



Initial Community Engagement Report

We've overcome so many challenges together in District 200 and put our district on a positive path forward that will continue to inspire in everyone a passion to excel!

We are at the final step in catching up on our district's infrastructure needs. All that remains is to address the significant needs at three of our four middle schools, and this decade-long effort to put our district on a sustainable path with safe, efficient, and up-to-date school buildings will be complete.

In an effort to determine the priorities of our residents, District 200 has taken active steps since August to engage the community and solicit feedback. During the initial phase of this process, we developed messaging, recruited a community-based committee to lead these efforts, engaged key influencers, coordinated two discussions with the Community Leadership Team, held four community engagement sessions (one virtually) to discuss the district's successes, opportunities for improvement, and obstacles ahead, and conducted a scientific phone survey on what improvements community members would like to see to their schools and how they would like to fund those improvements. In total, we have received feedback from 700 members of the community.

Using information provided by the district and their experts, we developed a "menu" of potential individual projects and potential funding levels. Throughout this initial phase, the district has been closely listening to the community as individuals considered and ranked each item on the menu to share their priorities.

Feedback from the community was documented during this time through notes taken of all direct communications, feedback provided on digital and paper forms at the Community Leadership Team meetings and community engagement sessions, responses to a publicly available feedback form available on the district's website, and spreadsheets generated from the results of the scientific phone survey. We received tremendous levels of engagement from the community, including 98 responses from engagement sessions and online feedback as well as 534 phone survey responses.

We will continue our efforts to engage the community through December of 2023 to determine the vision for our schools going forward. In the final phase of this process, we will develop three options for the community's review and feedback based on information gathered from the community during the initial phase. Feedback will be solicited on the district's website, on feedback forms at another Community

Leadership Team discussion, and through another public phone survey. The final phase will be conducted in November and December, with a report made to the board at the phase's conclusion.

Messaging

We developed messaging to properly communicate how we got to this point, what our successes and challenges have been, and how to approach the path forward. This messaging detailed recent progression and improvements as well as infrastructure challenges at three of the four middle schools in the district. The six key takeaways from the messaging are below, and a full copy of the messaging is provided with this report.

- We've overcome so many challenges together in District 200 and put our district on a positive path forward that will continue to inspire in everyone a passion to excel!
- We are continuing to strive for excellence, with a special focus on learning acceleration. As a result of this collaborative work, our students achieve high levels of academic success in one of the best-ranked school districts in the entire state of Illinois.
- We also continue to strive to be operationally excellent, operating our district as efficiently and effectively as possible. We've stayed true to our district's commitment to fiscal conservatism.
- We are at the final step in catching up on our district's infrastructure needs. All that remains is to address the significant needs at three of our four middle schools, and this decade-long effort to put our district on a sustainable path with safe, efficient, and up-to-date school buildings will be complete.
- The exciting news is our district's fiscal responsibility has given us a unique opportunity to address these challenges and modernize our middle schools while giving our taxpayers even more property tax relief. We can complete the effort to fix our schools without raising our taxes.
- During the 2023-2024 school year, our community will determine the path forward together. Please plan on participating in this important community engagement process as we continue our district's positive momentum.

Menu Survey

During this initial phase, the district conducted a public phone survey to gauge support for each potential individual project and potential funding level listed in the menu. For each item discussed, respondents were given information on each item as well as estimated costs. The survey was taken before the full public had been educated on the projects or fully informed of the district's needs. This was done in order to obtain an accurate representation of the public's unbiased, intuitive reactions to the projects and funding levels contained in the survey.

The results from the menu survey are provided with this report.

Community Leadership Team

We developed a committee of individuals who will provide direct, informed input throughout this effort. The committee is made up of a cross-section of District 200 stakeholders, including parents, taxpayers without children in the district, business owners, local officials, and teachers. The committee has been formalized and tasked with the responsibility of actively gathering feedback from the community to determine what they would like to see for the future of District 200. The Community Leadership Team first met last spring on April 10 and April 24. The team met again this school year on August 21 and September 25. Committee engagement will continue in the next phase of this process.

Public Engagement

The district held four community engagement sessions at different locations and days to provide all members of the Wheaton-Warrenville community an opportunity to attend. These events were promoted through direct mail, emails, and social media.

Community engagement sessions were held:

- Thursday, September 28 at 6 pm at Edison Middle School.
- Tuesday, October 3 at 6 pm at Monroe Middle School.
- Thursday, October 5 at 6 pm at Franklin Middle School.
- Tuesday, October 10 at 6:30 pm virtually through Zoom webinar.

Verbal discussions occurred during these meetings and additional collaboration opportunities were made available as well through feedback forms and the district's website.

Attached is a detailed report of the feedback that was collected during the initial phase of this process, which includes feedback from the Community Leadership Team, the public at public engagement sessions, key influencers, and the public via the online feedback form on the district website.

Initial Phase Analysis

In forming our analysis of the initial phase, we reviewed all data points provided by members of the community. First, through the menu survey, which gives us a scientifically accurate snapshot of the intuitive reactions of members of the community to the items being discussed. Second, through the community engagement sessions, which give us the more passionate responses from community members very invested in their schools who have taken some time to consider these issues. Third, through the Community Leadership Team, whose responses come after hours of discussion, allowing us to track the movement of opinions as individuals become more engaged and educated on these topics.

An important data point for processes like this is the favorability of the school district, because the success of any future effort is tied to how residents feel about the district. Here, the phone survey provides very good news: D200 residents have a very favorable opinion of their schools. 79% of district residents have a favorable opinion of the district, with only 14% holding a negative opinion, for a net favorability rating of +65%. This is in the upper echelon of the dozens of school districts we have tested in phone surveys throughout Illinois over the past five years. Clearly D200 residents support their schools and are appreciative of the work being done by the district.

Potential Individual Projects

Overall, the community supports all ten projects tested throughout this process. This is important to note because we often see most, but not all, projects receive positive feedback. Yet for D200, the "least" supported project still receives +24% support, which shows the positive level of support for this effort.

Of the projects tested, two clearly are the top priority for the community: Safety & Security and Infrastructure & Mechanicals. The more engaged individuals are, the more Infrastructure & Mechanicals takes a slight lead over Safety & Security, because those individuals are more acutely aware of the significant infrastructure needs at the three middle schools, while those less engaged hold Safety & Security slightly ahead in order of priority.

Next, the community prioritizes Special Education & Accessibility, Science Lab Classrooms, and Classroom Improvements. The level of support from the general public for Special Education & Accessibility is

notable, as we rarely see this strong of support for this type of project. All three of these projects are strongly supported by the community and a high priority.

The remaining five projects are all supported, though lower priority. There is very little difference in the priority levels between the five, though taking all collected data into account, they can be put in this (very close) order: Performing Arts & Music Spaces, Library Learning Centers, Indoor Athletic & PE Spaces, Student Services Spaces, and Building Layout & Collaborative Spaces.

Potential Funding Levels

Once again, the community supports all three funding levels tested during this process. This is noteworthy, since typically the highest funding levels are opposed by the general public, though not surprising, since all funding levels tested lead to some level of tax relief for property taxpayers.

Most importantly, only 5% of the public do not support providing some level of additional funding to the district to fund this effort, while 89% support at least one of the funding levels. This is a clear sign that the public is invested in completing the infrastructure work needed to set the district on a sustainable path moving forward.

Another significant result from the initial phase of this process is the level of support for the High Funding Level. Typically the higher funding levels receive strong support from the more engaged and passionate individuals who participate in the community committee and public engagement sessions, while the less engaged individuals who participate in the phone survey prefer the lower funding levels. Here, that is not the case, again likely because all options lead to some level of tax savings. All three groups tested in this phase ranked the High Funding Level first, then the Medium Funding Level, then the Low Funding Level, though it should be noted the gap between those levels was narrower among the general public than among those more engaged with the schools.

Developing Options for Final Phase

Using this data and working with the district and the district's experts, we will develop three options for the public to consider.

Our recommendation will be to build three options based on specific funding amounts that each accomplish as many of the public's top priorities as possible.

Option 1, based on the Low Funding Level, would accomplish the community's top 2 priorities: Safety & Security and Infrastructure & Mechanicals.

Option 2, based on the Medium Funding Level, would also address those top two priorities. With the remaining funding available, it should address the community's next three priorities as much as possible: Special Education & Accessibility, Science Lab Classrooms, and Classroom Improvements. This option can touch on the remaining five priorities as well.

Option 3, based on the High Funding Level, would address all community priorities. Focus should remain on the community's top five priorities, but this option can address even more of the remaining five priorities: Performing Arts & Music Spaces, Library Learning Centers, Indoor Athletic & PE Spaces, Student Services Spaces, and Building Layout & Collaborative Spaces.



Community Unit School District 200 is conducting community engagement efforts this school year to engage in a conversation regarding the facility needs and challenges at Edison, Franklin, and Monroe Middle Schools. Thank you for participating in this important process to help determine the path forward together.

**WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?
RANK THE PROJECTS BY PRIORITY FROM 1 – 10
(1 = HIGHEST PRIORITY)**

RANK	POTENTIAL INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS
	INFRASTRUCTURE & MECHANICALS: Safer, updated, and more energy efficient school buildings through investments in infrastructure and mechanicals, including roofing, electrical systems, fire alarm systems, plumbing, HVAC units, lighting, ceilings, flooring, and finishings. <i>(Estimated cost: \$32.6 million)</i>
	SAFETY & SECURITY: More secure environment for students and teachers including improved sight lines in hallways for adequate supervision, upgraded camera systems, and updated door entry systems. <i>(Estimated cost: \$9 million)</i>
	SCIENCE LAB CLASSROOMS: Modernized science lab classrooms with more space, modern features, and improved furniture to implement current and future curriculum and optimize hands-on learning. <i>(Estimated cost: \$14.4 million)</i>
	CLASSROOM IMPROVEMENTS: Increased space in some classrooms that are too small as well as optimized and dedicated spaces for co-curricular classes such as STEM and elective courses, providing more hands-on opportunities for students. <i>(Estimated cost: \$44.4 million)</i>
	BUILDING LAYOUT & COLLABORATIVE SPACES: Improved building design and layout, providing additional common spaces to facilitate collaboration, hallways with space for project-based learning outside of classrooms, and improved building circulation. <i>(Estimated cost: \$14.9 million)</i>
	SPECIAL EDUCATION & ACCESSIBILITY: More accessible buildings to increase ADA compliance and improve safety for students as well as optimized special education spaces to provide more support and life skill instruction for students. <i>(Estimated cost: \$8.6 million)</i>
	STUDENT SERVICES SPACES: Optimized spaces for health services, wellness, counseling, and mental health services to provide more readily accessible resources and supports for students in more private and confidential environments. <i>(Estimated cost: \$3.1 million)</i>
	LIBRARY LEARNING CENTERS: Modernized libraries to better utilize technology, provide students individual support, facilitate group learning, and inspire creativity. <i>(Estimated cost: \$13.8 million)</i>
	INDOOR ATHLETIC & PHYSICAL EDUCATION SPACES: Improved indoor athletic, physical education, and recreational spaces including updated gyms, improved flooring and bleachers, renovated locker rooms, and safer student areas. <i>(Estimated cost: \$14.4 million)</i>
	PERFORMING ARTS & MUSIC SPACES: Renovated and improved music classrooms with increased space, additional storage, and sound barriers to reduce noise disruptions, as well as a performing arts center at the one middle school that does not have one. <i>(Estimated cost: \$23.4 million)</i>

**PLEASE RANK THE FUNDING LEVELS BY PRIORITY FROM 1 – 4
(1 = HIGHEST PRIORITY)**

RANK	POTENTIAL FUNDING LEVELS
	LOW FUNDING LEVEL: Funds some improvements Approximate funding amount: \$42 million Approximate yearly tax decrease: \$342
	MEDIUM FUNDING LEVEL: Funds many improvements Approximate funding amount: \$122.5 million Approximate yearly tax decrease: \$151
	HIGH FUNDING LEVEL: Funds all improvements Approximate funding amount: \$155.4 million Approximate yearly tax decrease: \$73
	NO ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR OUR SCHOOLS

(The average annual tax decrease is based on a CUSD 200 home valued at \$370,400)

SHARE ANY ADDITIONAL NOTES, FEEDBACK, OR COMMENTS

CUSD 200 Opinion	
Very Favorable	40%
Somewhat Favorable	39%
Somewhat Unfavorable	11%
Very Unfavorable	3%
Unsure	8%

Potential Individual Projects	Strongly Supportive	Somewhat Supportive	Somewhat Opposed	Strongly Opposed	Unsure	%	Rank
Infrastructure & Mechanicals	43%	39%	8%	7%	2%	18%	2
Safety & Security	55%	28%	8%	7%	2%	31%	1
Science Lab Classrooms	44%	33%	12%	8%	2%	8%	5
Classroom Improvements	34%	32%	17%	13%	4%	9%	4
Building Layout & Collaborative Spaces	29%	30%	20%	16%	5%	5%	6
Special Ed & Accessibility	54%	28%	10%	6%	2%	16%	3
Student Services Spaces	44%	25%	15%	13%	2%	4%	7
Library Learning Centers	38%	33%	13%	13%	3%	2%	10
Indoor Athletic & PE Spaces	35%	30%	20%	14%	2%	4%	9
Performing Arts & Music Spaces	38%	33%	16%	12%	2%	4%	8

Potential Funding Levels	Strongly Supportive	Somewhat Supportive	Somewhat Opposed	Strongly Opposed	Unsure	%	Rank
Low Funding Level	34%	32%	12%	12%	10%	21%	3
Medium Funding Level	35%	37%	10%	11%	6%	31%	2
High Funding Level	42%	28%	10%	15%	4%	38%	1
No Additional Funding						5%	5
Unsure						6%	4

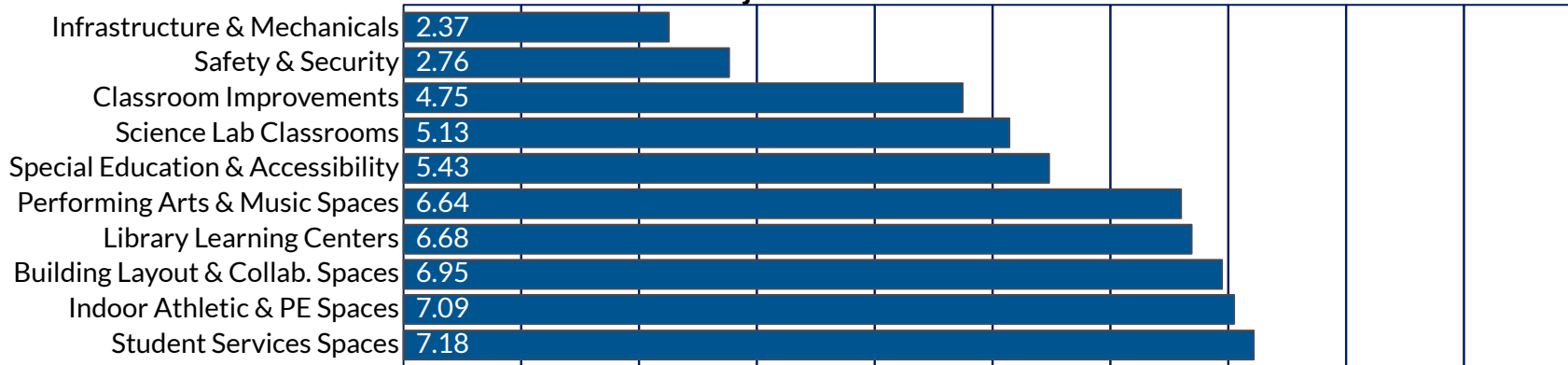


CUSD 200 FEEDBACK FORM SUMMARY

Community Engagement

Potential Individual Projects

Lower number indicates higher priority.



Potential Funding Levels



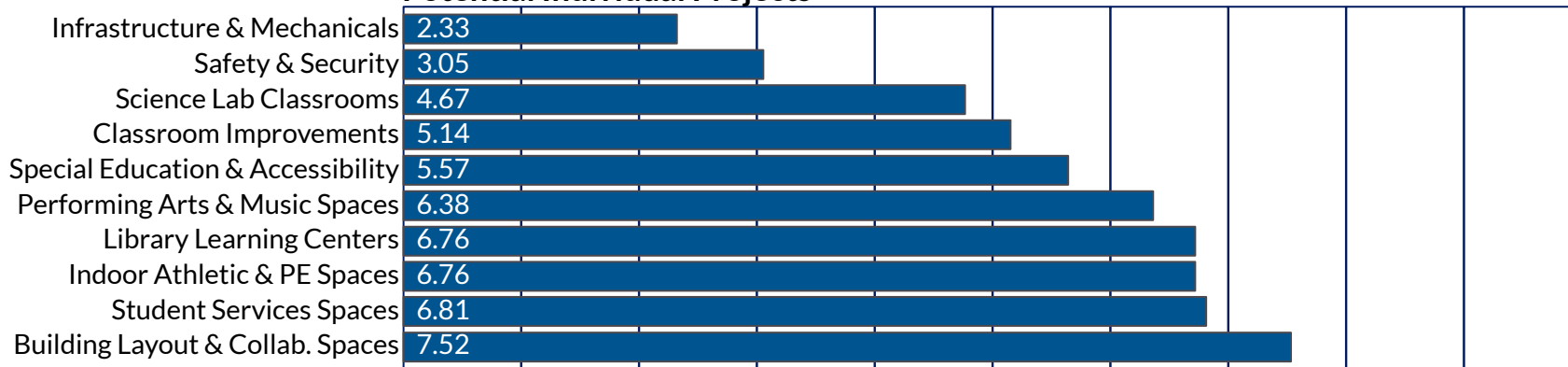


CUSD 200 FEEDBACK FORM SUMMARY

Community Leadership Team

Potential Individual Projects

Lower number indicates higher priority.



Potential Funding Levels

