

UPDATES ON REFERENDUM PROJECTS David Bridenhagen, Superintendent of Shell Lake

It has been a very exciting few months at Shell Lake School! Since passing the referendum in the Spring '18, we have been very busy working with architects and construction managers on the design details for the Shell Lake School District building project. In January, final blueprints were sent out to bid and these bids were reviewed by Kraus-Anderson, our construction manager. They presented these bids to the school board for approval at the last board meeting. While there was some uncertainty due to rising construction costs and tariffs, I am delighted to report that our bids have come in favorable and will allow us to accomplish all we set out to do!

We will be delivering all that was defined in both referendum questions and, in fact, will be doing a bit more. Within the scope of the referendum, we will be adding a wing on to the existing 3-12 site. That wing will include classrooms, a gym, cafeteria and kitchen, elementary office, art and music rooms, and small group learning spaces.

At the 7-12 level, it includes the remodeling of the technology education and art spaces, an expanded science and agricultural area, and an expanded special education area that include handicapped restrooms and a life-skills learning area. There will also be a new gym/performance area that will allow us to have double header games at one site and deliver performances in a venue that allow our students to have multiple practices in the area without having to cancel physical education classes.

Over the past several months during the designing process, discussions included an expansion to the current weight room into a larger space that would accommodate a larger number of students. The area also included adding changing rooms and restrooms. We also looked at remodeling the current elementary office to include expanding the lounge area to accommodate the additional staff coming over from the primary school, adding a concession stand, a sensory room, and remodeling the current district office into what will become the new high school office.

While the weight room and remodeling of the offices were not included in the original scope of the referendum project, including them, along with resurfacing of the student parking lot and the entrance from highway 63 to the main parking lot, presented an opportunity to enhance the overall project by adding district funds to the project. Prior to the approval of the referendum, the district had been setting aside funds to resurface the 20-year-old parking lots and replacing the roof on the primary school. These funds are being used now to take advantage of having contractors on site and overall reducing the cost to make these improvements at a later date.

Due to cost constraints, the scope of the weight room had to be reduced eliminating the additional bathrooms and the changing rooms. We hope to be able to make these improvements later, as funds are set aside over the next several years.

Although the grass is many inches below the snow right now, we hope to begin breaking ground as soon as the snow melts and the frost has left the ground. Our projected timeline remains as planned, with much of the remodeling happening as soon as school dismisses for the year. Footings will be poured, and walls erected for the gym, weight room and elementary additions this spring. Students from the primary school will enjoy their new space in the 2020-2021 school year!

As with any construction project, there will be inconveniences as this will be an active construction site. I ask for your understanding in advance and your flexibility with expected inconveniences as we move forward.