

Frequently Asked Questions about a Student and Community Wellness Center

Why a Student and Community Wellness Center?

- A Student and Community Wellness Center would add to the overall vitality of the entire community and has the potential to be a benefit to all members of the community: students, parents, student athletes, senior citizens, and employees.
- It will provide a safe and efficient space for community members to focus on overall health and wellness goals as well as creates a place for the programs and social space necessary to address community fitness needs and wants.
- There is currently no fitness center in Wrightstown for community use. Each year, we have requests from citizens to walk in the hallways or gymnasium in order to maintain some level of fitness during winter months. There has also been significant interest in holding group community fitness classes. Because of the extensive use of the buildings, community use of the buildings for fitness use is very limited.
- There is currently a 2,500 square foot space that houses strength training equipment at the high school. The district also has a multi-purpose space adjacent to the weight room which is used almost exclusively by students and student athletes. There is also a gymnasium that is used for sports competitions, practices, and physical education classes. The current space is used to its maximum potential and from early morning until late evening. While the current space is used effectively, in order to educate district students on how to be healthy and fit adults, additional space is needed for cardiovascular equipment and programming.
- PE staff currently have 5 pieces of cardio for student use. There is limited use of the cardiovascular equipment because of the number of pieces available and the location of the equipment. There is no place within the existing building to allow students to access or store cardio equipment. Every hour of the day, there are injured students who use the cardio equipment to rehabilitate an injury or special needs students who need to use the equipment as a safe way to get a cardiovascular workout.
- There are also many students, who are not participants on the school sports teams, who have shown interest in getting extra cardio workouts before or after school. The gym is in constant use before and after school making it almost impossible for the non-athlete student population to exercise outside of PE class.

How will this benefit community members?

- According to Mayo Clinic Staff, regular exercise combats health conditions and disease; improves mood; controls weight; boosts energy levels; promotes better sleep; and can be fun and social! A Student and Community Center would provide a place to regularly exercise for community members.
- In a recent Nielson study, 50% of survey participants listed 'convenient location' as the reason for working out at a fitness center. Currently, there is no fitness center in Wrightstown. The nearest center is over 9 miles away.
- This initiative allows for us to collectively address community wellness by offering space, equipment, and programming to improve the health, wellness, and fitness levels of the entire community.
- This safe, inviting space would be available for community members to pursue their fitness goals related to remaining active for life and healthy aging. The facility will offer free health and fitness assessments, programs for injury rehabilitation, and orientations on equipment use and fitness planning.

How will this benefit students?

- With the creation of a Student and Community Wellness Center, District students will benefit by being able to participate and have access to both strength training and cardiovascular equipment which will better prepare them to be healthy adults. Research indicates that improved fitness levels increases academic potential. Multiple studies confirm that active and fit students are better learners.
- There is currently very limited access to cardiovascular equipment for students. Obesity is an epidemic in this country, in this county, and visible in our schools as well. The WHS PE department has begun to address this issue by offering two fitness-based PE classes for juniors and seniors that do not involve sports. With less than 2% of adults staying in shape by playing sports (Ratey, *Spark*, 2008) this is an important transition for the long-term wellness of students. The focus on fitness-based PE courses creates the need for cardiovascular equipment and space.
- District students are demonstrating their support for a fitness-based PE program. Every year since the addition of the new courses, the traditional sports-based classes have declined in numbers and the fitness-based PE classes have increased. Total PE enrollment has also increased since the option of fitness-based classes was introduced.

What will be included in the Student and Community Wellness Center?

- The proposed Student and Community Wellness Center will offer an indoor walking track, a fitness classroom/large group multi-purpose space, and a physical education/health classroom in addition to about 11,000 square feet of space for strength training and cardiovascular equipment.
- The two-story building will include a first floor large vestibule with lockers and benches, restrooms, a fitness assessment office and cardiovascular, weights, and strength training equipment. The second floor will include treadmills, ellipticals, upright bikes, recumbent bikes and upper body ergometers. Strength training equipment will include free weights and selectorized equipment which allows individuals, from teens to senior citizens, to work each select muscle group of the body independently.
- The space and equipment is designed to be utilized by students and community members simultaneously. In conceptual designs, up to 100 individuals can use the facility at one time allowing for community members and an entire physical education class to use it at the same time.
- In addition to individual and group fitness opportunities, Bellin Health has expanded the partnership with Wrightstown Schools to include strength and conditioning coaching, community fitness program support, and community fitness assessments.
- Access to the Student and Community Wellness Center will be a separate, secured entrance. An electronic fob will be used for access to monitor access to the facility at all times. To assure student safety, there is no access for community members into the high school from the Student and Community Center and students will only be in the center during the day when they are accompanied by a PE teacher for class.
- In the community survey conducted in June, 53% of respondents indicated they would use the Student and Community Wellness Center to work out individually and 46% indicated they would use the Center for group fitness classes. Strength training, yoga, senior fitness classes, and aerobics were the classes or offerings of highest interest to survey participants. Community feedback on specific programs, days and times for programs, and hours of operation will be gathered if the referendum is approved by taxpayers on November 8. The goal is to

design a Student and Community Wellness Center that meets the needs of the community as well as physical education expectations for the students in the school district.

- The Student and Community Wellness Center would be located on the grass area at the east end of Wrightstown High School. The proposed area is not large enough to include a pool. Of greater concern are the long-term maintenance, liability, and operational costs associated with the addition of a pool. These costs add up to a significant cost to the taxpayer on an annual basis and the Steering Committee and Board of Education deemed the operational cost of a pool too great to be included in the Student and Community Wellness Center.

How much will the Student and Community Wellness Center cost and how will it be paid for?

- The Student and Community Wellness Center would be paid for with tax payer contributions through a referendum on November 8. While preliminary, the total project cost is estimated to be about \$3.8 million.
- Attempts were made to secure funding for the Center by applying for a federal Carol M. White PEP grant. Unfortunately, after multiple attempts, the District's grant application was not funded, but we came close! This grant is no longer offered through the federal government. As a result, the cost will need to be funded through an alternate way.

How will it impact tax payers?

- In March 2017, the District will make the final payment on the 20-year debt issued to build Wrightstown High School. The final payoff of this debt provides the opportunity for the community to build and equip a Student and Community Wellness Center at the High School, promote and strengthen health and wellness opportunities for all residents, and still reduce taxes for the taxpayers.
- If the November 8 referendum is approved, a new 5-year debt for the Center would replace the retiring high school debt. With a projected cost of \$3.8 million, the facility would include cardiovascular, weight, and strength training equipment, as well as an indoor walking track and a large multi-purpose room for group fitness and wellness activities. The facility would be available for student and community use throughout the day, year round.
- The new debt payment is estimated to be significantly lower than the high school debt, and would result in a projected drop in the tax rate of \$0.86 per thousand.

The current debt payment for the high school is \$2.34 per thousand or \$234 on a \$100,00 property. In addition to a lower debt payment, interest rates are currently at or near their lowest levels in recorded history. The loan would be for 5 years, and have an estimated interest rate of under 3.00%.

How will the day-to-day operational and long-term maintenance expenses be addressed?

- The Student and Community Wellness Center will be used daily by students. A portion of the day-to-day operational expenses (heating, cooling, and electricity) will be funded through regular district budget procedures.
- The District also currently supports supervision of the existing weight room, before and after-school, through regular personnel costs. The expanded hours of the Center and the long-term maintenance and repair of the equipment would be paid for through nominal membership fees.
- The steering committee is also exploring the potential of community members/Wrightstown school district staff/high school students being trained to work the fitness center in return for free membership to help offset costs.

Who will use the Student and Community Wellness Center? When will it be available?

- The Student and Community Wellness Center will be open to all community members and staff members of WCSD for before and after school use, as well as for specific classes and programs scheduled during the school day. Community feedback on specific programs, days and times for programs, and hours of operation will be gathered if the referendum is approved by taxpayers on November 8. The goal is to design a Student and Community Wellness Center that meets the needs of the community as well as physical education expectations for the students in the school district.
- In the state of Wisconsin, to graduate from High School, a student must take 3 classes of physical education. Therefore, the Student and Community Wellness Center will be used by every student at the high school during their time at WHS.
- In addition, the center will be used by student athletes for conditioning and training and by students who want to focus on health and fitness goals.

Will there be a fee to use the Student and Community Wellness Center?

- Yes. The steering committee is investigating the fee for use of the facility. Comparisons are being done with similar school and community partnerships; with membership fees in the range of \$50.00 - \$100.00 per year with reduced rates for senior citizen membership.
- These fees will be used to help defray costs for building supervision and long-term equipment maintenance and replacement. The bricks and mortar of the building will be paid for by taxpayers through a bonded referendum.

What is Bellin's role in the Student and Community Wellness Center?

- The Wrightstown Community School District currently partners with Bellin Health to provide Athletic Training services for the student athletes. As part of the new contract, Bellin has expanded the partnership to include Strength and Conditioning coaching, community fitness program support, and community fitness assessments.

Why investigate the addition of a Student and Community Wellness Center now?

- Most people, when asked, will acknowledge that adopting a healthy lifestyle that includes making healthy nutritional choices, being less sedentary, and increasing physical activity, will help decrease the risk of obesity, but knowing this fact and actually implementing the necessary changes is not happening. The percentage of children in the Wrightstown School District who qualify as overweight and out of shape is pretty similar to what is seen nationwide, thus spurring organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics to make this a healthcare priority, the thought being, if we can focus on our children, and work with them and their families to adopt healthy lifestyles and healthy choices, we will lessen the disease burden and overall health costs as they age.
- How to do this? By consistently promoting and adopting healthy lifestyles and by mobilizing communities to get engaged in their health. Access to facilities has been an issue, as has lack of knowledge of how to incorporate strength and resistance training in a safe and controlled manner, thus preventing injury and encouraging longevity of use. The wellness center would address **all** of these needs.
- The other important positive health care effect of exercise that cannot be emphasized enough, is that regular, moderate exercise, has been shown to help

manage stress, improve mood, and may help decrease the feelings of depression and boost self-confidence.

- As above, the health of the family is integral when discussing the health of our children. In this day and age, not only moms and dads, but also grandmas and grandpas are engaged in raising our children. If we are to be successful in raising healthy children, we need to be modelling healthy habits as adults, and for adults, exercise is clearly beneficial as noted by the Surgeon General (www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/pdf/olderad.pdf):
 - Helps maintain the ability to live independently and reduces the risk of falling and fracturing bones.
 - Reduces the risk of dying from coronary heart disease and of developing high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes.
 - Can help reduce blood pressure in some people with hypertension.
 - Helps people with chronic, disabling conditions improve their stamina and muscle strength.
 - Reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression and fosters improvements in mood and feelings of well-being.
 - Helps maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints
 - Helps control joint swelling and pain associated with arthritis.
- In addition to addressing the significant health threat of obesity, investigating the addition of a community fitness space now is advantageous to the tax payers of the district. With the retirement of debt for the high school, fitness space can be added with little to no impact to the taxpayer. Early indications are that even with the addition of a Student and Community Wellness Center, the mill rate will drop 86¢ per thousand.

How have other districts and community this size addressed the need for fitness facilities and programs?

- Several area communities and school districts have pursued fitness facilities through referendum support. Little Chute, New Holstein, Oconto Falls, Bonduel, and Seymour all have fitness centers that were supported through referendum dollars, connected to the school district facilities, and are open for community use. The partnership between taxpayers and school districts has been a benefit to those communities in supporting lifetime community fitness goals for their residents.

How does the new track project fit with this initiative?

- The two projects are completely separate. Replacing the track has been a budgeted, long-term maintenance project for the past seven years. Building and

Grounds Director, Russ Bowers, plans and prioritizes facilities maintenance projects in both the long-and short-term. All large projects, like resurfacing parking lots, replacing lawn and snow removal equipment, replacing bleachers and lockers, upgrading heating and cooling units, and other costly facility maintenance items are prioritized in 3-5 year, 5-7 year, and 7-10 year planning cycles to be fiscally responsible to taxpayers.

- The District plans and budgets for all long range maintenance projects over the long- and short-term. By responsible budgeting and planning for large maintenance projects over the past 7 years, the track will be replaced through the regular district budget.

Why does the design of the Student and Community Wellness Center not include the addition of a pool?

- The Student and Community Wellness Center would be located on the grass area at the east end of Wrightstown High School. The proposed area is not large enough to include a pool. Of greater concern are the long-term maintenance, liability, and operational costs associated with the addition of a pool. These costs add up to a significant cost to the taxpayer on an annual basis.

How do we find out more information about the Student and Community Wellness Center?

- Information is available at
 - www.wrightstown.k12.wi.us under the 'Project TigerTough' link. On the website is background information along with contact information for Steering Committee members who can be contacted for questions or concerns.
 - Questions may also be emailed to wcsd.tigertough@gmail.com.
 - Contact Steering Committee Co-Chairs, Mary Bartel (920)740-2645 and Diane Roundy (920) 655-2484 with comments or questions
 - Follow the informational posts on Facebook and Twitter

Please take an opportunity to learn more about this important community wellness initiative.