



impact REPORT REFERENDUM

www.buildingabetterdistrict.org

INTRODUCTION

Building A Better District is a non-partisan community movement that emerged through the collaboration of parents and taxpayers, all deeply invested in the promise of high-quality, taxpayer-funded education in CCUSD 301. Our goals are simple:

- provide accurate information & data to the community Improving and implementing changes depending on the results of the report
- build an empowered and engaged community
- demand transparency and accountability of our district
- demand that due diligence is performed by our elected Board of Education
- present a unified voice with which to address our district administration and board of education

We are not an anti-tax or anti-referendum effort! Building A Better District supports appropriate tax investments for high-value returns on education in our community.

**This is not about taxes.
This is about TRUST.**

In order to have trust, there needs to be transparency. Transparency means open meetings, regular steering committee updates and posted minutes, ongoing communication and engagement with the community. ***None of the current referendum process should have been done behind closed doors.*** It should not have excluded the input of the community (164 people is not "overwhelming consensus").

- We **agree** we need to address compression in our elementary schools.
- We **agree** we may need to build a purpose-built school in the near future.
- We **disagree** that the district's methodology for calculating future enrollment is accurate.
- We **disagree** that a 450,000 SF high school for up to 3,000 students solves our elementary space issues.
- We **disagree** that the appropriate processes have been followed and analyses performed to arrive at these decisions.
- We **disagree** that the current solution represents the wishes of the majority of our community.
- We **disagree** that the community should spend \$195 million without the benefit of an independent enrollment forecast and facilities analysis that supports such an expenditure and this specific expansion plan.
- We **disagree** that the community should take on \$100 million more in debt than allowed by statute ILC 105 5, 19-1, which is designed to protect taxpayers from undue burden.

OUR STORY SO FAR

THE PROBLEM

The taxpayers in D301 **overwhelmingly approved** a \$22 million referendum in 2016 for improvements to Central High School that were supposed to last the community 20 years of growth. The improvements were completed in 2018, but only lasted 5 years. When asked how this happened and how they miscalculated the space by 15 years, the district says they can't figure out how they arrived at those numbers.

- We currently have 13 mobile units at our elementary schools. How did this happen if the district is accurately projecting enrollment numbers?
- Prairie Knolls Middle School is in need of expansion (which it was designed to do). Why didn't the district act on that data and plan for expansion this summer for fall 2024?
- Central High School has a 20-classroom addition opening for Fall 2024 with room for 500 more students, bringing total capacity to 1900, making a new 3000-student high school unnecessary. The auditorium, cafeteria, and parking needs expansion (and can be done for \$54 million and result in a REDUCTION of taxes). Why did we not also plan for this along with the 20-classroom expansion?

REPEATING A MISTAKE

Our Board of Education has a fiduciary duty to be the check and balance against the district to protect taxpayer funds. If the district can't produce the data used as the foundation for a \$22 million ask in 2016, our community should not approve another referendum without an independent Enrollment Forecast & Facilities Analysis and a detailed plan on spending, including how long these improvements will really last our community.



We have not been able to pinpoint the methodology utilized to determine the calculation for the 2016 fieldhouse and classroom addition solution, suspecting it may have been based on square footage rather than student enrollment growth. Unfortunately, we reached capacity sooner than anticipated.

--Central/D301 on why the \$22 million referendum of 2016 didn't last for 20 years of growth at CHS as represented by the district to the taxpayer community.

THE NUMBERS

5700

The total taxpayer households excluded from Focus Group discussions in November 2022

164

The number of people that participated in the November 2022 Focus Groups.

157

The number of people that selected a \$195 million plan for over 8,000 taxpaying households

3

The number of community residents hand-picked to participate in a closed-door Steering Committee hidden from the public

2

The number of Board of Education members participating in the closed Steering Committee to avoid triggering the Open Meetings Act

1778

The number of taxpayers that voted NO to this same plan in April 2023

3

The number of taxpayers that knew the district was spending millions of our dollars on a high school plan after the 2023 referendum was defeated.

0

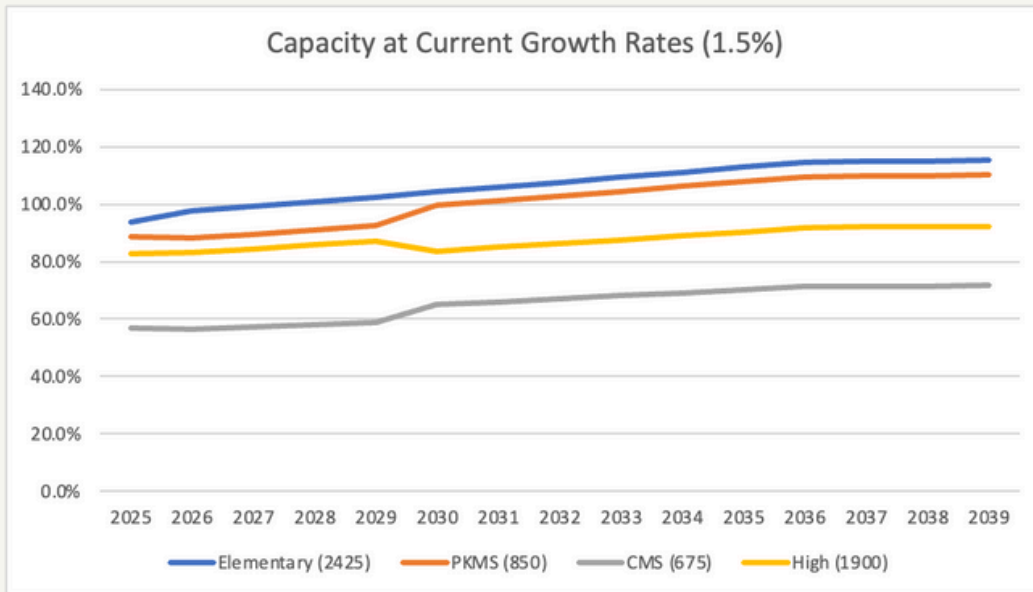
The number of subdivisions scheduled to start sales & construction in the next 5 years.

- This same \$195 million referendum was defeated in April 2023, yet **our district has spent millions** in planning and development behind closed doors
- The current referendum would build a new 417,000 SF high school with capacity for up to 3,000 students, a brand new field house and sports facilities.
 - The taxpayers JUST PAID FOR a new high school field house and athletic fields in **2018**
- New home construction has significantly slowed due to high interest rates, high home prices, and the effects of inflation bringing **year-over-year total enrollment growth is down to 1.5%**.
- **New home construction is down 21.8%** against the 2022 EAV according to Kane County's 2023 EAV Assessment Report.
- In-district home sales are **down 22.8%** against 2022 and down against pre-pandemic year sales.
- Current high school enrollment is 1,447 students. Our new 20-classroom addition at CHS opening in August 2024 brings capacity to 1,900 students. **We have no capacity issues at our current high school!**
- The district's enrollment numbers **have not been confirmed** by independent demography firm validating the district's projected numbers and proposed solutions.
- Based on the district's numbers and plan, our 8th grade center will be operating at under 25% capacity and all other schools under 70% capacity for some time. **These numbers may mean higher carrying costs for under-utilized buildings and even HIGHER tax burden via the district's annual operating budget.**

OUR DISTRICT'S DEBT CEILING IS \$96 MILLION MAKING THIS \$195 MILLION REFERENDUM MORE THAN TWICE THE DEBT OUR TAXPAYERS CAN AFFORD TO CARRY.

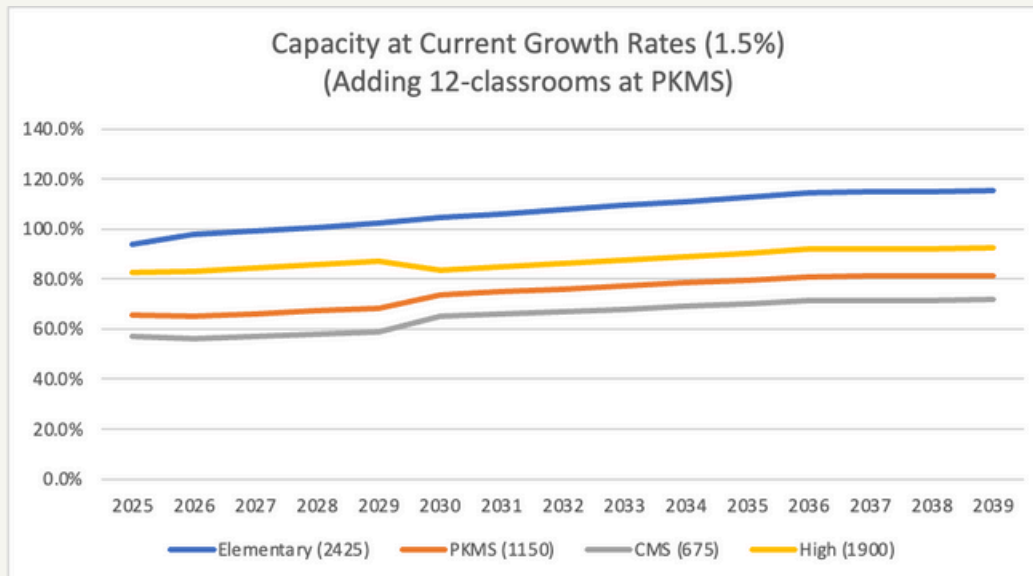
OUR DATA ANALYSIS

At our current 1.5% year-over-year rate of growth, you can see we are in dire need of ELEMENTARY school space and a small increase in our 6/7 Grade Center School (Prairie Knolls Middle School). The data clearly shows we do not a High School, let alone a \$195 million high school.



Elementary (EC-5); PKMS (Grades 6/7); CMS (Grade 8); High (Grades 9-12)

In the chart below, you can see we easily accommodate our enrollment growth needs if we add a 12-classroom addition to PKMS (which it was designed to do). Elementary school space should still be the #1 priority.



Elementary (EC-5); PKMS (Grades 6/7); CMS (Grade 8); High (Grades 9-12)

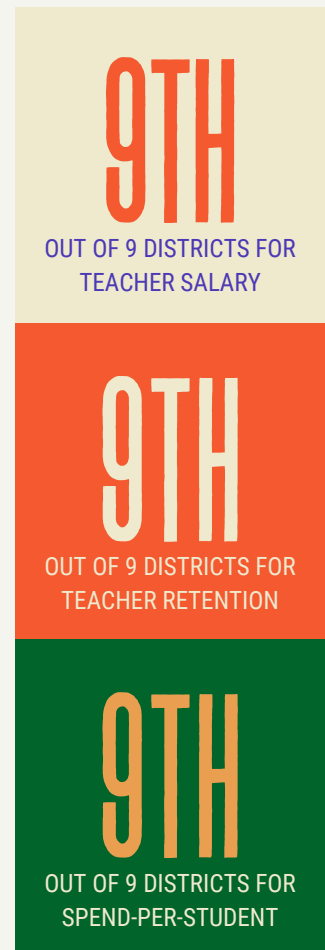
As taxpayers we rely on our Representatives to protect us from undue tax burden, corruption, collusion, and to be our champions against government agencies that have the money, power, and reach to put out a message that cannot be matched by the average voter. Building A Better District was shocked to learn our school district could ask to exceed their 13.8% of EAV statutory debt ceiling simply by asking a House Representative to amend the law WITH NO DISCLOSURE TO THE TAXPAYERS OF OUR COMMUNITY -- YOUR CONSTITUENTS! What's the point of having laws if the powers that be can simply circumvent them and doom our community to devastating loss of population due to lack of affordability in taxes?

HOW DO WE RANK IN KANE COUNTY?

CENTRAL CUSD 301 Ranks LAST out of all 9 school districts in Kane County in critical performance areas directly related to spending, yet they are asking the community to exceed the 13.8% of EAV statutory debt limit by \$100 million for a new high school the numbers show we DO NOT NEED.



SOURCE: KANE COUNTY EAV REPORT



SOURCE: ISBE 2023 REPORT CARD

Ask Central CUSD 301 to detailed produce the reports that show definitively that a 3% enrollment growth is expected ANNUALLY for the next 5-10 years without attrition attributable to "aging-in-place". Ask the City of Elgin and Kane County to confirm that they have the water & sewer infrastructure to immediately support growth westward along with proof of imminent development in the form of permitted subdivisions ready to break ground & begin construction along with expected first occupancy dates.

GROSS TAX IMPACT

[Gross Tax Calculator](#)

\$936

ANNUAL TAX IMPACT FOR A HOME WITH A NET TAXABLE VALUE OF \$102,000; HIGHER IF EAV DOES NOT GROW AT 3% ANNUALLY

43%

% of D301 Students That
Are Not Proficient In
Reading

\$15,886,785

Increase in Annual Budget Since 2017 In Spite of Poor
Performance of Students and 5Essentials Survey Results

58%

% of D301 Students That
Are Not Proficient In
Math

Central High School
Partially Organized for Improvement

Effective
Leaders

Collaborative
Teachers

Ambitious
Instruction

Supportive
Environment

Involved
Families



Addendum: Referendum Discoveries & Information

CURRENT ABILITY TO EXPAND

- Central High School is designed to accommodate a third floor on the main building and also on the new classroom addition currently under construction. These could provide room for hundreds of additional students at CHS and even create space to expand CTE offerings.
 - Space exists on the current CHS campus to add 142 new parking spaces to the west of the main entrance if parking needs to be supplemented.
 - The current auditorium was added on to Central High School and could potentially be replaced, however, plays and recitals from 2024 did not see a single sell-out night showing there is ample room to accommodate current audiences.
- Prairie Knolls Middle School is designed to accommodate 12 more classrooms on the ends of the classroom wings. This would provide space for 300 more students.
- Country Trails is designed to accommodate 8 more classrooms. This would provide space for 190 more students.
- In previous years, Central Middle School and Prairie Knolls Middle School each housed 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. This was changed to make PKMS a 6/7 grade center and CMS an 8th grade center due to declining enrollment at that time.
- The mobile units at Prairie View Grade School, Howard B. Thomas, and Country Trails accommodate up to 100 students each.
- The mobile unit at Central High School has been there since 2016 and remained even after the 2018 improvements were completed.

HIGH SCHOOL LUNCH SCHEDULES

- Central High School has had a lunch that begins prior to 10 AM even in 2018 immediately following the expansion of the cafeteria. Changes were made to the lunchroom furniture that greatly reduced the functional capacity of the cafeteria. The current early lunchroom is not the result of lack of space. It is in line with area district lunch schedules.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Building A Better District is a non-partisan community movement that emerged through the collaboration of parents and taxpayers, all deeply invested in the promise of high-quality, taxpayer-funded education in CCUSD 301.

Building A Better District led by residents Chuck Barham, Andy Dogan, and Micheline Welch and has become a fast-growing grassroots movement supported by thousands.

Our work is the result of many in Central CUSD301 who have e-mailed, messaged, posted comments, and provided information for research and asked us to validate answers to their questions.

Our work is truly one of facilitating information for our community, who is counting on YOU to do the right thing.

BUILDING A BETTER DISTRICT

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WE THANK YOU
FOR DEMANDING
TRANSPARENCY
