

Dear Families, Community Members, and Alumni:

We are very grateful for your ongoing support. **Thank You!** The purpose of this letter is to bring you up to speed on a challenge that has come about since voters approved a referendum to pay for updates at Ely Elementary School in December 2021.



Background Information

Our community passed a referendum to remodel Ely Elementary School.

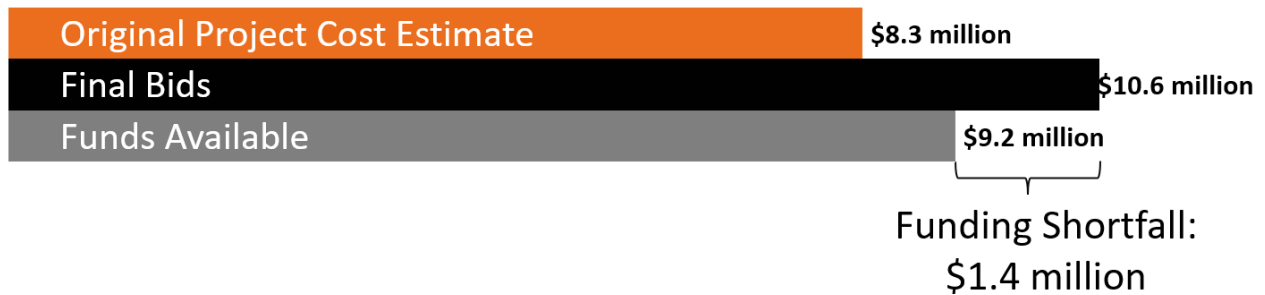
2021 Referendum Results:

Yes = 627 (79%)

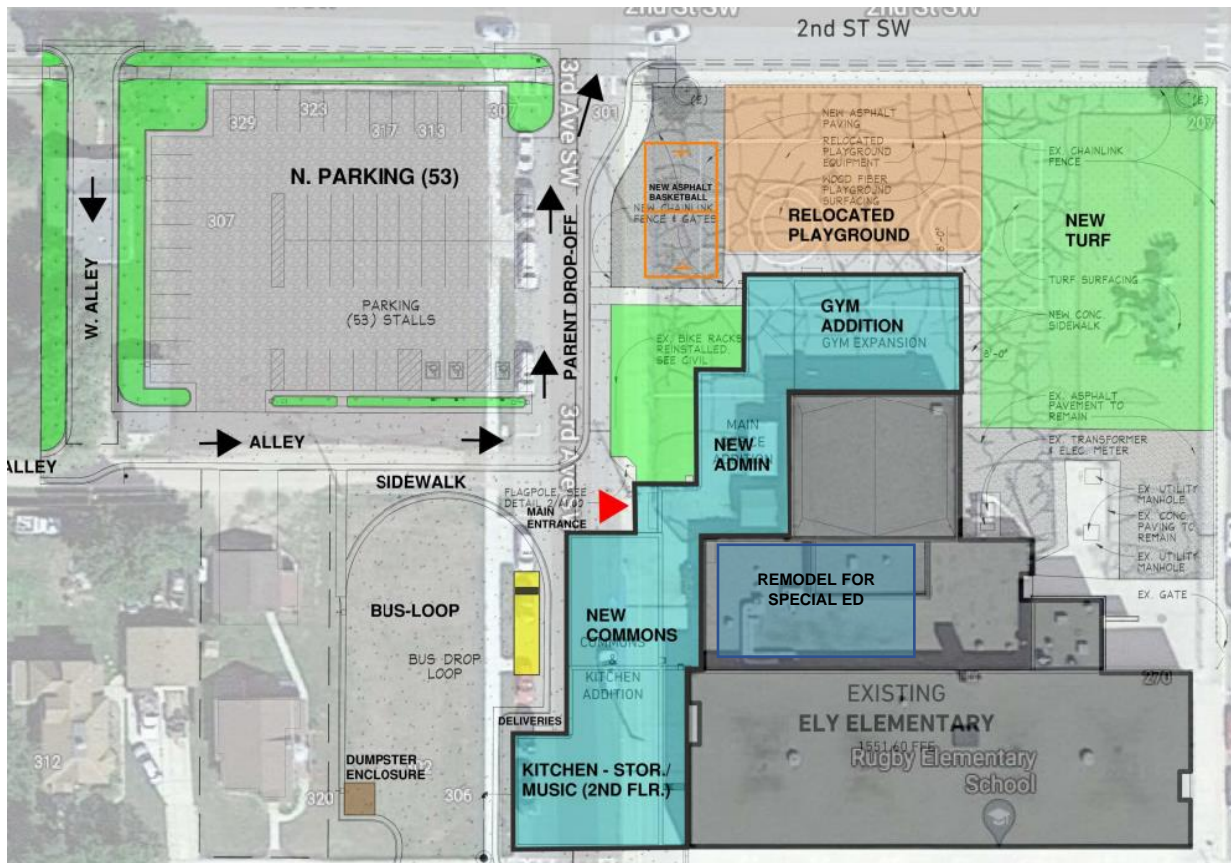
No = 162 (21%)

What is the challenge?

The School Board received preliminary cost estimates in the fall of 2021. Since then, supply chain bottlenecks, material shortages, and overall inflation have significantly increased project costs across the country and here in Rugby.



Ely Elementary Building Project Design



What are the options to close the funding gap?

- **Use funds from the District’s operating budget:** Unfortunately, we are a very lean district, and we do not have the money to cover this with our annual operating budget.
- **Reduce the scope:** We could eliminate the following projects, including 1) the academic wing remodel; 2) concrete paving and curbs for the northwest parking area; 3) playground relocation and turf; and/or 4) the wood floor for the gym, gym equipment, and bleachers.
- **Use federal ESSER dollars:** The one-time \$1.3 million allocation is already being used for this project, along with a \$70,000 federal food service grant.
- **Levy additional funds with another referendum:** Before receiving the cost estimates, we made a commitment to our community that the elementary school updates would not increase taxes over the current level.
- **Secure a loan:** This payment would strain our annual operating budget, which is not sustainable.
- **Fundraise and solicit donations:** We believe this is our best option at this time to raise additional funds to address the funding shortfall.

Next Steps: Fundraise and Solicit Donations

Recently, we held a meeting with the Citizen’s Committee (the group that helped guide the referendum process last year). The committee suggested we begin developing a plan to fundraise to make up for the funding gap mentioned on the previous page.

How do I contribute?

We want to deliver on the project voters approved. Members of the Citizen’s Committee have created the Rugby Public School Foundation for charitable donations. The foundation’s advisory committee established a fundraising goal of \$1.4 million. The school board approved a partnership with the North Dakota Community Foundation to manage private donations.

Here’s how to make your tax-deductible contribution:

- **By check:** Make payable to “NDCF” with “Rugby School Project Fund” in the memo line. Mail to the District’s Business Office at 1123 S Main Ave, Rugby, ND 58368 or drop it off at the school.
- **Online:** <https://www.rugby.k12.nd.us/domain/2170>
- To donate appreciated stock or use the charitable IRA rollover (QCD), contact NDCF at 701.222.8349.

If you have questions about how to contribute or our planning, please reach out to Mike McNeff (Superintendent) or Dawn Hauck (Business Manager) at 701-776-5201.

Sincerely,

The Rugby Public School District Board

Dustin Hager – *President*
Carlie Johnson – *Vice President*
Kristi Blessum – *Board Member*
Nick Schmaltz – *Board Member*
Chad Duchscher – *Board Member*



Thank you for your support!