

The Cornell School District is among only 12% of WI School Districts that has never held a referendum to exceed the state-imposed revenue caps. We also have not had a building referendum since 2001. We have been debt free for several years and we have a comfortable fund balance that allows us to not have to borrow annually for cash flow purposes. Overall, things are fairly good in Cornell!!

In my last article, I wrote that we need to begin planning for the future of the MS/HS building and I provided three major options of either closing, remodeling, or building. While we have not heard a lot of comments, most of them have been supportive of building a mostly new MS/HS building instead of remodeling a very old building. However, this month I want to focus on the other option which a couple of people have asked about, and that is closing the MS/HS.

First, I want to say that this is an option the taxpayers of this community could support. State law does allow “whole grade sharing” where we could send the MS/HS students to another school district without going through a consolidation or dissolution. This would keep property taxes in check as we would not need to maintain/build new facilities. Secondly, I want to make it **very clear** that closing the MS/HS is not something I, nor any of your board members, want to see happen. However, I would not be acting in good faith of providing “all” options to the community if this option was not shared.

The remodeling/construction of school district buildings is something that is beyond the decision of the Superintendent and/or school board. Since it takes a referendum to fund major remodeling and build facilities, the decision needs to be supported by a majority of the voting public. I believe the public needs to know all options when making these types of major decisions, even if the options are not popular with some people. Next month’s article will focus on remodeling.