

# LISTENING SESSION RESULTS



## BHS/BLC/LEC COMMUNITY

### MAY 23, 2017



# Listening Session with the Community

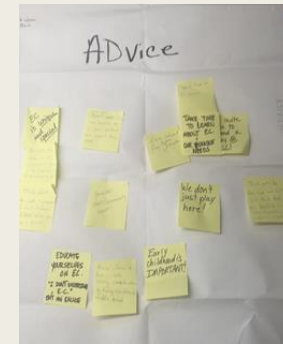
## Example Questions...

What great things are happening in the Brainerd Schools?

What are our biggest challenges facing the Brainerd Schools?

What can the business community do for the school district?

What advice would you give to the decision makers?



What would you like the Headlines to be of the newspaper 10 years from now about the Brainerd Schools?

What are our biggest facility needs?

How can we improve facilities and enhance education?



# *Outline of Needs*

*-Questions and Results-*



# What great things are happening in the Brainerd schools? (#) = Quantity of Similar Type Responses

- Great teachers and staff – highly qualified - caring (6)
- The great outdoors – easy access to nature and outdoor activities (5)
- Opportunities for students with special needs
- Merit scholars – AP scores
- Location of facility
- Many opportunities for students
- Large public meeting space
- Excellent teachers that win awards
- Tons of programs
- Buildings have been very well maintained
- High quality arts programs (choir, band, etc.)
- Great coaches!



# What great things are happening in the Brainerd schools?

- Great variety of HS classes – workforce and university readiness
- Community is involved in supporting athletics
- Neighborhood schools
- Good sized city
- Community engagement
- BHS is a pleasant building
- Variety in academic and extracurricular opportunity
- Small town with lots of amenities
- The lakes, the location, the people!
- Small enough – great shopping – lakes
- Beauty
- People



# What great things are happening in the Brainerd schools?

- Great public schools
- Great parks
- Opportunities for my children
- Lakes, woods, beauty
- Academic opportunities
- Schools are available and used by many community groups
- Education for all diverse



# What are our biggest challenges facing the Brainerd schools? (#) = Quantity of Similar Type Responses

- Aging buildings – not built for technology (2)
- Shortage of space for all the various high school athletic opportunities
- Lack of pride for our community
- Too many snowbird voters
- Aging population
- Declining federal \$ for “at risk” students
- Class sizes (middle school & elementary)
- Need for a much better swimming pool
- Space at elementary schools
- Growing needs – keep up with diversity of needs
- Lack of religious and racial/ethnic diversity
- Low paying jobs





# What are our biggest challenges facing the Brainerd schools?

- Shortage of affordable housing
- Shortage of teaching staff
- Lack of second language opportunities
- Lack of economic diversity
- Want first class for all – but not willing to invest
- Providing equal educational facilities to all (wide gap in elementary schools)
- Lack of sidewalks
- Not been able to attend an event without having a difficult time finding accessible restroom
- How to make schools a community need
- High percentage of identified SPED students without funding to meet needs
- Seasonality of jobs



# What are our biggest challenges facing the Brainerd schools?

- No politics in K – 12
- While the community has a lot to offer, not accessible
- Small town = small minds sometimes
- Political polarization
- Fiscally conservative leaders
- Poverty & wealth extremes
- Poverty rate is high - Lack of professional jobs
- Tight taxpayers
- Aging workforce



# What are the biggest facility needs for the district? (#) = Quantity of Similar Type Responses

- Upgrade technology – access for all (3)
- Learning spaces that promote and help facilitate student collaboration and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning (2)
- Update pool (2)
- Energy efficiency (2)
- Education for all diverse
- Fabulous teachers
- Tarnstrom Auditorium is awesome, but should be an auditorium at BHS
- Space!!! Inside and outside
- Faster/more dependable Wi-Fi
- Student parking lot issues at BHS
- Environmentally sustainable facilities and practices
- Severe space needs for struggling learners in elementary
- Flexible spaces that have multiple uses



# What are the biggest facility needs for the district?

- Administrators who do something about bullying
- Facilities that accommodate different learning styles
- Neighborhood schools
- Internet filtering
- LEC – front entrance offices/secure entry
- Safe places to learn and grow
- Facilities that double as community centers
- Need better temperature control in learning spaces at BHS
- Addressing spaces that students experience violence/harassment



# What would you like the headlines to be of the newspaper 10 years from now about the Brainerd schools?

- Combined ISD 181 – CLC Performing Arts Center Opens!
- 90% of Brainerd Graduates Enter Into The College Career of 1<sup>st</sup> Choice
- Brainerd Schools Lead The Way And Save Money With Renewable Energy
- German, French And Chinese Added To BHS Elective Options
- Brainerd Swimmer Wins Olympics
- Brainerd Graduates Moving Back To Lakes Area
- Brainerd Community Invests In Keeping Schools Strong
- Facilities Meeting Student Needs And Ready For Population Surge Due To Economic Growth
- Brainerd Music Program Continues To Win Awards
- All Students Graduate With Honors



# What would you like the headlines to be of the newspaper 10 years from now about the Brainerd schools?

- An Inclusive, Supportive Environment For All
- Innovative Programming Brings 100% Of Open Enrollees Back To ISD 181
- ISD 181 Leads State In Standardized Test Scores And Graduation Rate
- BHS AP Program ranked #1 in State
- Brainerd's Safe Schools Program Top In State
- No More Basement Lunchrooms – Well Lit, Welcoming Places To Eat
- ISD 181 in Top 5%
- Brainerd High School Graduates Are The Happiest, Healthiest, Smartest Students in the Universe!
- Brainerd Schools Are The Greatest!
- Enrollment Explodes 20% Over Last 10 Years



# What would you like the headlines to be of the newspaper 10 years from now about the Brainerd schools?

- First Environmental Science Graduates



# What advice would you give to the decision makers?

- Make the case about how quality education impacts economy.
- Look at class size.
- Focus on the heritage of Brainerd schools.
- Generations of families
- Value of tradition and welcoming and attracting new people into the community
- Continue transparency in the decision making process.
- Keep an open mind.
- Tell stories – make it more personal – more pictures.
- Present the data – show comparison – separate “needs” from “wants”.
- Encourage excellence in education – not mediocracy.
- Listen to the students and educators in the buildings.





# What advice would you give to the decision makers?

- How do we make this process good – use Facebook
- Quality schools make a safer community.
- Have empathy and understanding for people with limited resources.
- More and varied opportunities for input – not 9 to 5 – provide daycare
- Look at options and amount of referendum – pieces vs. whole
- Costs and interest rates are a consideration.
- Don't re-invent the wheel – benchmark districts
- Do virtual tours of buildings.
- Look for ways to engage people w/o children in school.
- Realize school's purpose beyond learning for students.
- Get information out honestly and quickly to counter the rumor mill.



# What advice would you give to the decision makers?

- Be non-partisan in the classroom.
- Communicate like “snow days”

