



# School District of New Glarus

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## ***Press Release***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### ***New Glarus School District Considers New Option for Primary School***

The New Glarus School District is considering a new option for the Primary School after bids came in \$8 million higher than budgeted due to inflation and unexpected delays at the proposed Tower Heights site. The referendum for the Primary School, a High School addition, High School renovations, and Elementary School renovations was approved by voters in April 2021. With some adjustments to the size of the Primary School and value engineering, the budget was on target in spring 2022. Unfortunately, unexpected delays and inflation increased costs by \$3 million by the end of summer 2022 and an additional \$5 million by the time the project could be bid out in December.

The New Glarus School Board and District Administration have been analyzing options and discussing how to proceed with the new Primary School over a series of spring public school board meetings. Options explored included: reducing the size of the building to fit within the budget, exploring other building sites, and asking taxpayers for more money via referendum.

The School Board decided in April to not go back to referendum for more money to build the Primary School. The New Glarus community has generously supported the recent facility and operating referendums, and the Board decided to not ask the community for additional funding. Instead, the Board is working with District Administration to find a solution within available funding.

To fit the Primary School building within the available budget, building size needs to be reduced by between 25,000-35,000 square feet, depending on location and site costs. Unfortunately, a stand-alone building cannot be reduced by that many square feet and still be a fully functioning school. Therefore, the School Board and District Administration have determined that the best option is to explore connecting the new Primary School to the current Elementary School. Doing so allows the buildings to share duplicative services, such as a library, cafeteria, office, art, music, and guidance spaces. This could significantly reduce the Primary School's square footage, while still providing high quality educational spaces for the youngest learners.

Connecting the two schools comes with a challenge. The only area around the current Elementary School that is not in a floodplain is the football field. Therefore, the Primary School would need to be built in that location. The School District recognizes the importance many district residents place on the current football field. However, re-examining where athletic fields are located creates an opportunity. When the district conducted a 2019 survey asking community residents to prioritize the District's facility needs, a new combined track/soccer/football field was next on the priority list after the building projects currently in progress. Since then, the need for a regulation size soccer field and track has come up repeatedly on parent surveys. Because of this interest, the School District is exploring the viability of building a combined track/soccer/football field across from the high school. The cost for a basic

track/soccer/football field is still being finalized, but a large portion of the funding for the project could come from selling the Tower Heights property that is no longer suitable for a Primary School.

The District is working diligently to determine the viability of this new option, and will continue to update the community during the planning process. In the meantime, the High School addition project has begun, and renovations at the High School and Elementary School are planned to begin as the school year ends.

For more information on any of the projects, please attend New Glarus School District Board meetings in-person or via Zoom, or be watching for updates on the District website and in the press this summer.

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