

COMMUNITY SURVEY REPORT

Prepared for:

Decorah Community School District

1732 Old Stage Rd.

Decorah, IA 52101

Donovan Group

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School Communications

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past 16 years, the Decorah Community School District Board of Education and administration have explored potential improvement options for John Cline Elementary School and West Side Early Childhood Center. This evaluation included discussions and visioning through board meetings, facility assessments by architects and engineers, consultation with teachers and staff, and communication with community partners. After considering renovation and new construction options, constructing a new elementary building and tennis courts in the Heivly Island location (where John Cline Elementary is located) was identified as best for kids and the community, considering city streets and infrastructure.

Land was purchased in fall 2023 and a facility committee was formed in 2024.

As part of this process, the district conducted a community-wide survey to gather input and feedback from district residents to help guide decision making about the proposed construction of a new elementary school.

PROCESS & METHODOLOGY

The survey was administered using the Donovan Group's survey engine. Efforts were made to ensure that all eligible respondents had the opportunity to take the survey, but that no respondents took it multiple times. Following best practices in online research and to protect the security of the survey, internet protocol (IP) addresses were logged, and each response was time-stamped.

While we do not detail our specific survey security protocols, if we have reason to believe that anyone has taken the survey more than once or that there is any fraud, those responses are removed.

Finally, it is worth noting that, by design, this data is not based on a scientific sample. Therefore, it should be treated as qualitative data similar to data from a large number of focus groups. Because we used a convenience sample, it would be methodologically inappropriate to conduct a regression analysis or attempt to calculate error. However, our response pool to date is solid and provides sound data to division administration and the school board.



SURVEY RESULTS

A total of 1,151 respondents completed the survey. To complete the survey, respondents must have clicked "submit" at the end of the survey and answered all the required questions. Below is a summary of the results from the survey, along with some brief analysis from the Donovan Group team.

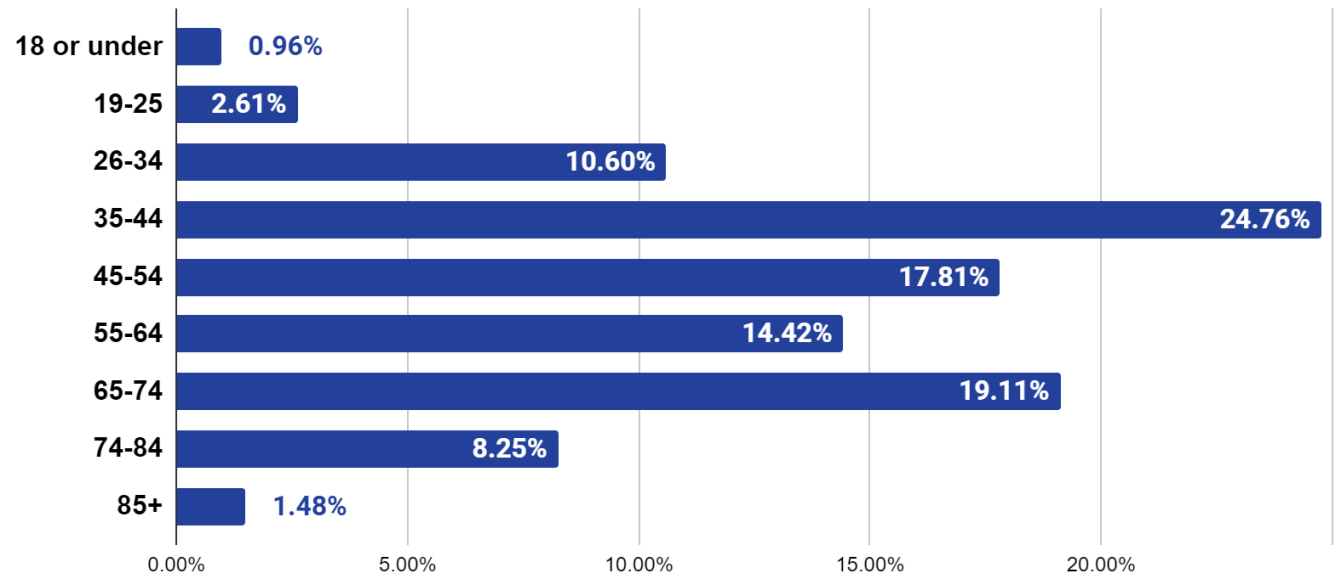
Those marked with an asterisk (*) were required to complete.

1 What is your age?*

Answer	Response #	Response %
18 or under	11	0.96%
19-25	30	2.61%
26-34	122	10.60%
35-44	285	24.76%
45-54	205	17.81%
55-64	166	14.42%
65-74	220	19.11%
74-84	95	8.25%
85+	17	1.48%

Analysis:

The largest percentage of survey respondents were between 35-44 years of age and 65-74 (19.11%). The former is typical for a survey of this nature, as we typically see more responses from those directly connected to the district through currently enrolled students. The survey overall received a good mix of responses across age groups.



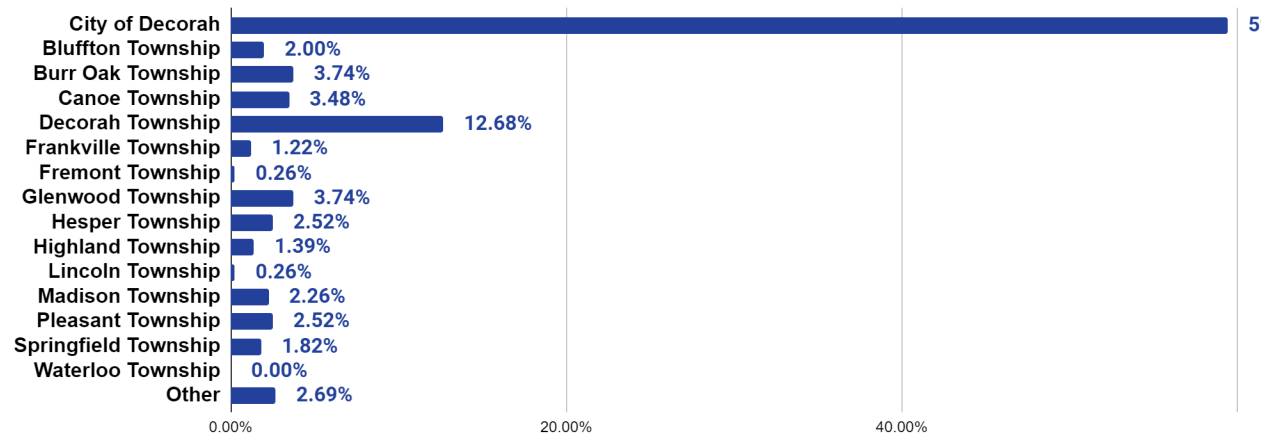
2 Where do you reside?*

Answer	Response #	Response %
City of Decorah	684	59.43%
Bluffton Township	23	2.00%
Burr Oak Township	43	3.74%
Canoe Township	40	3.48%
Decorah Township	146	12.68%
Frankville Township	14	1.22%
Fremont Township	3	0.26%
Glenwood Township	43	3.74%
Hesper Township	29	2.52%
Highland Township	16	1.39%
Lincoln Township	3	0.26%
Madison Township	26	2.26%
Pleasant Township	29	2.52%
Springfield Township	21	1.82%
Waterloo Township	0	0.00%
Other	31	2.69%

Analysis:

The largest percentage of survey respondents indicated they reside in the City of Decorah (59.4%). In comparison, 12.7% of respondents indicated they reside in Decorah Township.

Responses in “Other” included Waukon, Harmony, out of state, Waukon, Union Prairie, Calmar, Ridgeway, Allamakee County, Freeport area/township, and Fort Atkinson.

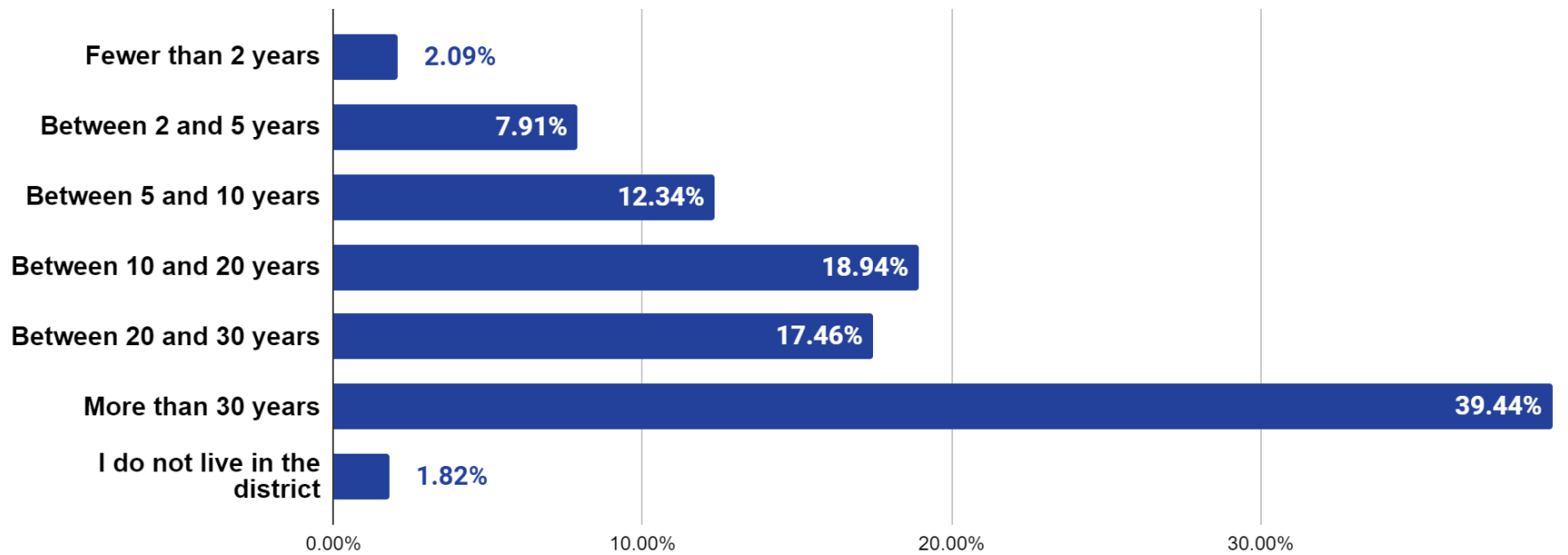


3 Approximately how long have you lived in the school district?*

Answer	Response #	Response %
Fewer than 2 years	24	2.09%
Between 2 and 5 years	91	7.91%
Between 5 and 10 years	142	12.34%
Between 10 and 20 years	218	18.94%
Between 20 and 30 years	201	17.46%
More than 30 years	454	39.44%
I do not live in the district	21	1.82%

Analysis:

The results here correspond accordingly to the respondents' reported age from question one. While we would have liked to see a few more responses from those who have lived in the district for fewer than five years, this pool provides a solid representation of the overall district community. It is also apparent that once residents move into this district, they tend to stay.



4 Please check all of the following that apply to you.

Answer	Response #	Response %
I have preschool-aged children (as of fall 2024)	116	10.08%
I have children who currently attend school in the Decorah Community School District.	383	33.28%
I have school-aged children who are open-enrolled into the Decorah Community School District (as of fall 2024).	26	2.26%
I have school-aged children who are open-enrolled into another school district (as of fall 2024).	20	1.74%
I have grandchildren who currently attend or have attended a school in the Decorah Community School District.	173	15.03%
I have children who have graduated or previously attended a school in the Decorah Community School District.	445	38.66%
I have attended a school in the Decorah Community School District.	379	32.93%
I am a community member who has never had children attend Decorah Community School District.	181	15.73%
I am an employee of the Decorah Community School District.	130	11.29%
I am currently a student at a school in the Decorah Community School District.	10	0.87%
Other	77	6.69%

Analysis:

Respondents were asked to select all that apply. As such, the percentages will add up to over 100, as we divide by the total number of responses for this specific question instead of the total number of survey respondents.

The respondent pool is diverse regarding connections to the school district. It is typical for a survey like this one to have many respondents directly connected to the district, as parents and staff members are the most likely to have heard about the survey. That said, many participants have children who have graduated or previously attended a school in the district, and/or they attended a school in the district.

Responses in “Other” included: have family attending DCSD (niece/nephew/grandchildren), retired employee, future parent/guardian of a DCSD student, former student, community member, former School Board member, former DCSD committee member, spouse is former student, open enrolled into DCSD, and DCSD volunteer.

In the following section, respondents were asked to review the background information below:

New Elementary School Survey and Project History

For several years, the Decorah Community School's District Board of Education and administration have actively sought solutions to address the facility challenges presented at John Cline Elementary School and West Side Early Childhood Center.

West Side was constructed in 1939 and John Cline first welcomed students in 1964. These schools have educated generations of students and been a source of pride for the community, but the district faces a long list of needs and expenses today due to the age and maintenance associated with these schools.

In 2008, an Iowa Construction Advocate Team conducted a review of John Cline and recommended to the Board that the school be replaced. In the years since, district officials and facility committee members, along with additional engineers and architects, have extensively studied both facilities.

The consensus is that investing funds at John Cline or West Side is not a practical or cost-effective option when it comes to meeting the goal of providing a 21st century learning environment for elementary students.

Among the most pressing issues that John Cline and West Side face today:

- Problems with the outdated structural, mechanical, and electrical systems.
- Sanitary sewer systems that connect to the city's main must be replaced and plumbing problems like toilet leaks and sewer backups are common.
- The buildings do not allow for effective security measures to be implemented.
- Asbestos can be found within the facilities.
- There is a lack of adequate classrooms to accommodate up to six sections per grade.
- The lack of air conditioning at both buildings impacts the entire school district's ability to remain in session on hot days.
- Playground drainage issues cause decaying leaves to collect in the fall and create foul odors.
- Small group collaboration and small group 1:1 student work space is unavailable.
- Limited ability to utilize technology to support 21st century learning.

Both schools have architectural issues that create challenges for students, teachers, and support staff. Many classrooms have limited setup options due to size, shape, and the location of outlets. There is inadequate closet space for students to store winter clothing. There is an insufficient number of sinks in classrooms and stalls in restrooms. And, both buildings lack general storage space.

The schools lack community rooms capable of hosting meetings and conferences, and shared gymnasium and lunchroom space interferes with indoor activities and recess periods. John Cline has multiple interior rooms that lack windows or proper ventilation due to previous construction.

The estimated cost to renovate John Cline and West Side was approximately \$9.1 million in 2009, compared to a new construction estimated cost of \$13 million. Not only would the renovation costs be close to 70% of the new construction, but a renovation project would also fall short on a number of educational priorities for our children, staff, and community. It was determined unanimously by community members and the Board of Education in 2014 that new construction was the best path toward addressing the district's needs for the next 50+ years.

Decorah CSD explored the possibility of using the North Winneshiek building, which was obtained when the two districts merged in 2018. However, that building was of the same vintage as John Cline, with its own infrastructure shortcomings that did not allow it to accommodate three grades of students with up to six sections. There would have also been scheduling issues and the added cost of transporting students to that campus, which in 2015 had an estimated cost of more than \$71,000 annually.

As the district pursued plans to construct a new school in the past decade, it engaged in discussions with the City of Decorah and Luther College, among other parties, about acquiring land. In October 2023, Decorah CSD ultimately agreed to purchase a city-owned parcel west of John Cline for \$1.97 million.

The City of Decorah's North Alley District master plan, published in 2023, includes space for a new elementary school. Some of the benefits of constructing a school at this site include:

- An opportunity to improve traffic flow, parking, and pedestrian safety around both the elementary school and the high school.
- Proximity to the high school provides opportunities for savings, including efficient food service operations, staff sharing, and transportation.
- More curricular opportunities for interaction between high school and elementary students.
- The city's parks and recreation program would have access to an additional full-size gymnasium located near its offices.
- This school would improve the appearance of one of the most visible areas of the community.

All of these efforts since 2008 have led to the next step of asking Decorah CSD residents to consider a general obligation bond that would be on the ballot November 5, 2024, to finance construction of a new elementary school.

The estimated cost of the project is \$30-38 million. If the project is approved by voters, the existing \$2.70 tax levy rate will be extended to cover the cost along with SAVE, PPEL, and other financing options. The tax levy rate will **NOT** be raised to fund a new school.

5 I support the construction of a new building to replace John Cline Elementary School and West Side Early Childhood Center.

Answer	Response #	Response %
Yes	878	76.35%
No, I would not	178	15.48%
Unsure	94	8.17%

Analysis:

Over 76% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while approximately 8.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Non-Staff/Non-Parents/Guardians

Answer	Response #	Response %
Yes	494	70.17%
No, I would not	143	20.31%
Unsure	67	9.52%

Analysis:

As noted previously in the report, we typically see more responses from those directly connected to the district through currently enrolled students, as well as from staff. We removed those who are current parents/guardians and staff and reviewed the level of support. As you can see, there is still overwhelming support, with 70.2% of respondents indicating they support the construction of a new building to replace John Cline Elementary School and West Side Early Childhood Center.

6 If you answered “no” to the question above, what are your concerns about the possible construction of a new elementary school?

Common themes and corresponding quotes

This was an optional question, and 167 responses were received. The responses highlight various information, preferences, and suggestions for the school district to consider. Common themes have been identified, with direct quotes from survey participants to provide additional insight.

• Financial Concerns and Tax Impact

- “As long as the real estate taxes are not increased or in danger of being raised, I would support this issue. You all need to realize the massive number of people who move to Decorah to retire. Therefore, have no connection to the school and are on fixed incomes. I also realize that good schools attract good families and employees for the Decorah businesses.”
- “Concerned about the slippery segue from 9.1 million -> 13 million -> 38 million taxpayer dollars. Construction of a new school would reward its proponents scaremongering and arrogance, thus turbocharging future overreach and turbospending.”
- “How can you guarantee that the tax levy rate will not be raised? The cost of the project is astronomical.”
- “I do support this project, but continue to be concerned about the impact this would make on the already steep taxes for city residents. With all of the land in Decorah city limits already exempt from taxes, i.e. churches, schools, and the private property owners who enjoy the new construction tax abatement, the citizens on a fixed income, supporting the city via our taxes, are feeling over-whelmed. ALL home owners should pay their fair share of taxes.”
- I don't understand how you said this: The estimated cost to renovate John Cline and West Side was approximately \$9.1 million in 2009, compared to a new construction estimated cost of \$13 million. Now you're asking for 38 million? Does this mean construction costs have TRIPLED in 15 years? Just clarifying... Thanks. You should adjust the estimates to reflect current costs of renovation.
- “Property taxes are double what they were 15-20 years ago. This makes it difficult for those on fixed incomes. You say the levy will not be raised, but the value put on houses has gone up a lot the past 5-7 years which does raise taxes.”
- “Voting no = lower taxes since the existing bond will get paid off this year.”
- “I'm not opposed but would like to better understand how the investment went from \$13M to \$30-38M. Financing cost? What else? Thank you!”
- “Please consider all income levels and retirees on fixed incomes when you start your plans.”
- “If new construction cost is estimated at \$13 million and the land already purchased was \$1.97 million, what is the difference between the \$30-38 million and the \$15 million (for site already purchased and new construction) going towards? Fifteen to \$28 million for? Please clarify.”

• Maintenance of Existing Facilities/Planning Concerns

- “these problems didn't happen overnight and it seems like once the school gets a certain age we don't want to do the necessary repairs.”
- “The school had the opportunity when they had n.winn school to use that while construction of new alot of money was spent on this and just put on back burner.”
- “We currently have 3 "new" buildings that do not work as expected. Temperature in those three buildings cannot be controlled. All three buildings have leaks that are not fixed. Maintenance on all three of these newer buildings is not being done on a regular basis.”
- “You had a perfectly good building north of Decorah, and you chose not to use it. There was space, green areas, parking, etc. Also, basic maintenance of any building will keep it use able. Continued, on going maintenance will keep a building forever.”
- “In reading through the above information, I question the overall need for a new school. Remodeling perhaps would be a better option. The fact that enrollment is not increasing, leads me to question the need for this new school.”

- “you have wasted tax payers money on the construction of the old Carrie Lee building and the middle school built in the past when you could of built a new school with everything in one building ranging from k-8. Where you want to put the new school now. You have also put the tennis courts up 5-10 years ago that costed the tax payers more money to now want to rip them up. You people have no common sense.”
 - “I think the district was very closed minded when it came to the North Winn facilities to utilize them in a short term capacity for however long it would have taken to construct a new school on the current site of John Cline. This would also have prevented bulldozing the wonderful tennis courts and softball diamond.”
- **Location and Infrastructure Concerns**
 - “I’m concerned about the proposed location for the new school building. It seems like it will make that area too congested.”
 - “I don’t object to the construction of a new elementary school. I just object to where you want to put it.”
 - “Are you planning for future! You need a full size gym to accommodate tournament play. Where will everyone park? I just think you should be looking at a different location. Too bad you didn’t think about moving school campus’s out of town so you could have room for schools and fields. You are land locked. You did a disservice to highschool by not building a bigger gym and seating in practice gym. I can’t vote yes seeing what you have done before.”
 - “Not on the current cramped sight. I would support the construction of a new elementary in a different area of town.”
 - “Disagree with earlier study. New school is a must. poor location. lack of space . traffic congestion in an emergency situation . loss of parking. loss of community tennis courts built with donated funds, etc.”
 - “I am not opposed to a new school but am opposed to the location. The building will break up the view of the hillside scenery, cluttering up an already crowd area and creating a larger traffic problem than we have now. You are ruining the uniqueness of the area. You had other location options and chose not to use them, unfortunately.”
 - “The location is a concern. Congested area - further congestion would impede the fire department in their valuable services. Would be more appropriate for the elementary school to be built near the middle school - closer related activity day and more related for traffic flow for delivering and picking up students.”
 - “The proposed location could flood. The current flood protection has come very close to failing and seems like it has a high chance of flooding at some point in the future. It would probably be federal taxpayer money that would help pay for damages to the new school.”
 - “The district wasted a very good facility when they left the north Winn building empty. That facility would have accommodated the students that were in the building in question today . While it may not have been a permanent solution it was a very usable solution.”
 - “Before the land purchase was completed, there should have been a comprehensive plan for the school buildings as well as other potential features. That plan should have been available to the community prior to the land purchase and proposed bond issue.”
 - “I honestly wish there was an option that said Yes, I support the construction, just NOT in the current location or the location that the school district is proposing. There is already issues for parking & traffic, your taking away a much used baseball diamond and tennis/pickleball courts. You talk about the future, but if you build in the location you’re proposing where is there space to grow in the future if needed? There isn’t.”
 - “The current location of the youngest students literally next door to the oldest students and most inexperienced drivers, many if not most of whom drive to their school, is a MAJOR flaw and seriously dangerous situation for the current location. To use the same location, with only minor change in location, is a serious flaw to the current proposal. Also, the purchase price of this new location is outrageously expensive. Residential location or edge of town would be preferable.”
 - “The location is not a good choice for the community. I prefer a location further away from the downtown businesses.”
 - **Historical and Environmental Considerations**
 - “I absolutely DO NOT support tearing down Westside Elementary. It is an important structure and landmark.”
 - “More attention is needed to environmental concerns in building a new building than appears to be taking place.”

- “Decorah has a long history of discarding our architectural heritage. May I remind you of the East Side School? This was a huge loss to Decorah and I simply cannot support the same demise of the West Side school, one of the most functional, yet architecturally pleasing educational facilities in the country.”
- “I think that Decorah needs to learn how to maintain the buildings they have. I am not opposed to a new building other than I live in the Woolen Mill apartments and would have to listen to all that noise pollution.”
- “That building and that land was set aside specifically in the 19th century -- as a commitment in perpetuity to public education. That building should be renovated and used.”
- “The question seems to link replacement of West Side School to the demolition of John Cline. I do not support demolishing West Side School. It is a historic resource that should be protected. Missing from the selective and manipulatively constructed history above is the District's track record demolishing other valued historic resources, like the East Side School, rather than seeking creative opportunities for reuse. Do not make the same mistake again.”
- “I'm curious to know what the cost of making West Side a serviceable facility for DCSD in some manner might be, and any historical value, both physical and narrative, that this former generational elementary school may have.”

- **Alternative Solutions and Suggestions**

- “Consolidate the schools near Carrie Lee Campus.”
- “School board is obsessed with a new building on property not owned by school. There are other options out there.”
- “Please come back with a better plan that costs less.”
- “Although DCSD “explored” the possibility of using North Winneshiek School, it had so much potential! It had all modern electronics, A/C in the lower elementary, and a large playground to name a few! I believe repairs and updates would've been far more financially beneficial compared to all the costs of a brand new school.”
- “You should have used North Winn School for one year and torn down John Cline right after the last day of school and they could have built the new school right there and had it done by August 1st of the following year. Then we didn't need to buy all the land from the city. Decorah schools never fix things the right they just patch it to get by. Keep the tennis courts cause they are all pretty new and so is the new concession & bathrooms building.”
- “Why not destroy John Cline and build on the same site? Utilities hookups are there, no need to destroy existing rec facilities or purchase more land. Kids would be displaced for one year. Demolition could begin the day classes end and a new building be ready for classes in 15 months.”
- “Put the construction back on the same spot as John Cline is currently sitting. Entrances in north alley and in front of the school. Plus change parking by tennis courts to parallel. Do not disturb softball field or tennis courts. Put out part time school rooms during construction like was done before.”
- “Buy back north Winneshiek for \$500,000.”
- “Always wondered why the middle school would not be used for elementary and a new middle school would be built on John Cline school location. This way middle school and high school would be together and the elementary schools be located together to share facilities and in a less busy area for safety of younger students.”
- “I am disappointed that you put “the cart before the horse” by purchasing land before letting people weigh in on other options. Many tax payers feel you all ready had your agenda and you did not give other ideas proper consideration. Options like using property near Carrie Lee and the Middle School, or rebuilding John Cline on its current spot when you owned North Winn building and could have used it for classrooms temporarily..”

7 Of the potential features that could be included with the construction of a new elementary school, please rank the following options with “1” being the highest priority.

Answer	Ranked
Pickleball courts	1
Outdoor amphitheater	2
Outdoor basketball courts	3
Additional competition gym for school events, Parks & Recreation, and the community	6
Parks & Recreation outdoor green space	5
Parking for the high school and community events	4

Analysis:

Of the list of proposed features that could be included with the construction of a new elementary school, the top three features were pickleball courts (1), outdoor amphitheater (2), and outdoor basketball courts (3).

Parking for the high school and community events ranked fourth, while parks and recreation outdoor green space were ranked fifth. Of the six potential features, the additional competition gym for school events, parks and recreation, and the community ranked last.

8

What do you believe is most important for the Decorah Community School District and the Board of Education to focus on when building a new elementary school?

Common themes and corresponding quotes

This was an optional question, and 791 responses were received. The responses highlight various information, preferences, and suggestions for the school district to consider. Common themes have been identified, with direct quotes from survey participants to provide additional insight.

- **Consideration of Cost/Potential Revenue**

- “We need a new building that is environmentally friendly and uses the latest green technology available, even if the upfront costs are more.”
- “Being transparent with the tax payers that will be funding the project.”
- “The cost to taxpayers. Many people are hardly making ends meet now as lots of jobs in the area pay poorly.”
- “Keeping cost overruns from occurring.”
- “We could generate significant tax revenue by adding gym space that would allow us to host more tournaments.”
- “Keeping costs under control.”

- **Location and Traffic Management**

- “Location- do not want it where you have identified. Put it in the current location or connect it to the Carrie Lee building.”
- “Looking at having the new school being close to other schools.”
- “The safety of the children when planning how drop off/pickup will flow. The traffic in general in that area is horrendous in the morning. Many downtown businesses have employees also trying to get to work in the morning.”
- “Building the school in the right location, preferably close to the current upper elementary and middle school location”
- “Make it adaptable & expandable for the future.”
- “Connection to nature, low traffic patterns, room to expand in the future and not be so land locked downtown. The list of options in the list provided above will make this survey lean toward favorable results for current space. I would like to see those tennis courts saved, green space saved, and school located elsewhere to create a central city park that can feed our downtown retailers all year round!”
- “Engineers really need to focus on the efficiency of a parking and pickup route that will not only be safer for students, but will allow greater fluidity loading and unloading of buses. I have witnessed multiple instances of children almost being ran over at the west cross-walk due to blind spots and young drivers. Parents picking up block in cars parked in the street, creating another safety hazard.”

- **Safety and Security**

- “Security!!!! We can't be ignorant in thinking that a school shooting could never happen in Decorah. Children's safety in schools is absolutely the #1 priority!”
- “Safety features: cameras, security lock systems.”
- “Safety. Unfortunately with the rise of school shootings, schools need to be designed in such a way to minimize harm to children should a shooter gain entrance into a school.”
- “installing a security system in the school to keep the children safe if there is an active shooter. Safety mechanisms at classroom doors to keep children and teachers safe.”
- “A tornado safe room that could also be utilized as a multipurpose room/gym.”
- “Safety from traffic, flooding, other natural disasters, intruders, etc. these are the youngest kids in the district.”

- “Consult with engineers and the Local Law Enforcement (Decorah Police, Winneshiek Sheriff Dept, and State Patrol) to ask for assistance in building the facility in a manor that bolsters keeping our children safe.”
- **Quality and Functionality of Educational Spaces**
 - “I also think that giving students sufficient outdoor exposure (green space and sports facilities) is very important.”
 - “I believe the learning environment for the students attending is most important.”
 - “Provide a state of the art facility that offers larger classrooms, latest technology, facilities that promote music, arts and exercise.”
 - “Spaces for children to decompress and go to as a safety place for emotions.”
 - “Asking the current teachers what they need.”
 - “Diverse spaces in the school as far as offices to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse learners- adequate spaces for school specialists like ELL, counselors, speech pathologists, special education services to work with students in smaller groups or one on one.”
 - “A safe healthy building for students to effectively learn. Ensure it can withstand high winds and includes tornado shelter, and cooling for extremely hot school days. Adequate band & music rooms, overall this is an educational facility, first and foremost.”
 - “Safety and versatility to provide education sites and rooms adaptive to all variety of learners, including individual, large and small group needs and comfort levels.”
 - “More water fountains ..more cubby room for the littles.. more storage for the teachers.. bigger space for lunches so the are not crammed.”
 - “As technology continues to be integrated into everyday life, thinking ahead to classroom design that not only works now but for decades ahead.”
 - “Large enough to accommodate 6 sections along with space to collaborate within each grade level. Space for kids to move around including outdoor learning areas.”
 - “Creating synergies between locations. There are enough cross over things between music, strength, track, football etc that allowing middle school kids to use those facilities without having to walk or to take transportation back and forth would be ideal.”
- **Sustainability and Energy Efficiency**
 - “Look to the Future. Sustainability. Build a Blue Zone school.”
 - “I think that sustainable building practices should be at the forefront of decision making. We are building this school for future generations, so let's make decisions that support both their learning, and the world they will inherit. Specifically, I support exploration of a net-zero facility that seeks to achieve goals already set by the City's Sustainability committee. This might include a net zero facility, access to natural/park space, and pedestrian/bike accessibility.”
 - “Any new school at this point should be carbon-neutral, should be surrounded by green space and natural native plantings, including trees and bushes--as natural as possible. Parking should be at the rear and as inconspicuous as possible, encouraging walking to school as a healthy practice.”
 - “Focus on the health of the current and future generations of students through sustainable design and energy plans. Prioritize green design and follow elements for LEED certification. Set the goal of being a "net-zero" school by emphasizing on-site electricity generation and sustainable heating and cooling systems like geothermal. Build to enhance resource conservation and efficiency!”
 - “As a physician, I believe incorporating the safety of the students needs to be one of the highest priorities 1) excellent ventilation with HEPA filters with benefit everyone in the school in regard to infections spread through the air. As we found out this last year, it would also help protect us from smoke coming from wildfires. 2) I think it is also important for the kitchen to utilize electrical cooking options rather than natural gas as gas stoves have been proven to be a hazard in kids with asthma. 3) I believe the new location for the elementary school is just south of the dike, and with the history of increasing flooding, elevating the school foundation a few feet would decrease the risk of flooding the building, if and when water flood waters go over the dike. I will never forget, looking up the river from a bridge in Decorah, and seeing the flood waters within 3 feet of going over the dike. I suspect the school would be used for the next 50 or 60 years. Our climate is in great flux, and I think an

elevated foundation is important. 4) I am delighted that air conditioning will be utilized to help protect against increasingly hot days 5) I also think energy efficiency, great insulation, etc. is critically important, and there would be space I am hopeful for solar to decrease the long-term cost of utilities.”

- “Creating a bright, beautiful, light filled, highly functional space for our youngest students to learn and our staff to flourish in.”
- “I hope that you will work to make this building a net-zero school, meaning it will be optimally efficient, generate energy onsite, use clean renewable resources, in a quantity equal to or greater than the total amount of energy it uses. We want to keep children and staff healthier and save the district money over the long run.”
- “The building should be designed and built to the highest standards of energy efficiency and incorporate renewable energy (geothermal plus solar) in order to be a net zero emissions and even carbon-positive building once operational. This is fully possible today, and there are federal (and possibly state) incentives that can help significantly, including the 30% direct pay tax credits, which provide a "refund" to non-taxable entities thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act.”

- **Community Involvement and Use**

- “Keeping tennis courts and outdoor recreation areas in town for safety of students and also for use by Park & Rec Department in the summer.”
- “Forget the fluff like pickle ball courts, outdoor amphitheater, and parks and rec outdoor green space. Stay in your lane and let Parks and Rec provide those things.”
- “Spaces for community gathering.”
- “Parking for events and school. As well as green space and nice facilities for the kids to play on and use during the school time and in the summer as well.”
- “An indoor training facility for children of all levels, faculty, and the general public to use. We are in dire need of a larger indoor training facility with easier access, especially for the winter months.”
- “That this would be a space for the entire community to use and not only the schools (with priority obviously given to schools during school time).”
- “Think about how this can benefit the whole community and not just families with children.”
- “Coming from a contractor stand point - I feel it is incredibly important to be sure to hire local contractors for the construction of this new building. We are the tax payers who have been funding projects like this for many, many year - and we will continue to not only pay those taxes, but be local sponsors for events, host training clinics for students, etc. We live in this community and should be able to have our fair shot at bidding a project of this size.”
- “Could a community center be built as an integrated part of the building.”
- “Connecting-community fitness center to the school.”
- “Have something available for these kids to do on the weekends. Example: During the winter months Harmony, MN opens a school gym up for "tot time". They have activities, balls, bikes and bounce houses for a few hours on every Saturday. There's nothing for kids to do in Decorah, surrounding towns have fitness centers with lots of activities.”

- **Future-Forward Thinking Balanced with Practicality**

- “Looking to the future of education and how spaces/classrooms can be flexible to meet the changes. Having adequate space for ancillary activities, such as speech therapy, remedial teaching, etc.”
- “Building for the future - numbers will go up at some point so making sure there is space for our future numbers is important. I also think having another gym would be great for the schools considering all of the school and club sports that have to share space.”
- “Staying on target and planning for possible future growth.”
- “Demographic trends suggesting that the student population will grow increasingly smaller. Do not overbuild. Look at how much empty space is already present in North Winn, Luther, etc. Kids in the upper midwest are not a growing segment of the population.”

- “Please don't build a flat-roofed building (so short-sighted).”
 - “Plan for growth in student population.”
 - “The board of education needs to think about what the needs of the district will be in 50-60 years. There should be a minimum of 6 classrooms per classroom to accommodate large classes. There needs to be ample bathrooms that are equipped for small children. The building needs to have a sufficient heating and cooling system. The lunchroom needs to be separate from the gym to allow for creativity when making a schedule.”
 - “Connection to the outdoors is a plus (please some windows!).”
 - “Don't build for today. Imagine the future and build towards that.”
 - “Planning for future enrollment gains and/or losses. IE: spaces that can be adjusted so no class is larger than 18 or smaller.”
 - “Get it right the first time, meaning don't come back to the taxpayers in ten years because you need something else.”
- **Collaboration**
 - “The City needs to take on the responsibility of the optional features listed above!!”
 - “Work with Park and Rec to meet the most important community needs.”
 - “Make it as useable by the community as possible. I feel the community is closed off and making a space that is open to everyone would encourage people into our area.”
 - “Want safe and efficient building. Do not need all the frills, the community can build all those things. They can fund raise for the extra things. Just make a square building. Do not need empty space like middle school.”
 - “I do not believe that it's purpose is to provide Park & Rec needs- outdoor or indoor- unless the school sees the opportunity to overlap the building's structure to help meet those needs in off use hours (gym space or green space) without incurring extra expense in the process.”
 - “I really like the opportunities discussed above for collaboration and sharing of facilities with park and rec.”
- **Accessibility**
 - “Increasing biking and pedestrian safety and encouraging less driving and more walking and biking to school for all ages. Having a spot further away from the school for high schoolers to park and parents to drop off kids to walk to school so there is less car pollution near the school.”
 - “Accessible to all with physical handicaps, and welcoming to all gender expressions.”
 - “That all students have equal access to all departments and rooms regardless of physical needs.”
 - “Bathrooms in every early childhood and lower elementary classroom. Handicap accessible playground as well as an outdoor green space with natural elements.”
 - “There needs to be ample bathrooms that are equipped for small children.”
 - “Special education students need space to learn and practice skills while being able to utilize mobility equipment.”
- **Timely and Efficient Construction**
 - “This needs to happen as quickly as possible. It's no shock that these things take time, but every board meeting, city council meeting and annual meeting moving forward should state where this is, what is coming up next and how we, as the community, can do our part to help the process. Not everyone can financially donate, so give us a list of how we can help clean out classrooms, prep spaces, paint, do landscaping, anything to ensure as few students and teachers/staff/administration as possible have to be in the current John Cline building.”
 - “To get this done quickly and efficiently. We have spent too much time on this whole process. It should have been done years ago.”
 - “Getting it done as soon as possible, while focusing on student and staff needs. With this having been a known issue since 2008, it is time for it to be resolved.”

9 What questions do you have either about the process that led to this point or what the Board of Education should consider leading up to a November 2024 bond vote?*

Common themes and corresponding quotes

This was a required question, yet approximately half of the respondents provided a specific response. The responses highlight various information, preferences, and suggestions for the school district to consider. Common themes have been identified, with direct quotes from survey participants to provide additional insight and specific examples.

- **Features, Size, Enrollment, Timeframe**

- “Crazy to buy more property, destroy the tennis courts, softball field and make people, kids go 2 miles out to play the above.”
- “Will existing school be able to be used throughout new construction? Will tennis courts be removed?”
- “Why did you let the North Winn building go so easily and not utilize it???”
- “What Was the process that led to this point?”
- “What is the future projected enrollment?”
- “Why is the elementary school not for grades K-5?”
- “When would this take place where exactly is the building going?”
- “How were future enrollment levels forecasted and considered?”
- “What is the time frame for the school's completion? The sooner, the better.”
- “Build schools that do not have flat roofs.”
- “Are you building on an entirely unused space, or how will you handle education during the building process?”
- “If the bond doesn't pass, what next?”
- “I don't disagree that something has to be done, but what other large projects do we need to consider that will require funding in the next 5 to 10 years? Will the West Side school be taken down? Will the property be sold? Or repurposed for another school project that needs funding?”
- “Where will the following be relocated? -softball field -tennis courts.”
- “How long would construction take?”
- “Where will students be going to school during the construction process?”
- “What factors will the Board consider in choosing to retain or sell the John Cline and West Side properties?”
- “Does the new construction consider the potential population increase of the future?”
- “Why no consideration for a two-level plan when land in Decorah is a premium.?”
- “What factors will be used to determine who wins the contract?”
- “Will there be an elevator?”

- **Location, Traffic, Parking**

- “I think a fair amount of consideration should be given to how the students will be dropped off and picked up from the new building. Currently it is a very hectic environment especially when walking a TK-2nd grader through bus and high school traffic.”
- “Why do we not consider other locations? Why is being near the high school such a priority over being near Carrie Lee or Middle School?”
- “I support a new school, but think it should be built somewhere else.”
- “What is the 100/500-year flood plan?”
- “Is there still time to consider another location?”

- “Was there any consideration to space by the middle school for the elementary? Thereby, building a 6-8th grade where the current John Cline is located.”
 - “What would the renewed traffic routing for general public in the area look like?”
 - “Has there ever been consideration of building up and out of the valley of Decorah along Highway 9 or 52?”
 - “Will there be sufficient parking for students near the school to reduce the number of students that zoom around and park in the 'flat' neighborhood area?”
 - “Why does the board of education only ever seem to consider the downtown location for the new school? If there have been other sites considered, have they been shared with the public?”
 - “Will State street, Heivly street, and Claiborne Drive remain the same?”
 - “I am concerned about the traffic flow with the north alley, fire and police departments so nearby. congestion seems inevitable.”
 - “Have you attempted to pursue other options on the edge of town? Why insist on keeping it so close to the high school, and all the dangerous traffic?”
 - “What will we do with west side property?”
- **Cost and Financial Considerations**
 - “How can we make this affordable?”
 - “Why did the expensive land purchas(es) for this project occur prior public approval of constructing a new school?”
 - “If the estimate for a new school was \$13 million in 2014, why is the estimate over 3x that now? Have costs really jumped that much in 10 years? Is there more included in the new estimate so it is not an apples to apples comparison? While I understand costs have risen, that substantial jump in pricing surprised me.”
 - “With an uncertain future for budgets how can we be sure we can pay this off?”
 - “The school board should keep costs the lowest possible when getting bids etc. , but NOT AT THE COST OF SAFETY. SAFETY should be the number one priority when considering improvements to the school.”
 - “I want to see a current itemized cost break-down of the renovation vs new- construction options. The 2009 estimates are out-of-date.”
 - “I don't understand anything about the \$2.70 tax levy rate. What is that? What does it mean? What does it mean to extend it? Also, how did the cost to build go from \$13 million to \$38 million in 15 years?”
 - “How many years will the tax levy rate be extended?”
 - “How will a new facility help in attracting new, young teachers? How will a new facility help with improving district academic outcomes. If we have new facilities and disgruntled and underpaid teachers, I don't see how that helps. Teachers 1st and buildings 2nd. Please be mindful of the budget.”
 - “Have you looked into grant money to offset the cost?”
 - “What is the cost to the average resident?”
 - “As mentioned earlier, the building of a new school was based on a repair vs build analysis from 2009. Is there a 2024 analysis on repair vs cost ratio?”
 - “With the enormous purchase price of the proposed location, will the tax increase be mitigated by extending the current debt for the latest building construction? Would it cost more to buy up the land around West Side Elementary, keeping the new building in a residential area?”
 - “Please assure senior citizens of tax ramifications.”
 - **Collaboration/Other Features and/or Factors to Consider**
 - “Why won't you let MC kids continue to go to school there?”
 - “Where will park and recreation re-locate for new baseball/softball fields? How many tennis courts will be re-built? Suggest eight tennis courts. Also, suggest two dedicated pickleball courts be set for the space as well.”

- "I'm wondering why you don't have Softball field on the list of perks for the community?"
 - "Where will the tennis courts go????"
 - "Includes community fitness center with the new school. There is a large population of residents in Decorah who are middle aged or senior citizens. This population will be more apt to vote yes if you build a school facility that includes a fitness center that they can attend, too."
 - "Is there enough coordination between the district and county officials regarding the timing of capital projects? You want to pass a school bond at a time when the county is proposing a 8-9% property tax increase to pay for the 911 tower and Spectrum building purchase. That's a lot all at once, especially for retirees on fixed incomes like us."
- **Overall Support and Criticism**
 - How much did you spend getting to this point? Using consultants doesn't come free. Have you exhausted all possibilities?
 - "SECRETS and a lack of transparency. I cannot even find the current enrollment of John Cline or for all the grades in the Decorah Community School District. If this is on the website, it is well-hidden. If this information is NOT on the website -- WHY?"
 - "What is it taking so long?"
 - "Whose it benefit the school or Luther College?"
 - "Why the lack of communication with district patrons regarding: acceptance/rejection of potential other locations for proposed building, purchase of property on and off site, potential solutions regarding loss of centrally located facilities currently in use?"
 - "Why not build the new elementary school where Carrie Lee is ...then where John cline is build a new middle school for 6 to 8th graders?"
- **Suggestions/Suggestions within Questions**
 - "I would suggest offering small group educational training sessions to the general public. I would definitely attend these educational sessions to further understand all aspects of this proposal & the impact for the next generation of our USA Citizens. Plus being a senior citizen that needs reinforcement to understand all this important information."
 - "Public meetings to explain plan and allow questions as it has been awhile since plan was discussed."
 - "The board should do as much community awareness of the nasty conditions currently. Possibly an open house to actually show people the school when it is 80 plus inside."
 - "I am in full support of the new school and its location but think there needs to be even more communication about why other options (like North Winn or land near Vennehjem) didn't work and all the benefits the current location has to offer. Also, it's important to explain how building a new school is an urgent need. Things are so bad a John Cline I don't feel comfortable sending my youngest to school in that building."
 - "Speed this up. The students are in school right now!"
 - "Lots of publicity showing the plans for the school again."
 - "Is there a beneficial reuse of demolished buildings rather than just landfilling?"
 - "Convert current high school classrooms into elementary classrooms. Build a multilevel, 4 story tall, high school on John Cline site. Save green space area for other uses besides a sprawling elementary building. Share some of the existing high school building such as band room, auditorium, gymnasiums, cafeteria with both high school and elementary children. Skywalk to connect both buildings."
 - "Why not use the North Winn facility as another grade school for pre-kindergarten through 6th grade rather than trying to get all of the kids in a couple of grades bused up there? This would reduce bussing costs since those kids wouldn't have to come all the way to Decorah and shorten their ride as well."
 - "How many lots could west side be divided up into? The building needs to be torn down. It smells so bad in it and we should not allow students to be in the building."
 - "Really get the word out about not increasing the levy rate."
 - "Will there be tours of John Cline for the public?"
 - "How can we support this project better in the community? Give us tangible ways we can help make this happen, please."

- “Streamline the DCSD message on construction costs. How does \$9 million renovation cost go to \$13 million new construction costs go to \$30-38 million new project costs.”
- “I'd love to see the proposed printed physical layout of the area again!”
- “Will the survey results be made public?”
- “Let the public see possible plans NOW if we are expected to vote in 2024.”i
- “Stress the fact that taxes won't go up- that the levy will simply replace one that is expiring. Start sharing photos and videos of how the structures can't be healthy nor practical. I can see standing water in the roof of John Cline!!”
- “The board needs to consider that we are a rural school district and understand the opinions and concerns of those who don't live in Decorah. When farmers own hundreds of acres of land, a bond issue is definitely felt to a greater extent than to the average Decorah resident. You'd better get the rural community involved.”
- “Craft a school bond construction committee that will canvass every vote in the district and provide accurate information to ALL voters, including yes, no, and undecided. Know ahead of the bond election, all of your yes, and undecided voters.”
- “I've followed the process and understand it has been a very long journey. I would place things to consider as: what are your marketing effort plans specifically for rural residents? What innovative features might the new school contain that continue DCSD's history of one of Iowa's finest? How will this new facility attract teachers? How will it contribute to attracting families to our district? How might the District collaborate with local real estate agents?”
- “I think people from the community need to be able to enter the building and walk through it and see for themselves how much the community needs a new preschool. Could that happen?”
- “What is being done to educate the public about the poor condition of the school that will lead to health concerns? Asepsis, mold, poor circulation, etc. Also what is being done to educate the public on the specific safety/security concerns?”

10 What other comments would you like to share with the Board of Education at this time?

Common themes and corresponding quotes

This was a required question, yet just over half of the respondents provided a specific response. Many of the respondents showed appreciation for the survey and for the solutions presented in the survey. Common themes have been identified among all comments, with direct quotes from survey participants to provide additional insight and specific examples.

- **Appreciation and Support**

- “Thank you for getting the ball rolling on this! We are excited to see construction begin!”
- “This is a long time coming. My child is in the same building I went to school in, which looks exactly the same as it did 20 years ago. An update is far overdue.”
- “If we value children in this community, we need to act on that value by investing in education. I fully support a bond vote and this construction project.”
- “Thank you for the opportunity to complete this survey and for your efforts to communicate the issues to the general public.”
- “Thank you for your work on providing consistent communication with the overall community in this project. I don't have children in the district but always want to support the best that I can.”

- **Fiscal Responsibility and Cost Concerns**

- “Bad time now to plan this with the high inflation that we have.”
- “I have heard there was a considerable waste of resources (reams of paper, gym equipment, and valuable assets that could have been used by the district, etc) that was tossed out or given away when N. Winn closed. Please utilize our tax payer dollars with care and consideration. Have a good plan in place:an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!!”
- “The explanation above is a good summary of the issue. However, there is a disconnect between your 2009 estimate of \$13M and the now estimated cost of \$30+M. There needs to be some additional explanation of that increase other than to just say costs went up.”
- “Please continue to emphasize that the tax levy rate will NOT increase. I think this will be a huge point to make to the community. Of course we need to clarify that this is only the rate, not the total taxes. I would have put that item first in the long narrative above!”
- “The community has been very generous in your requests the past 15 years but I think we are maxed out until current loans are paid.”
- “Look at least expensive way to accomplish a fix! There are several residents of our school district that are on a very fixed income.”
- “Schools don't teach, teachers do. Put your resources into adding and retaining high quality teachers.”

- **Community and Communication**

- “Please ensure that the next meeting with a need for public opinion/votes/etc is advertised in as many equitable ways as possible, in a location that can accommodate for voices to be heard. If this survey was only offered in English, understand many of the ESL families will not have equitable options to take it as it may be intimidating to read and type without assistance.”
- “Let's ensure that all thoughts in the community and especially those on the board are heard - it's time for new thoughts in this process.”
- “Please work hard at unifying the community. People sending their students to St Bens talk negatively about this building and are uninformed as to how this affects their students or not. They see nothing beneficial about the construction. The last bond issue tore the Decorah Community apart and there were lots of negative letters to the editor, historic claims, signage, etc. It was difficult to see neighbor fighting neighbor.”

- “Board needs to reach out to community, especially those that don't have any current links to the school. It will be all about property taxes and for the bond issue to pass people need to be knowledgeable about what happens if it doesn't pass & the implications that would create.”
- “Communicate communicate communicate. Transparency on budget, direction, plan, etc. is essential for community buy in.”
- “Could we see a map of these proposals?”
- “It would be great to hear from the Board with updates and proposed plans and timeline.”
- “I was a member of the Shareholders (SIAC) Committee when the district passed the bond issue to make the updates to the high school. It is imperative that our older community members see the need for a new elementary school. Personal conversations with community members, as well as tours of the current facilities, can help educate those who don't have a direct connection to the district.”
- “The purchase of land in fall 2023 was news to both my husband and me. Surprised this was not more highly visible. I hope future developments would be communicated in multiple ways, especially because not everyone has students in the school system.”
- “I would like to have as many kids involved in the process as possible.”
- “Everyone should really walk through the school and see the unhealthy environment and how unsafe the school really is. Really can see all of this when end of school year when class room are all clean out. Talk to every teacher and school employee of their working condition and know it effecting their health and has to affect students too. We need a new school there was issues with the school back when my kids went there, which was at least 15-20 year ago and every year since it just keeps on getting worse! In the past 2 years see up and close of how the school is fall apart with the roof being bad, the foundation walls not touching the floor, mold ,heaters don't work and water leaking in and the list goes on and on we need a new school now!”
- “Are people going to go door to door to speak to the community? Or invite people to tour the school to see how bad the conditions are in the buildings.”
- “Encourage you to develop a simple and clear message campaign re the cost benefit of moving tennis courts and building new. A former board member explained to me the cost of portables to rebuild on the John Cline site is NOT insignificant.”
- “I feel the public should be shown more pictures of some of the buildings problems. I don't think most have a realistic idea of just how bad things are.”
- “We need more specific public information to get this bond issue passed in the next months. This is a big issue and people will be talking about it. Please let us do it with facts.”
- “Will you have public meetings for Q & A to share updated costs?”
- “Important to create communication lines to allow district voters to learn the facts about the project well in advance of November 5. Need more than social media outlets. Most desirable is to create an informed team that personally networks with family, friends, co-workers, and others to allow all voters to know what they are voting for, what will change in the current area (including road access), why we are voting in a general election, and why it is important to pass the bond in 2024 to assure a project can move forward.”
- “This project needs to be done sooner rather than later as expenses continue to rise and the community need becomes more evident with the reasons listed above, BUT there needs to be more transparency and accountability and specifics of this proposal before it can pass in this community. We need stories, narratives, facts & figures that show where the money is coming from, for how long, and especially where it is going both to vendors and for specific parts of the project. 8 million is a BIG variance!! Why the large gap?”
- “The community would appreciate more communication from the board of education about the process of building the new building. This would reduce the amount of false information that is spread about building the new school building.”
- “There has been little to no community discussion about this. You're going to lose people's attention over the summer, so you need to start an information campaign. Don't get distracted by discussion about amenities - focus on the needs of the kids, staff and district.”
- “Please publish the results of this survey to everyone in the district.”

- **Priorities and Needs**

- “I think the priority of the new school should be the elementary students and teachers, and functionality for them, things such as parking for high school students should not be a concern.”
- “I fully support building a new school to house our current and future pre-K and elementary students!”
- “I think education is more important than recreation and sporting space.”
- “Is it the schools job to create space for park and rec? I don't want to rank any of the potential features as they are park and rec not school items.”
- “It is important for a new facility to be built-no use putting money into present buildings, esp if it just covers up existing problems.”
- “I feel the main focus at this time should be building the school. I don't feel the extras such as an amphitheater should be a focus at this time.”

- **Sustainability and Long-Term Planning**

- “To make sure the building will be appropriate for the future too and not just a quick fix for now.”
- “Focus on the health of the current and future generations of students through sustainable design and energy plans. Prioritize green design and follow elements for LEED certification. Set the goal of being a "net-zero" school by emphasizing on-site electricity generation and sustainable heating and cooling systems like geothermal. Build to enhance resource conservation and efficiency!”
- “Maybe a parking garage should be built also. Parking can get kind of ridiculous during wrestling meets and other big events at the high school”
- “We already have the cart ahead of the horse, moving tennis courts and the ball diamond. Please think about being practical.”
- “Has there been a consideration to adding green roof space for roof top gardens or play space or green energy practices - solar? This could benefit the high schoolers across the street learn about sustainability. Potentially add food growing spaces on top of the school to use towards school lunch program or as a learning space for a horticulture class at the high school. Would also lower the heat island and keep the building cooler. Surface area of the roof is a great opportunity for water collection to use in toilets etc. I would personally pay more in taxes to have more sustainable practices implemented within our community.”
- “Outdoor amphitheater is not needed, baseball fields are.”

- **Concerns and Other Considerations**

- “The location for the new elementary school is lousy. The street along the back alley is used extensively by people wanting to bypass going thru downtown on Water Street. Having the entrance of the new elementary off the back alley street would really cobble things up- just way to much congestion!!”
- “Rent old sunflower or bring in portable units and tear down John Cline and build a new modern school on that site. West side school could become outdoor activity center, for sports, once it was tore down.”
- “Since student roles have a way of fluctuating and may now be more on the decline, it would be wonderful to plan in some larger space that could be used for community events. We do not have a community center and could really use such a place. Concerts? Community potlucks? Why not a shared space within the school? Please consider this. Then if roles decline, perhaps other rooms could be open for additional needs.”
- “PLEASE FOCUS ON THE SCHOOL!!!!!! NOT THE CITY ENTERTAINMENT!!! THERE IS A HUGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE 30 AND 38 MILLION DOLLAR BUDGET!!!”
- “Why was the idea of renovating John Cline and making that the preschool/Tk and then add on and make the add on the new elementary K-2. That option I think would have gotten more community support. Just an idea from a citizen.”
- “See comment ms above about building the K-2 in the area of Carrie Lee and the Middle School freeing up space for more high school options at current John Cline.”

- “Do not waste taxpayer dollars for parking lots for high schoolers. If they want to drive, they can pay for parking like they do at other school districts (unless they are carpooling.) There WILL be a flood. Someday the levee will not hold back the flood water. Plan ahead for flooding of this building.”
- “I wish you could buy the old Aase Hougen nursing home and put the elementary there with all the outdoor facilities you talk about. Then you could put more parking at the old John Cline.”
- “Do not eliminate tennis courts or park and rec softball field. Decorah is already short of diamonds to play and practice on. Decorah Schools need to also purchase the Girls High School Softball field and turn it into a permanent structure.”
- “I have always thought there was room for new bldg. at the Vernon / River Street.”
- “Go small in size with a design for future expansion if needed. Is there a guarantee as to the costs so not to take away from other important functions/needs in other buildings.”
- “What will be done with the West Side School? The current tennis courts have issues with sinking because of prior use of that piece of ground. The North Alley Master Plan decreases the parking in their plan by 70 sites. It shows pickleball courts ~ what about restroom facilities and parking. Decorah has an ample amount of green space. We don't need green space at John Cline, especially if wet leaves create a smell issue. We have a wonderful indoor theatre ~ we do not need an amphitheater.”
- “Move the high school out of town like it should of been done years ago.”
- “I would ask if you've looked at comparative school districts who have built new facilities and learned from what they have done. Building on a landlocked piece of land in the middle of the business district seems absurd when there is land on the outskirts of town everywhere you go. What about the area up near the airport? What about the area out Locust Road? Why is building in the middle of the town the only option? Common sense tells you there's no room for growth in this location. I completely support building a new school and we need it urgently, but I don't support building in the middle of the city just like I don't support building softball diamonds on land that is flooded year after year And takes our precious children through traffic as they rushed to their practice.”
- “Will the new building displace the public recycling containers, and if so, where can the public (in Decorah) take their recycling?”
- “I definitely feel it is beyond the time for a new school to be built however I am disappointed that more research was not done looking outside of the "valley" for possible space to build, which could've had a potential impact on more economic development in our community if there were was a school built beyond the 'valley.'”
- “Location of tennis courts is very important. New location should be near the high school to minimize travel and safety issues, and preferably not near residential areas. Best location would be where current John Cline school is located.”
- “Please try to maintain a space for the Decorah Farmer's Market in that area.”
- “Your questionnaire does not mention West Side School. Despite being late comers to the Decorah community, we still bemoan the destruction of East Side School. Our grandson attends the new middle school and we are left cold by its resemblance to a big-box store. Please consider some kind of creative reuse for the architecturally-historic West Side.”
- “Was it considered to have the preschool, elementary schools near each other, and build new middle school near high school?”
- “In the list of potential features I would have liked to see baseball/softball complex to update the current city field.”
- “Please have a "Plan B" in place should the bond not pass in the first try - but really hoping it does!”
- “Sure wish we could find somewhere to put in a pool for the kids.”
- “As mental health is skyrocketing in youth, consider opportunities to build their resilience - physical and mental health. Schools are putting in meditation rooms, etc. Lots of research on benefits of mindfulness in the youth that we could learn from.”
- “Please pay attention to the spaces designed for music, art, PE, and the media center. New elementary schools often have wonderful classrooms for homeroom and special ed teachers, but each specialist's classroom has unique needs. Please include the specialists in the design process for their classrooms.”

- “I want this to pass. I will vote yes no matter what, but please do the following to make it easier to go through. Don't get rid of roads and do not put an outdoor amphitheater in the area. If it doesn't pertain to kids, leave it out. Plenty of green space for kids to play. This would include space that won't get muddy, so when I say green space I just mean open areas for kids to run and play. If possible, I would dedicate space for tennis courts. Having the courts there for the high school team is very helpful. (Yes, I'm a tennis players parent). You all have been to activities at the schools. Parking is at a premium. Please keep that in mind.”
- **Dissatisfaction**
 - “Save tax payer dollars on voting on this in November. It's a poor location. There are other options that would make better sense. Look into the future and produce a plan that provides an opportunity for growth.”
 - “The building is to be for Education not a show place on the outside I put a 0 for Pickleball Courts, Amphitheater, and Competition gym but your survey form will not let anything but 1-6 work. Not a fair survey when it is made to work in your favor only.”
 - “This survey feels like a ruse. The whole point is the section above explaining why you're going to build a new expensive school. Then you can say "we already told you." I do not believe there's the possibility that you'll change anything about your agenda based on the results of this survey. Your mind was made up long ago. This is just PR.”
 - “I don't think you should have purchased all that from the city without putting it up for a vote to the Decorah residences that has to pay for all this.”
 - “Not happy purchasing land before a bond issue even passed!”
 - “I dislike the proposed traffic flow & the. Loss of the softball diamond. Dislike public use pickle ball courts on school property.”
 - “My property taxes are high enough without funding a poorly located potential school that 10 years from now will be obsolete and have no room for expansion. I can not and will not support this plan!”
 - “We all resent the fact that the Board has hired expensive consultants to help them strategize on how to make this ridiculous bond issue pass. The strategies so far are so obvious and infantile that we cannot believe tax dollars should be paying for this. You would not need to strategize if you had a solid plan for a useful building that is not so grossly overblown.”
 - “You had your chance to help the students of the northern part of your district and you chose not to! So I find it only fitting that my family will NEVER support a new Decorah school!”
 - “Since these questionnaires and parents opinion don't matter to the board anyways. I bet you don't even read half of these. But I truly hope the number decline and decorah kids start going elsewhere with how the school board is destroying Decorahs reputation.”