

BELLE PLAINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRICT 716 UPDATE



REFERENDUM - VOTE NOVEMBER 4TH

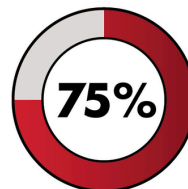
On November 4, Belle Plaine Public School District residents will vote on a long-term plan to operate more efficiently while improving our school buildings to better serve students and the community.

Community Input Directly Shaped the Focus of the Referendum



It's **important** to ensure safety & security at all of our buildings

Community members **support** a plan to right-size the district



Project Highlights

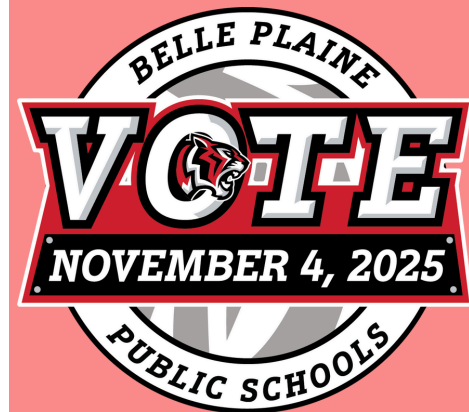
ENHANCED SAFETY + SECURITY

Reducing from four buildings down to two will allow us to create **one secure entrance** where every person entering the building will pass through a staffed office before gaining access.

Currently, every hour of the school day, students must travel from the secondary building across the street to the old junior high for agriscience and woods courses. This creates significant safety and logistical challenges: two main entrances must remain open in the secondary building, students cross a busy street multiple times a day, and the junior high lacks a secure entry point.

The proposed plan would **reconfigure our buildings** to:

- Make all entrances more secure
- Improve parent and bus traffic flow
- Eliminate the need for students to move between buildings during the school day



COMMUNITY INFO SESSIONS

Tuesday, October 7
6:00 - 7:00 PM

Thursday, October 30
6:00 - 7:00 PM

Location: Oak Crest Elementary

EARLY VOTING

JR/SR High/District Office - Door M
220 S. Market St.

September 19 - November 3
Weekdays, 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

*Residents of townships that traditionally automatically receive ballots in the mail, for this referendum will now need to complete an absentee ballot application in order to receive a ballot by mail. Other options would be to vote early in person at the District Center, or cast their ballot on Election Day at Belle Plaine City Hall.

OPTIMIZE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

The district currently maintains more building space than needed, making upkeep increasingly costly. The proposed plan would reduce the number of facilities from four down to two, saving approximately \$400,000 annually in operating costs, eliminating the need for student shuttles, and reducing the overall footprint by 35,000 square feet.

This Fall, many districts across Minnesota are pursuing operating referendums to offset their rising expenses. Our project is intentionally designed to take the opposite approach, reducing square footage and lowering operating costs. If the bond passes, Belle Plaine will remain “right-sized” for the future and will not need to seek an additional operating referendum in the foreseeable future.

To put this into perspective, the projected \$400,000 in savings would be the equivalent of passing an operating referendum worth approximately \$275 per student without increasing the tax burden on our community by having to ask for an operating referendum.

EXPAND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Modern Learning Spaces for Student Success

Our schools need modern spaces to ensure every student can succeed. As interest grows in trades, manufacturing, and service careers, our current facilities can no longer provide the proper hands-on training environment.

The plan addresses this by creating dedicated career and technical education (CTE) spaces all under one roof. Currently, equipment is spread

across multiple buildings, which limits both efficiency and student access. Consolidating programs into a single, purpose-built space will allow students to maximize their use of tools and resources, better preparing them for both the workforce and postsecondary opportunities. This new space will also be designed specifically to meet the current and future needs of our students.

Fine Arts Opportunities

Belle Plaine Public Schools is home to one of the strongest Fine Arts programs in Minnesota. Our renowned One Act Play program has earned more STAR recognitions at the state competition than any other school in the state regardless of size. Despite this, Belle Plaine remains one of the only districts without a traditional auditorium space.

Adding a modern auditorium will ensure our students have access to the same facilities as their peers across Minnesota, while expanding opportunities for performance, collaboration, and community engagement. Moving 6th grade to the secondary building will provide access to elective courses and opportunities they have never had before.

Elementary Learning

Bringing all elementary students into one building will improve collaboration, services, and support for both staff and students. This structure creates new opportunities for cross-grade activities such as 5th graders serving as reading buddies for kindergarten students, a program that has always been valued by both kids and families. Expanding these kinds of activities helps students grow as leaders, mentors, and community members, further

strengthening our district’s culture of kindness, inclusion, and pride.

A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE, A FUTURE OF INNOVATION

Belle Plaine Public Schools is a regional and statewide leader in academic excellence, innovative programming, social-emotional supports, and responsible financial stewardship. Our district’s progress is no accident—it is the result of leadership from outstanding educators and a community committed to student success.

We are proud to:

- Serve as a model for literacy and math instruction, adopting best practices years before state mandates.
- Recruit and retain exceptional educators, including many Belle Plaine alumni who chose to return and serve.
- Prioritize culture, student achievement, emotional health, and fiscal accountability in a balanced approach.
- Lead in innovation by expanding high-quality online learning options, opening doors to courses and levels of rigor never before accessible to our students.
- Provide opportunities in Career & Technical Education, STEM, AgriScience, Fine Arts, and Athletics that many schools of our size cannot offer.

Ryan Laager
Superintendent