $15,067.

- The average expense per student of all Districts analyzed in the study was $13,979. The state average for expense per student is $14,721.

- Expense per student is lower in Districts with higher enrollment numbers due to factors such as economy of scale, faculty efficiencies, lower overhead, and facility utilization.
DEMOGRAPHIC AND ENROLLMENT STUDY RESULTS

RSP and Associates work exclusively with school districts and is based in Overland Park, Kansas. They have worked with over twenty North Dakota school districts over the last decade, including Williston #1 and Williams County #8. RSP’s team provides data-driven analysis in the areas of enrollment, demographics, development, and functional building capacity. Robert Schwarz, AICP, CEFP worked in the areas of enrollment, and demographic analysis and the report will assist the community in knowing specific things (visually through maps, charts, and text) such as where students reside, where they choose to attend, how quickly enrollment change may happen, and how the changing economics will impact many of those household choices to locate within Williams County. The RSP team also provided support as requested, in conjunction with JLG Architects, in creating functional building capacities to assist in understanding gaps in the type and adequacy of educational spaces. The following sections provide the most relevant data and information from the complete report which is available in its entirety on the Williams County website.

Demographics Information

The following table depicts the demographic for each of the school districts in Williams County. The school district and overall county represent demographic information. Some highlights form this information includes:

- Demographic information for the majority of school districts is homogenous, besides Eight Mile 6, which has higher percentages of American Indian/Alaskan & two or more races.
- The unemployment rate is lower than the State of ND besides Eight Mile 6 & Tioga 15.
- All School Districts have a higher Median Household Income than the State of ND.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eight Mile 6</th>
<th>Grenora 99</th>
<th>Nesson 2</th>
<th>Tioga 15</th>
<th>Williams 8</th>
<th>Williston 1</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Household Size</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>1,328</td>
<td>2,882</td>
<td>5,285</td>
<td>29,131</td>
<td>39,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$71,449</td>
<td>$71,637</td>
<td>$86,231</td>
<td>$72,275</td>
<td>$88,640</td>
<td>$81,965</td>
<td>$81,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Housing Units</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>1,611</td>
<td>3,039</td>
<td>14,068</td>
<td>19,906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner Occupied Housing Units</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>1,368</td>
<td>6,564</td>
<td>9,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter Occupied Housing Units</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>5,637</td>
<td>7,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacancy Rate</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census, Esri BAO
Enrollment Predictions and Change

Overall growth will continue in Williams County. This increase in student growth aligns with the facilities study report where facility conditions and needs are imminent, especially in Williams District 8 and Williston 1. Key findings from the RSP study include:

Enrollment Projections – Five Year Outlook

- Enrollment change is forecasted to be near 9,000 students by 2024/25.
- Enrollment change is dependent upon the anticipated economic positive opportunity, and reasonable housing starts to support the market need.

Next Five-Year Enrollment Change Outlook

- District increases by just nearly 2,000 students (+25.7%) (Annual Range: +4.5% to +5.7% a year)
- Elementary increases by about 900 students (+23.0%) (Annual Range: +3.2% to +6.2% a year)
- Middle School increases by about 400 students (+22.3%) (Annual Range: +0.9% to +9.2% a year)
- High School increases by nearly 700 students (+34.0%) (Annual Range: +4.5% to +8.8% a year)

Past School Enrollment

The following table indicates past school enrollment by grade for all districts in Williams County since the 2010/11 school year. Some highlights from the table are below:

- The largest class in 2019/20 – Kindergarten (646).
- The smallest class in 2019/20 – 11th grade (401).
- Graduating senior class is smaller than the incoming Kindergarten class.
- Largest grades ever will be in:
  - Elementary: Kdg, 2nd, 4th.
  - Middle School: 6th, 7th, 8th.
  - High School: 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
<th>6th</th>
<th>7th</th>
<th>8th</th>
<th>9th</th>
<th>10th</th>
<th>11th</th>
<th>12th</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>3,694</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>4,091</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>4,582</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>4,947</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>5,208</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>5,458</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>5,984</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018/19</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>6,329</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019/20</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>6,884</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCLAIMER: All past student data is exported from the district student database allowing the ability to do robust statistical analysis by student geography. The student database export will not always align perfectly with the Official Count.
Past, Current, and Future Enrollment

The following table illustrates enrollment by the following grade configuration: Elementary K-5, Middle School 6-8, and High school 9-12. This was done not to influence or indicate this is the best or most desirable, but rather as a measurement to see where enrollment change is happening at a standardized level.

Enrollment Future Described

- Enrollment Change – Overall enrollment increase forecasted to be near 9,000 students by 2024/25
- Enrollment change is dependent upon the anticipated economic positive opportunity, and reasonable housing starts to support the market need.

Next Five-Year Enrollment Change Outlook

- District increases by just nearly 2,000 students
  - (+25.7%) (Annual Range:+4.5% to +5.7% a year)
- Elementary increases by about 900 students
  - (+23.0%) (Annual Range:+3.2% to +6.2% a year)
- Middle School increases by about 400 students
  - (+22.3%) (Annual Range:+0.9% to +9.2% a year)
- High School increases by nearly 700 students
  - (+34.0%) (Annual Range:+4.5% to +8.8% a year)

Source: Williams County Schools and RSP & Associates Sophisticated Student Forecast Model (SFM)
Enrollment Projection Notes

Projections Clarification - Past Enrollment is shown three different ways:

- Reside (Based on where a student Resides with the Williams County school district – includes Out of County and Unmatched students)
- Attend (Based on which school district the student is attending in Williams County - includes Out of County and Unmatched students)
- Out of County/Unmatched (Students who either attend a Williams County School but do not live in Williams County or an address that could not be associated with a physical address – example a P.O. Box)

Projections are shown one way:

- Reside (Based on where a student Resides with the Williams County school district – includes Out of County and Unmatched students)

Capacity

- Provided by district administration
- Should be annually examined to ensure appropriate education space is available

Other Items

- Enrollment Grade Configuration in Student Forecast Model (K-5, 6-8, 9-12).
  Note: Williams County 8 does not have a physical building for high school students.
- Eight Mile and Grenora were only able to provide student data by address for the 2019/20 school year.
- The Reside could be larger than the Attend because there may be students who Reside in a Williams County School but choose to attend a different Williams County School.
- For the other four Williams County school districts, the Reside could be larger or smaller than the Attend because there may be students who Reside in a Williams County School but choose to attend a different Williams County School.
Elementary Projections

The following table depicts enrollment projections by each school.

### Williams County Enrollment Projections By School District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Ideal</th>
<th>Student Location</th>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>Past School Enrollment</th>
<th>Projections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2020/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Sch 4th-8th Elementary</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>Reside</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neosho #1 Elementary</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>Reside</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipton #1 Elementary</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>Reside</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams County #8 Elementary</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>Reside</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Elementary Schools Total</td>
<td>1,299</td>
<td>1,397</td>
<td>Reside</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>2,276</td>
<td>2,310</td>
<td>2,335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,185</td>
<td>1,281</td>
<td>Reside</td>
<td>1,241</td>
<td>1,261</td>
<td>1,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>1,908</td>
<td>1,954</td>
<td>2,007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Secondary Projections

The following table depicts enrollment by each school.

### Williams County Enrollment Projections By School District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Ideal</th>
<th>Student Location</th>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>Past School Enrollment</th>
<th>Projections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2020/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams County #8 Middle School</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>Reside</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westville #1 Middle School</td>
<td>814</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>Reside</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westville #6 High School</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>Reside</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand River #9 Elementary</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>Reside</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovesvle #1 Elementary</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>Reside</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westville #1 High School</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>Reside</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All County Schools Total</td>
<td>4,275</td>
<td>3,909</td>
<td>Reside</td>
<td>2,514</td>
<td>2,723</td>
<td>2,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Impact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>2,514</td>
<td>2,723</td>
<td>2,878</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note 1: Student Projections are based on the residence of the student
Note 2: The Enrollment Model is based on a Headcount of students by Planning Area at each school
Note 3: Transfers between facilities are factored into the Projections
Note 4: The Enrollment Model utilizes each school district's grade configuration (buildings serving 7th grade or higher are considered secondary)
Note 5: Each passing area is assigned the 2015/16 School District Boundary of Williams County (some districts serve students beyond Williams County)
Note 6: School capacity provided by JGC 2020 Study (Portability structures not included in Ideal Capacity) [Williams #1 Innovation Academy not included in totals]
Note 7: Reside is based on where a student resides as relates to the Williams County school district - includes Out of County and Unmatched students
Note 8: Attend is based on which school district the student is attending in Williams County - includes Out of County and Unmatched students
Note 9: Over/Under is based on Students who either attend a Williams County School but do not live in Williams County or are an address that could not be associated to a physical address - example: P.O. Box

March 20, 2020
Enrollment Conclusions
The following are some general enrollment observations:

• Enrollment has been increasing despite limited residential development over the last few years.
• RSP & Associates monitors over 400 planning areas for demographics, development, and enrollment data sets.
• A direct correlation between women in childbearing ages (15-59) and where children (0-4) reside will need to be monitored for future demographic shifts.
• Enrollment tends to increase from grade to grade each year at each level.
• Significant increases happen from 7th to 8th.
• Significant decreases happen from 10th to 11th grade.
• Live Birth data compared to kindergarten students five years later has not seen the type of growth if did from 2007 through 2014.
• Larger elementary school grades will result in larger Middle and High school grades
• Greatest student density in the city limits of Williston.
• Least student density is in rural areas.
• The largest grades since 2010/11 student data: Elementary: Kdg, 2nd, 4th; Middle School: 6th, 7th, 8th; High School: 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th
Student Choice Matrix (2019/20)
The following table is the 2019/20 student data illustrating based on the relationship where a student address is within a school district and the school district the student attended. The Out of County or Unmatched (P.O. Boxes) students are separated because those addresses are not known to be associated with a school district in Williams County.

Table Explanation using Eight Mile #6 (Row)
• 313 students Attend Eight Mile #6
• 77 students Reside and Attend the Eight Mile #6 district
• 96 students Reside in Williams County #8 but Attend Eight Mile #6
• 58 students Reside in Willison #1 but Attend Eight Mile #6
• 2 students Reside outside Williams County but Attend Eight Mile #6
• 80 students Reside (unmatched addresses) but Attend Eight Mile #6

Table Explanation using Eight Mile #6 (Column)
• 89 students Reside in Eight Mile #6
• 77 students Reside and Attend Eight Mile #6
• 4 students Reside in Eight Mile #6 but Attend Williams County #8
• 8 students Reside in Eight Mile #6 but Attend Williston #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Eight Mile</th>
<th>Grenora</th>
<th>Nesson</th>
<th>Tioga</th>
<th>Williams County #8</th>
<th>Williston</th>
<th>Outside of County</th>
<th>UnMatched</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eight Mile</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenora</td>
<td></td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nesson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>311</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>376</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tioga</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>321</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>161</td>
<td></td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams County #8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>657</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williston</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>365</td>
<td>4,304</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>4,481</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>6,884</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Williams County Schools Enrollment
Development Opportunities
The Significant areas of vacant land, when infrastructure allows and developed, will have a drastic effect on future enrollment. Several areas throughout the County are developing, but the most likely areas will be within the city limits of Williston, including the old airport land. The new residential activity must be monitored to ensure the best decisions are made for students (Single-family and Multi-family have a different yield rate of students).

The following are some general development observations and conclusions:
- Population and building activity will likely increase.
- Single-family residential has the highest propensity to have school-aged students, yield rates of this development type are typically much higher than that of multi-family, but with a limited housing inventory, multi-family developments will tend to have a greater yield rate.
- Majority of residential development will be concentrated in Williston.
- Future residential growth is dependent on access to infrastructure and affordability of the product being built – this is a challenge for the county.
- Affordable housing is the key to the future of the count. It is becoming more challenging for builders to construct a similar type of housing product matching household incomes.
- Considerable opportunity for residential development, Soulin Field Airport redevelopment alone will have 800 acres of developable land by 2021.
- The city of Williston has had about 30 single-family homes built over the last few years – more is needed to support the market need.
- The price of homes influences the student change throughout all grade levels.
- The building activity must be monthly monitored to be sure the activity is matching the assumptions of adding at least between 100 and 350 units a year.
- Tracking the types of development is important to understand the yield rate of students for every part of the county – there are varying yield rates with all developments – and the attraction of people choosing to move with a home/work environment is a unique situation.
FACILITY STUDY RESULTS

JLG Architects’ team for this study was led by Dan Miller, AIA, JLG’s Principle-in-Charge of the JLGk12 Practice studio. Katie Becker, AIA, JLG’s dedicated K12 Planner oversaw the condition assessments, educational adequacy/capacity studies, and the generation of potential solutions. The following sections comprise the executive summary from the facilities study report. The complete report, which includes over 240 pages, is a valuable resource and is available in its entirety on the Williams County website.

Project Overview

Williams county has undertaken this study regarding the educational facilities within the county to provide data, information, and analysis that informs and inspires a collaborative process between the six districts within Williams County. This process hopes to create PreK-12 educational solutions and educational conditions that support:

• High quality of life for Williams County residents.
• Attraction, retention, and support of a quality workforce.
• Affordable and sustainable housing.
• Equitable access for all students to safe schools where students’ social, emotional, and physical health are supported.
• Equitable access for all families to quality educational opportunities.
• Equitable fiscal burden among districts.
• Educational facilities equipped to support 21st-century education.
• A shared vision that will be supported and sustained at the voting polls.

As part of the study, JLG was tasked with looking at the area of ‘Facility Assets and Utilization.’ This included observation and analysis of facility age, condition, current utilization, capacity, challenges, needs, the existence of makeshift/short term solutions to overcrowding (temporary modular buildings or rented space), and deferred maintenance issues.

In this report, JLG has provided observation and analysis of sixteen buildings across the six districts of Williams County, including:

• Nesson 2: Ray Public School
• Eight Mile 6: Eight Mile Public School
• District 8: Round Prairie Elementary School, Garden Valley Elementary School, and Missouri Ridge Middle School.
• Tioga 15: Central Elementary School, and Tioga High School
• Grenora 99: Grenora Public School

This report is organized by school district and by individual buildings within the district. Each building has its summary containing additional details about the condition and educational adequacy of that building, provided later in this report.
Methodology
As part of the study, JLG was tasked with looking at the area of ‘Facility Assets and Utilization.’ This includes observation and analysis of facility age, condition, current utilization, capacity, challenges, needs, the existence of temporary and short-term solutions to overcrowding (temporary modular buildings or rented space), and deferred maintenance issues.

JLG has divided our observation and analysis into two categories, a **Facility Condition Assessment**, and an **Educational Adequacy Assessment**. The following outlines the methodologies JLG used to evaluate these two categories in the schools throughout Williams County.

**Facility Condition Assessment**
A facility condition assessment considers general building conditions based on facility age, deferred maintenance issues, building systems and assemblies, appropriateness of finishes related to the activities performed in the space, building code, issues of life safety, issues of safety and security, and issues of ADA compliance. An option for an in-depth review of building mechanical and electrical systems was determined not to be included at this time. Analysis of the building systems was performed at a high level by JLG and is primarily based on high-level observation during onsite visits and knowledge provided to JLG by district or building administration.

Each facility’s condition represents the following general qualities to be considered an exemplary building.

- The building should have no serious deficiencies when it comes to exterior systems such as parking, outdoor program space, and exterior building materials such as walls, windows, and roofs.
- The building should meet all current codes and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- The building should have no serious deficiencies when it comes to building mechanical, electrical, structural, or life safety systems.
- The interior finishes should be in good condition and should not be showing serious wear, the building should also be free of hazardous materials, including asbestos and lead.

Data were collected through three methods for this area of the study. Site visits were made to all buildings in December 2019 to tour and assess the current condition of the buildings included in the study. While on-site, interviews were conducted with the building's district administration to gain additional insight into building systems, current practices, and any concerns they may have with their building. Finally, the latest facility studies or master plans performed by the district were requested and were used for the school districts that provided them. These methods of data collection allowed for third-party first-person observation of the building while also acknowledging that those who work in these buildings every day know them best and can provide valuable insight into the study.

The data collected for this portion of the study has been presented in two ways. Photographs of the interior and exterior were taken during building tours and have been included to represent the general conditions of the building or highlight specific areas of concern. The facility condition has also been analyzed as part of a facility condition matrix. Ten areas of the building were...
analyzed, including site, building envelope, learning environment, supporting education space, administration, public space, activities areas, food service, building systems, and code compliance. Additional comments were included alongside each category to call attention to any conditions of note and to provide further context. A scale of 1-5 was used to evaluate these ten areas.

5 – The system condition is new or near new condition

4 - The system is generally suitable for the intended use. Minor improvements could improve building performance and longevity.

3 - The system is suitable but requires specific upgrades to meet performance and operational objectives.

2 - The system has serious deficiencies.

1 - The system is unsuitable for the intended use.

These methods of presentation were chosen to give a quantitative and qualitative representation of the existing conditions at the schools in Williams County. Several buildings were undergoing additions at the time of the visit. These spaces will be new or in like-new condition upon their completion and are represented as such in our data.

Educational Adequacy Assessment
An educational adequacy assessment considers the room size for the prescribed programming, current utilization of space, the capacity of the building, any challenges, or needs to provide 21st-Century education and the existence of makeshift/short term solutions to overcrowding (temporary modular buildings; rented space). For this study, JLG focused primarily on the size and capacity to accommodate a full class size. There may be spaces that are unaccounted for that may be appropriate for educational purposes.

Each facility must meet the following general qualities to be considered an exemplary performing building. These qualities are:

- Rooms should be appropriately sized based on the space program and age of students occupying the space, as well as accommodate an appropriately sized number of students without feeling crowded or being unsafe.

- The building should be able to provide appropriate amenities based on the age level of students in the building; this includes attached restrooms at the elementary level, space for special education programs, gymnasium space, performing arts space, outdoor program space, music rooms, and any other specialty elective classes such as STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) and CTE (Career and Technology Education) spaces.

- The campus should not include any temporary modular buildings. Modular buildings are not ideal learning environments and should not be considered long term space solutions. Temporary modular buildings are often used by districts in need of quick, inexpensive solutions to address growing enrollments. While such buildings can be adequate when new, historically, they age faster than conventional construction. If not maintained properly, they can potentially become inadequate or unsafe learning environments.
1. The building should provide a positive environment for a 21st-Century education. Elements of a 21st-Century educational space that are widely accepted and acknowledged have been used for this study. It should be noted that expectations regarding what a 21st-Century educational environment might look like can vary across the school districts in this study. It is not the intent of this study to re-define for each of these school districts what these spaces may look like; however, these elements were used to provide consistency in the JLG building assessments.

Some examples of these elements include:

- Access to natural light has shown to increase student performance and experience in the classroom and should be provided when possible.
- Collaborative spaces and flexible furniture have increased in recent years as a shift towards more personalized learning has occurred, and the importance of soft skills has increased.
- Safety and security have been high-profile topics in recent years. While the levels of threat, and the types of risk, vary district to district, the first line of defense is controlling access to the building. This is mainly done through a security camera and buzzer system to gain entry to the building in addition to secure entry vestibules attached to a reception check-in area before entering the remainder of the building.

Data for this area of the study is presented in three ways: a floor plan showing the degree of appropriateness the size of the room is to the programming of the space, an educational adequacy matrix, and a capacity calculation (the full chart can be found in Appendix 1.2 of the full report).

To determine if the size of a learning space was appropriate, JLG requested floor plans from each school district. The nature of some architectural building plans provided by the school districts allowed for better scaling than others. Because there may be some differences in how the information is analyzed, some variances between school districts may exist in the final reporting for each building in each school district. Every effort was made to verify and interpret the findings as accurate representations of each school district's building(s).

JLG analyzed the appropriateness of spaces critical to providing a quality 21st-Century education experience: classrooms, supporting educational spaces such as media centers and music rooms, specialized activity areas such as gymnasiums, performing arts spaces, and the cafeteria. JLG based our criteria on the standard for spaces outlined in the Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning: Guide for Planning School document. This guideline was chosen as Minnesota has a similar curriculum structure to North Dakota, identical building needs, has shown positive results, and such guidelines do not exist for North Dakota. See the guidelines used in Appendix 1.4. Once the size of a room was established, a corresponding color was applied to the floor plan. Green indicates a space that is ideally sized based on the standards, yellow indicates a space that is moderately sized based on the standards, and red indicates a space that is small in size for use by a full class size. The appropriateness of the space may vary from what is presented depending on the class size; this analysis was done assuming a full class occupying the space.

Educational adequacy has also been analyzed as part of an educational adequacy matrix. These areas were observed during the onsite building tours, along with information provided by the school districts. Five areas of the building were analyzed in conjunction with the spaces analyzed.
for size appropriateness, including overall facility, learning environment, supporting education space, activities areas, and the cafeteria. Additional notes were included alongside each category to call attention to any items of note and provide additional context. These five areas were evaluated on a scale of 1-5.

- 5 - System works and meets 21st Century education objectives.
- 4 - System is generally suitable for 21st Century education objectives. Minor improvements are needed to improve functionality.
- 3 - System is suitable but requires specific upgrades to meet 21st Century education objectives.
- 2 - System has serious deficiencies regarding 21st Century education objectives.
- 1 - System is unsuitable for 21st Century education objectives.

Finally, educational adequacy was examined in the context of the capacity to house students within the building. The capacity chart can be found in Appendix 1.2. There are many ways to look at building capacity, and there are also many unique conditions amongst the school facilities in Williams County. These specific variables affect the individual enrollment capacity of each school; however, a standard methodology has been applied to all buildings to provide a consistent overview of the county-wide student enrollment capacity of the school facilities.

This methodology focuses on the capacity of core academic/learning environment areas of the facilities, i.e., the classroom setting/teaching station count. While a facility may have the classroom/learning environment capacity for a specific enrollment of students, a school building’s capacity may still be less than this study shows due to inadequate support space and learning environments for specials/electives, such as cafeterias and music rooms. Inadequate support space also has an impact on overall building capacity and impacts the number of specials/electives a building can offer on a scheduled day. Unique discrepancies of educational adequacy are noted within the detailed educational adequacy summaries for each school facility, while this county-wide enrollment capacity summary focuses primarily on the core learning environments.

Our analysis does not include Special Education programming space in any of the capacity calculations. An exception was made if such spaces are being utilized by a specific number of students that spend the majority of their day in those spaces.

To determine the core learning environment capacity for each building, JLG implemented the following equation:

\[ \text{Teaching Station} \times \text{Average Students per Teaching Station} \times \text{Efficiency Factor} = \text{Student Enrollment Capacity} \]

For this study, a Teaching Station is any instructional area within the school facility that is intended to practically host a class-sized group of students for a typical period or block of the school day schedule.

- At the elementary level (PK-6th grade), teaching stations are typically limited to the elementary classrooms. Learning environments for specials such as art, music, or physical education are not included as these spaces serve the same student enrollment load that is already attributed to core elementary classroom teaching stations.
At the middle school and high school level (7-12 grade), teaching stations include all core classrooms as well as learning environments for electives (music, art, physical education, CTE, etc.)

For this study, the Average Students per Teaching Station is the number of students per teaching station that is derived from the ideal class sizes for Williams County agreed upon by all school district superintendents after review. These ideal class sizes are averaged across the range of grades that each school building serves. For example, a building that houses Kindergarten through 2nd grade would have the ideal class size of each grade level added together, and then the total is divided by the number of grades in that building. The formula in this example would be as follows:

\[
\frac{18 \text{ kindergarteners} + 22 \text{ first graders} + 22 \text{ second graders} + 22 \text{ third graders} + 23 \text{ fourth graders}}{5 \text{ grade levels}} = 21.4 \text{ Average Students per Teaching Station}
\]

The following are the agreed-upon class sizes for Williams County and the associated Averages per Teaching Station; actual individual class sizes may differ from district to district. These proposed numbers were shared with leadership in each school district in advance of the study, and there was consensus among all that JLG and RSP would use these as the basis for their work on this study.

A building/district is over capacity if the average class size exceeds or is projected to exceed these numbers at a given grade level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Capacity Limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades 1-3</td>
<td>22/classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 4-5</td>
<td>23/classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6-8</td>
<td>24/classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 9-12</td>
<td>26/classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this study, the Efficiency Factor indicates the amount of time a typical class-sized group of students utilizes a learning space during a regular school day.

- In elementary settings, the student enrollment is fully accounted for by the teaching station/elementary class that is reserved all day for each class, whether the students are at that teaching station or elsewhere within the school facility during the day, such as at learning environments dedicated to specials. Therefore, the efficiency factor is considered 100% in elementary settings in this study.

- In high school and middle school settings, students typically rotate between learning spaces dedicated to core curriculums and electives; therefore, all learning spaces are considered a teaching station. 100% use of teaching stations is not practical due to prep time, variations in elective offerings, and balancing of class sizes. Due to this reality of academic scheduling and operations, an efficiency factor of 80% is typical and is used in middle and high school settings in this study where classes are typically occupied six out of seven periods day.
The capacity number derived from this formula is referred to as the Capacity as Used. The Capacity as Used calculation uses all available teaching stations at the class sizes established for Williams County, regardless of the adequacy of that learning space to accommodate the set acceptable class sizes. All temporary, modular learning spaces are also included in this capacity calculation as teaching stations. This calculation reflects how the school districts may utilize the current facilities if overcrowding is allowed in classroom settings that are not adequately sized, and temporary facilities are continued to be used. This calculation is labeled “Capacity as Used” since many districts in Williams County are utilizing their facilities in this fashion. While it is possible to operate at these capacity levels out of necessity for a short duration, operating year after year at these capacity levels will have near-term detrimental impacts on the quality of education and longer-term harmful economic effects on the district.

The second level of analysis was performed on this data to determine an Ideal Capacity for each building. For this study, the Ideal Capacity calculation proportionally fits the student capacity of teaching stations that are smaller than ideal square footages and does not include any teaching stations within temporary or modular learning space environments. The ideal capacity does not include temporary/modular classroom units within the calculation as such facilities are not to be considered long term space solutions. While such units can be adequate when new, such modular classroom units historically age faster than conventional construction and can potentially become inadequate or unsafe learning environments over time.

The educational adequacy analysis described earlier in this section, learning spaces are categorized into three square footage ranges and are coded as such on the educational adequacy floorplans for each school. The ideal square-foot range (GREEN) can accommodate the agreed-upon ideal student class size (number of students). (YELLOW) denotes a learning space square foot range that is approximately 15% below the ideal square footages recommended. (RED) denotes learning spaces that have a square footage range that is approximately 25% less than what is recommended for the ideal class sizes. The Average Students per Teaching Station value is prorated down by 15% and 25% respectively for teaching stations within YELLOW or RED square footage ranges. While there are learning spaces throughout the county that are less than the size recommended for the ideal student class sizes, this does not mean that all spaces are educationally inadequate. Many of these learning spaces have adequate amenities for education but are suited for smaller class sizes. More information about the various ranges of learning space square footages can be found in Appendix 1.4.

These three methods of presentation were chosen to give a quantitative and qualitative representation of the educational adequacy at schools in Williams County. Several buildings are undergoing additions at this time, those spaces have been included in the floor plans and capacity numbers presented as they will be part of the district’s facility space for the 2020/2021 school year.
OVERARCHING SCHOOL DISTRICT SUMMARIES

Eight Mile 6
The Eight Mile 6 District has one building that serves 313 students in grades K-12 as of the 2019/2020 school year. They have recently completed a major remodel and addition of their building in 2019. Given the recent improvements to the building, there are no significant condition concerns, and the building is still in its new or like-new condition. Rooms at all age levels are generally well-sized and utilize new flexible furniture to accommodate a variety of learning and teaching styles. The capacity calculations done as part of this study suggest that the recent additions to the building have given the district room for future student growth.

Grenora 99
The Grenora 99 District is the smallest in the county with one building and serves a total of 191 students in grades K-12 as of the 2019/2020 school year. The building recently went through a significant elementary addition in 2016, and there are no major condition concerns in that portion of the building. The remainder of the building has minor life safety, code, and security issues that should be addressed. The capacity calculations done as part of this study show the building has ample capacity and should serve the students of the Grenora 99 District well for years to come.

Nesson 2
The Nesson 2 District has one building that serves 376 students in grades PreK - 12 as of the 2019/2020 school year. They are currently undergoing a building addition to be completed in the fall of 2020 and have undertaken regular updates, capital improvement projects, and remodeling projects over the last eight years. Given the ongoing plans to update the building, there are few condition concerns for the building. Classrooms are generally traditional, and the building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts. They are integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls, and a 2 to 1 device policy for students. The capacity calculations done as part of this study suggests that the building has ample capacity once the 2020 addition is complete and should serve the students of the Nesson 2 District well for years to come.

Tioga 15
The Tioga 15 District is comprised of two buildings: an elementary school, and a high school, that serve a total of 498 students in grades PreK - 12 as of the 2019/2020 school year. The elementary school recently went through a significant renovation, and there are no significant condition concerns. The building is still in its new or like-new condition. There are minor life safety, code, and security issues at the high school that should be addressed. The capacity calculations done as part of this study show that the elementary school is at or near capacity and that the high school has ample capacity to serve the students of the Tioga 15 District well for years to come.
**Williams District 8**
District 8 is the second-largest district in the county with three buildings - two elementary schools and one intermediate school - that serve a total of 778 students in grades PreK - 8 as of the 2019/2020 school year. Missouri Ridge School is currently undergoing an addition to be completed in 2020. After either grade, students must enroll in a neighboring K-12 district to complete their high school education. A majority of the students enroll at Williston High School in Williston District 1. There are life safety, code, and security issues at both elementary buildings that need to be addressed. Both elementary schools are primarily composed of temporary modular buildings that are not connected, resulting in students having to go outside to access other parts of the building, this creates a concern given the cold North Dakota climate. Temporary modular buildings make up 55% of the square footage on-site at Round Prairie Elementary and 71% of the square footage on site at Garden Valley Elementary. This high reliance on temporary modular buildings for space is a concern as they are not ideal learning environments and should not be long term solutions. Missouri Ridge School is new within the last few years and has no significant concerns and should serve students well for years to come. The capacity calculations done as part of this study identified Round Prairie Elementary as under capacity while Garden Valley Elementary and Missouri Ridge School are at or above capacity.

**Williston District 1**
Williston District 1 is the largest district in the county with eight buildings - five elementary schools, an intermediate school, a middle school, and a high school - that serve 4,728 students in grades PreK through 12 as of the 2019/2020 school year. This district has seen a large influx of student population over the last few years, and it is evident that it is still struggling to keep up with the increase from a facilities standpoint. There are life safety, building code, and security issues at most of the buildings in the district that need to be addressed, and many finishes throughout the district are showing their age. Almost all buildings are at or exceeding their capacity, and there are many temporary modular buildings in the district, with six of the eight buildings hosting temporary modular buildings on site. These temporary modular buildings account for 27% of all elementary space and 10% of all district space. Wilkinson Elementary and McVay Elementary Schools have the largest temporary modular building presence at 25% and 75% of their square footage, respectively. This long-term reliance on temporary modular buildings for space is a concern as they are not ideal learning environments and should not be long-term solutions. Williston District 1 has a new Innovation Academy under construction to be completed in the fall of 2020 and has a capacity of roughly 400 students. This building is not yet online and was not included in the condition or educational adequacy analysis later in the report. When the building becomes available, it will impact the capacity of both Bakken Elementary and Williston Middle School. Capacity calculations have been included in Appendix 1.2 for the Innovation Academy to inform an understanding of the district capacity better.
INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL SUMMARIES

Eight Mile K12 School
Eight Mile Public School is a K-12 school in Eight Mile 6 District of Williams County. The building was built in 1963 and has recently completed a major remodel of the majority of the building in 2019.

The administration has done a good job keeping the building in great condition with recent building remodels and additions. Given the recent improvements to the building, there are no significant condition concerns, and the building is still in its new, or like new, condition. The building is fully sprinkled and utilizes a secure entry vestibule, in addition to a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun. Outside the building, the site has limited parking, and adjacent athletic fields and amenities need updating.

The administration is dedicated to providing for the needs of all students in this building. The building is separated into elementary and middle school/high school wing while some support spaces are shared between the different age groups. Room at all age levels are generally well-sized and utilize new flexible furniture to accommodate a variety of learning and teaching styles. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls. There is no dedicated performing arts space on site; it is attached to and shares an area with the auxiliary gymnasium and cafeteria. The shared space creates scheduling conflicts for the building, and while a performing arts space is not required, it is typical to see them at high school buildings.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 529 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity drops to an ideal capacity of 488 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 313 students. Recent additions have given the building some capacity in both how it is currently used and in its ideal capacity.

Steps for improvements include addressing the minor exterior improvements noted.
**Grenora K12 School**

Grenora Public School is a K-12 school in the Grenora 99 District of Williams County. The building is comprised of an original building from 1969 and recently completed a significant elementary addition in 2016. Overall the condition of the building is good, with varying levels of condition between the original building and recent addition. The building is well maintained and cared for.

The administration has done a good job updating space with only minor condition updates left to update. As previously stated, the elementary wing of the building is recently added, and other updates were done at the same time, including the roof, administrative office, and cafeteria. Given the recent work to update the building, there are few condition concerns for the building. Some notable concerns include the restrooms at the original building and access to the 2nd-floor wrestling room not meeting ADA compliance. The finishes in the original building are showing their age, especially compared to the elementary wing. There is a lack of directional signage to the main entry for visitors to the parking lot when visiting mid-day access at the cafeteria was possible, and access in this manner is a potential safety concern. Finally, other safety and security concerns include a lack of secure entry vestibule, though the entry sequence is better than at other buildings in the county. The building utilizes a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun, and the main entrance is adjacent to the administrative offices.

The administration is dedicated to providing for the needs of all students in this building. The building is separated into elementary and middle school/high school wing while some support spaces are shared between the different age groups. Typical classrooms in the original building are well sized at all age levels with flexible furniture in use at the elementary wing and a more traditional setting in the middle school/high school. Furniture and other collaborative items spill into the hallways, and while a potential safety hazard, this speaks to their need for additional small collaboratives spaces common in 21st-century education. Interior and exterior doors are all equipped with electronic fob access control, which is forward-thinking. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls and a 1 to 2 device policy for students. Access to power and data outlets lacks in the original building, especially in the computer labs where stations are daisy-chained together through surge protectors. There is also minimal natural light in specials classrooms like the media center, music rooms, and cafeteria.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 461 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity drops to an ideal capacity of 403 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 191 students, well below both forms of capacity. These numbers suggest that the building has ample capacity and should serve the students of the Grenora 99 District well for years to come.

Steps for improvement include addressing minor life safety, code, and security issues in the original building. Secondary should be updating fixtures and finishes as many are showing wear or reaching the end of useful life.
Ray Pre-K12 School
Ray Public School is a PreK-12 school in the Nesson 2 District of Williams County. The building is comprised of an original building from 1950 and currently has an addition in progress planned for completion in 2020. Overall the condition of the building is good, with the building undergoing regular updates and remodeling projects over the last eight years. The building is well maintained.

The administration has done a good job updating space with only minor condition updates left to update. As previously stated, many areas of the building have been through recent upgrades, including the playground, flooring in classrooms, administrative area, lockers, and the roof. Given the ongoing projects to update the building, there are few condition concerns for the building. Some notable concerns include the toilets in the elementary classrooms and the primary access to the auxiliary gym not meeting ADA compliance, though a secondary entry does accommodate any need with a wheelchair lift. The exterior envelope is in overall good condition; however, there are drainage issues in the north courtyard that have led to water infiltrating and flooding the hallway of the elementary wing. Several windows contain broken glass and should be replaced; window caulking should also be updated. The building will be fully sprinkled upon the completion of the 2020 addition and remodel. Finally, other safety and security concerns include a lack of secure entry vestibule, though the entry sequence is better than at other buildings in the county. The building utilizes a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun, and the main entrance is adjacent to the administrative offices.

The administration is dedicated to providing for the needs of all students in this building. The building is separated into elementary and middle school/high school wing while some support spaces are shared between the different age groups. Typical classrooms are well-sized for all age levels, though there is limited access to natural light within them, and they are relatively traditional in how they are used. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls and a 2 to 1 device policy for students.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 1,033 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity drops to an ideal capacity of 976 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 376 students, well below both forms of capacity. These numbers suggest that the building has ample capacity once the 2020 addition is complete and should serve the students of Nesson 2 District well for years to come.

Steps for improvement include addressing the minor fixture and finish updates as part of their ongoing maintenance plan.
**Tioga Elementary**

Tioga Central Elementary School is a PK-6 school in the Tioga 15 District of Williams County. The building was built in 1953 and undergone a significant addition, and 2015 and significant remodel of the rest of the building in 2019. Overall the condition of the building is great, and it is the newest space in the district. The building is well maintained.

The administration has done a good job keeping the building in top condition and creating engaging space for the student population. As most of the building has undergone substantial updates in the last five years, there are no significant condition concerns, and the building is still in its new, or like new, condition. The building has a complete sprinkling system, and all MEP systems were updated with the 2019 remodel. There are minor exterior items needing repair at the original building, including some facia and brick damage, the roof, and the windows. Some handrails in the original building are not code compliant at the handrail extension and should be corrected. Finally, safety and security concerns include a lack of secure entry vestibule, though the entry sequence is better than at other buildings in the county. The building utilizes a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun, and the main entrance is adjacent to the administrative offices.

The administration is working to create a current and engaging space for students. Typical classrooms are generally well-sized with good natural light and seem to meet the needs of staff and students. The administration is also taking active measures to provide safe zones for students through retrofit of classrooms to reduce sightlines into the rooms. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls, sound field audio systems, and a 1 to 1 device policy for students.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 344 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity drops to an ideal capacity of 280 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 283 students. These numbers suggest that the building is at its ideal capacity but has some available capacity based on how it is currently used.

Steps for improvement include addressing the minor code and exterior improvement items that are present as part of an ongoing maintenance plan.
**Tioga High School**

Tioga High School is a 7-12 school in the Tioga 15 District of Williams County. The building is comprised of an original building from 1956. Overall the condition of the building is good, with the building undergoing meaningful updates over the last ten years. The building is well maintained.

The administration has done a good job of addressing needs as they arise. New windows were installed in 2010, and the FACs and science labs were recently updated with new casework and ADA compliant stations. Some noticeable concerns in the building are the items that do not meet ADA compliance, such as door hardware, some door alcoves do not have proper clearances, locker room access, and restrooms. The building is also not sprinkled, which creates a potential life safety concern. The building has several fixtures and finishes that need updating, including the boiler room roof, exterior athletic space, and several areas of potential asbestos in floors that should be tested. Finally, other safety and security concerns include a lack of secure entry vestibule. The building utilizes a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun, and the main entrance is down the hall from the administrative offices.

The administration is dedicated to providing for the needs of students in this building. Typical classrooms well-sized, and they are relatively traditional in how they are used. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls and a 1 to 1 device policy for students. There are also additional charging/storage lockers in the hallways for students to use. The media center is impressively sized, with ample storage and adjacent collaboration spaces for students to use. Some classrooms still utilize chalkboards, while the condition is good; these are not in line with a 21st-century education model and should be updated.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 345 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity drops to an ideal capacity of 325 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 197 students, well below both forms of capacity. These numbers suggest that the building has ample capacity and should serve the students of the Tioga 15 District well for years to come.

Steps for improvement include addressing life safety, code, and security issues and updating fixtures and finishes as many are showing wear or reaching the end of useful life.
Williams 8 - Round Prairie K-2 Elementary

Round Prairie Elementary is a K-2 elementary school in District 8 of Williams County. The building is comprised of an original building from 1992 and two temporary modular buildings installed on site. Overall the condition of all buildings is fair.

The administration has done a good job utilizing the space available on site and keeping the interiors in good condition. The playground equipment is in good condition, and new carpet has been recently installed throughout all buildings. There is a secure entry sequence in place with a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun, and the main entrance is adjacent to the administrative offices. Some noticeable concerns in the building are the items that do not meet ADA compliance, such as door hardware in the original building, and access to the main entrance is via stair and is not accessible, though accessible entry to the building is available through the north door on the other side of the building. The kitchen is open to the main serving area, does not meet commercial kitchen standards, and is a potential safety hazard to students. The building has several areas of damage to note on all three buildings, with the temporary modular building housing the library being in the roughest shape.

The administration is using available space well. Typical classrooms throughout all buildings are undersized; however, they seem to meet the needs of staff and students in the building. All rooms have adequate access to natural light, and some flexible furniture is being used for collaboration. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls and a 1 to 1 or 1 to 2 device policy for students depending on grade. The classrooms housed in the temporary modular buildings are a majority of the teaching stations on-site at 73%. Temporary modular buildings are not ideal learning environments in general and are intended to be a temporary solution for overcrowding. The two temporary modular buildings comprise 55% of space on-site and are a concern. While the majority of teaching stations are in temporary modular buildings, given the low enrollment numbers at Round Prairie, the temporary modular building sits mainly vacant except for use as a physical education space. All classes are currently held in the original building. Access to specials is a concern as students must go outside to access the library, and there is no gymnasium on site. The room in the temporary modular building used for physical education is not adequate for planned activities.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 227 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity drops an ideal capacity of 49 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. This is primarily because so many teaching stations are available in the modular buildings. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 27 students, well below both capacity figures. These numbers suggest that the building has some capacity for how it is currently used.

Steps for improvements include life safety, code, and security issues, as a priority, updating finishes as many are approaching the end of their lifespan and are showing wear, and address the need to accommodate the growing student population more permanently by transitioning out of the temporary modular spaces.
Williams 8 - Garden Valley Pk-2 Elementary

Garden Valley Elementary is a PK-2 elementary school in District 8 of Williams County. The building is comprised of an original building from 1990 and four temporary modular buildings installed on site. Overall the condition of all buildings is fair.

The administration has done a good job utilizing the space available on site and keeping the interiors in good condition. The playground equipment is in good condition, new carpet has been recently installed throughout all buildings, and portions of the roof have been replaced within the last ten years. Some noticeable concerns in the building are the items that do not meet ADA compliance, such as door hardware in the original building, and the outdoor connections between buildings. The building does not have a sprinkling system, and the limited parking on-site is unpaved, unstriped with a lack of exterior lighting. The building has several areas of damage to note on all buildings. Finally, other safety and security concerns include a lack of a secure entry vestibule. The building utilizes a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun, and the main entrance is down the hall from the administrative office.

The administration is using available space well. Typical classrooms throughout all buildings are undersized; however, they seem to meet the needs of staff and students in the building. All rooms have adequate access to natural light, and some flexible furniture is being used for collaboration. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls and a 1 to 1 or 1 to 2 device policy for students depending on grade. The classrooms housed in the temporary modular buildings are a majority of the teaching stations on-site at 62%. Temporary modular buildings are not ideal learning environments in general and are intended to be a temporary solution for overcrowding. The four temporary modular buildings comprise 71% of space on-site and are a significant concern. Access to specials is a concern as students must go outside to access the library, the music room, and there is not a gymnasium on site. The space in the temporary modular building adjacent to the kitchen used for physical education is not adequate for planned activities. It is also not accessible from the inside of the building, and students must go outside to use the ramp to gain accessible access. There are also egress concerns from this building as one of the doors is blocked by the ramp handrail.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 260 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity drops an ideal capacity of 75 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. This is primarily because so many teaching stations are housed in modular buildings. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 251 students, well above the ideal capacity. These numbers suggest that the building is functioning well for how it is currently used but is above capacity for ideal learning environments.

Steps for improvement is addressing the need to accommodate the student population in a more permanent manner and transition out of the large percentage of temporary modular space. The administration should also address life safety, code, and security issues, repairing areas with exterior damage.
Williams 8 - Missouri Ridge 3-8 School
Missouri Ridge School is a 3-8 school in District 8 of Williams County. The building was recently built in 2018 and has an addition in progress planned for completion in 2020. Overall the condition of the building is great, and it is the newest building in the district. The building is well maintained.

The administration has done a good job keeping the building in top condition and adjusting to growing capacities. As the building is under two years old, there are no significant condition concerns, and the building is still in its new, or like new, condition. The building is fully sprinkled and utilizes a secure entry vestibule, in addition to a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun.

It is evident that the administration is working to create quality space for students and are planning for the future with the current addition under construction. Typical classrooms are generally well-sized with good natural light and seem to meet the needs of staff and students. The building contains a dedicated STEM Lab, which is in line with current 21st-century educational programming, and it is a benefit to students to have access to this type of space. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls, sound field audio systems, and a 1 to 1 device policy for students.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 467 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity stays level at 467 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 500 students. The building is above capacity in both how it is currently used and in its ideal capacity.

Steps for improvement include addressing the growing student population.
**Williston Hagan Elementary**

Hagan Elementary is a K-4 elementary school in Williston District 1 of Williams County. The building is comprised of an original building from 1984 and a temporary modular building installed on-site in 2011. Overall, the condition of both buildings is good, and the building is well maintained. The building has experienced an increase in student population over the last several years, and the administration is adapting to accommodate the growth through the use of non-traditional spaces such as hallways, storage closets, and locker rooms as educational space for smaller groups.

The administration has done a good job updating space as they can, while some are showing wear on original finishes and fixtures. The kitchen is up to date and meets commercial kitchen standards, and technology has been updated throughout the building. Some noticeable concerns in the building are the items that do not meet ADA compliance, such as door hardware and toilet rooms attached to classrooms. The building is also not sprinkled, which creates a potential life safety concern. Finally, other safety and security concerns include a malfunctioning security camera system and a lack of a secure entry vestibule near the administration offices. While the building utilizes a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun, the primary entry point is down the hall from the administration, and potential threats would have access to the building before interacting with staff. Administration does not use the entry adjacent to them for visitors as the parking lot’s proximity to the playground has created vehicle traffic safety concerns for students.

The administration is making accommodations to meet the needs of its student population. They are utilizing every nook and cranny as educational space, whether it is ideal or not. Typical classrooms in the original building are well-sized, and strategic finish updates would make them into great 21st-Century education spaces. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls, sound field audio systems, and a 1 to 1 device policy for students. The classrooms housed in the temporary modular building are slightly undersized; however, they seem to meet staff and student needs. Temporary modular buildings are not ideal learning environments in general and are intended to be a temporary solution for overcrowding. The eight classrooms housed there make up 44% of the classroom space on site, which is concerning. The shared gymnasium and cafeteria space create scheduling conflicts, and the adjacency of these noisy spaces to SPED instructional space, whose students often require a quieter learning environment, is a concern.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 385 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity drops to an ideal capacity of 214 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 485 students, over double the ideal capacity. These numbers suggest that the building is well over its capacity for the student population.

Steps for improvement include: addressing life safety, code, and security issues, updating finishes as many are approaching the end of their lifespan, and address the need to accommodate the growing student population more permanently by transitioning out of the temporary modular spaces.
Williston Lewis & Clark Elementary
Lewis & Clark Elementary is a K-4 elementary school in Williston District 1 of Williams County. The building is comprised of an original building from 1952, and five temporary modular buildings installed on-site in 1980. The condition of both buildings is good, with some of the newest permanent spaces in the district for this age level with the 2004 gym addition. The building is well maintained.

The administration has done a good job updating space as they can, while some are showing wear on original finishes and fixtures. The administrative area and library have gone through recent finish updates, and technology has been updated throughout the building. The 2004 gym addition is an asset to the building and is in good condition. Some noticeable concerns in the building are the items that do not meet ADA compliance, such as door hardware and toilet rooms attached to classrooms. The building systems need attention as the building is only partially sprinkled, the alarm system regularly malfunctions, and the district reports power capacity issues resulting in blown fuses and circuits regularly; all of these are potential life-safety concerns. The building has several fixtures and finishes that need updating and is reaching the end of their useful lives, including several areas of potential asbestos in floors and ceilings that should be tested, windows that are cracked, and which present condensation issues, and areas of the roof that leak. Finally, other safety and security concerns include a malfunctioning security camera system and a lack of secure entry vestibule. The building utilizes a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun, and the main entrance is adjacent to the administrative offices.

The administration is forward-thinking in meeting the needs of their student population. Furniture and other collaborative items spill into the hallways, and while a potential safety hazard, this speaks to their need for more small collaborative spaces common in 21st - Century education. Typical classrooms in the original building are well-sized, and strategic finish updates would make them into excellent 21st - Century education spaces. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls, sound field audio systems, and a 1 to 1 device policy for students. The classrooms housed in the temporary modular buildings are generally well-sized for their use and appear to meet the needs of staff and students. Temporary modular buildings are not ideal learning environments in general and are intended to be a temporary solution for overcrowding. The five temporary modular buildings comprise 17% of space on site.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 300 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity drops to an ideal capacity of 219 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 269 students, well above the ideal capacity. These numbers suggest that the building is at or above capacity for what the building can support.

Steps for improvements include: addressing life safety, code, and security issues, updating finishes as many are approaching the end of their lifespan, and several areas should be tested for hazardous materials, and address the need to accommodate the growing student population more permanently by transitioning out of the temporary modular spaces.
**Williston Wilkinson Elementary**

Wilkinson Elementary is a K-4 elementary school in Williston District 1 of Williams County. The building is comprised of an original building from 1962 and eight temporary modular buildings installed on-site in 1980. Overall the condition of both buildings is fair, with the original building showing its age and the temporary modular buildings are at the end of their useful lifecycle.

The administration has done a good job updating space as they can in small ways with new paint and engaging activities for students. The playground equipment has been recently updated, and technology has been updated throughout the building. Some noticeable concerns in the building are the items that do not meet ADA compliance, such as door hardware, toilet rooms attached to classrooms, and ramps that do not have proper railings in place. The building is not sprinkled, which creates a potential life safety concern. The building has several fixtures and finishes that need updating and is reaching the end of useful life, including several areas of potential asbestos in floors and ceilings that should be tested. The temporary modular buildings contain failing building systems, have experienced water infiltration, and have experienced settlement issues. Finally, other safety and security concerns include a lack of secure entry vestibule. The building utilizes a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun, and the main entry is adjacent to the administrative offices.

It is evident that the administration has a desire to create a vibrant space to meet the needs of its student population. Furniture and other collaborative items spill into the hallways, and while a potential safety hazard, this speaks to their need for additional small collaboratives spaces common in 21st-century education. Typical classrooms in the original building are well sized with flexible furniture in use. These rooms have great potential; addressing the lack of natural light and strategic finish updates would make them into great 21st-century education spaces. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls, sound field audio systems, and a 1 to 1 device policy for students. The classrooms housed in the temporary modular buildings are generally well-sized for their use and seem to meet the needs of staff and students. Temporary modular buildings are not ideal learning environments in general and are intended to be a temporary solution for overcrowding. The eight temporary modular buildings comprise 25% of space on site.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 214 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity stays level at the ideal capacity of 214 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. This is primarily because specials, like music, SPED, and the library is housed in the modular buildings. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 310 students, well above the ideal capacity. These numbers suggest that the building is at or above capacity for what the building can support.

Steps for improvements include addressing life safety, code, and security issues, updating finishes as many are approaching the end of their lifespan and are showing wear, particularly the items needing abatement, and address the need to accommodate the growing student population more permanently by transitioning out of the temporary modular spaces.
**Williston Rickard Elementary**

Rickard Elementary is a K-4 elementary school in Williston District 1 of Williams County. The building is comprised of an original building from 1951 and two temporary modular buildings installed on site. The condition of both buildings is fair, with both the original building and the temporary modular buildings showing their age.

The administration has done a good job updating items around the building as they can in meaningful ways. Improvements include a replacement of the roof and water heater, and technology throughout the building. Some noticeable concerns in the building are the items that do not meet ADA compliance, such as door hardware, toilet rooms attached to classrooms, ramps that do not have proper railings in place, and some secondary entry sidewalks. The building systems need attention as the building is not sprinkled, the alarm system regularly malfunctions; all of these are potential life-safety concerns. The building has several fixtures and finishes that need updating and is reaching the end of useful life; including several areas of potential asbestos in floors and ceilings that should be tested, ceilings with noticeable water damage, and a playground with poor drainage and lighting that leaves it unusable at certain times of the year. The administration has also expressed concerns for allergens and general indoor air quality as well as previous rodent infestations. Finally, other safety and security concerns include a malfunctioning security camera system and a lack of secure entry vestibule. The building utilizes a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun, and the main entry is adjacent to the administrative offices.

It is evident that the administration has a desire to create a vibrant space to meet the needs of its student population. Furniture and other collaborative items spill into the hallways, and while a potential safety hazard, this speaks to their need for additional small collaboratives spaces common in 21st-century education. Typical classrooms in the original building are well sized with flexible furniture in use. These rooms have great potential; addressing the lack of natural light and strategic finish updates would make them into great 21st-century education spaces. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls, sound field audio systems, and a 1 to 1 device policy for students. The classrooms housed in the temporary modular buildings are few, and house three SPED classrooms and the music classrooms. While their size is adequate, the flow through the SPED space is not ideal. Temporary modular buildings are not ideal learning environments in general and are intended to be a temporary solution for overcrowding. The two temporary modular buildings comprise 10% of space on site.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 291 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity drops to an ideal capacity of 278 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. This is primarily because specials, like music and SPED, are housed in the modular buildings. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 335 students, above the ideal capacity. These numbers suggest that the building is above the capacity for what the building can support.

Steps for improvements include life safety, code, and security issues, as a priority, updating finishes as many are approaching the end of their lifespan and are showing wear, particularly the items needing abatement, and address the need to accommodate the growing student population more permanently by transitioning out of the temporary modular spaces.
**Williston Mcvay Elementary**

McVay Elementary is a K-4 elementary school in Williston District 1 of Williams County. The building is comprised of an original building from 1964, and three large temporary modular buildings installed on-site in 2012. The condition of both buildings is good, with the temporary modular buildings being some of the newest in the district. The building is well maintained.

The administration has done a good job updating items around the building as they can in meaningful ways. The exterior brick and temporary modular buildings are in overall good condition, playground equipment was updated in 2012, carpet has been updated in some classrooms, and technology has been updated throughout the building. Some noticeable concerns in the building are the items that do not meet ADA compliance, such as door hardware in the original building, toilet rooms attached to classrooms in the original building, and access to the second floor is impaired as the lift on site is broken. The building systems need attention as the original building is not sprinkled, and the district reports power capacity issues resulting in blown fuses and circuits regularly; all of these are potential life-safety concerns. The building has several fixtures and finishes that need updating and is beginning to show their age, including a playground with poor drainage and lighting that leaves it unusable at certain times of the year. Finally, other safety and security concerns include a lack of secure entry vestibule, though the entry sequence is better than at other buildings in the district. The building utilizes a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun, and the main entrance is adjacent to the administrative offices.

It is evident that the administration has a desire to create a vibrant space to meet the needs of their student population with engaging activities for students throughout the building. Typical classrooms in the original building are well-sized; however, classrooms in the temporary modular buildings are undersized, though they seem to meet the needs of staff and students. All rooms have adequate access to natural light, and some flexible furniture is being used for collaboration. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls, sound field audio systems, and a 1 to 1 device policy for students. The classrooms housed in the temporary modular buildings are a majority of the teaching stations on-site at 80%. Temporary modular buildings are not ideal learning environments in general and are intended to be a temporary solution for overcrowding. The three temporary modular buildings comprise 55% of space on-site and are a concern.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 535 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity stays level at an ideal capacity of 107 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. This is primarily because so many teaching stations are housed in modular buildings. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 438 students, above the ideal capacity. These numbers suggest that the building has some capacity for how it is currently used; however, given the number of teaching stations in temporary modular buildings, the building is well above what the building capacity can support.

Steps for improvements include life safety, code, and security issues, as a priority, updating finishes as many are approaching the end of their lifespan and are showing wear, and address the need to accommodate the growing student population more permanently by transitioning out of the temporary modular spaces.
Williston Bakken Elementary

Bakken Elementary is a 5-6 elementary school in Williston District 1 of Williams County. The building is comprised of an original building from 1956 and was the old high school before the new high school opening in 2016. The building underwent a renovation at that time to accommodate the change to the student population at the building. It is also connected to Williston Middle School, which was built in 2003. There are no temporary modular buildings in use at Bakken Elementary. Overall the condition of the building is good. The building is well maintained.

The administration has done a good job updating items around the building to be appropriate for the age group in the building and make necessary updates to the original building. Some areas of the building have had asbestos issues addressed, and the administration is aware of the rest and plans to address as they are able. Other building updates include fire separation doors added in 2003, wall repair in 2016, significant-finish and equipment upgrades to the auditorium in the last five years, and new kitchen equipment in 2003. Some noticeable concerns in the building are the items that do not meet ADA compliance, such as door hardware in the original building, and some toilet rooms throughout the building. The building systems need attention as the building is only partially sprinkled, and the district reports power capacity issues resulting in blown fuses and circuits regularly; all of these are potential life-safety concerns. It should also be noted that the alarm system is connected to Williston Middle School. The building has several fixtures and finishes that need updating and is beginning to show their age or reach the end of useful life, including exterior windows, several areas of potential asbestos in floors and ceilings that should be tested, the roof, and water damaged ceilings and windows. Finally, other safety and security concerns include a lack of secure entry vestibule. The building utilizes a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun, and the main entrance is adjacent to the administrative offices.

The administration has adjusted well to a building not initially meant for the age of the student population. It is unique to have a dedicated performing arts space on-site at this grade level, and it is a benefit to students to have access to these types of facilities. Typical classrooms are generally well-sized and seem to meet the needs of staff and students. The media center is large and implements flexible use options. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls, sound field audio systems, and a 1 to 1 device policy for students. There is no playground on site, which is not uncommon for this in-between age group and is a policy issued to be addressed by the district. Currently, Williston Middle School occupies several classrooms on the Bakken Elementary side of the building to address their capacity issues. This is not ideal, and separation between schools would be an improvement.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 964 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity drops to an ideal capacity of 865 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 647 students. These numbers suggest that the building has some capacity in its current use and its ideal capacity.

Steps for improvements include should include addressing life safety, code, and security issues as a priority and updating fixtures and finishes as many are showing wear or reaching the end of useful life.
**Williston Middle School**

Williston Middle School is a 7-8 school in Williston District 1 of Williams County. The building is comprised of an original building from 2003 and a temporary modular building installed on-site in 2012. It is connected to Bakken Elementary School, which was the old high school before the new high school opening in 2016. The building is currently undergoing a renovation to be completed in the fall of 2020. Overall the condition of the building is good, and it is one of the newest buildings in the district.

The administration has done a good job keeping the building in top condition and adjusting to growing capacities. The exterior brick and windows are in overall good condition, with only minor leaks reported over the media center. Some interior finishes are starting to show minor wear and could be replaced soon; other areas have already begun to be updated. Williston Middle School is one of the only buildings in the district to be fully equipped with a sprinkler system. It should be noted that the alarm system is connected to Bakken Elementary School. Finally, other safety and security concerns include a lack of secure entry vestibule, though the entry sequence is better than at other buildings in the district. The building utilizes a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun, and the main entrance is adjacent to the administrative offices.

It is evident that the administration is working to adjust to the influx of students in recent years and are adapting the building to fit their needs by enclosing open spaces into more traditional classrooms and using non-traditional spaces for smaller classes. It is unique to have a dedicated performing arts space on-site at this grade level, and it is a benefit to students to have access to these types of facilities. Typical classrooms are generally well-sized with good natural light and seem to meet the needs of staff and students. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls, sound field audio systems, and a 1 to 1 device policy for students. Vehicular circulation is a concern with a high level of congestion. The cafeteria is undersized for the student population and the number of lunch shifts, causing strain on the building. Currently, Williston Middle School occupies several classrooms on the Bakken Elementary side of the building to address their capacity issues. This is not ideal, and separation between schools would be an improvement. The classrooms housed in the temporary modular make up 8% of space on site. Temporary modular buildings are not ideal learning environments in general and are intended to be a temporary solution for overcrowding.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 826 students, once the current remodel is complete. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity drops to an ideal capacity of 638 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 640 students. These numbers suggest that the building will have some additional capacity once the renovation is complete in fall 2020.

Steps for improvements include addressing the minor improvements needed and address the need to accommodate the growing student population more permanently by transitioning out of the temporary modular spaces.
Williston High School

Williston High School is a 9-12 school in Williston District 1 of Williams County. The building was built in 2016 and has multiple additions in progress planned for completion in 2020. Also, on-site is a dedicated CTE building and new athletic fields. The condition of the building is excellent, and it is the latest buildings in the district.

The administration has done

an excellent job keeping the building in top condition and adjusting to growing capacities. As the building is under five years old, there are no significant condition concerns, and the building is still in its new, or like new, condition. The building is fully sprinkled and utilizes a secure entry vestibule, in addition to a buzzer and camera system to allow visitors entry into the building after classes have begun.

It is evident that the administration is working to adjust to the influx of students in recent years and are adapting the building to fit their needs by enclosing open spaces and using non-traditional spaces for smaller classes. They have also addressed this influx by planning for the current building addition. It is unique to have a dedicated CTE building on-site with such robust programs and facility space; it is a benefit to students to have access to these types of facilities. Typical classrooms are generally well-sized with good natural light and seem to meet the needs of staff and students. The building utilizes technology that has become standard in most districts and is integrating it into the curriculum through the use of digital teaching walls, sound field audio systems, and a 1 to 1 device policy for students. Vehicular circulation is a concern with a high level of congestion. The cafeteria is undersized for the student population and number of lunch shifts, causing strain on the building, though the current addition underway should address this concern. Some circulation issues are present, and these should also be rectified in the new additions.

Our capacity calculations found that the building has a Capacity as Used of 1,290 students. When factoring in the educational adequacy of individual spaces, that capacity drops to an ideal capacity of 1,206 students, based on the methodology previously outlined. Data provided by RSP & Associates shows a 2019/2020 enrollment of 1,272 students. These numbers suggest that once the building additions are complete that Williston High School will have some capacity in both how it is currently used and in its ideal capacity.

Steps for improvements include addressing circulation issues noted and accommodating the growing student population.
Conclusions
Williams County has experienced immense change over the last few years, increasing student population and student diversity. Some districts have experienced the effects of it more than others, particularly Williston District 1 and District 8. All school districts in the county have recognized the impact of this change and have undertaken significant building additions or remodeling projects in the last five years. These projects include the Innovation Academy at Williston District 1, additions to the Williston High School, addition and remodel to Ray Public School, the addition and remodel to Eight Mile Public School. The new construction of Missouri Ridge School in District 8, an addition and remodel to Tioga Central Elementary, and the addition to Grenora Public School. These building improvements have and will significantly contribute to the overall condition and ability to deliver 21st-century education to students throughout Williams County.

The study shows that Williston District 1 and District 8 rely heavily on temporary modular buildings, particularly at the elementary level. Temporary modular buildings account for 27% of all elementary space and 10% of all district space in Williston District 1 and makeup 55% of the square footage on-site at Round Prairie Elementary and 71% of the square footage on site at Garden Valley Elementary in District 8. This high reliance on temporary modular buildings for space is a concern as they are not ideal learning environments and should not be long term solutions for accommodating an influx of capacity. Many of these buildings have been in use since well before the 2014 oil boom. Both districts should look for solutions to address the need to accommodate the growing student population in a more permanent manner and transition out of the large percentage of temporary modular space.

The data shows that all districts have some life safety, code, and security issues that need addressing and should be a priority. These include a lack of appropriate secure entry vestibules, areas of buildings that do not meet ADA compliance, and hazardous material testing of floors and ceilings. The study also suggests that there are similar successes throughout the county, including the current use of a camera and buzzer entry system at main entries, updated technology in the classrooms and for student device policies, and updated playground equipment at the elementary level.

The findings of this study show that the buildings throughout Williams County vary in age, condition, and overall suitability to provide quality 21st-century education.
**PERCEPTUAL STUDIES RESULTS**

Raw data and information compiled by consultants about facilities, finances, student opportunities, and enrollment projections may paint a picture than can be interpreted in many ways. It was also essential to get a picture of what perceptions and values might inform the interpretation of the data and information. Thus, the study included two processes that provided insights into the data. The first was a SWOT (*Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats*) analysis conducted with district leadership. The other was a scientifically designed survey to elicit perceptions of community members from each of the County school districts relative to essential issues in the major areas included in the survey. The following paragraphs summarize the finding from these two exercises.

**Williams County School District SWOT Survey**

The Williams County school participate in a SWOT Analysis Survey. The school district Superintendent and School Board members were invited to take the survey. In all cases, the Superintendent and School Board President completed the survey. In some school districts, additional school board members also participated in the survey. In total, 18 individuals participated. The following is the set of questions that were asked:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS - are internal factors that represent the things your organization/school district does well. Strengths are factors where you have full control over and may include programs, facilities, equipment resources, skilled employees, location, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Please identify two factors you would characterize as strengths of your school district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What are you most proud of about your school district?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What do you believe makes your district better than others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What are two things you would not want to see change?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEAKNESSES - are internal factors that hinder your progress. They inhibit your school district from functioning effectively. Identifying weaknesses highlights areas where improvements can be made.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What areas do you wish could be improved about your school district?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What resources do you lack that could make the district even better?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are there internal operational issues that impact the district’s ability to accomplish your mission?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are there any things you believe need to change about your district?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES - are external factors that, when considered, could help your school district/organization enhance overall effectiveness. By identifying possible external opportunities, the school district/organization can be proactive in their approach to communicating and collaborating with external resources.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What opportunities would you like to explore or learn about to collaborate with other districts or entities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What external or creative funding sources might the district be interested in exploring?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What external changes are happening that may offer real opportunities?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THREATS - are external factors that can negatively impact your school district or organizations. These external factors may include economic markets, funding, lack of resources, human resource shortages, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What external trends or changes that you cannot control are you most worried about having an impact on your district?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What possibly negative perspectives might community stakeholders have about the district if any?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Have there been any setbacks for your district due to any community or other area partners?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following chart is a summary of the results from all school districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Skilled/Dedicated staff</td>
<td>• Facility needs/capacities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Small school atmosphere</td>
<td>• Funding from the State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student opportunities</td>
<td>• Applicant pools – lack of highly qualified applicants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong community support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Administrative leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilities - new additions and remodeled areas in some schools.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>Threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More class offerings and enhancements, i.e., Advanced courses and CTE/STEM programs.</td>
<td>• Land transfers – annexations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing and collaborating with other schools.</td>
<td>• Community attitude – in some districts, lack of support for facility needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions
- Facility needs, adequate funding, and hiring and retaining highly qualified staff are the main concerns of the school districts.
- Perceptions of and relationships with neighboring school districts have an impact on future concerns of school districts.
- Several school districts mention collaboration and sharing resources regarding curricular opportunities for students.
- The uncertainty in the sustainability of the main economic driver – oil – is a concern.
Williams County School District Community Engagement Phone Survey
Prime46, with Kim Kemer as the principal researcher, conducted the community engagement survey entitled, Perceptions and Attitudes of School Districts Among Residents of Williams County. A PowerPoint and narrative documents containing the complete report and data are available on the Williams County website.

Introduction
Public input as part of a structured process allows for voices not always heard to participate in an important discussion on the role of public schools in the county. Though other methods to provide an opportunity for public input can be helpful, it may be difficult to put that input into perspective and use a framework that allows for thoughtful examination and meaningful comprehension of the data.

Methodology
This study was conducted via telephone by professional interviewers at a North Dakota based call center. Residents were selected at random from a list of voter records of Williams County residents. Residents were requested by name and asked to verify their address and school district. Interviews were recorded for accuracy, and quality checked before the audio was deleted.

The number of completed interviews was hampered due to participation rates being lower than projected. Despite the lower number of completed interviews, the data is still projectable and has margins of error ranging from +/- 4.66% to 10.23%.

There are six school districts in Williams County. For reporting purposes, two districts are referred to by their common names, Williston District 1 and Williams County 8. There are four other districts in the county. They are Tioga 15, Grenora 99, Ray – Nesson 2, and Trenton – Eight Mile 6 and are referred to as ‘Other Districts’ in the document.

Results
When asked about the factors of quality of life that are most important, residents most often selected “Quality schools and student opportunity,” making it the highest among three factors they were asked to choose from, followed by, “Affordable medical care,” and “Low property taxes.” Residents in Williams County 8 ranked “Quality schools and student opportunity” most important more frequently than the other districts.

Residents interviewed in Williston District 1 and ‘Other Districts’ tend to prefer their home district. Residents interviewed living in Williams County 8 school district indicated a near equal preference for Williston District 1 and, to a lesser degree, a preference for ‘Other Districts’ over their home district. [See Table 1]
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home / Preferred</th>
<th>Williston District 1</th>
<th>Williams County 8</th>
<th>Other Districts</th>
<th>All Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Williston District 1</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams County 8</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Districts</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided No preference</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Table 1] The table shows the home district residents (top row) and the district they prefer (left column). Williston District 1 and Other Districts tend to prefer their home district. Residents in Williams County 8 indicated a near-even split of preference among all three reporting groups. *Some residents that were interviewed had indicated no preference.

When asked about the level to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements read to them, Williams County residents offered the greatest insight into their attitudes towards a range of topics.

Nearly all residents (95%) interviewed agreed that “Students should have the same quality of K-12 school experience, regardless of where they live.” A majority of residents (67%) agreed that “it is acceptable for each school district to provide facilities and student opportunities based on the districts’ resident’s willingness to support the schools.”
Most residents (66%) agree that school board leadership is doing the right things to promote the best student experience within their home district’s financial resources. Residents interviewed also agreed by a large majority (82%) that they would support an increase in taxes only if they were confident with school leadership effectively using resources for a quality education.

Regarding taxes, a near-even percentage (58%) would support taxes to provide for construction on needed space only in their home district. And fewer agreed (43%) they would support taxes to provide for space in a district other than their home district. A large majority (88%) agreed they would want more information before supporting an increase in taxes.

When asked about school facilities in their home district, the smaller districts grouped as ‘Other Districts,’ agreed by a wide margin (82%) that their facilities are ‘entirely adequate’ as compared to the combined opinions of all districts in Williams County (42%). (The following chart shows this discrepancy, illustrating that Williston and Williams 8 view facilities as less adequate.)
That differing account is also evidenced in the ‘Other Districts’ agreement (91%) that the ‘quality of K-12 student experience is adequate as compared to Williston District 1 and Williams County 8.'
The aggregate value of all districts is notably lower (67%). The third area where attitudes varied more widely by districts is again when comparing ‘Other Districts’ to Williston District 1 and Williams County 8. ‘Other Districts’ residents agree (87%) their district has been able to respond to change in student numbers. The county-wide aggregate value of all districts is notably lower (47%).

And lastly, when residents were asked about “support for my school district dissolving or combining with another school district,” residents of Williston District 1 were most in agreement (88%), followed by Williams County 8 (72%) and ‘Other districts’ (54%). The aggregate level of agreement (78%) is a large majority of county-wide residents.

Conclusions
On issues noted as important to the quality of education in Williams County, there is a good amount of agreement among residents surveyed. Below are a few highlights:

- “Quality of schools and student opportunity” was selected most often as important to the quality of life by a majority of residents interviewed
- Their current home district is the preferred district for residents surveyed in Williston District 1 and ‘Other Districts’
- A vast majority of residents surveyed indicated that “Students should have the same quality of K-12 school experience, regardless of where they live.” (Illustrated in the table below)
- A majority of residents surveyed indicated they would support their school district dissolving or combining with another school district.
WILLIAMS COUNTY STUDY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was the scope and intention in this study to explore in-depth the first two of the following organizing questions:

- **What?** – What are the facts? What information can we gather regarding each of the separate areas in the study?
- **So what?**—Upon more in-depth analysis, what do the information and data mean? What are the connections between the different portions of the study? What patterns do they reveal?
- **Now what?** Given what the collection and analysis of the data seem to teach us, what does it all mean for the next steps forward? Does it illuminate any potential pathways ahead?

The major subparts of the study focused on the first two questions. We offer the following analysis as an exploration of the third question, "Now what?" It was clear from the beginning, however, that this study would stop short of recommending a specific solution or outcome. It would not be appropriate, nor would it ensure success if the study made a recommendation for a particular scenario or path forward. We believe that the primary purpose of the study was to illuminate potential pathways ahead that might be explored collaboratively by the stakeholders in the County. Furthermore, the information, data, and analysis provided in the study will significantly inform such a process. We firmly believe that any successful long-range facility planning process must engage critical stakeholders and or their representatives in a collaborative effort.

**Outcomes and Conclusions**

The separate parts of the Williams County K12 Education Study, and their collective analysis, point to several outcomes and conclusions. These observations, particularly the conclusions, represent some of the intersections among the different subparts of the study. These outcomes and conclusions are shared below in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Projections</td>
<td>- There is a critical need for additional space, particularly in Williams 8 and Williston 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment is forecast to increase annually at all levels in the County</td>
<td>- There is a need and great potential for collaborative problem solving across districts that will result in more cost-effective and sustainable solutions than reactionary, short term fixes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• District increases by just nearly 2,000 students</td>
<td>- There is a need in the community for additional housing to accommodate projected growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• (+25.7%) (Annual Range:+4.5% to +5.7% a year)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Elementary increases by about 900 students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• (+23.0%) (Annual Range:+3.2% to +6.2% a year)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Middle School increases by about 400 students
- (+22.3%) (Annual Range: +0.9% to +9.2% a year)
- High School increases by nearly 700 students
- (+34.0%) (Annual Range: +4.5% to +8.8% a year)
- Enrollment exceeds capacity in several buildings currently and will be exacerbated by projected, continued enrollment growth over the next five years.
- The enrollment and capacity crunch is most significant in Williston 1 and Williams 8 and is at a critical stage at the high school level
- Community housing demand/need exceeds the capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Assets</th>
<th>student Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Several buildings have safety, ADA, or basic maintenance needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is an over-reliance on the use of “temporary” facilities (modular classrooms). These are not adequate in a sustainable, long-term facility plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several buildings are over both their capacity as currently utilized, as well as their ideal capacity and are thus inadequate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several buildings are inadequate relative to 21st-century learning needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each district now has a facility appraisal that can inform their long-range facility planning priorities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a need for long-range facility planning, which is collaborative and focused on long-term, sustainable solutions rather than short-term expedient solutions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-range facility planning should include consideration of how large patrons want schools (particularly high schools) to be relative to culture, climate, and student opportunities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Assets</th>
<th>student Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative, long-range facility planning should be informed by needs to improve education adequacy of buildings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative, long-range facility planning should be informed by the expressed desire for student opportunities to be similar across the county.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All districts should continue current efforts, and explore additional opportunities to collaborate in the provision of CTE, special education and extra-curricular opportunities (through NW Area Career and Technical Center;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Stakeholder Engagement Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • The fifteen-year history of enrollment shows a strong correlation between enrollment and the increase in oil industry activity.  
• Taxable valuation increases have increased taxing capacity for capital improvements.  
• Variation in year-to-year taxable valuation makes long-range-financial planning more challenging  
• Despite perceptions to the contrary, the finance formula, and the appreciation of taxable valuation capacity that has accompanied growth, Williams County districts can address facility issues, as other districts in the state have done. | • Any consideration of reorganizing or dissolution of districts must include careful analysis and modeling of the tax revenue, expenditure, and transportation implications for the affected districts and their patrons.  
• Long-range facility planning efforts now have an excellent base of historical information related to enrollment and finance to inform such planning efforts.  

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Engagement Information</th>
<th>Stakeholder Engagement Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • In the SWOT analysis, leadership from all districts expressed a willingness and desire to collaborate with others.  
• “Quality of schools and student opportunity” was selected most often as important to the quality of life by a majority of residents interviewed  
• Their current home district is the preferred district for residents surveyed in Williston District 1 and ‘Other Districts’  
• A vast majority of residents surveyed indicated that “Students should have the same quality of K-12 school experience, regardless of where they live.”  
• A majority of residents surveyed indicated they would support their school district dissolving or combining with another school district to increase student opportunities. | • The SWOT analysis and the community engagement survey provide a foundation that should inform any next efforts to engage in the collaborative long-range facility planning effort.  
• The community engagement survey results support the exploration of collaborative solutions that enhance student opportunities. |
Recommendations

We offer the following recommendations:

1. Each school district in the County should carefully review this report, and as importantly, each of the individual reports that the study included. Each of these reports contains essential and valuable information about different districts.

2. Each school district should consider developing or updating a long-range facility plan, informed by the data and information included in these reports.

3. Consider conducting a long-range facility planning process that is collaborative and inclusive of multiple districts that have the greatest need for such collaboration.
   a. Identify a person or entity to facilitate such a process. This could be the County Superintendent, a current district leader in the County who has the trust and credibility to facilitate the process, or an outside entity or consulting group.
   b. This report includes a section describing what such a process might entail.

4. Use data and information from the study to inform stakeholders regarding projected enrollment, the need for building renovations, the need for additional space, and the need to provide equitable opportunities for all students in the County.

5. Consider forming an Education Coordinating Council in the County that meets regularly (perhaps quarterly) to share information, explore and act on ways to collaborate to increase student opportunities, and explore creative solutions to the quality of life challenges faced by the County. Such a Council might consist of 20-25 participants led by a chairperson selected by the group; such a group might include:
   a. Superintendents from each school district and the County Superintendent
   b. A school board representative from each district
   c. Representative(s) from planning departments of the cities and the County
   d. Representative(s) of State government—elected official(s)
   e. Representative(s) from Realtor’s Association
   f. Representative(s) of business and industry
   g. Representative(s) from medical and mental health entities
   h. A chairperson selected from among the superintendents, or County Superintendent if time demands allow.
   i. Others as needed

6. There is the capacity to build additional needed space within current Century Code requirements (as districts in the County and other growing districts in the state have done). In addition to seeking such solutions locally, continue to study and advocate for legislative actions that might help address funding challenges for immediate and long-range facility needs across the state.
**Reflections on Potential Pathways Forward**

There is no easy or distinct pathway forward to address the challenges impacting Williams County. Without data and information, the most likely scenario is a continued cycle of decisions by district school boards and leadership that potentially creates more challenges and reactions. A coherent pathway forward that affords the greatest chance to impact long-term results positively will require that leaders and stakeholders are informed. Furthermore, it is recommended that leaders and policymakers use the data and information to collaborate and chart a course that will be most beneficial for the most significant number of stakeholders for the long term.

The following graphic presents what the authors of the study perceive as the array of potential pathways.

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**Graphic Representation of the Williams County Status and Potential Paths Forward**

**Status Quo:**
- Each district continues to “do its own thing” or other districts need to experience consequences.

**Williston 1 and Williams 8 Collaborate**
- Seek a solution that maintains boundaries and configurations.
- More likely that a course significantly by funding over districts in Williams 1.

**Williams 8 Decides Its Future: Decision Becomes Trigger**

**District 8 Dissolves**
- Consequences/Pros/Cons

**District 8 Reorganizes with 1 or more other districts**
- Consequences/Pros/Cons

**District 8 Becomes K-12 District**
- Consequences/Pros/Cons

**Impacts/Results**
- Impact on student opportunities?
- Sustainability/Feasibility of the solution?
  - Relative to enrollment projections
  - Relative to facility needs
  - Is it feasible?
  - Relative to fiscal capacity
  - Relative to potential voter/stakeholder support?
  - Impact on/likely reaction of smaller K-12 districts in the county?
  - Impact on quality of life and attractiveness of Williams County to new families and businesses?
  - What steps and collaborative processes would be required of districts impacted in order for the scenario to become a reality?

---

**Interpretation of Graphic Representation**

The scope of this study does not include making a recommendation for THE path forward. The purpose of the study is to provide stakeholders and leaders in Williams County with data and information that illuminate potential ways forward. The graphic above and the analysis that follows are intended to provide such illumination. It would seem that there are a limited number of possible or potential scenarios that could unfold. The following analysis describes each. It is possible, and even desirable, that stakeholders and leaders—the consumers of this report—engage collaboratively to explore further and add to the pros and cons analysis in the outline.

The following is offered merely as a framework for a potential next phase of study and solution-seeking. It should be considered incomplete, and only a template, for possible use by stakeholder groups. Stakeholders are encouraged to think of other pros, cons, and impacts on desired results.
POTENTIAL PATHWAYS - SCENARIOS

I. The Status Quo
In this scenario, each district acts mostly independently. Perhaps there are some attempts to communicate or collaborate with one or more other districts. Still, primarily each district makes decisions given the data and information they have about their circumstances. Though it is a simplification, in the status quo scenario, overcrowding likely continues, stakeholders are not motivated to support bond referendums, and there is a general lack of progress in addressing the challenges. These types of events have already unfolded in the form of action and reaction. Faced with a failed bond referendum and relentless growth projections, Williston 1 terminated the acceptance of high school students from other districts. Williams 8's board decided to become a K-12 district and advanced a bond referendum to help facilitate such a transition. Some Williams 8 board members and patrons reacted, and a recall election ensued. Though understandable, these actions and reactions on the part of both boards tend to be analogous to plugging the crack in the dike within one's reach; but ignoring the hole that one's neighbor faces. If we consider Williams County as an entity made up of several sub-entities, all met with one form or another of the challenges borne from tremendous growth; then, this scenario doesn't work long-term. We are all on the same side of the dike facing the deluge; we will have to work together to solve the problem.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
<th>Impact on Desired Results</th>
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</table>
| Status Quo: Each district continues to “do its own thing”; other districts react, experience consequences. | • Districts exercise the autonomy of addressing problems within their control  
• May satisfy short term issues | • Solutions may create longer-term problems for the individual district or other districts  
• Working in isolation does not leverage resources that collaborating with others may offer | • Likely failure to solve long-term facility deficits, enrollment capacity, and student opportunity challenges.  
• Could result in investment in buildings in the wrong location  
• Continued isolation from other districts |
II. Williston 1 and Williams 8 Collaborate

In this scenario, the two districts feeling the most considerable pressure and challenges in the County attempt to collaborate in response to the problems of overcrowding. In this scenario, the assumption is that both districts likely maintain their current boundaries and configurations. This scenario has also included discussions and proposals for Williams 8 to assist Williston 1 in the construction of new high school space. Exploration of this scenario seems to be ongoing, though there was an impasse at one point.

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<tr>
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<th>Cons</th>
<th>Impact on Desired Results</th>
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</table>
| Williston 1 and Williams 8 Collaborate: Seek a solution that maintains boundaries and configurations | • Supported by those who want to maintain the status quo relative to boundaries and configurations  
• Has the potential to solve projected HS overcrowding for Williston 1 at least for the short term  
• Has the potential to create a long-term solution that affords all students in both districts the comprehensive opportunities many desire for their students  
• Potentially provides continued access by Williams 8 to a broad curricular and extra-curricular opportunities  
• It is at least an attempt to collaborate and recognize the impact of each district’s decisions and circumstances on the other. | • Begs the question, how large a high school enrollment does Williston 1 want to have long term? (At what point do the two districts need two high schools?)  
• May perpetuate perceptions from some that the burden for provision of high school facilities and curriculum are borne disproportionately by Williston 1  
• May require additional taxation in both districts  
• Not a comprehensive solution to facility challenges at middle and elementary levels in the two districts | • The larger Williston High School becomes, the more challenging opportunities in co/extra-curricular areas become. (More competition for teams, roles in the musical, etc.)  
• Larger high schools may have more significant challenges in school culture and personalized student engagement |
III. Williams 8 Decides Its Future: Decision Becomes Trigger

This scenario recognizes that Williams 8 has several options available to it and that the leaders and stakeholders must decide. Furthermore, this scenario recognizes that once Williams 8 decides its future identity, that decision triggers decisions other districts in the County may have to make or collaborate to make as well. Two of the scenarios available to Williams 8 (dissolution and reorganization) would trigger extensive involvement of one or more other districts, and consequential steps involving extensive work.

1. Williams 8 Becomes a K-12 District

This scenario assumes that the board and the voters approve a referendum for space to accommodate a transition to offering high school curriculum and programming. The February 25, 2020 referendum was an attempt to achieve such an outcome, envisioning the construction of a new elementary school and conversion of the middle school to a high school. Even with the failure of the referendum, this scenario could become a choice in the future, provided there are short term solutions for providing or accessing high school programming for the district’s 9-12 students.

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<tr>
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<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
<th>Impact on Desired Results</th>
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</table>
| Williams 8 Becomes a K-12 District| • The district’s students no longer rely on the other County school districts for grades 9-12 attendance and programming.  
• Other school districts in the County can accept or not accept students from other districts based upon their circumstances  
• There are models and examples in the state of districts successfully transitioning from K-6 or K-8 to K-12 districts.  
• Maintains the district’s autonomy and historical identity. | • Likely requires passage of a bond referendum and subsequent additional taxation  
• May represent a significant change for grade 9-12 students relative to breadth of offerings, depending on what the district affords in programming  
• May impact families who are happy sending their children to high schools in other districts that may be geographically closer to them, or whose programming is preferred by them. | • Great potential for positive impact, depending on the depth and breadth of programming afforded in the new high school.  
• May impact budgets of other districts in the county who have received Williams 8’s 9-12 grade students in the past  
• Where high school facilities/programming are offered becomes an essential factor and might be best determined in collaboration with Williams 8 residents as well as with other districts. |
2. Williams 8 Decides to Reorganize
The following definition and steps are cited on the Department of Public Instruction’s website. (Also, the addendum to this report contains a PowerPoint prepared by DPI detailing the reorganization process). Jodi Johnson, who serves as the Williams County District Superintendent, would also be a valuable and necessary resource in pursuing the reorganization process.

https://www.nd.gov/dpi/districtsschools/finance-operations/school-district-organization/reorganization

Definition: School District Reorganization is a process provided for in North Dakota Century Code Chapter 15.1-12, which allows two or more contiguous school districts, or parts of two or more contiguous school districts, to complete the reorganization process and become a single new reorganized district.

Threshold Criteria: The school boards of the involved districts must initiate the process.

Process Steps:
- After the districts involved have voted to pursue the development of a reorganization plan, they move forward with the process of actually developing a proposed reorganization plan.
- When the plan is complete, and board members have voted to approve the completed plan, it is forwarded to the County Superintendent or Designee who schedules a hearing before the county committee.
- If the county committee approves the plan, the plan is submitted to the State Board of Public School Education, who must also review and approve the plan. If the State Board approves the plan of Public School Education, the plan must be voted on and approved by a majority vote in each school district involved in the reorganization plan.
- Approved reorganizations are always effective on July 1 in the year following the approval of the reorganization.

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<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
<th>Impact on Desired Results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Williams 8 Decides to Reorganize: As described above, this is not a decision that can be made in isolation.</td>
<td>• If achieved successfully, the newly constituted district would, by definition, due to the prescribed process, have the support of the State Board of Public School Education as well as the voters of the two or more districts that combined to create the new district. • Would result from significant</td>
<td>• Would require significant time to achieve the multiple steps involved in the process • Would require that the collaborating districts agree on a short-term scenario to address immediate capacity and overcrowding issues (where would 9-12 students attend pending drafting of and approval of the</td>
<td>• Great potential for positive impact, depending on the details of the reorganization plan approved • Would have tax implications for any districts participating in the reorganization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaboration and problem-solving</td>
<td>reorganization plan, for example</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Would require modeling of determination of new taxation implications for residents of the newly formed district</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. Williams 8 Decides to Dissolve

The following definition and steps are cited on the Department of Public Instruction’s website. (Also, the addendum to this report contains a PowerPoint prepared by DPI detailing the dissolution process). As with the process of reorganization, Jodi Johnson, who serves as the Williams County District Superintendent, would also be a valuable and necessary resource in pursuing the dissolution process.

**Definition:**

Voluntary dissolution is a process provided for in North Dakota Century Code Chapter 15.1-12, through which a school district can determine “that it is in the best interest of its students to dissolve the school district and become attached to surrounding school districts.” The process provides a vehicle for a school district, as a North Dakota political subdivision, to end its existence and become attached to other contiguous school districts.

**Threshold Criteria:**

The board of the school district involved must adopt a motion that puts the district into dissolution.

**Process Steps:**

- After the school board has decided to dissolve the district, the school board is encouraged to consult with its patrons to determine where the patrons want their children to go to school and what part of the school district’s land should be attached to those school districts.
- That division of the land and its taxable valuation should be proportionate to where the resident students of the district have indicated where they will attend school after the dissolution.
- The county superintendent or designee schedules a hearing before the county committee. At the hearing, the board of the dissolving district is encouraged to propose a particular manner of dissolution.
- The county committee approves the dissolution and decides which land of the dissolving school district will be attached to which contiguous high school districts. The county committee’s decision is then submitted to the State Board of Public School Education for approval.
- After the State Board’s consideration and approval, the dissolution becomes active on the following July 1 or another date specified by the county committee.
- The preferred dissolution date is August 15.

The Department of Public Instruction website provides additional resources that detail the steps and assist districts in the dissolution process: [https://www.nd.gov/dpi/districtsschools/finance-operations/school-district-organization/dissolution](https://www.nd.gov/dpi/districtsschools/finance-operations/school-district-organization/dissolution)

Among other resources, the website includes forms that support the steps in the process. One form, for example, the Voluntary Dissolution Questionnaire, would enable each resident in
the dissolving district to express which of the contiguous districts they would like their children to attend, as outlined in the first bulleted step in the process above.

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</table>
| **Williams 8 Decides to Dissolve** | - The dissolution process steps require significant input from patrons and significant potential choice in the division of district land and assets  
  - The process hopefully results in an equitable distribution of land to contiguous districts  
  - The process creates a potential foundation for significant collaboration among the five remaining/newly configured districts in the County | - Dissolution represents a significant and potentially disrupting change  
  - Dissolution represents an ending of a historic entity  
  - Tax implications may be negative (an increase) for some patrons  
  - Dissolution still leaves tough decisions for each of the contiguous districts relative to their capacities to absorb students.  
  - Facility needs will still need to be addressed (deferred maintenance, inadequate spaces), potential overcrowding | - Great potential for positive or negative impact, depending on the details of the reorganization plan approved |
**SUMMARY**

Williams County, North Dakota, enjoys both challenges and opportunities resulting from the boom in economic and population growth brought about by the oil and gas industry. In times of such accelerated growth, achieving or maintaining the quality of life may be more challenging. The study is based on the belief that the quality of the educational systems in Williams County is essential to the overall quality of life. The Williams County K12 Education Study was conducted to provide data, information, and analysis that might inform planning and decisions that create long-term and sustainable K12 education opportunities for all students in the County.

The study, which was commissioned and supported by the County Commission, consisted of studies analyzing data and information from several separate but overlapping domains: Curriculum and Student Opportunity Study; Financial and Enrollment Study; Demographics and Enrollment Study; and Facility Study. Also, the study solicited perceptual information from two groups. A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) engaged superintendents and board presidents. A phone survey engaged over 400 patrons to gauge public perceptions regarding K12 issues related to the study.

The County and each stakeholder have access to each of the separate studies, as well as the Executive Summary. The organizing concept in the study was to ask the subcontractors to explore the relevant data with this construct in mind:

- **What?** What are the facts? What information can we gather regarding each of the significant areas in the study? This information may be presented in narrative form, in charts or graphs.
- **So what?**—Upon more in-depth analysis, what do the information and data mean? What do the charts, graphs, and data sets tell us? What connections exist among the different portions of the study? What patterns does it reveal?
- Finally, the authors of the Executive Summary, attempted to explore: **Now what?** Given what the collection and analysis of the data seem to teach us, what does it all mean for the next steps forward? Does it illuminate any potential pathways ahead?

Ultimately it is up to the stakeholders to explore the information in the individual reports and the executive summary and determine “Now What?” The report shall not be misused, or portions of the report quoted and attributed to the authors or taken out of context to support perspectives not included in the report.

In addition to the analysis provided in the “Potential Pathways Forward” and “Recommendations, “ an addendum to this report gives an example from lessons learned as the West Fargo School District conducted successful Long-Range Facility Planning and subsequent bond referendums in response to growth similar to that experienced in Williams County.
ADDENDUM - EXAMPLE LONG RANGE FACILITY PLANNING AND BOND REFERENDUM INFORMATION

Pathways to Passage of a School Bond Referendum

Prepared by Dr. David Flowers

Introduction
In North Dakota, passing a bond referendum is more complicated than in most other states. Century Code requires that at least a 60% majority approve a ballot measure to allow a school board to indebt the organization and levy the necessary mills. This report is shared as a part of the Williams County K12 Education study as an additional offering that may help in the future since there has been a history of failed referendum attempts. The report is based on the experience of Dr. David Flowers, principal coordinator of the Williams County Study. It is reflective of his experience in helping with the long-range facility planning process for three bond referendums totaling over $200 million for new and remodeled facilities in West Fargo, one of the fastest-growing districts (along with Williams County) in the state. Each referendum vote well exceeded the 60% threshold.

Process
The process is essential. In the author’s experience, the key ingredients of a successful process are:

1. Transparency
2. Effective long-range facilities planning, including engagement of critical stakeholders in the process and utilization of accurate data and information
3. School board unanimity
4. a shared approach to the referendum campaign between the board/administration and an effective community-based “vote yes” committee.

Transparency and Trust
School boards and administration must establish a high degree of trust with the owners of the district if they are to ask them to increase their taxes. Transparency means having the planning process, data, information, and decision-making open to the public and the media. Transparency also means outlining the process to be followed upfront. It also means being clear that the process is meaningful, not an exercise to affirm a foregone decision already made by administration or school board.

Effective Long-Range Facility Planning Process
An effective planning process starts with gathering as much data and information as possible. The types of data and information needed are exactly the categories selected for the Williams County K12 Education Study. This study provides a tremendous wealth of information that can be used to inform county-wide collaborative processes or individual district planning.

- **Facility Assessment**—Basic information needed by planners and decision-makers in this category include information and answers to the following questions. It is advisable to have an architect assist in the assessment of the facilities, as well as to
serve as a resource on any long-range facility planning task force. It is most useful to compile this information in a binder or a digital file accessible to all members of any planning task force.

- What are the current facilities, and how are they being utilized?
- What is the age of the facility, and when were additions made?
- Floor plans and site plans
- What is the condition of the facilities? Are there code issues, safety issues? Has there been deferred maintenance that left certain systems in need of repair or investment (for example, HVAC, roofing, exterior things sidewalks and parking lots, asbestos, etc.)
- What is the capacity of the facility, and to what degree is that capacity being utilized or exceeded?
- Is the space adequate for its use? Does it meet accepted standards of adequacy in terms of square footage? Is it a long-term sustainable facility? (Are there temporary or modular structures?)
- Are commons spaces adequate for current and expected enrollments? (Cafeteria, gymnasium, library/media)
- Etc.

**Enrollment Projections**—The usual methodology for making enrollment projections is the cohort survival formula, which is based on past enrollment and trends. It is possible to do such projections internally using district staff familiar with the formula. On the other hand, professional companies such as the one engaged in the Williams County study (RSP and Associates) utilize more sophisticated and effective modeling taking into account several other variables. Because enrollment is a primary driver of new facility needs, the enrollment projections must be accurate and believable. In West Fargo, two bond referendums in 2009-10 failed, and a reason given by many was that they did not trust the board and administration nor believe that growth was going to materialize as had been projected by the district.

**Dr. Flowers engaged RSP and Associates form Overland Park, Kansas, in the process of getting a professional, outside, and objective assessment of the enrollment projections. The following minimum information can provide a compelling picture of future challenges that can hopefully help convince voters of the need.**

- Enrollment history going back 5 to 10 years
- Current facility capacities and utilization
- Projected future enrollment

As an example of how such data can paint a compelling picture, the following chart from JLG architects, and with projections provided by RSP and Associates, reflects this data for all of Williams County. The similarly-formatted charts are for specific districts that are projected to grow rapidly over the next few years are even more compelling. The one shown here for the entire county clearly shows that there will be insufficient space in the county in the next five years, particularly in light of ideal capacity. The “capacity as utilized” in the following chart reflects the use of space that is not considered adequate or sustainable as a long-term solution (modular/portables). Those districts in the county that are growing rapidly and that have utilized portables rather than more sustainable brick and mortar construction
may already be exceeding ideal capacity, and the growth in enrollment is projected to continue.

- **Fiscal Factors and Capacity**—This is, of course, a vital domain. Planners need to know and understand the district’s financial picture. Typically such a picture would include many of the following and would be provided by the business manager or superintendent. Much of this information is provided for each district in the County as a part of the Williams County study.
  - Revenue and expenditure budgets going back several years
  - History of assessed valuation
  - Capacity—how many dollars one mill raises in the district
  - What is the impact of any potential referendum scenario/millage on a homeowner (perhaps expressed as a dollar amount per $100,000 of home value)
  - Whether the district has a current levy for sinking and interest/repayment of debt
  - Whether any bonded indebtedness is scheduled to be retired in the next few years
  - If there is a building fund levy (if so, how much does it raise annually, how is it being utilized, how much of it is already committed to debt service?)

- **Curricular and Student Opportunity Needs**—Often, the staff has prepared a list of perceived needs in this area. Perhaps overcrowding has made it impossible to offer art and music at the elementary level in a dedicated classroom space. Perhaps growth has compromised the district’s ability to offer physical education because there is not enough gym space. Maybe Career and Technical Education spaces are inadequate or need additional equipment because of evolving technology impacts. Ultimately, the task force needs to know about such concerns and will need to weigh what to include in any recommendations in the Long Range Facility Plan. Are these things, “wants, needs, or imperatives?”
**Collaborative Long Range Facilities Planning Task Force**—Each of the three bondreferendums passed in West Fargo over nine years began with a recommendation made by a collaborative stakeholder group. The recommendation was made to the school board based on their collaborative process. The board ultimately tweaked and approved the task force recommendation and then set a date for the referendum.

- **Task Force Makeup**: The group must be large enough to be inclusive of key stakeholder groups, but not so large as to be unwieldy in the consensus-building process. Typically the task forces in West Fargo were about 40 members. Some of the members were staff who participated in discussions and served as resources, but did not “weigh-in” on consensus “votes.” We found that it was advisable to make sure that non-staff members/community representatives formed the majority and that such members be representative of diverse views relative to any past/failed referendums.

Examples of essential constituencies to be considered include:

- Parents of students from different grade levels and different portions of the community, and representing any racial, ethnic and economic diversity;
- Teachers from different grade levels (elementary, middle, high school);
- Administrators from different levels;
- Representatives of the city and county government (planning department or commission very helpful);
- Representatives of the business community
- School board representative(s)—no more than two, with no greater voice or vote than any other member of the task force
- “Non-voting” resource members who serve to provide information and answer critical questions: business manager, director of facilities/grounds, an architect, activities/athletic director.

- **Meetings/Process**—Typically, the task force would meet evenings every other week, or every three weeks, in a series of about 5-7 meetings, each about two hours in duration. On the following page is an outline of one of the long-range facility planning processes from West Fargo. The goal is to help the task force members become the most informed people in the community regarding the district’s facilities and needs. The meetings are a process of studying and discussing all of the information presented, and then ultimately reaching consensus on what should be included in a long-range-facilities plan, and what to recommend to the board for any needed bond referendum(s) and the timing of these appeals to the voters. The chair or facilitator may be an outside consultant or someone internally who has the skill set to organize and facilitate the work of the task force. In West Fargo, the superintendent, Dr. David Flowers, planned and facilitated the work of the Long Range Facilities Task Forces. It is advantageous to use some type of response software or survey app to rapidly gauge the degree of consensus on any question before the group.
Initiating the Process—At the first meeting of the task force it is essential to do introductions, give an overview of the “charge” of the group, help them understand what power they do and do not have, to whom they will report, how often and when they will meet, etc. Typically such a group provides their final report or recommendations to the school board. It should be clarified, however, that such recommendations are not binding on the school board, which may alter, amend, or even reject the recommendations. In other words, the work of the task force is advisory. In the author’s experience, the school board accepted and acted to move the task force’s recommendations forward with minor changes.

Establishing Norms—Also, at the first meeting, the facilitator needs to help the group establish its operational norms. It is helpful to start with some suggested norms, and then let the group offer additions or amendments. The norms address how the group will conduct its work, how members will treat one another, and how decisions will be made. Sample starting point norms follow.

- We will start and end on time
- We will be present and attentive (no sidebars, no distractions from cell phones, etc.)
- We will be respectful and listen to one another’s opinions and input without interruptions
- Etc.

The author recommends that decisions be made by consensus, but consensus needs to be defined by the group. For example, if some sort of response software or app is used, it is suggested that 80% or more agreeing or strongly agreeing with a suggested action or recommendation constitutes consensus.

The following are examples from the 2011 facilities planning process that ultimately resulted in the passage of an $82.5 million referendum to create a two-feeder-system model in West Fargo, with two middle schools, two 9-12 high schools, and two new elementary schools to accommodate projected growth.

This following is an example of “charge” or overall goal assignment given the 40-member task force at the beginning of its work. The goal is to:

“To draft a long-range facilities plan that projects the future space and program needs of students and staff, and aligns them with the community’s values and ability to support financially.”

This table shows possible scenarios identified by the task force to address the needs recognized by the task force. This slide reflected work several meetings into the group’s work after they had reviewed enrollment projections, facility assets, and capacity utilization. At this point, they had reached a consensus that growth was occurring and would soon exceed capacity at every level, and that solutions were needed to the space issues at every level. The task then, as reflected in the slide, was to come up with and then discuss the merits of different scenarios that could address the space issues.

**Projected NEED 2015: 687 spaces at elementary; 750 MS; 666 HS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A. Elementary Space/Cost</th>
<th>B. MS Space/Cost</th>
<th>C.HS Space/Cost*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1100: Two 550 student buildings: $22 m</td>
<td>1200, expandable to 1500; $33.3 m</td>
<td>1500: $26.8 m (add’l 900 seats)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>950: One 550; one 400 student building: $20.3 m</td>
<td>900, expandable to 1200; $28 m</td>
<td>1200, expandable to 1500; $22.8 m (add’l 600 seats)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>780: One 550; expand Horace (230): $14.6 m</td>
<td>600, expandable to 1200; $22.75 m</td>
<td>900, expandable to 1200 or 1500; $17m (add’l 300 seats)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>630: One 400; expand Horace: $12.9 m</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>550: One 550: $11 m; monitor need for add’l space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>400: One 400 student elementary: $9.3 m</td>
<td></td>
<td>*Add $400,000 to retro-fit WFHS for 9th grade center/academy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This slide shows a tool that the task force used to analyze the scenarios under consideration. The questions, with the original “charge” of the task force in mind, were:

- Is the proposed scenario a “good” solution—does it address the problem?
- Is it a long-term solution or a short-term “band-aid” approach?
- How expensive is it? Is it affordable given what we have learned about the district’s financial picture?
- Is it politically salable?

### Cost vs. long-term benefit matrix

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Cost; harder sell politically</td>
<td>Shorter term solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why? (High cost/ineffective)</td>
<td>Why Bother? (Low cost, but ineffective, short-sighted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Not? (Lower cost; more reasonable solution)</td>
<td>You want WHAT? (May be perceived as Cadillac)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower cost; easier to sell politically</td>
<td>More advantages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### School Board Unanimity

Once the task force recommendation is shared with the school board, it is then the board’s job to act on it. If the recommendation from the task force is to ask the voters to support a bond referendum for new and remodeled space, then it is critically important that the board is unified in their decision. There are two critically essential purposes in having a collaborative task force to make recommendations to the school board. First of all, if the group is well constituted, it represents a broader diversity of opinion from across staff and community, and any consensus it produces should carry significant weight and validity. Secondly, the school board delegates such work to a task force because they don’t have the time in addition to their regular business to study the issues at the depth the task force does.

Nevertheless, the school board has the ultimate authority and responsibility to act. What is essential is that the members realize that a split vote has consequences. If the board decides to ask voters to indebt the district and the decision to do so is not unanimous, it sends a terrible message to the public. Many voters will conclude, “If the school board members cannot agree that we need these new facilities, then why should I support increasing my taxes?” Or, “It appears that the board doesn’t know what they’re doing, so I will not support the referendum.” Once the decision is made by the school board to ask voters to consider authorizing the board to
indebt the district, bond counsel may be consulted to make sure the mill levy needed is accurate and specified correctly. A date must be set for the election and coordinated with the county, and the specific ballot language must be drafted. Setting a date for the election can be a strategic decision that has potential consequences as well. The timing of the beginning of needed construction may be critical to coincide with the short construction season in North Dakota. This may trigger the need for a special election rather than an additional ballot measure at a general election already scheduled. Running an election comes with costs, for which the district may be criticized.

Additionally, some critics may argue that a special election is an attempt to limit the number of voters who turn out, hoping that most will be parents and staff. The school board certainly needs to weigh these considerations in scheduling a vote. Following is an example notice from the 2011 West Fargo referendum. Because the district was in dire need of new facilities and needed to begin construction immediately after the election, if it passed, the school board determined that a special election in May was required.

EXAMPLE NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on Tuesday, May 24, 2011, a special election will be held in West Fargo Public School District No. 6 of Cass County, North Dakota, for the purpose of submitting to the voters of the School District, the question as to whether the following Initial Resolution for the issuance of general obligation bonds adopted by the School Board of the School District on March 28, 2011, at a special meeting of the School Board duly called and held, shall be approved:

BE IT RESOLVED by the School Board of West Fargo Public School District No. 6 of Cass County, North Dakota (the “School District”) that it is necessary and expedient for the School District to issue its general obligation school building bonds as hereafter described:
1. The maximum amount of bonds proposed to be issued is $82,500,000.
2. The purpose for which the bonds are proposed to be issued is to provide funds, together with any other funds available, to construct and equip a high school, a new middle school and new elementary schools, including gymnasiums, to construct and equip additions to school buildings, to remodel, renovate, improve and equip school buildings, to purchase land and acquire property for school purposes, to make site improvements to school property and to construct, remodel, improve and equip co-curricular and athletic facilities.
3. That assessed valuation of all taxable property in the School District as defined in N.D.C.C. 21-03-01, is $1,772,404,183 as last finally equalized for the year 2010.
4. The total amount of bonded indebtedness of the School District, all issued for school building purposes, is $57,260,100, less amounts on hand in sinking funds for the payment thereof, $1,686,887.

s/ Karen Nitzkorski
President

ATTEST:
/s/ Mark P. Lemer
AND YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED AS FOLLOWS:
That the polling places for holding the election will be as follows:
Harwood Community Center 210 1st Avenue Southeast, Harwood, ND
Westside Elementary School 945 7th Avenue West, West Fargo, ND
Veterans Memorial Arena 1201 7th Avenue East, West Fargo, ND
Horace Senior Center 214 Thue Court, Horace, ND
Sheyenne 9th Grade Center 800 40th Avenue East, West Fargo, ND
And you are further notified that the polls of the election will be open at 7:00 a.m., CT, and
will remain open continuously thereafter until 8:00 p.m., CT, of that day, and that the election is
to be held on Tuesday, May 24, 2011.

DATED: March 28, 2011.
BY THE ORDER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF WEST FARGO PUBLIC SCHOOL
DISTRICT NO. 6 OF CASS COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA.

/s/ Mark P. Lemer
Business Manager

Shared Responsibility for a Referendum Campaign
In running a campaign leading up to the vote, there are many factors to consider, which increase
the likelihood of success. The author has assembled a “playbook” based on experience and
based on advice from others, such as the DLR Group of architects who advise and assist school
districts with bond referendum passage. A shared responsibility between the
administration/board staff and a “vote yes” community committee is an important consideration
and one that the author has utilized successfully. A bond referendum is a political campaign. As
such, the superintendent, school board, and staff cannot expend taxpayer dollars or employee
time on such a campaign. Their responsibility, and what they CAN do, is to provide data and
information.

The community committee, on the other hand, can take that information and create brochures,
yard signs, television ads, social media appeals, etc. advocating a “yes” vote. Indeed, an
individual or an organized group could also use that same information provided by the
administration/board and use the same mechanisms to advocate a “no” vote. In the author’s
experience, the 20/60/20 rule holds true. This theory holds that in a vote of this nature, 20% of
the voters will support it regardless. These voters have perhaps vested voters or ones that, in
general, have a generosity of spirit toward children and schools. Another 20%, this theory holds,
will vote “no” almost regardless of how compelling the needs or how convincing and coherent
the arguments in favor. Perhaps they are actively anti-tax persons, or for whatever reasons are
not supportive of schools or possibly other taxing entities. So if we subscribe to the 20/60/20
rule, the campaign is for the hearts and minds of the 60% who might go either way. In a state
where Century Code requires a 60% majority for school referendums, we must capture at least
2/3 of the “middle” 60%. The pages following this report include slides that the author used in
each campaign to help everyone involved know their role.
Summary/Conclusion
The key to gaining public support for a bond referendum lies in collaboratively developing, with input from key stakeholders, a coherent long-range facility plan. This plan must be based on a comprehensive review of critical data and information, including at a minimum:

- An objective assessment or audit of current facility assets;
- A review of the past and projected enrollment and demographics
- An appraisal of critical needs affecting student opportunity and the adequacy of current facilities to meet these needs
- A review of financial circumstances, including the capacity to support additional bonded indebtedness

Process matters. How these elements are reviewed and by whom is important. A collaborative process involving key stakeholders helps build trust and transparency. With the completion of the Williams County Education Study, leaders, stakeholders, policy-makers have the raw materials outlined above. Whether they take the next steps to engage in meaningful, long-range strategic facility planning is in their power to decide. The long-range facility plan is foundational. Beyond the work of the task force, and the school board’s decision to go forward with a referendum, lies the important work that will determine whether the voters agree to authorize the school board to indebted the district and construct the hoped-for facilities.
Pathway to Success

Long-Range Facility Plan
West Fargo Public Schools
Fall 2015

Two Types of Voters Need Information and Support

• Vested Voter—A registered voter whose children will directly benefit at some point from a successful bond election, as well as registered district employees living in the district.

• Invested Voter—Everyone else—Voter who are owners of the district because they live in the district and pay taxes in the district’s support.
Common Reasons that Bond Issues Fail

1. Apathy in vested voters
2. Tax increase considered unreasonable
3. Consequence of failure not fully conveyed
4. Split board of education
5. Facility design, size, features, location not fully decided or communicated
6. Poor/weak district leaders and credibility

7. Consensus solution not adopted by the board
8. Education effort ignored special interest/demographic groups
9. Education effort poorly organized
10. District let “yes” committee drive the education effort rather than coordinating a collaborative effort.
Coordinated, Dual-Path Communication Campaign

Vested Voter Informers
- District Leadership
- District Prepares the “Bible” to educate all groups
- School Leadership is engaged and accountable
- Targeted Information is Presented; Reminders Delivered
Result: Vested Voters Are Informed

Invested Patrons
- Visible Steering Committee
- Steering Committee uses “Bible” to promote a Yes vote
- Community Leadership Informed/Engaged
- Targeted Promotional Information Presented/Reminders Delivered
Result: Community Patrons Are Informed

Sample/Possible Community Committee Organization Structure

Supt./BOE:
Dist. Leadership Committee: Advisory/ Factual Information Provision

Community Committee Co-Chairs
Yes Committee:
1_2_3_4_5_6_7_8_9_10_11_12_13 etc.

Business 1_2
1_2

Publicity 1_2
1_2

Finance/Endorsements 1_2
1_2

Canvas 1_2
1_2

Voter ID 1_2
1_2

Transp./Daycare/Callers/Poll Watchers

Political Entities/Civic Groups/Individuals

Neighborhoods/Telephone

Speaker/Media/Senior Citizens/Brochures/Fact Sheets

Voter ID Absentee Voters
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks to Vote</th>
<th>District Leadership Committee</th>
<th>Vested Voter Informers</th>
<th>Community Steering Comm.</th>
<th>Invested Voter Informers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9—Sept 13-19</td>
<td>(Poll, discuss, responsibilities, detailed roles for each group in each role as needed)</td>
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<td>8—Sept 20-26</td>
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<td>7—Sept 27-Oct 3</td>
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<td>6—Oct 4-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>5—Oct 11-17</td>
<td><strong>(Sample Template; include as many weeks as necessary to provide a planning calendar for the campaign)</strong></td>
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<td>4—Oct 22-28</td>
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<td>3—Nov 1-7</td>
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<td>2—Nov 8-14</td>
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**Ethics—What CAN Vote Yes Committees, Board Members, PTOs Do/Not Do?**

*In general, the law forbids using public funds to urge voters to vote for or against a referendum.*

**Can Do**

- Hold informational meetings in district facilities after business hours if the district allows other political organizations to do likewise
- Distribute factual information produced by the district
- Post signs and distribute materials encouraging “yes” votes OFF district facility/grounds

**Can’t Do**

- Use district resources (paper, copy machines, etc.) to produce material that encourages a “yes” or a “no” vote
- Present a pro-referendum message at meetings held during the day in district facilities
- Post referendum signs/posters/stickers in a district facility or on district grounds
Consider these as possible “must dos” prior to launching campaign publicly

• Position statement to guide content development
• 1 minute “elevator speech” with position statement information
• FAQ document with most common questions asked by public. (A living document, probably 100 Qs and As by the time of the election)
• Financial impact statement in annual, monthly costs and scalable for different taxpayers.
• Specific terms of bond issue in bulleted form

Consider these as possible “must do’s” prior to launching campaign publicly

• Consequences of failure statement from district leadership
• Educational benefits of projects in bulleted form, by building and grade. Include every building and program that will be affected educationally
• Presentation quality site plans/floor plans
• Fact Sheet #1 covering bond scope, schedule, costs, design, ballot language