



Phase 2 Community Engagement Report

Over the past few months, Community Consolidated School District 89 has continued to look to the community to guide us as we determine the path forward for our schools. So far, we have received feedback from more than 461 members of the community through in-person presentations, an online survey, and a scientific phone survey on what improvements they would like to see to their schools and how they would like to fund those improvements.

Phase 2 of community engagement was conducted in January of 2022. Using information provided by the district and their experts, we developed a “menu” of potential individual projects and potential funding levels. Throughout this phase, the district has been closely listening to the community as individuals considered and ranked each item on the menu to share their priorities.

District 89 has continued to take active steps to engage the community and solicit feedback. To achieve this, we updated messaging, met with the Community Finance Committee for an in-depth discussion, engaged key influencers, conducted a public phone survey, and held three public engagement sessions (two in person and one virtual) at different times and days of the week to ensure all community members could participate. Feedback from the community was documented during this time through notes taken of all direct communications, responses provided on paper forms at the Community Finance Committee meeting and public engagement sessions, and spreadsheets generated from the results of the scientific phone survey. We received tremendous levels of engagement and feedback in Phase 2, gathering 97 responses from engagement sessions and online feedback, as well as 364 phone responses.

We will continue our efforts to engage the community through March 2022 to determine the vision for our schools going forward. In Phase 3 of this process, we will develop three options for the community’s review and feedback based on information gathered from the community during Phase 2. This community direction is determining the district’s path forward. Feedback will be solicited directly, on the district’s website, on feedback forms at another Community Finance Committee discussion, and through another public phone survey. Phase 3 will be conducted in February, with a report made to the board at the phase’s conclusion.

Messaging

The district continued to use messaging to properly communicate how we arrived at this point, what our successes and challenges have been, and how to approach the path forward. This messaging detailed recent progression and improvements as well as the challenges posed by the growing infrastructure needs of our aging buildings. The five key takeaways from the messaging are below, and a full copy of the messaging is provided with this report.

- In Community Consolidated School District 89, we empower all learners to recognize and optimize their full potential. We are passionate about our students' success and committed to building a stronger community.
- Even while being one of the highest performing districts, we are one of the most fiscally conservative. Our district spends the lowest per pupil of all Glenbard feeder schools and the fifth lowest of all elementary districts in the county.
- Our next challenge is addressing the growing infrastructure needs of our aging buildings. This work isn't flashy, but it's necessary. We must maintain our community's largest physical asset and protect the community's investment in these buildings.
- Our dedication to fiscal responsibility affords us a rare opportunity to tackle this challenge while achieving property tax relief for overburdened homeowners. Because the district paid off a set of bonds that will expire in 2021, property taxes for district residents will already be reduced by an average of \$239 per year. We have a second set of bonds set to expire in the coming years, and we need to consider how much of this second set of bonds to renew so we can address urgent infrastructure projects while still providing property tax relief.
- In the coming months, our community will collaborate on a long-term infrastructure plan for our schools. While other districts pursue tax increases to build expensive new buildings, we will develop a fiscally responsible plan that protects our infrastructure, improves educational environments, keeps our students and teachers safe, and provides property tax relief.

Menu Survey

During Phase 2, the district conducted a public phone survey to gauge support for each potential individual project and potential funding level. For each item discussed, respondents were given information on each item as well as estimated costs. The survey was taken before the full public had been educated on the projects or fully informed of the district's needs. This was done in order to obtain an accurate representation of the public's unbiased, intuitive reactions to the projects and funding levels contained in the survey.

The results from the menu survey are provided with this report.

Community Finance Committee

The Community Finance Committee met to provide the district with direct input. The Committee is a cross-section of district stakeholders, including residents from different neighborhoods and regions of the district, business owners, community leaders, and administration members.

The Committee met on January 11 during Phase 2. Committee engagement will continue throughout the remainder of the community engagement.

Attached is a detailed report of the feedback that was collected from the Committee during Phase 2 of this process.

Public Engagement

The district held three public engagement sessions at different times and days of the week to provide all members of the District 89 community an opportunity to participate. Two of the sessions were held at district schools (Briar Glen Elementary and Arbor View Elementary) and one of the sessions was a virtual Zoom webinar. These events were advertised by email, social media, the district's website, and direct

mail. These sessions presented the same potential individual projects and funding levels presented throughout Phase 2. The community was encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback.

Phase 2 public engagement sessions were held:

- Wednesday, January 19 at 6:00 pm at Briar Glen Elementary School.
- Saturday, January 22 at 10:00 am at Arbor View Elementary School.
- Thursday, January 27 at 6:00 pm through a virtual Zoom webinar.

Verbal discussions occurred during these meetings and additional collaboration opportunities were made available through feedback forms. The presentation and feedback forms were made available on the district's website.

Attached is a detailed report of the feedback that was collected from the attendees at the public engagement sessions during Phase 2 of this process.

Phase 2 Analysis

In forming our analysis of Phase 2, we reviewed all data points provided by members of the community. First, through the menu survey, which gives us a scientifically accurate snapshot of the intuitive reactions of members of the community to the items being discussed. Second, through the public engagement sessions, which give us the more passionate responses from community members very invested in their schools who have taken some time to consider these issues. Third, through the Community Finance Committee, whose responses come after hours of discussion, allowing us to track the movement of opinions as individuals become more engaged and educated on these topics.

An important data point for processes like this is the favorability of the school district, because the success of any future effort is tied to how residents feel about the district. Here, the phone survey provides very good news: D89 residents have a very favorable opinion of their schools. 78% rate their district favorably, including 49% who rate their district "very favorable." Meanwhile, only 15% rate their district unfavorably. This gives the district a net positive favorability rating of +63%, which is very strong. Clearly D89 residents support their schools and are appreciative of the work being done by the district.

Potential Individual Projects

Unsurprisingly, all individual projects tested in this phase are supported. Given the nature of this effort, we didn't expect any would be unfavorable. Our focus is on identifying which are the most favorable and highest priority so the district can prioritize available funding.

Five of the individual projects are clearly higher priority than the rest. The top two are Security and Roofing, with both receiving high levels of support and ranking high in priority among all groups. Next is Mechanical Systems, which is strongly supported and is especially a high priority for the most passionate. Following that is Electrical & Plumbing and Doors & Windows, with nearly equal support.

The remaining individual projects are all supported, they're simply lower priority than the above five. They are Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment (FFE), Basic Renovations, Outdoors, Pavement & Sidewalks, and Flooring.

Potential Funding Levels

All four funding levels are supported. While that isn't overly surprising, given that each level results in a property tax decrease, it is still notable, because we've only seen one other time in polling for other districts that all funding levels receive support. Also notable is the "no additional funding" option receives only 12% support, showing the public is absolutely in favor of investing in improvements for D89.

The public doesn't show an overwhelming preference between the funding levels. If you ranked the levels based on the data, Maximum would be 1st, Medium 2nd, Low 3rd, and High 4th, but really you could also say that all four levels are essentially tied when you combine all the data gathered in this phase.

Developing Options for Phase 3

Using this data and working with the district and the district's experts, we will develop three options for the public to consider.

Our recommendation will be to build three options based on specific funding amounts that each accomplish as many of the public's top priorities as possible.

The low option should be right around the Low funding level tested in Phase 2 (\$12.7 million). This number does not need to be decreased as it received significant support. The district could even potentially increase it slightly and it would still hold strong in support, so roughly \$13 million for Option 1.

The high option should be right around the Maximum funding level tested in Phase 2 (\$27 million). This number should not be increased, as it received strong support at its current level and any increase will change the tax impact. It could be decreased slightly to increase support, if the district wishes. This would be Option 3.

The medium option can be anywhere in the range of the Medium and High funding levels tested in Phase 2 (\$17.3 million to \$22 million). We recommend either adding some priority projects to the Medium level or subtracting some lower priority projects from the High level, to arrive at an Option 2 somewhere around \$20 million.

As the district is developing the options, we recommend freshly looking at what is included in each option now that the public's top project priorities are known. Each option must emphasize Security, Roofing, and Mechanical Systems, and as much as possible also touch Electrical & Plumbing and Doors & Windows. The district's experts will know if improvements from the other five individual project categories are necessary, in which case they can be included as long as they don't crowd out needed funding for the main priorities.