

RICHLAND COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

BUILDING IMPROVEMENT PLAN



Remember to Vote on March 20, 2018

The mission of the Richland County School District, in partnership with families and the community, is to create a safe and engaging learning environment that provides our students with opportunities to prepare them for academic success, career readiness, life-long learning, citizenship, and global awareness.



**Our Children / Our Schools
Our Future**

A SOLUTION DESIGNED FROM MONTHS OF STUDY AND PLANNING BY THE COMMUNITY

In January of 2017, the Richland County School District began studying our current facilities seeking ways to improve the educational environment for Richland County students. The community was invited to partner with the district to find solutions. A citizen's committee, **Facility Advisory Citizens for Tomorrow's Students (FACTS)**, was created to study the issues and give feedback. The FACTS Committee designed a series of five Community Engagement Sessions where hundreds of parents, residents and staff met



throughout the year to learn about current school district facilities and share insight for a long-range plan. The group determined that a major renovation of the high school was the appropriate course of action. FACTS presented its recommendation to the RCCU1 Board of Education on Nov. 17, 2017.



FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FACTS COMMITTEE

- 1) The school district should complete a major renovation of Richland County High School.
- 2) The school district should put the question of the County School Facilities Sales Tax on the March 2018 ballot as an alternate funding source to support the renovation project.
- 3) The school district should reconvene the FACTS Committee at a later date to review improvements to the middle and elementary school and to athletic facilities.

A SMART IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR RICHLAND COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

Plan could provide up to 70 more years of life to the high school and provide an outstanding educational environment for many more generations of high school students.

The current high school facility opened in 1952, making it considerably older than other RCCU1 schools. Since the high school was well-constructed and has been effectively maintained over the years, renovating the school is a smart solution. The renovation concept is a bold and ambitious plan that leaves no part of the building untouched, with some parts of the building being completely redesigned and/or repurposed.

The renovation will accomplish three main goals.

- 1) **Accessibility** – With a building that was constructed in 1952, there are many parts of the school that are simply inaccessible to individuals with mobility concerns.
- 2) **Safety and Security** – In the world we live in, school security is a very real concern. This concern is addressed with more limited entrances to the school
- 3) **21st Century Learning Environment** – A modern learning environment addressing today's needs for student learning. The areas to be upgraded in the renovation plan include general classrooms, lab facilities, library, cafeteria/commons, vocational classrooms and shops, auditorium, fine arts spaces, and gymnasiums.

A FUNDING SOLUTION THAT WILL NOT INCREASE PROPERTY TAXES

The Richland County School Facilities Sales Tax would place a 1% sales tax on specific retail items in Richland County. This non-traditional funding option would reduce the burden on property taxes to support facility improvement projects. The Richland County Community School District school board passed a resolution to place the question on the March 20 ballot. The County School Facilities Sales Tax allows Illinois school districts a funding alternative that does not rely on local property taxes. As of 2017, 49 counties in Illinois, including Cumberland, Lawrence, Edwards, Wabash, Hamilton and White have said yes to supporting their local schools by passing a sales tax referendum.

Revenue from the sales tax can be used for school facility improvements only. Many essential items would not be subject to the tax ... things such as groceries, drugs (including prescription medications, vitamins, and over the counter medication) farm equipment (including fertilizer and seed) mobile homes and licensed and titled vehicles or boats & RVs. It doesn't tax anything that is not currently taxed.



REMEMBER TO VOTE ON MARCH 20 OR VOTE EARLY

The County School Facilities Sales Tax requires a simple majority (50% + 1 for approval).

Early voting is available Feb. 8 - March 19 at Richland County Clerk's Office at the Richland County Courthouse, Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Local residents who are not registered to vote can register and vote at the same time also beginning in February. **Grace Period Registration and Voting is Feb. 21 - March 20**

at Richland County Clerk's Office, Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Here's What's on the Ballot

"Shall a retailer's occupation tax and a service occupation tax (commonly referred to as a "Sales Tax") be imposed in Richland County at a rate of 1% to be used exclusively for school facility purposes?"

We urge you to please learn about and vote on this important ballot proposal.

Additional information about FACTS and the plan to improve Richland County High School is on the district's website or please contact Mr. Larry Bussard, Superintendent, lbussard@rccu1.net.

Richland County Community Unit 1 School District
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