



SPRING EDITION 2020-2021

CHEESEMAKER PRIDE

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MONROE

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER

925 16TH AVENUE SUITE 3
MONROE, WI 53566
608-328-7171

ABRAHAM LINCOLN ELEMENTARY

2625 14TH AVENUE
MONROE, WI 53566
608-328-7172

NORTHSIDE ELEMENTARY

3005 8 1/2 STREET
MONROE, WI 53566
608-328-7134

PARKSIDE ELEMENTARY

920 4TH STREET
MONROE, WI 53566
608-328-7130

MONROE MIDDLE SCHOOL

1510 13TH STREET
MONROE, WI 53566
608-328-7120

MONROE HIGH SCHOOL

1600 26TH STREET
MONROE, WI 53566
608-328-7122

MONROE PUBLIC LIBRARY

925 16TH AVENUE
MONROE, WI 53566
608-328-7010

WWW.MONROESCHOOLS.COM

MISSION STATEMENT

The School District of Monroe will prepare each student for the future by developing academic, life, and employability skills. To this end, we will foster partnerships with family and community to ensure student success.

NORTHSIDE ELEMENTARY PROJECT AND LONG RANGE FACILITY PLANNING



Rick Waski
District Administrator

The School District of Monroe Board of Education voted 8-0 (one member absent) to bring a 3 year, \$5.6 million referendum question, to the community, to make improvements to Northside Elementary School. This project will include replacing the heating and ventilation system (HVAC), replacing the roof, remodeling restrooms to be ADA compliant, replacing the ceilings, upgrading the lighting to LED lighting, and improving and replacing some exterior parts of the building that have deteriorated over time.

We believe that these improvements will put Northside Elementary in a place where it should not need major capital improvements for the next 20 years. Additionally, all of the systems being installed will be expandable in case Northside is remodeled in the future.

We know that many people in the community might be asking “Why are we upgrading Northside when the high school is the building in the worst shape?” This is certainly a good question given the fact that the high school has many more deficiencies as a building and it is significantly older than Northside.

The feedback we received from community surveys was that it would have been very close if we would have gone to referendum on the \$81 or \$85 million proposals to substantially upgrade the high school as either a 9-12 or 7-12 building. This survey was taken before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. As a result of the survey and concerns about the pandemic, we decided to hold off on the improvements at the high school until a later date. We hope to survey the community again regarding what they will and will not support concerning improvements, remodeling, or new construction associated with a high school facility. The need is still pressing, but we did not feel now was the right time for a facilities referendum question of this magnitude.

Our plan is to continue working on various options to address the needs of our high school after the April referendum for the Northside improvements. We will involve stakeholder groups in this decision-making process. We will also survey the community at least one more time. The culmination of this work will likely be a referendum question in the Fall of 2022 at the earliest to address the high school. Due to the condition of the high school that was built in the 1950s, it is likely this referendum question will include a much higher dollar amount and longer payback.

Northside Elementary Project... (continued on page 2)

Northside Elementary Project... (continued from page 1)

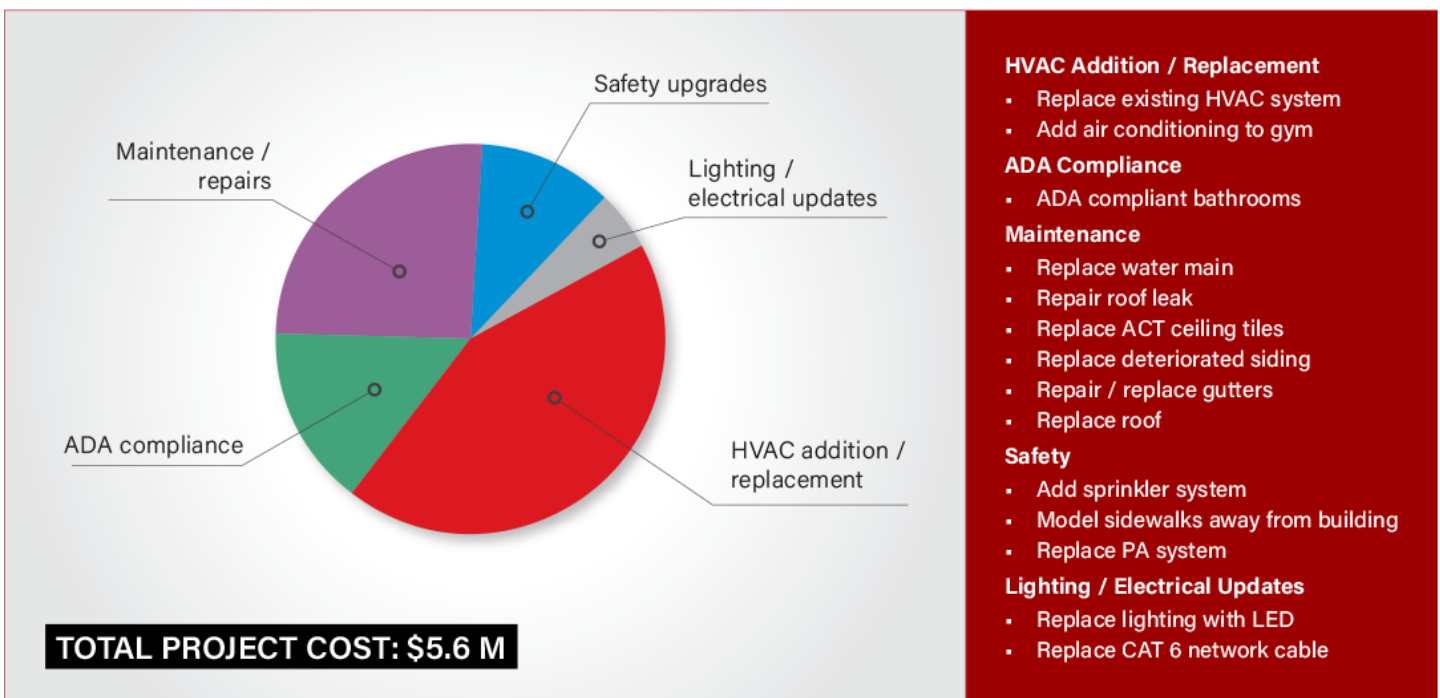
In the end, our Board and administration felt that shoring up Northside Elementary for the foreseeable future (like we have with Parkside Elementary and the Middle School) seemed to make the most sense in the short-term. This project will not raise the current school levy rate and in the process Northside Elementary will be a better learning environment for our students and a better work environment for our staff.

If you have additional questions on this project, feel free to contact Ron Olson, the District Business Administrator at ronolson@monroe.k12.wi.us or contact me at rickwaski@monroe.k12.wi.us.

2018 Completed Projects	Parkside Elementary	Middle School
Maintenance	✓	✓
HVAC addition / replacement	✓	
Lighting / electrical updates	✓	
ADA compliance	✓	✓
Safety upgrades	✓	

Have a safe and productive Spring of 2021 and GO CHEESEMAKERS!!

What exactly is being addressed by the referendum?



In 2018, voters approved a referendum to complete several projects at Parkside Elementary and Monroe Middle School. At both schools, restrooms were updated to be ADA compliant and improve accessibility for all students, staff, and visitors.

NORTHSIDE ELEMENTARY FACILITY IMPROVEMENT REFERENDUM



Ron Olson
Business Administrator

The spring election on Tuesday, April 6th will have a referendum question on the ballot asking voters whether or not they approve issuing bonds to fund a facilities improvement project at Northside Elementary School. The cost of the proposed facility improvements is \$5,600,000. The debt from the bonds would be completely paid off over three years. The District tax levy rate is projected to remain at the current 2020-21 level.

The project would address heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) replacement and upgrades, ADA compliance upgrades, safety updates and additions, lighting and electrical upgrades, maintenance and repair.

The HVAC system would be replaced. The new system, which is similar to the one that was installed at Parkside Elementary, will be more energy efficient and will greatly increase ventilation and fresh air exchanges in the classrooms. Air conditioning will also be added to the gymnasium which is often utilized by the community and District throughout the summer.

Bathrooms will be expanded and reconfigured to meet ADA compliance. This will include all new fixtures and finishes.

Safety upgrades will include replacing the existing fire alarm and public address (PA) systems. These systems will also include the required ADA changes. In addition, a fire sprinkler system will be added to the building.

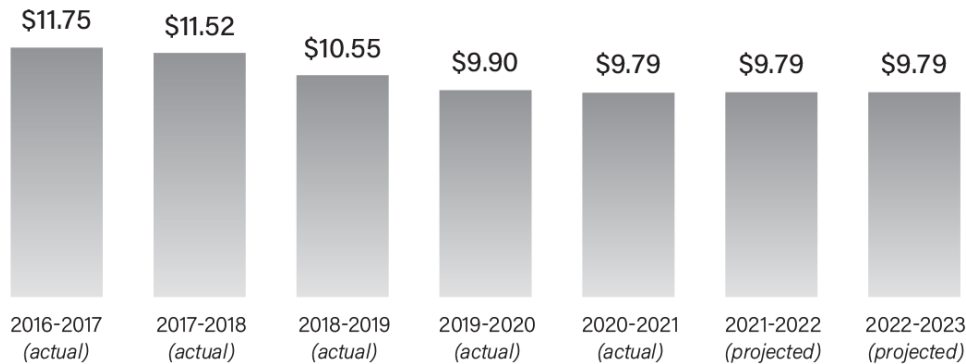
Lighting and electrical upgrades will include replacing the existing lighting with new LED fixtures and replacing data wiring with CAT6 network cabling.

Maintenance issues that will be addressed include replacing the water main that runs to the building. The existing water main is deteriorating from age and has already had one failure that required an emergency repair including jack hammering through a floor. The new main will also be adequate to service the fire sprinkler system. The entire school roof will be replaced. Most roof areas have already exceeded their expected life and were due to be replaced. Gutters will be replaced or added around much of the building. New siding will replace the current deteriorated wood siding. New ceiling tiles will be installed throughout the building as much of the ceiling will have to come out for work to be completed on the new HVAC, fire sprinklers, lights, and other fire and electrical systems.

This project will be very similar in nature to the project that was completed at Parkside Elementary School in the summer of 2019. The Parkside project will be paid off as of April 2021. Parkside Elementary had just had its roof replaced prior to that project so unlike at Parkside, the Northside proposed project includes the costs for replacing the roof and siding. You can read Mr. Waski's article for more information on why these projects happened when they did and how they fit into an overall plan for addressing District facilities.

As stated at the start of this article, this project, if approved, is projected to keep the levy rate for the District at its current level. Although we cannot control the unknowns of future state funding and its impact on Fund 10 levy, the debt service levy rate which pays for referendum-approved buildings and projects is projected to remain at its current level over the next three years should the referendum question be approved. The debt on this project would expire and be paid off in the spring of 2024.

The District's current total tax levy rate is \$9.79. The tax levy rate has decreased each of the last four years and is currently at its lowest rate in over 30 years. The School Board remained committed to addressing the needs of our buildings which are all over 30 years old while recognizing the financial hardships or uncertainty some community members may have been or may still be experiencing during the pandemic. They chose to propose a project that addresses most all of the primary infrastructure and needs for one of our school buildings for the next twenty years while not raising taxes to do it.



HISTORICAL MILL RATE COMPARISON

School District of Monroe Summer School

Monday, June 14 - Friday, July 2nd

August Jumpstart:

Monday, August 2nd - Friday, August 20th



Online registration is open
April 6th - 18th, 2021

Summer School Course Offering Books
will be available online starting March 22nd
at www.monroeschools.com
or at any school building office

SUMMER SCHOOL 2021

Summer School will be back for 2021! The School District of Monroe currently is in the process of planning a three-week Summer School session for Monday, June 14th—Friday, July 2nd. We will not offer a second session this year. Instead, we will be offering an August Jumpstart that will provide programming for small groups of students in need of academic support. Summer School booklets will be available on our website at www.monroeschools.com starting March 22nd. A limited number of booklets will also be available at each school building office. Online registration opens April 6th at 9am and closes April 18th at midnight.

Summer School offers a wide variety of classes and experiences for students in Monroe. With classes in everything from art and writing, to disc golf and cooking, Summer School has something fun for everyone!

The School District of Monroe sponsors the Federal Summer Food Service Program to stress the importance of students eating nutritious meals during the summer months. All students are offered free breakfast and lunch at Summer School.

Please watch our website for up-to-date Summer School news and information.



2020 EIE OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR

The Excellence in Education Foundation recognizes an outstanding teacher or teaching team in the School District of Monroe each year who exemplify the highest standards and practices of the teaching profession. The award is typically presented on Scholarship Night in the Spring but was postponed last year due to the pandemic. Recently, Monroe High School Metals teacher Dan Saunders was recognized as the 2020 Excellence In Education Outstanding Educator. The award includes a \$1000 stipend to be used for professional development or classroom teaching materials. The Foundation presents this award annually through funds provided by the Class of 1977 and EIE Special Projects Fund. Congratulations!

EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY: *How School Facilities Impact Students with Disabilities*



Joe Monroe
Director of
Pupil Services

Have you ever taken time to consider what a school represents to a community? At first glance it seems like a simple question, but after some thought it becomes clear that there is much to examine. In 2015, the University of Notre Dame posed this question to a number of community members and a summary report of their findings highlighted the following quotes:

- *The school “represents the future.”*
- *“The school is the strength of the society.”*
- *“The school is a development agent for the community.”*
- *The school “shines the community.”*
- *The school “makes our children dream differently.”*
- *The school is “educating people who solve the problems of the country and the community.”*
- *The school “means hope for us and our children.”*

I personally agree with all of these statements, but the last resonates with me the most. To me, schools should represent the best of what our community has to offer. Our traditions, our culture, our values. It should be a place where we are able to support the needs and dreams of all students and families, regardless of background, income, race, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation or ability. ALL children should be able to access a quality education and learn what it means to be a positive, contributing member of our community.

It is with this in mind that we consider options to address our aging school facilities. When faced with a question about expending public resources it is important to carefully consider the needs, the cost and the impact of the decision. There are two questions that we must ask ourselves regarding the current referendum question:

1. Do our existing school buildings meet the requirements of federal handicap accessibility law for new buildings?
2. Can all of our students and families equally access our schools?

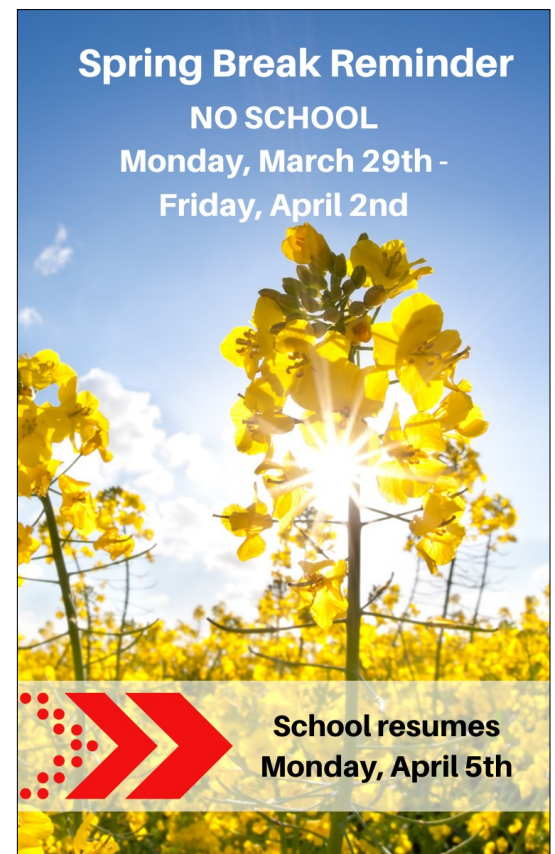
Currently, the answer to both questions is no.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability. It affords similar protections against discrimination to Americans with disabilities as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made discrimination based on race, religion, sex, national origin, and other characteristics illegal, and later sexual orientation. In addition, unlike the Civil Rights Act, the ADA also requires covered employers to provide reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities, and imposes accessibility requirements on public accommodations.

The five public schools in our community were built some time ago (Abraham Lincoln - 1977; Northside - 1968; Parkside - 1986; Monroe Middle School - 1939; Monroe High School - 1958). The original concept and design of these schools did not address accessibility requirements as this law wasn't passed until several years later. While a number of building projects have addressed some issues, some needs remain. The current referendum question seeks to address the ADA needs at Northside Elementary. This school serves a number of students with significant disabilities and updating this facility is essential to our compliance with federal law. Creating accessible bathrooms will address a long standing need that is currently very problematic. Updated lighting will resolve issues for many students that have significant sensory issues. Addressing an aging heating, ventilation and air conditioning system will provide better air quality for those with asthma and other health issues.

When a school referendum question is posed people often think of the financial impact, and rightfully so. School buildings are significant investments made by the community and paid for with precious tax dollars. Deciding how we use public funds deserves careful consideration. As you contemplate the upcoming referendum question, please reflect on what our schools mean to our community and what we hope to accomplish. As I stated earlier, I believe that ALL children should be able to access a quality education and learn what it means to be a positive, contributing member of our community. Learn what it means to be a Cheesemaker.

If you have any questions, concerns or feedback, please feel free to contact me via email at josephmonroe@monroe.k12.i.us or by calling me directly at 608-328-7155. Thank you for placing your trust in us as we work to provide the support and educational experience your children deserve!



Spring Break Reminder
NO SCHOOL
Monday, March 29th -
Friday, April 2nd

School resumes
Monday, April 5th

CURRICULUM UPDATE: *COVID-19 Changed the Landscape of Education Forever*

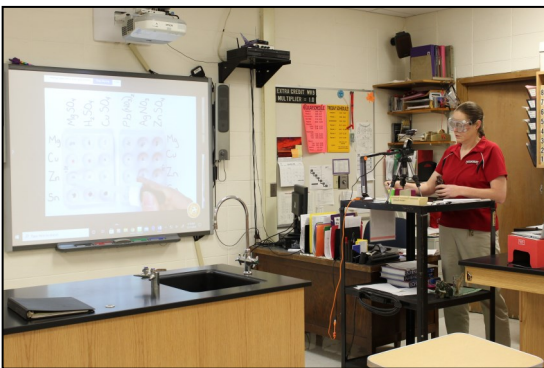


Terri Montgomery
Director of Curriculum
& Instruction

COVID-19 forced many districts, including Monroe, to look hard at how we deliver instruction. In Monroe, every student in grades 6th-12th had computers they used in class and at home. 4th and 5th-grade students at the elementary level had computers in a one-to-one setting, but they used them only at school. COVID-19 forced the issue of making sure all our students PreK-12th grade had computers and internet access. It didn't happen all at once, but we made sure that all students had some sort of device to use until we could get everyone a device. COVID-19 forced the issue of providing instruction in a virtual format. This format was new for the majority of teachers and students as they used technology in class, but they never delivered or received instruction in a virtual format. Our teachers, students, and parents had a lot to learn about virtual instruction.



There are two main ways that virtual instruction can be delivered – asynchronous or synchronous. Asynchronous means the teacher is giving instruction that a student can access at any time because it is recorded. In asynchronous instruction, the student would watch a lesson that is provided and do their work independently. Synchronous means the teacher is giving the instruction as the student is participating virtually at the same time. Both asynchronous and synchronous, have advantages and disadvantages. The School District of Monroe has employed both of these methods at various times. For the most part, we have delivered synchronous learning, but we always record our lessons so students can access them at another time if they need to. Most virtual instructors from virtual academies only teach asynchronously and meet with students when needed. Our teachers have been teaching concurrently, meaning they are delivering lessons in the classroom to one group of students while at the same time providing virtual instruction to students at home or in daycare settings. This has been extremely challenging for our teachers trying to manage a classroom of students and virtual students at the same time.



As a district, we know that after having virtual instruction, some families and students will want to continue their instruction in this type of format. We are currently examining how we can continue to provide virtual instruction for the families that want it. We know we are capable, but we need to figure out the logistics so we can be ready in September of 2021 to meet our students' needs in a virtual setting.

Snow days? Having taught in this format has allowed the district to still have instruction when the weather is too bad to send students to school. Snow day lessons are taught asynchronously so students have time to enjoy the snow, but still receive some instruction. This helps with lost instructional time that happens when students are at home from school in a typical snow day situation. It also eliminates the need to make up days at the end of the school year. Many districts in Wisconsin and other snowy states have been doing virtual instruction on snow days for years.

Universities have been using online learning for many years with success, but there is a difference between an adult taking classes and a kindergartener taking online classes. The older the student the more independent they can be with their learning. With that said, there are students who struggle with online learning, just like we have students who struggle in the classroom. Teachers are learning how to work with all students in the virtual format, providing more individualized instruction to those students who need more help.

According to an article from the [World Economic Forum \(April 2020\)](#), some believe that a new hybrid model of education will emerge, with significant benefits. "I believe that the integration of information technology in education will be further accelerated and that online education will eventually become an integral component of school education," says Wang Tao Vice President of Tencent Cloud and Vice President of Tencent Education. This seems to be the view of many today and traditional classrooms will be transformed forever.

All K-12 parents will be receiving a survey after spring break on virtual learning. Please make sure you take the survey as it will assist us in our fall planning.





ENROLL TODAY AT MONROE SCHOOLS!

Now is a great time to enroll in Monroe Schools! Wisconsin's Open Enrollment period begins February 1st for the 2021-2022 school year and runs through April 30th. We are also now accepting enrollment applications for 4K and for any students who were not enrolled in 4K this year but who intend to attend Kindergarten for the 2021-2022 school year.

The School District of Monroe is a 4K-12 student-centered school system dedicated to providing each child with a broad array of academic and co-curricular programs that will prepare him or her to succeed academically, technologically, physically, and socially. The teachers, support staff, and administrators are dedicated to creating a climate of high expectations for all students and ensuring academic excellence in all subject areas. The underlying goal of all instruction is to provide each student with the opportunity to achieve his or her potential through a superior education, continually preparing them for the next step in their lives. The District views education as an experience best served by the coordinated efforts of parents and schools. Visit our website at www.monroeschools.com to learn more and to enroll today!





SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MONROE

925 16TH AVENUE SUITE 3
MONROE, WI 53566

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SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MONROE CALENDAR

March 29th-April 2nd, 2021

Spring Break

Monday, May 31st

Memorial Day - No School

Wednesday, June 2nd

Last Day of School—Half Day, No Lunch

Visit our District Calendar at www.MonroeSchools.com
for up-to date information on upcoming events.



ATTENTION NON-RESIDENTS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MONROE

This newsletter is provided to all residents of the School District of Monroe. The most affordable process used to circulate this newsletter throughout the district is to use saturation mailing. It is costly to avoid a few non-residents from receiving our newsletter. We apologize for your inconvenience but wish to provide important information to all residents. Thank you.