

Teton School District 401
Assessment of Community Attitudes and Opinions
Regarding a Possible School Bond
April 2017

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1. Acknowledgements

Thanks need to be given to the entire TSD401 School Board, all of whom donated many hours in support of this effort to collect the opinions of the school staff and the community. Creating a culture of inclusion is not an easy or simple task, and this project reflects their commitment. Also, special thanks to all of the school principals as well as to Victor Public Library, Kwikway in Driggs, Grand View General Store in Tetonian, and Phillips 66 in Victor for allowing us to conduct focus groups in their buildings.

And lastly, thanks must be given to the 150 people that participated in the group meetings, and to the 487 people who took the time to complete a survey – obviously this project could not have been completed without the time that you generously gave.

2. Introduction

In fall of 2016 the TSD401 school board decided that it was necessary to consider floating a bond election in 2017. The purpose of this bond would be to raise money to address the urgent issues of overcrowding and aging facilities of the elementary schools.

Because recent attempts to float bonds had narrowly missed passing, and because the board recognized that both the general community and school staff had expressed concerns at not being included in recent school initiatives, the board decided to launch a project that would actively solicit staff and community input regarding a possible 2017 bond. It was hoped that this information would help the board propose a bond that met the interests of the community.

This project included 3 objectives:

1. Collecting attitudes and opinions of the community and school staff regarding a bond;
2. Gauging, and increasing, the level of understanding regarding the needs of the schools and the impact of a bond on property taxes;
3. Demonstrating the board's commitment to include the public and school staff in major decision-making.

Two strategies were identified as the most efficient means to achieve these objectives:

1. Offer an online survey available to the entire community; and
2. Conduct a series of facilitated small group meetings with school staff and community members.

3. Methods and Limitations

Surveys

Surveys were primarily conducted online, using Google Docs (see Appendix 1). Surveys were made available to all participants in the small group meetings, and were marketed to all school staff, parents of school children through email and text, and to the general public through Facebook and the newspaper. The newspaper also successfully advertised the survey in an online promotion. After eliminating duplicates, 487 responses were recorded, nearly doubling the original target.

The purpose of the surveys was to gather opinions about the state of elementary facilities and about possible solutions. Comments were also accepted. Questions regarding demographics and voter history were included to allow analysis of sub group responses. Survey questions were developed with the input of school administration, school board members, and volunteers from the community.

Small group meetings

All group meetings were conducted in the same manner. A school board member opened the meetings with a short introduction (see Appendix 2). The board member would then excuse him/herself to better allow for frank discussion, and then a series of 4 questions (see Appendix 3) were posed to participants by the facilitator.

Participants were invited to dialogue with each other as they explored concerns about the administration, the district in general, and school facilities. Approximately halfway through each meeting, FAQs (see Appendix 4) regarding the state of elementary school facilities and the impact of a hypothetical \$25M, 20-year bond on

tax bills were provided and discussed. Finally, participants were asked about their ideas for solutions and about their current opinion regarding support for a bond.

Meetings were first offered to school staff in a conscious effort to solicit their input before any other group. The school board recognized that staff had felt disenfranchised from previous school initiatives, and wanted to assure staff felt prioritized and valued.

While all staff members were welcome to participate in the meetings, and some schools were able to schedule their entire staff's participation, due to practical constraints, some schools invited a limited number of staff, while others simply made an open invitation for staff to participate. In the end, all 7 schools participated, with 79 participants in 14 meetings.

A total of 12 community meetings were also held, with 71 participants. Meetings were held in local schools, libraries, and coffee shops. Participants were invited by a committee of volunteers that aimed to recruit participants with a diverse range of perspectives. Geographical diversity was a priority, as was including those who are large land owners, those that had voted no or yes on bonds in the past, parents with children in the various public and private schools, adults without children in school, young adults, retirees, second homeowners, and the Hispanic/Latino community (see Limitations, below).

As a result of the 26 meetings, over 1,000 comments were recorded from the 150 participants. These comments were then reviewed to identify common themes as well as the range of opinions and attitudes.

Limitations

Due to budget and practical restrictions, this project did not attempt to implement a randomized or controlled survey or series of focus groups. As a consequence, neither method can make the claim of reaching a representative sampling of the school staff or the general community. Therefore, no relationships between the sample data and the general populations can be claimed.

Rather, it was the intention of this project to obtain as large a range of input from the widest variety of demographic groups as practically possible. By collecting narrative commentaries (qualitative data) from the meetings, as well as numerical scores (quantitative data) from the survey, it was hoped the combination of data would provide clarity about opinions and attitudes, perhaps even point to consistent themes. It was also of interest to see if the findings between the two methods would corroborate each other.

There are a number of limitations to the surveys that need to be acknowledged. First, the lack of a question asking if a respondent was a school staff member became mildly problematic. The original plan was to complete all school staff surveys before making it available to the public. However, primarily because of weather delays with staff meetings, the public became aware of the survey before all staff surveys were completed. As a consequence it was possible to clearly segregate most, but not all, of the staff responses.

Another limitation with the survey is that two groups are underrepresented – the Hispanic/Latino community and parents of home schooled children, and one group is over-represented – 57% of all respondents have always voted yes on school bonds.

For the most part, the efforts at reaching a diverse range of the population for the community groups were successful. The glaring limitation was that invitations to participate made to the Hispanic/Latino community were uniformly declined. An obvious lesson from this project is that any future initiative to solicit community input must begin with an effort to design an effective strategy to include this segment of the Teton Valley population.

4. Executive Summary

This section of the report attempts to summarize the key findings that could be of most help in guiding the efforts of the school board in possibly floating a bond in 2017.

1. Trust

- There were pervasive concerns regarding the school district's (both the board's and the administration's) ability to communicate effectively, to involve staff and the community in planning and decision-making, and with managing projects in a cost effective manner.
- This has led to a common sense of mistrust and is a significant factor that erodes support for any school initiatives, particularly bonds.

2. Bond Support

- There was strong support for a school bond.
- Additional, perhaps critical, support could be gained if well-researched cost comparisons were presented.
- Support could also be expected to increase substantially if school staff and the community were involved with planning and decision making in a systematic way.

3. Facilities and overcrowding

- There was broad recognition of the issues caused by aging and inadequate facilities.
- There was also broad acknowledgement of existing overcrowding in the elementary schools, as well as concerns about future growth for all grade levels.

4. Advice on how to float a bond

- There was a lot of advice on how to successfully float a bond. This both implies a strong interest in a bond's success as well as provided a store of good ideas.

5. Configurations

- There was majority support for keeping 3 local schools, although there was a strong interest in seeing the costs between a centralized school and local schools compared.
- There was no consensus regarding grade level configuration - there were strong opinions supporting both a K-3 model and a K-5 model. It must also be said that there were a large number of respondents that stated ambivalence about grade level configuration.

5. Recommendations

The findings of this project point to a number of action steps that could help the school board succeed in floating a bond in 2017.

1. Improve levels of trust with staff and the community.

At a minimum, identify and utilize a prominent and regular means of updating the public on the board's actions.

In addition, efforts on the part of the board to actively include staff and public input will be greatly appreciated.

Staff would also like to see communications improved, and an increase in their inclusion, regarding specific topics from both the board and district administration. These topics include: staff development, strategies for improving alignment, a decrease in apparently reaction driven activities, dual language, and strategic planning. This would also help address a common staff sentiment that they are being dictated to and not fully trusted.

2. Conduct a comprehensive cost analysis of improving elementary school facilities

There are three options that came up most frequently:

1. Renovations of existing facilities
2. Rebuild Driggs and Victor schools, possibly renovate Tetonia
3. Build a centralized elementary school

Participants requested that this analysis include items such as real estate (purchase of new land, sale of existing facilities), design, construction, operations, maintenance, impact on bussing, estimated costs of future expansion, and general timelines.

It is also important to include projections of costs/timeframes associated with anticipated growth that will impact the middle and high schools in the next 10 years. In short, everyone wants to know what to reasonably expect in the future.

Because of the strong interest in expanding the number of gymnasiums in the district, it is recommended that cost analysis also include 2 new gymnasiums.

3. Present a clear recommendation

Participants expressed interest in a recommendation that include a general design, timeline, means for including public comment, including input on design and revisions, and estimated tax bill impacts.

4. Include advice on how to make the bond successful

In Section 12, Small Group Meeting Findings, there is a concise list of suggestions.

6. Survey Findings

The following charts present the results of all respondents to the survey.

Short notes introduce each chart in an effort to highlight the data. These notes also include details regarding subgroup responses, when those responses were notably different than the aggregate results.

Select comments from the surveys from “Always Voted No” respondents are also provided. Please note that comments were taken verbatim, including any typos or other errors, from the forms.

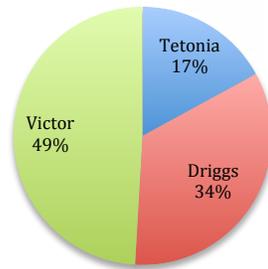
Number of respondents:

All respondents (aggregated) = 487	Tetonia respondents = 83
School staff = 67	Driggs respondents = 165
Always voted no on school bonds = 32	Victor respondents = 239

Geographic distribution

The survey data indicates a fairly even distribution of respondents throughout the school district.

What town do you live closest to?



Schools attended

By far, most survey respondents have not had children in the public schools in the past 10 years.

37% have had a child in the middle school in the past 0-10 years.

14-35% have had a child in public elementary or high school in the past 0-10 years.

13% have had a child in private elementary school in the past 0-10 years.

Very few have had children in Basin High, private (other than elementary), or home school.

The respondents from each town had higher rates of their children attending their elementary school.

Tetonia respondents had a higher rate of children attending the middle and high schools in the past 10 years.

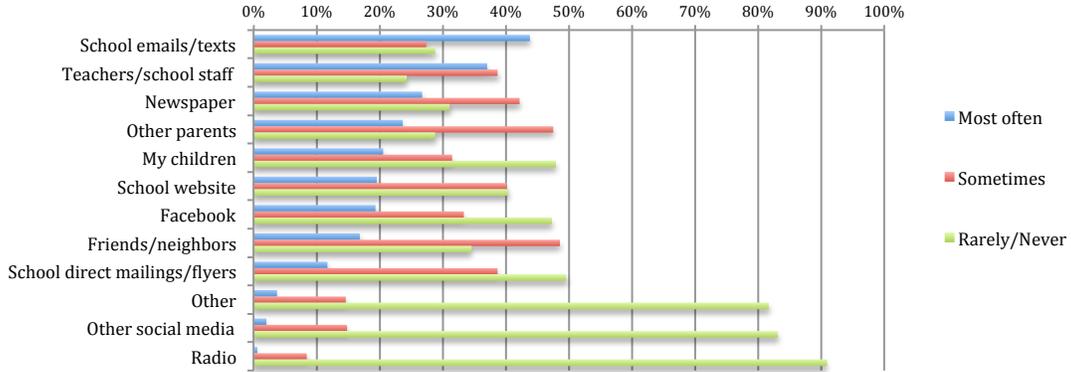
If you are a parent/caretaker and have had children attend school in Teton County, Idaho recently, what school(s) did they attend?



Source of information regarding school related issues

School email/texts and Teachers/school staff are the means that respondents get information “Most often”. If “Most often” is combined with “Sometimes”, common means include “Other parents” and “Newspaper”. “Those who always voted no” get their information nearly equally from the top 8 sources.

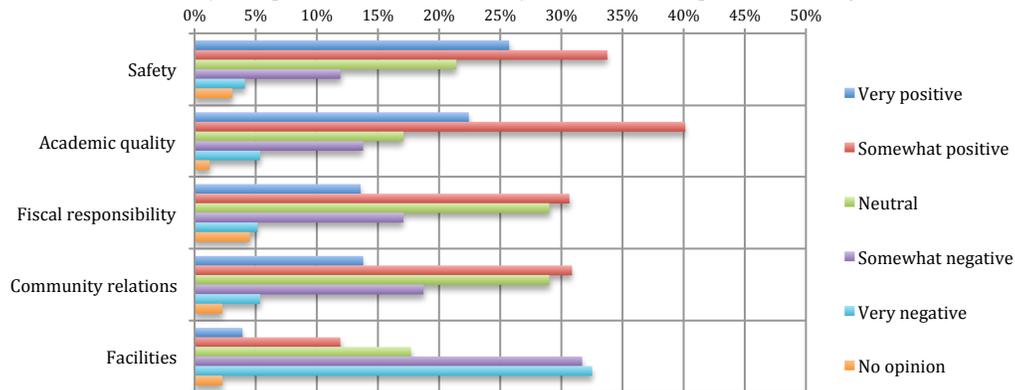
Where do you get your information and news about school related issues?



Opinion of School District performance

A majority had a “Very” or “Somewhat” positive opinion regarding both Safety and Academic quality. A majority had a “Very” or “Somewhat” negative opinion regarding Facilities. Staff have a higher opinion of Academic quality, and a lower opinion of Community relations and Facilities. Those who always voted no have a higher opinion of Facilities, and a lower opinion of Fiscal responsibility and Community relations. Teton has a higher opinion of Academic quality.

What is your opinion of the Teton County School District's performance right now?



Support for a hypothetical bond in 2017.

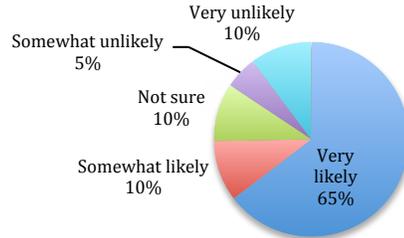
Most respondents were “Very” or “Somewhat” likely to support a bond.

Staff reported 86% that were “Very” or “Somewhat” likely.

Those who always voted no had 59% that were “Very unlikely” and 0% that were “Very likely”.

Tetonia had 45% that were “Very likely”, yet 64% if included “Somewhat likely”.

Based on the information you have at this time, how likely would you be to vote for a \$25 million bond that would aim to rebuild and/or expand elementary schools in 2017?



The comments from “Those who always voted no” indicate a range of concerns:

The schools aren't being used to there full capacity. There are open spaces that could be classrooms.

If the board allows it's favorite architecture firm suck tax payer dollars and not give a decent product.

Against the bond because money hasn't been spent wisely in the past few years by Mr. Woolstenhulme. Also, farmers and tax payers don't want their tax increased.

I'm not just going to say yes to 25 MILLION. Has to be the right plan!

I would be more inclined to be supportive if the proposed buildings and improvements were in line with what the community as a whole can afford and not high end and more expensive than needed.

Will not support bond due to the district not using funds reasonably

Depends on which way the shoot board dediced to go

We're already taxed through the levy for other things. How many undocumented students are we paying for with our taxes? Our tax dollars should not be paying for children to go skiing during school hours. Parents should pay for that entire cost and the children have too much time off. They don't even go the same number of hours that other state's children do. In other words, I don't find the district responsible with my tax dollars now so why would I want to pay more! There should be one centrally located elementary school in the VALLEY, no one particular town.

If it was transparent on how the money was to be spent, more likely to make a decision yes or no.

Not convinced of the need or that existing resources are spent wisely.

Have not seen evidence of them efficiently using what has already been given them. Don't want higher taxes! Someday they will drive us out of here!

I believe the schools here are a waste of taxpayer money

The bonds are too expensive and the costs are being funded by the property owners and not necessarily by the parents of school aged children. The costs are passed on to retired citizens and those who don't have children while the state's contributions are minimal. Sick of paying increased property taxes for lazy parents who don't think their children should have to ride a bus to a nearby town to go to school.

The system is fiscally out if control. Time to cut them off.

Property tax is too high.

Likely to rebuild Victor, unlikely to rebuild Tetonia.

Not clear facts and in the past money hasn't been spent wisely or even spent at all.

How many illegal aliens are my tax dollars educating?

Board is poor at financial responsibility

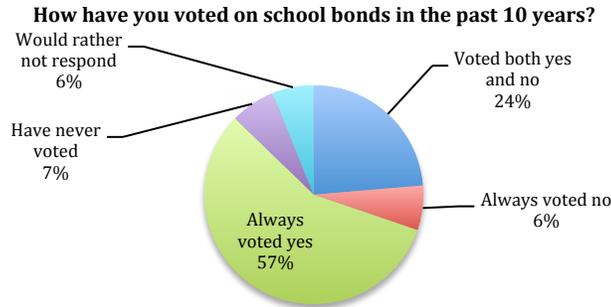
Government waists money!

I am not aware of how the current funds are being spent. Rumor from others is that current funds are more geared to athletics than to academics.

I understand the need, but it is a lot of money that will be taxed the property owners and I just don't know how we could come up with the extra money.

History of voting on bonds

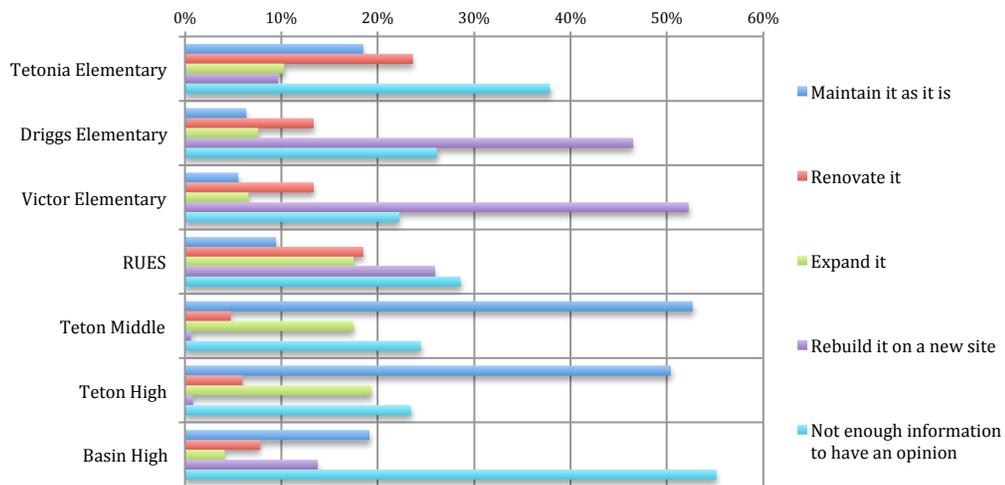
The majority of respondents have always voted yes.
 Tetonia and School staff had lower rates that have always voted yes, but higher rates that have voted both yes and no.
 Victor had the highest rate that has always voted yes.



What should be done with school buildings

Most people think that Victor and Driggs should be rebuilt.
 A significant number of respondents don't have enough information to know what to do with every school.
 The majority doesn't have enough information regarding Basin High.
 Those who always voted no had a higher rate that didn't have enough information on all buildings.
 Those who always voted no had a higher rate for maintaining buildings as they are.
 Those who always voted no had much lower rates for supporting any rebuilding.
 School staff reported a higher rate for rebuilding Victor, Driggs, and RUES.
 School staff also reported a higher rate for maintaining the middle and high schools as they are.
 Respondents from each town had higher rates regarding not having enough information regarding the schools in other towns.
 Driggs and Victor respondents had higher rates for rebuilding the Driggs and Victor schools.

What do you think should be done with each of the following school buildings?



The comments from “Those who always voted no” indicate a range of opinions:

The gyms in the Victor, Driggs, and Rendezvous buildings could be divided in half and a classroom made in half with a smaller gym. The auditorium in Driggs Elementary could be made into at least three classrooms...

Most building are more sentimental than practical If there is not a buyer than they need to be demolished and new built. Driggs Elementary has an auditorium that could be split into classrooms and isn't being used that much at this current time. Rendezvous Upper Elementary is in need of some handicapped things and bigger SpEd/Title I rooms.

One central school with expanded grades to incorporate Rendezvous. update (big time) the Victor and Tetonia schools greatly and leave them k-3.

I liked idea, build one large elementary in Driggs and sell all the building and property of Elementary in Driggs, Tetonia, and Victor. Then you would only have the expense of one building to keep up... and please make sure this building would be designed and build well,so in 10 years down the road there are not problems with roof, bathrooms, and etc....so you will want to build another school... also maybe enough ground around school if you need to add on ...

I would like to see a long term plan that fits the needs of the community.

Not really sure , but they should be sponsored if not complete responsibility of the state. But if it is the responsibility of local government, and that is the way they reach the people, then local government needs to loosen those ties of letting people come in and build our community! And then you would have more tax money! They are public schools! If people want facilities and education of a private school for their children they need to send them to private schools. Expectations are way too high for public schools!

Rendezvous Upper Elementary could be expanded to the east more. Driggs Elementary has an auditorium that isn't be used and could be put into 4 classrooms.

Some are old and, who thought of a FLAT roof in Teton County. We have too much snow and the building are leaking. New slanted roofs would help things.

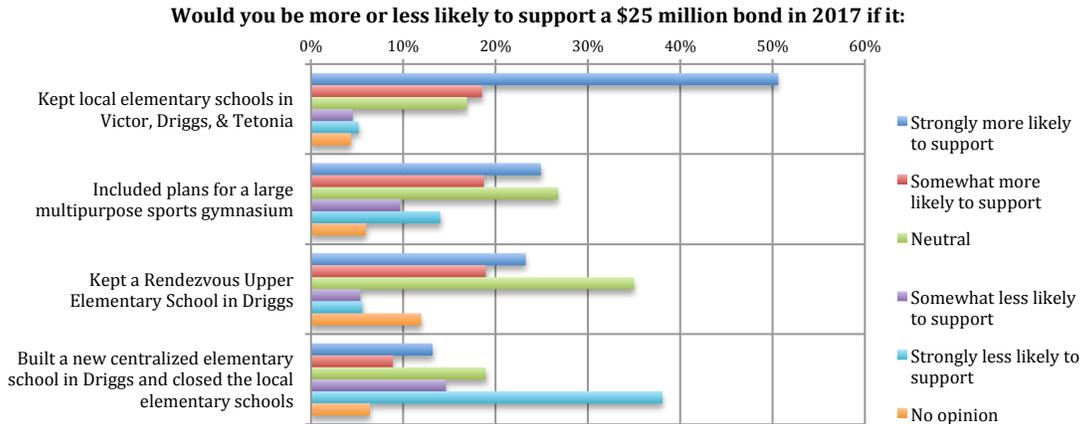
Would you be more or less likely to support a bond if...

There is a clear preference for keeping local schools vs. a centralized school.

Those who always voted no did not indicate anything that would make them “Strongly” more likely to support a bond.

Those who always voted no were less likely to support centralized school or a gymnasium.

Driggs respondents were more neutral about local schools vs. central schools, RUES, and a gym.



The comments from “Those who always voted no” indicate limited possibility of support:

Less

If the money were to be well spent instead of just something for the school board and superintendent to have their names on a plaque.

One central school with expanded grades to incorporate Rendezvous. update (big time) the Victor and Tetonia schools greatly and leave them k-3.

Will NOT support

Depends on your decision

Need more info to do so on where the money would be spent.

The school system is broken. A building is just a building. I would support it if the building was environmentally friendly and NON-TOXIC. It will not fix any of the educational issues facing the district, but at least the children would not be breathing chemicals if it was built correctly.

It will never get my vote

Overtaxed, I do not support yet another school bond.

Firmly opposed to another bond of any size.

I will not support a bond.

Never

I am not sure that building a completely new facility and busing children from all over the Valley to Driggs is a good idea. There is the issue of expense and also safety.

Again, it is a lot of money for property owners to pay for the new schools. I have always thought that only those who Do Own Property should be allowed to vote on a bond that they will pay for.

12. Small Group Meeting Findings

With both staff and community meetings there were four consistent themes that stood out when reviewing the 1,000+ comments gathered during the small group meetings:

1. Advice on how to make a bond successful

Curiously, even though it was never asked, this was the most common type of comment received, regardless of subgroup (over 28% of all comments). This appears to indicate a desire of participants to see a bond succeed.

The advice given spanned a wide range of suggestions, including:

Change how people are taxed	Improve marketing of bond and school needs
Increase state funding	Keep the public informed every step of the way
Finding other sources of funds	Involve public and staff in design and decisions
Be specific with solutions	Be transparent in accounting, research/decision making
Raise enough \$ to fix problems	Guarantee roofs won't leak
Have a plan for the next 20 years' growth	Include old buildings in plans/accounting
Assure that money won't be wasted	Compare comprehensive costs of various solutions
Demonstrate value for dollars to be spent	Create professional level print and web communications
Give tours of the schools	Advertise the woeful state of the schools
Address the realities of school funding	Coordinate tax increases with other taxing entities

Even if each of these topics cannot be practically impacted by the school board, it would be helpful to at least acknowledge these concerns.

2. Advice on the best designs and configurations for schools

Over 25% of the comments collected were focused on this topic. The comments reflected a strong desire from participants to be able to be involved in, and have an impact on, decisions regarding planning. In terms of design, most concerns had to do with wanting a cost effective design.

In terms of configurations, while there were many proposals floated, a preference for local schools was clear. However, if a centralized school could be shown to be significantly less expensive, it could garner strong support. There was a mix of opinion regarding grade levels with most preferring K-5.

3. Concerns about existing facilities, including aging/inadequate facilities and overcrowding

About 20% of the comments collected were focused on these issues. Fundamentally, there was a clear acknowledgement that the schools are in poor condition as well as overcrowded.

School staff had a much clearer sense of the specific issues that are faced on a daily basis, while the community comments were often more general in tone, but no less passionate. Even among those that expressed a lack of support of a future bond, there was clear acknowledgement of the need to replace aging facilities and to face overcrowding.

4. Trust and communications between the school district and staff/community

Although these were not the most numerous comments (approximately 11% of all comments) they were clearly among the most passionate comments received. There is a strong, even urgent, interest from participants in most meetings that the relationships between the school administration/board and the staff/public be improved. Without question, this issue was expressed as a critical issue that has kept participants from supporting bonds in the past.

Appendix 1: Survey



* Required

Teton School District #401 School Bond Survey

This survey is part of an effort to include the community in the search for effective solutions regarding our schools. The School Board of TSD #401 thanks you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

1. What town do you live closest to? *

Mark only one oval.

- Tetonia
- Driggs
- Victor

2. If you are a parent/caretaker and have had children attend school in Teton recently, what school(s) did they attend? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Have not had children attend this school.	Attended this school year	Attended in previous 2 years
Driggs Elementary School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tetonia Elementary School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Victor Elementary School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rendezvous Upper Elementary School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teton Middle School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teton High School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Basin High School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private elementary school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private middle school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private high school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Home elementary school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Home middle school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Home high school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Where do you get your information and news about school related issues? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Most often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Newspaper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My school aged children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School sent emails/texts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers/school staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friends/Neighbors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Radio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School direct mailings/flyers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. What is your opinion of the Teton County School District's performance right now? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Very positive	Somewhat positive	Neutral	Somewhat negative	Very Negative	No opinion
In terms of Academic Quality	<input type="radio"/>					
In terms of Safety	<input type="radio"/>					
In terms of Fiscal Responsibility	<input type="radio"/>					
In terms of Community Relations	<input type="radio"/>					
In terms of Facilities	<input type="radio"/>					

5. Optional - please comment on Teton County School District's performance.

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6. Based on the information you have at this time, how likely would you be to vote for a \$25 million and/bond that would aim to rebuild and/or expand elementary schools in 2017? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not sure	Somewhat unlikely	Very unlikely
I would be:	<input type="radio"/>				

7. Optional - in a few words, can you please tell us why you'd be likely or unlikely to support a bond?

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8. How have you voted on school bonds in the past 10 years? *

Mark only one oval.

- I have voted both yes and no in the past 10 years on school bonds
- I have always voted no.
- I have always voted yes.
- I have never voted on school bonds.
- I would rather not respond.

9. What do you think should be done with each of the following school buildings? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Maintain it as it is	Renovate it	Expand it	Rebuild it on a new site	Not enough information to have an opinion
Tetonia Elementary School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Driggs Elementary School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Victor Elementary School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rendezvous Upper Elementary School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teton Middle School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teton High School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Basin High School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Optional - please comment on what should be done with school buildings.

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11. Would you be more or less likely to support a \$25 million bond in 2017 if it: *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly more likely to support	Somewhat more likely to support	Neutral	Somewhat less likely to support	Strongly less likely to support	No opinion
Included plans for a large multipurpose sports gymnasium	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kept local elementary schools in Victor, Driggs, & Teton	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kept a Rendezvous Upper Elementary School in Driggs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Built a new centralized elementary school in Driggs and closed the local elementary schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other - please comment in #12, below	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Optional - please comment on would you be more or less likely to support a \$25M bond.

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13. Optional - please add any questions, comments, or suggestions.

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14. Optional - please include your name and contact information if you would be willing to be contacted for more information.

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Appendix 2: School Board Introduction

Focus Group Introduction Script by TSD #401 Board Member

Hello, My name is _____. I'm a member of the Teton School District Board, and I'd like to thank you for participating in this meeting today.

Let me introduce Bob Gammelin, who we've contracted to help us gather the attitudes and opinions of the public regarding a possible bond vote in 2017. We are considering a bond to improve elementary school facilities, but we need your input to help us know what the community thinks is important and needed. The school board is committed to being inclusive of the community and staff in major initiatives like this.

This meeting's format is simple. Bob will ask a few questions about what you think the issues are facing our schools are, and you will have a bit of time to discuss your responses. You will also be given some facts about the schools and a possible bond, and you'll be asked about what you think the best solutions might be. You'll also have a chance to complete a short survey, either on paper or on your cell phone. The entire meeting should take about 30-45 minutes.

Bob will take the comments gathered from a series of these meetings, combine that with the survey responses, and present the information to the board later this winter. The board will use this, and other information, to decide whether to float a bond, and if so, what that bond will aim to achieve.

I will turn the meeting over to Bob now and let you get started. Thank you all again.

Appendix 3: Focus Group Questions

TSD #401 School Bond Focus Group Questions

Purpose of Focus Groups

1. Solicit attitudes and opinions regarding a possible bond election from both the general community and targeted groups in a series of facilitated group meetings
2. Provide to the community clear data regarding the state of facilities, demographic trends, and costs of bond
3. Report on key findings from meetings to board

Sequence (25-45 minutes)

1. Introduction by school board member (<5 minutes) **Time started: _____**
2. Stage setting and initial questions/discussion (10-15 minutes)
 - a. Acknowledgement of time constraints and reiteration of goals of focus group
 - b. Facilitator role and need for participation
 - i. We are very time limited
 - ii. This is a test run, but your input will be included
 - iii. Not teacher role, no need to raise hands – more a dialogue between all of us.
 - iv. I'll try to keep things concise, on the topic, and may ask individuals that haven't said much to add
 - v. Don't be offended if I cut you off and move on
 - vi. I'll be writing things down like crazy at times
 - c. **First question is super broad –** **Time started: _____**
What are your opinions of the biggest issues facing the school district? The issues you think the school board needs to address?
 - d. **What are your opinions for needs for elementary school buildings?** **Time started: _____**
3. Presentation/discussion of FAQs (5-10 minutes) **Time started: _____**
 - a. Aging and other problems with school buildings;
 - b. The demographic trends that will promote overcrowding;
 - c. The actual costs of a bond for property owners.
4. Follow up questions/discussion (10-15 minutes)
 - a. **What solutions do you think would work best?** **Time started: _____**
 - b. **What is your attitude regarding a \$20-\$25M bond election in May, 2017?** **Time started: _____**
5. Survey (<5 minutes) **Time started: _____**
6. Conclusion **Time started: _____**
 - a. Next steps
 - b. Thanks for participating

Appendix 4: Focus Group FAQs

TSD #401 School Bond 2017 FAQs

TSD #401 School Board is developing solutions to address two critical issues facing the elementary schools in the district: aging facilities and overcrowding. The board wants opinions from the community regarding these issues and the potential solutions. You are encouraged to read these FAQs and are invited to complete a [TSD #401 School Bond Survey](#) in order to help guide the School Board in decision-making.

1. What are the building conditions of the four elementary schools in the district?

The youngest school is the Rendezvous Upper Elementary School (RUES) in Driggs at 58 years. The oldest is Victor at 75 years old.

Tetonia, for its age, is in good condition. About \$35K is spent annually on maintenance. Design issues include staff and students sharing bathrooms, and the stage converted to a cafeteria.

RUES is currently utilizing 2 modular classrooms with the most recent being added for the 2016-2017 school year. These rooms do not have bathrooms, and in the main building, there is only one bathroom block for all students. Approximately \$40K is spent annually maintaining the building. The roof is a major source of repair costs.

Driggs was originally used as a high school and as such has a “challenging” layout, which is not conducive or optimal for use as a K-3 elementary school. It has gone through numerous renovations over the decades with the most recent being the enclosure of the stage to form a new classroom. This classroom has no windows. The back of the auditorium landing is now the library that is also a passageway to the classroom on the stage. Due to this school originally being a high school, the classrooms are too small and crowded for an elementary school. Lunchroom capacity and gym capacity are an issue. In addition to housing the Driggs Elementary School, this building also hosts the Basin High School. The number and size of bathrooms in this school is also an ongoing issue. Approximately \$30K is spent annually on maintenance.

Victor's main issue is capacity. The age of the school building and the size of lot that this building sits on severely limit the school district's ability to modify or add to the structure. In this building the stage has been modified to serve as the lunchroom and occupational therapy space. Often you will see students utilizing the hall as additional classroom space. There is only one set of bathrooms. Approximately \$40K is spent annually on facility maintenance.

2. What is the status with overcrowding at the schools?

Tetonia is overcrowded, based on designed capacity. Should it be necessary in the future, there is room for building expansion. Current enrollment is at 83, capacity is 76 students.

RUES has two portable structures. There is room for building expansion. Current enrollment is at 287, and capacity is 218 students without the modular classrooms, 256 with. A third modular will be required within 3 years due to younger grades having higher enrollment.

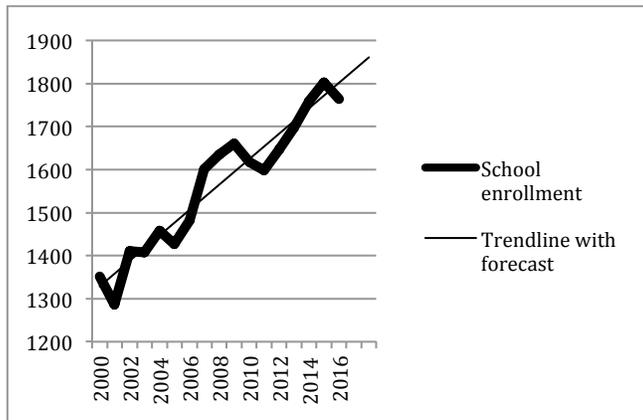
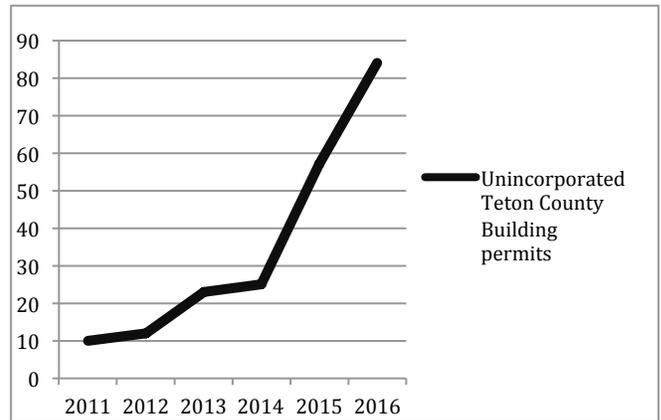
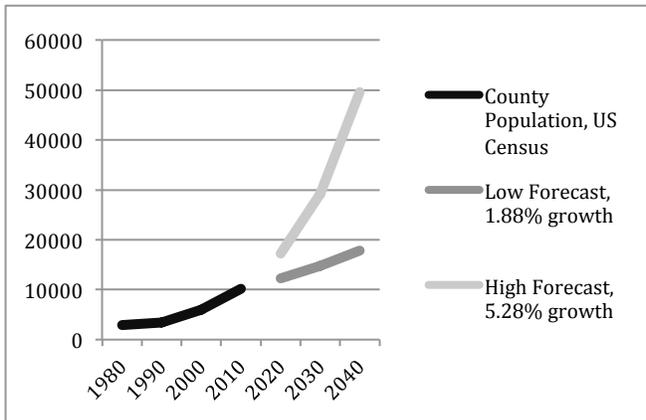
Driggs is currently overcrowded in the lunchroom, the playground, and classrooms. The building is a poor choice for another renovation, and there is not room for building expansion due to the size of the lot. Adding a modular would impinge on the already too small playground. Current enrollment is at 313, and classroom capacity is 195 students. Even if renovated further, the building itself cannot handle more students moving through the halls or using the lunchroom, playground, bathrooms, etc.

Victor is currently overcrowded such that students that live nearby cannot attend due to space limitations. There is not room for building expansion, and even adding a modular would impinge on the already too small playground. Current enrollment is at 172, and capacity is 133 students.

3. What is the forecast for overcrowding?

The forecast is not good for three separate reasons:

1. Currently, there are two “bulges” of student populations. Small increases in enrollment in any given grade would easily push classroom sizes above capacity.
2. It is estimated that approximately 16% of all elementary aged school children do not attend public school in TSD #401. If even a small percentage of these children stopped being home schooled, or stopped attending local private schools, there would be a serious impact on the capacity of facilities.
3. Population growth in the valley has been strong for three decades. The following charts look at population trends from three angles: 35 years of census data, 5 years of residential building permits, and 16 years of school enrollment. All three charts imply enough growth within the near future to overwhelm the elementary schools’ capacity.



4. What solutions are available?

To meet the issues of aging facilities and overcrowding, there is an urgent need to rebuild, renovate, &/or expand the elementary schools. Choosing which mix of solutions is very complicated and challenging, which is one reason that community input is being sought. Your participation in the TSD #401 School Bond Survey will help guide the choice of solutions.

5. What are the costs of solutions?

Regardless of the solutions that are finally selected, there is an immediate need to raise sufficient capital for improving facilities. Estimates state that the costs range from a minimum of \$10M (for maintenance/renovations only) to \$28M (for two new schools).

Purely for illustration purposes, if we assume a \$25M bond is approved in 2017, we can compare school related tax rates in the following charts. The results, while hypothetical, are clearly reasonable.

Impact of \$25M Bond on School Portion of Property Taxes					
	Taxable Value ¹	Tax Paid in Fiscal Year 16 (2015 Tax Year)	Tax Paid in Fiscal Year 17 (2016 Tax Year)	Tax Paid in Fiscal Year 18 ² (2017 Tax year)	Estimated Tax Increase from FY16 to FY18
Residential Property	\$75,000	\$268.41	\$229.50	\$275.25	\$6.84
Residential Property	\$100,000	\$357.88	\$306.01	\$367.01	\$9.12
Residential Property	\$300,000	\$1,073.65	\$918.02	\$1,101.02	\$27.36
Residential Property	\$500,000	\$1,789.42	\$1,530.03	\$1,835.03	\$45.61
Residential Property	\$600,000	\$2,147.30	\$1,836.03	\$2,202.03	\$54.73
	Taxable Value/Acre ³	Tax Paid on 1,000 Acres in FY16	Tax Paid on 1,000 Acres in FY17	Tax Paid on 1,000 Acres in FY18	Estimated Tax Increase on 1000 acres from FY16 to FY18
Irrigated ag. land	581	2079.31	1777.89	2132.30	\$52.99
Dry ag. land	239	855.34	731.35	877.14	\$21.80
Meadow ag. land	303	1084.39	927.20	1112.03	\$27.64
Dry grazing ag. land	80	286.31	244.80	293.60	\$7.30

Teton County's School Related Tax Rates		Fiscal Year 16 (2015 Tax Year) Actual Rates	Fiscal Year 17 (2016 Tax Year) Actual Rates	Fiscal Year 18 (2017 Tax year) Estimated Rates ²
Tort	<i>(Insurance)</i>	0	0.00000806	0.00000806
Plant Facilities	<i>(For capital outlays. Up for renewal in 2021.)</i>	0.000279662	0.000259431	0.000259431
Supplemental	<i>(Covers school costs as Idaho underfunds.)</i>	0.002167383	0.001914847	0.001914847
Emergency	<i>(Charged annually if enrollments climb.)</i>	0.00015	0	0
2012 Refi UR-Y	<i>(Refinance of '96 & '06 Bonds. Expires 2025.)</i>		0.000884969	0.000884969
1996 Bond	<i>(Middle School. Refinanced.)</i>	0.000380698		
2006 Bond	<i>(High School. Refinanced.)</i>	0.000601097		
Proposed \$25M 2017 School Bond⁴				0.00061
Total of School Related Property Tax Rates		0.00357884	0.003060053	0.003670053

¹ Residential taxable value is less than the market (full) value of a property. In FY18, for a property under \$100,000, taxable value is 50%. For more expensive properties, it is market value minus \$100,000.

² FY18 taxes estimated, using FY17 rates

³ Using Teton County's highest values for various agricultural property types

⁴ Primarily for elementary school facilities. Using bond interest rates estimated in October, 2016.

Sources of data: Teton County Almanac, 2014; US Census, 2010, 2016; Teton County, ID Government, 2016; Teton County, ID Comprehensive Plan, 2012; Teton County, ID Housing Needs Assessment, 2007; TSD #401, 2016; Plan1 TSD #401 Facilities Report, 2014.