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## **Emmetsburg CSD Purchases Property for Potential New School**

EMMETSBURG, IOWA — The Emmetsburg School Board has agreed to purchase property identified as the preferred location for a new elementary school, contingent upon the outcome of a fall bond referendum.

The \$501,600 agreement, approved by board members on June 27, would transfer ownership of approximately 24 acres to the Emmetsburg Community School District.

The undeveloped property is east of Iowa Lakes Community College and south of College Drive. The site was chosen by board members for its ample space to accommodate a new school and future expansion, close proximity to the high school, and road access that addresses current safety and traffic issues experienced at West Elementary School.

“After investing over a year studying the challenges at West Elementary School and considering various project options, this agreement is the next step in our mission to provide future generations of young learners with a high-quality facility that supports 21st century learning,” said Superintendent Cory Jenness.

West Elementary School, built in 1952, requires more than \$6 million in immediate facility and equipment upgrades. This includes improvements to heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; upgrades to safety and security systems; new classroom finishes; and parking lot repairs. The school’s playground is one of the smallest in northwest Iowa based on an enrollment of 308 students.

Project architects estimate that a new 65,000 square-foot school for grades PK-4 would cost \$29.75 million. If constructed, ECSD would retain ownership of West Elementary, leasing space for much needed daycare services in the community.

The 2013 addition at West Elementary, which includes the gymnasium, offices, kitchen, and cafeteria, would continue to be utilized by ECSD.

Two elections requiring at least 60% voter approval are necessary for the district to complete the land sale and build a new elementary school. The first, on September 10, will seek approval of a ballot question for the November 5 election. The second vote, on November 5, will ask voters to consider a general obligation bond.

The decision to pursue the construction of a new elementary school was unanimously accepted by the School Board following a recommendation in April from a Community Task Force that included district residents.

For more information on ECSD’s facility needs, the project’s tax impact, and answers to frequently asked questions, visit <https://www.emmetsburgbond.org>.

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