



MAPLE VALLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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FAQ



Maple Valley Public School North Entrance
Rendering by ICON Architectural Group



MAPLE VALLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL
www.maple-valley.k12.nd.us
(701) 749-2570

Q. WHAT IS OUR ENROLLMENT, AND WHAT IS IT EXPECTED TO BE IN THE FUTURE?

Our enrollment has ranged between 210 and 240 students the last 5 years, so the School Board requested the facility be designed for 15 – 20 students per grade, PreK-12. We expect future enrollment to at least remain steady, and our largest enrollment is now in grades K-3, where we have 76 students.

For the 2014/15 School Year (the most recent data available from DPI), Maple Valley ranked 80st out of 148 K-12 School Districts in North Dakota. In other words, over 50% of North Dakota K-12 School Districts are smaller than us, several of which have recently invested in their facilities.

The new facility is flexible enough to handle a larger “bubble” class as needed. We have enough land for future expansion, and our Core facilities (kitchen/commons, media center, physical education, etc.) are designed to accommodate more students if classrooms need to be added in the future.

It is our goal to maintain Maple Valley as a School of Choice for teachers and students, and attract new families to our Communities.

Q. WHY DON'T WE KEEP OUR 3 BUILDINGS AND UPGRADE EACH OF THEM?

- The Citizen's Committee studied that option, and learned that we would need to add up to 27,000 square feet more than the current plan, if we wanted to update all 3 locations. Updating 3 locations for things like kitchens/cafeterias, special needs classrooms, administrative offices, etc. would mean a larger construction cost.
- Our taxpayers would continue spending more for transportation, maintenance, etc.
- We would continue to lose the equivalent of 9 school days spent travelling. We are also concerned about the safety of this travel.
- We would need to deal with future Code and Maintenance upgrades, which are not funded.
- We lose the educational benefits of one location, including:
 - Older students tutoring/mentoring younger students
 - Staff professional development
 - Accessibility to administrators working together
 - Special Ed, Speech, and Title One programming will be more effective

One centrally located PreK-12 campus makes the most sense to the Citizen's Committee and School Board, and will save District taxpayers money in the long run.

Q. WHY HAVEN'T ALL THE MAINTENANCE NEEDS AND BUILDING CODE IMPROVEMENTS BEEN ADDRESSED AT OUR 3 LOCATIONS?

All maintenance and building projects since 1979 have been paid for from the General Fund. The School District does not have a building fund, yet needs to invest every year to maintain the three separate School facilities. Our current funding is below the recommended maintenance investment of \$0.80 to \$0.90 per square foot per year.

Our priorities for funding are to provide the best education possible. We feel a responsibility to invest in combining our facilities now, so we can gain the educational benefits of one PreK-12 campus, and avoid continued costs to maintain 3 separate facilities. We need to focus our dollars on educating students in one, well maintained facility.

Q. WHY NOT BUILD A BRAND NEW SCHOOL?

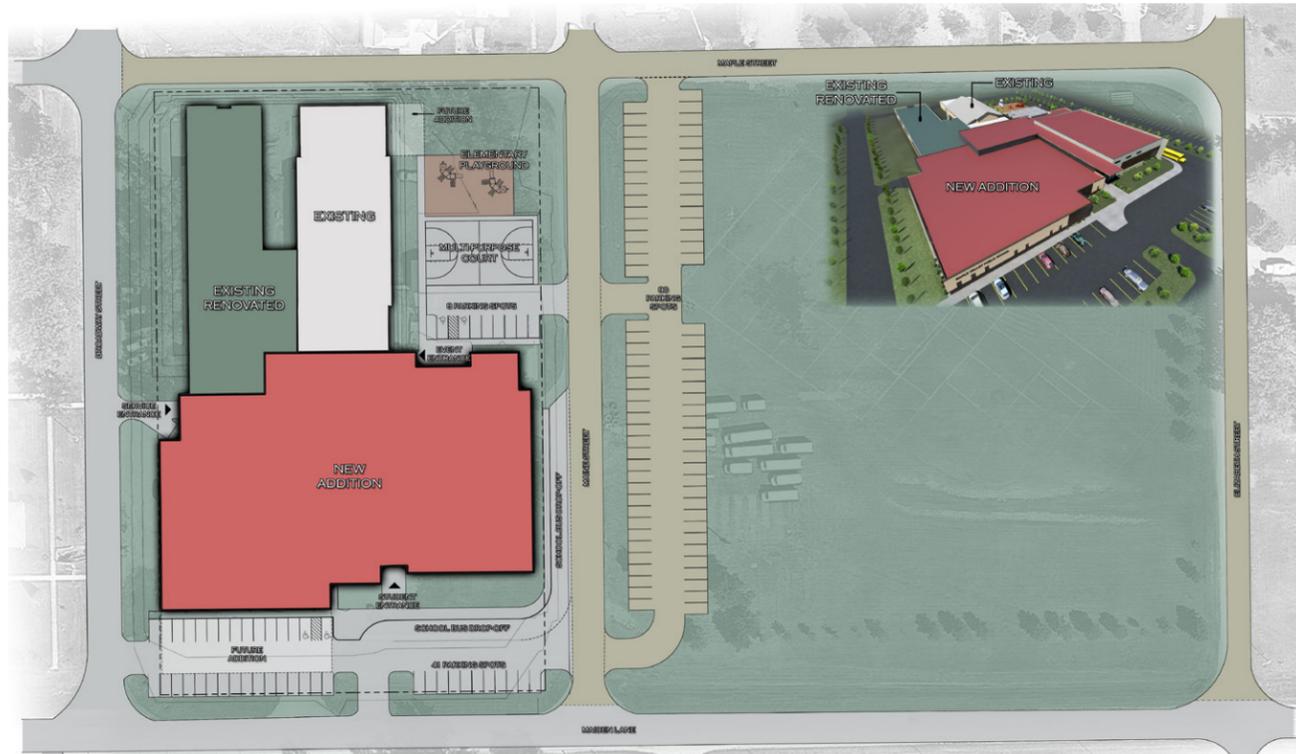
The existing school in Tower City has many years of useful life, and is being remodeled at less than 20% the cost of replacing the facility. We are making best use of what we have.

Q. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BUILDING PLAN WE VOTED ON LAST YEAR?

We listened and responded to input from our patrons. Several patrons expressed concerns about previous plans and our ability to deliver the project on budget, so the School Board decided to move forward with a new design and construction team. That team has led a very diligent process, and been challenged by the Citizen's Committee to provide the best long term facility for the District.



Maple Valley Public School Main South Entry
Rendering by ICON Architectural Group



Q. WHY NOT JUST DISSOLVE THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND SAVE THE TAXES?

If we decided to dissolve the Maple Valley School District, our property would become a part of another neighboring School District. Our property taxes would go to the School District we are absorbed into, at the millage rate set by that District. Here is a summary of Maple Valley’s mill levy, in comparison to our neighbors:

- Maple Valley 67.17
- Wyndmere 68.51
- Central Cass 74.77
- Page 75.99
- Enderlin 78.34
- Barnes County North 79.41
- Oakes 85.85
- North Sargent 89.39
- Mapleton 89.66
- Sargent Central 97.97
- Valley City 103.15
- Hankinson 116.95
- Richland 124.74
- Wahpeton 136.73
- Kindred 134.3

As you can see from the above 2014-2015 DPI data, if we dissolved the Maple Valley School District, our individual taxes would actually be higher, and we would lose our local control.

Q. WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF DOING NOTHING?

- There are a number of risks of doing nothing:
- We will continue spending at least \$130,000 per year to travel between, and keep our 3 separate buildings open.
- We will continue to lose the equivalent of 9 learning days travelling between our 3 facilities.
- We will need money in reserve for repairs to the buildings in Oriska and Buffalo, with unpredictable timing and costs. Emergency repairs can be disruptive to learning.
- It is likely that interest rates and construction costs will rise, making this project more expensive in the future.
- We may lose the ability to get a low interest (2%) loan from the State, which saves us about 10% of local funding. We don’t believe the State’s low interest loan will be available forever.
- Finally – and most importantly - if we did nothing today’s students would not gain the educational benefit of these improvements.

Q. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE BUILDINGS IN ORISKA AND BUFFALO?

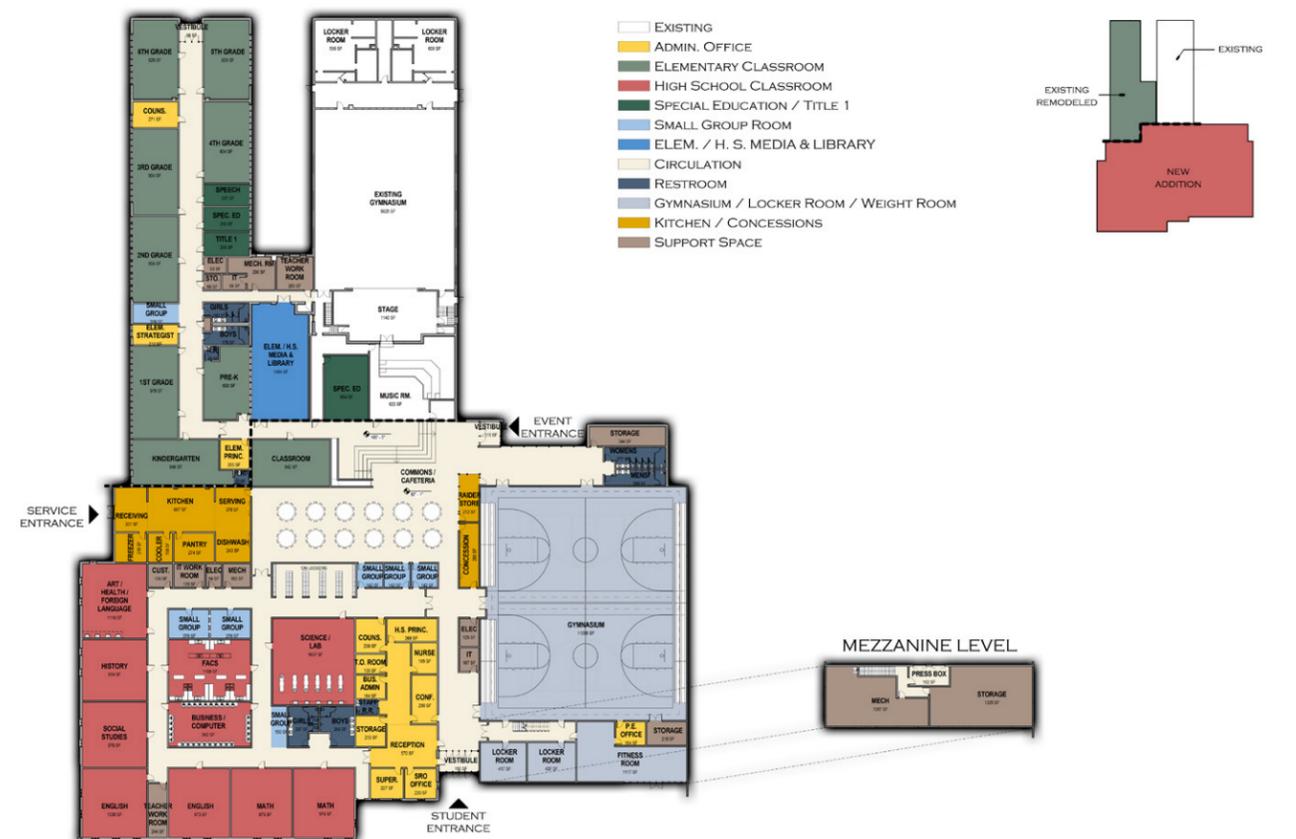
We have received requests from both Communities to make those buildings available, and the School District will be offering them for sale. The Century Code requires us to legally advertise and receive bids to dispose of property, so we will go through that process after the referendum vote. A number of people have expressed interest in re-purposing those facilities for other community uses. We have recently made improvements to the football field, and the football field will remain in Buffalo.

Q. WHERE WILL THE PLAYGROUND BE?

The playground will be located on the Northeast side of the existing building, with easy, safe access to the school and parking. The playground will be fenced for safety and security.

Q. MAINE ST. RUNS BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND PARKING. HOW WILL THAT BE SAFELY MANAGED?

Tower City needs to maintain their Maine Street into town, and the School needs Maine Street access during pick-up and drop-off hours. During the School day, gates will close off Maine Street on the east side of the School, with access available to emergency vehicles only. This will allow safe pedestrian access across Maine Street for parking, physical education, etc.



Maple Valley Public School Site and Floor Plans by ICON Architectural Group

Q. HOW WILL THIS PROJECT AFFECT OUR OPERATING COSTS?

This project will save at least \$130,000 per year in operating costs, itemized as follows:

- Reduced transportation costs
- Reduced costs of food service, by operating one kitchen instead of three
- Reduced maintenance costs for things like snow removal, lawn care, etc.

We will have additional savings of future capital maintenance/repairs, and Code upgrades to the existing buildings in Oriska and Buffalo. These costs are estimated at up to \$2.0 million in Buffalo, and up to \$3.1 million in Oriska over the next 10 years, and will be avoided by combining our students into one PreK-12 building, centrally located in Tower City.

Q. WHERE WILL THE \$130,000 PER YEAR IN OPERATIONAL COSTS SAVINGS GO?

The school board would decide how to use the savings. Possibilities could be lowering the general fund levy or putting that money toward additional principal. This is a year by year budget decision.

The Century Code requires us to seek voter approval of the mill levy provided by the State Tax Commissioner, so you will see a different tax impact in the legal advertisement for the election.

Q. DID THE SCHOOL BOARD LOOK INTO ANY AVAILABLE GRANT PROGRAMS?

Yes, and there are no grant programs at this time that are available.

Q. HOW MANY YEARS TO PAY OFF THE BONDS?

20 years, but bonds can be paid off early.

Q. THERE IS A SECOND BALLOT QUESTION TO AUTHORIZE EXCEEDING THE 5% DEBT LIMIT. WHY DO WE NEED TO APPROVE AN ADDITIONAL 5%, WHEN THE PROJECT ONLY REQUIRES AN ADDITIONAL 2%?

North Dakota Century Code requires that the district can only request one debt limit increase in the amount of 5% on the total valuation of the district. The School District was not given the option to only ask for a 2% increase in the debt limit as the project would require. In summary, the school district cannot levy any addition funds pass the approved \$14.3 million.

Q. WILL THE PROJECT BE UP FOR PUBLIC BID?

Yes, our Construction Manager has been hired through a competitive bid process, and all construction work will be legally advertised and competitively bid.

Q. WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR THE PROJECT?

With Voter approval on September 20, the project will proceed as follows:

- Final Plans/Competitive Bidding Fall/Winter
- Construction Start Spring 2017
- Furnishings, Technology, Training Summer, 2018
- Welcome Students to their new School Fall, 2018

Q. WHEN AND WHERE WILL VOTING TAKE PLACE?

Voting will take place on September 20th from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM in all 4 communities.

Q. WILL EARLY VOTING AND ABSENTEE BALLOTS BE AVAILABLE?

- Absentee ballots must be postmarked or hand delivered to business manager by September 19.
- Hard copy absentee voting applications can be obtained at [www.vote.nd.gov/North Dakota](http://www.vote.nd.gov/North%20Dakota): click on “How do I vote absentee or by mail?” then click on “forms and absentee/mail ballot application (or form SFN51468). Print off the form, fill out and send to the Business Manager at Maple Valley Public School, 207 Broadway St, Tower City, ND 58071, or pick up a form from the Business Manager at Maple Valley Public School at any time during the school day. After the application is returned, a ballot will be mailed to you with the instruction on voting.

Q. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE?

To vote in the election, you must be:

- A US citizen
- At least 18 years old on Election Day
- A legal resident of the Maple Valley School District for at least 30 days preceding the election
- Valid identification will be required and could include a driver’s license, non-driver’s identification card, tribal government issued identification card, or student identification certificate.

Q. HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION?

Please contact any of the following:

1) Citizen’s Committee Members:

Vicki Wendt
Paul Tinjum
Colleen Dimmer
Franklin Peterson
Kathy Walburn
Scott Kohler
Rick Pommerer
Joseph Bata

2) School Board Members:

Gil Schnase
Cathy Janish
Meridee Erickson-Stowman
Lori Kasowski
Sara Zaun
Corinna Knecht
Peter Utke
Todd Pierce
Stephani Karges

3) School District Representatives:

Brian Wolf, Superintendent of Schools
Jay Kocka, Elementary Principal
Dr. Mike Nygaard, High School Principal
Jessica Theurer

4) The Maple Valley Public School Website: www.maple-valley.k12.nd.us

5) Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/MapleValleyCommunicationsCommittee/>

6) Call (701) 749-2570