



CORVALLIS SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

→ Winter Report from the Board

January, 2019

The 2018-19 school year has reached the half-way mark. As we have previously reported, a main focus for this year is to plan for the use of the property purchased last year from the Ravalli Electric Cooperative and to develop sound long-range plans to meet the needs of the district and its growing number of students. The first step was taken in October when we sent a survey to all households in the Corvallis School District asking for input and ideas as we begin the planning process. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond on paper or electronically. With this report we would like to let you know what we heard.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The survey asked respondents to tell us what they viewed as the top two facility needs of the district and to describe a solution or solutions to those issues. We did not provide a pre-determined list of options to choose from. The survey questions were deliberately open-ended so that respondents would be free to express any and all ideas for us to consider. As a result, there was a large variety of responses, but also common themes that emerged. It is not possible to reproduce all the responses word for word here. Although what follows is a summary only, the full responses will be considered as part of the planning process.

WHO RESPONDED?

We received 108 responses, all but six of which were from residents of the district. About 50% of respondents said they had children or grandchildren attending the school. Twelve respondents said they were employees of the district. Respondents were asked to tell us how long they had lived in Corvallis (1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-20 years, 20+ years) and the number of respondents were evenly divided among the first three categories with about 21 to 24 each. However, the 20+ year category had the greatest number of respondents with 35.

WHAT ARE THE NEEDS?

The largest number of responses focused on the need for more classroom space, particularly at the Primary School, but also in the district as a whole. We received 50 responses that listed more classrooms, larger classrooms, updated classrooms or phasing out of the use of temporary modular classrooms as the greatest needs. The lack of an auditorium or performing arts space was the next most frequently mentioned need and was listed by 26 respondents. The need for better traffic flow and more parking was identified by 19 respondents. Similarly, 19 respondents listed more gym space as a need. More lunchroom space was mentioned by 8 respondents, 2 respondents listed playground improvements as a need, 2 wanted more vocational education space, and 6 respondents mentioned security and safety concerns.

Eleven respondents said they had no concerns and 6 respondents told us that their chief concerns were high taxes and fiscal responsibility. Three respondents said that more resources or pay for teachers was the greatest need and two respondents offered criticism of teachers. Some deficiencies were mentioned by no more than one respondent. These included: deferred maintenance, heating systems, bus routes, lack of an organic farm, and lack of private space for parents to meet with teachers. One respondent was concerned about poorly educated students, one respondent thought that the district needed to analyze its use of existing facilities, one respondent suggested rethinking how teaching is done in schools, and one respondent was concerned about potential toxins on the former REC property. This input and all future input will be considered and factored into decisions going forward.

WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS?

A number of solutions were offered to the issues identified, although 11 respondents said they had no suggestions. Two recommended involving the community in planning and one suggested hiring a consultant. A large number of responses (30) focused on ideas for constructing more classrooms, the majority suggesting the REC property as the location. Most suggested an elementary school, but one respondent preferred a new high school and one respondent specifically did not want an elementary school. An auditorium or performing arts building was suggested in 15 responses. Additional gym space was suggested by 14 respondents, some of whom favored a Middle School gym, others a High School gym, one a Primary School gym, with 6 not specifying. Fixing traffic flow patterns and parking issues was the suggestion of 14 respondents, and a few offered specific plans for how to do so. Two respondents recommended lunchroom expansion and 3 recommended security measures. Although how to pay for any improvements was not one of the questions, running a bond or levy was suggested by 8 respondents; 2 respondents suggested grants and private fundraising; and 6 respondents said they wanted no additional taxes. Two respondents suggested eliminating non-resident students and another suggested limiting enrollment in an unspecified manner.

As with the question about needs, there were some individual responses that didn't fit into any category. One respondent suggested adding a second story to single story buildings; one suggested more buses, one suggested an auto shop, one wanted to modernize existing space; one suggested reconfiguring grade levels without building; one recommended hiring more teachers; one suggested school consolidation; and one respondent suggested having less sports. One respondent suggested exploring new kinds of learning environments, while another suggested rethinking learning and involving students and staff in designing new construction.

GOING FORWARD

What are the next steps? The district is currently in the process of interviewing architectural firms to help us understand the costs and feasibility of various ideas that have been suggested thus far by the public and through the district's own facility needs assessment. Professional expertise will help us translate concepts into a site plan that will enable us to see how the High School/ Middle School campus with the addition of the recently purchased property, as well as the Primary School campus, can be made to function better and where there is room for future expansion of existing buildings or where new construction could take place.

In short, it is time to begin thoroughly evaluating some of the ideas that have been talked about over the years, as well as those that have been suggested recently. For every idea considered we need to understand its technical feasibility, its cost, and its impact on educational programs, and to analyze the level of enrollment growth it would accommodate. We need to understand how to best improve traffic flow and eliminate conflicts between buses, cars and pedestrians as much as possible. As part of this process we anticipate gathering still more input from the community and from staff and students. As potential site plans are developed we envision asking all these groups to help us evaluate and critique the options. We hope you will stay involved and participate in the process with us.



TIMETABLE

REC anticipates completing its move to its new facilities in the fall of 2019. At this point there is no set timetable for our planning process. We believe it is far more important to come up with a good plan for the school district than to come up with a quick plan for the school district. We also know that the district is growing and that houses are popping up on a daily basis. You can expect to hear more from us about this and to be invited to participate in public meetings throughout this school year. We will try to keep those of you who cannot attend meetings informed through communications such as this and any other means we can think of.

Thank you again for participating in the recent survey!

Corvallis School Trustees

Becky Anderson Tonia Bloom Dan Wolsky Jennifer Channer
Kathi Harder-Brouwer Ginny Hoffman Todd Wyche

Here's how to contact us with your ideas.....

- By mail: Corvallis School District, P.O. Box 700, Corvallis, MT 59828
- By email: csdinput@corvallis.k12.mt.us
- In person: At our regular monthly school board meetings, the second Tuesday of the month in the Corvallis High School Library, 7:00 pm

You can read the current facility planning document at corvallis.k12.mt.us





CORVALLIS SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 700 • Corvallis, MT 59828

Primary School: 961-3261 • Middle School: 961-3007
High School: 961-3201 • District Office: 961-4211
www.corvallis.k12

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LEARN MORE:

Visit the district website at <http://corvallis.k12.mt.us/> and click on the link.

CORVALLIS SCHOOL DISTRICT PROPERTY PURCHASE UPDATE

- In November 2017, a 5-year building reserve levy was approved by voters to finance the purchase by the Corvallis School District of the Ravalli Electric Co-op (REC) property.
- The property purchased consists of 21.23 acres and approximately 25,000 sq. ft. of office and storage space. The purchase price was \$1,725,000 and the annual amount on the 5-year levy is \$345,000.
- In June 2018, the sale was completed and the School District took title to the property.
- The REC is currently leasing back from the School District the buildings and the portions of the property they have historically used until their anticipated move to new facilities in the Summer/Fall of 2019.
- This school year the School District is planning for its occupancy of the buildings when they are vacated and is engaged in a long-term planning process for all district property to accommodate continued enrollment growth.