

# **REORGANIZATION STUDY**

**RIVER BEND CUSD #2  
WEST CARROLL CUSD #314**

# Midwest School Consultants

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# Purpose of a Feasibility Study

- Provide participating districts with information which can help them determine the best options for students, parents, and communities.
- Provide a neutral viewpoint based on the analysis of curriculum, finances, staff needs, transportation issues and facilities.
- Suggestions for improving the quality of instruction, efficiency, and programing options.

# Financial Comparisons

## School District Financial Profile

- Evidence Based Funding, ADA, Personal Property Replacement Tax, Operating Tax Expense Property Tax Rates per Pupil, and Evidence Based funding per Pupil
- Education Fund, Operations Fund, Transportation Fund, IMRF, Bond & Interest Fund, Working Cash, Site & Construction, Safety Prevention, EAV

# Facilities

- Number of buildings
- Grades housed in each building
- Building enrollments & capacities
- Age of facilities
- Life Safety/asbestos
- Accessibility compliance
- General upkeep & building conditions

# Transportation

- Number of Buses
- Number of Bus Routes
- Costs
- Number of students transported
- Route Mileage & Costs
- Special Education Buses
- Other Transportation Services & Costs

# Curriculum Comparisons

- Program highlights
- Grade Level enrollments vs. numbers of teachers in each community
- Test score comparison
- Junior High and High School courses & electives
- High School schedule & graduation requirements
- Final recommendations for participating districts

# Curriculum



# District Sites and Grade Configurations

- **River Bend 2** incorporates a PK-12 curriculum for **943 students at three schools: Fulton Elementary School**, grades PK-5 (439 students); **River Bend Middle School**, grades 6-8 (235 students); and **Fulton High School**, grades 9-12 (269 students).
- **West Carroll District 314** currently offers a PK-12 curriculum for **851 students at three schools: West Carroll Primary**, grades PK-5 (389 students); **West Carroll Junior High** grades 6-8 (186 students); and **West Carroll High School** (276 students).

*\* Starting in the 2025-26 school year, West Carroll High School will transition to the current middle school campus and will continue to house grades 9-12. The Primary School in Savanna will educate students from K-8. Additions and renovations are already planned to accommodate this move.*

# Early Childhood & Elementary Sections

	Fulton Elem (River Bend 2)			West Carrol Primary (WC 314)	
Grade	Enrollment	Sections		Enrollment	Sections
PK	40	2		77	6 half day, 1 full
KG	70	3		63	3
1	63	3		56	3
2	82	4		65	3
3	60	3		53	3
4	57	3		62	3
5	68	3		39	2

# Curricular Resources

<i>Subject</i>	Fulton Elementary	West Carroll Primary
ELA/Reading	Houghton Mifflin	Scholastic
<i>Phonics</i>	Michael Haggerty	Horizons Phonics
<i>Writing</i>	Zaner Bloser, Handwriting Without Tears	iReady Writing
Math	Math Learning Center	iReady
<b>Science</b>	Mystery Science	Mystery Science, McGraw Hill
Social Studies	Harcourt	Studies Weekly

# Middle School

<b>River Bend Middle School</b>		<b>West Carrol Middle School</b>	
<i>Grade</i>	<i>Enrollment</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Enrollment</i>
6	77	6	65
7	78	7	64
8	80	8	55

<b>Specials Offered</b>	
<b>River Bend MS</b>	<b>West Carroll MS</b>
Art	Art
Chorus	Chorus
Band	Band
PE/Health	PE/Health
STEAM Lab	
Social Skills	

# Programs, Clubs, & Extracurriculars

- River Bend MS – Offers band, chorus, volleyball, boys and girls basketball, cheerleading, co-ed wrestling, track and field, and game club.
- West Carroll MS – Offers band, chorus, volleyball, boys and girls basketball, football, co-ed wrestling, track and field, drama club, science club, STEAM club, Scholastic club, Quiz Bowl, and Thunder Club.

# Middle School Curriculum

<i>Subject</i>	River Bend MS	West Carroll MS
ELA/Reading	Amplify	StudySync
Math	Amplify	Pearson - Savvas
<b>Science</b>	McGraw Hill	McGraw Hill
Social Studies	Online – MyWorld Interactive American History	Houghton Mifflin

## Algebra 1

River Bend MS – Currently does not offer Algebra 1 for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

West Carroll MS – Does offer Algebra I with the use of Savvas Algebra.

During the 2022-23 school year, 92.6% of WCMS 8<sup>th</sup> graders passed Algebra 1 (state average was only 31%).

# Programs, Clubs, & Extracurriculars

- River Bend MS – Offers band, chorus, volleyball, boys and girls basketball, cheerleading, co-ed wrestling, track and field, and game club.
- West Carroll MS – Offers band, chorus, volleyball, boys and girls basketball, football, co-ed wrestling, track and field, drama club, science club, STEAM club, Scholastic club, Quiz Bowl, and Thunder Club.

# High School

Fulton High School (RB 2)		West Carrol High School (WC 314)	
<i>Grade</i>	<i>Enrollment</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Enrollment</i>
9	69	9	86
10	73	10	67
11	57	11	61
12	70	12	63



# HS Course Offerings

Core Classes of ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies:

- students from West Carroll will have fewer course offerings to choose from in both Math and Social Studies
- Equal number of offerings in ELA and Science

Overall, WCHS offers more course options. This includes the subject areas of foreign language, career & tech ed, family & consumer sciences, fine & performing arts.

# Advanced Coursework

## **Fulton HS (RB 2):**

- Dual credit offered through Sauk Valley Community College and Clinton Community College.
- Dual enrollment opportunities are offered through Sauk Valley Community College, Eastern Iowa Community Colleges, Western Illinois University, Morrison Tech, and Whiteside Area Career Center.

## **West Carroll HS (WC 314):**

- Dual credit offered through Sauk Valley Community College and Highland Community College.
- Dual enrollment offered through Highland Community College “CollegeNow” Program

# HS Graduation Requirements

- If students from WCHS were to enroll at FHS, changes in the number of credits for high school graduation will need to be made.
- Fulton HS requires 28 credits while West Carroll requires 24.5 credits to graduate.
- Considerations would need to be made by FHS in the areas of:
  - Intro to Computers – 0.5 years
  - College and Career Readines – 0.5 years

# Special Ed and Vocational/CTE Cooperatives

## **River Bend 2:**

***Special Education*** – Part of the Bi-County Special Ed Cooperative, a cooperative of 11 area school districts and 2 Regional Offices of Education

***CTE/Vocational*** - Part of the Whiteside Area Career Center in Sterling, a cooperative of 19 area school districts

## **West Carroll 314:**

***Special Education*** – Part of the Northwest Special Education Cooperative, a cooperative of 11 area school districts and 1 Regional Office of Education

***CTE/Vocational*** - Part of the Jo Daviess Carroll CTE Academy in Elizabeth, a cooperative of 6 area school districts

# Other Stats Per the 22-23 IL School Report Card

	Fulton Elem	WC Primary
Average Class Size	19	20
Pupil/Tchr. Ratio	18:1	18:1
Teachers FTE	28	25
Administrators	*1	1

	River Bend MS	West Carroll MS
Average Class Size	24	20
Pupil/Tchr. Ratio	18:1	15:1
Teachers FTE	13	15
Administrators	1	1

*\*Fulton added an AP in 2023-24, making 2 admins*

	Fulton HS (RB 2)	West Carroll HS (WC 314)
Average Class Size	16	17
Pupil/Tchr. Ratio	15:1	17:1
Teachers FTE	21	20
Administrators	2	1
Graduation Rate	90%	79%
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade on Track	91%	71%

# Enrollment

# Enrollment

- Student projections are made using existing class numbers to develop percentages.
  - These percentages are applied to future classes using the Cohort Survival Method.
  - Live births provided by the Census Bureau are used to project Pre-K and K enrollments.
- **For this study, the impact the loss/gain of students would have is addressed since these districts are not looking to consolidate.**
- West Carroll elementary enrollment dropped by 101 students from 2019-20 to 2023-24.
- West Carroll Middle School dropped by 69 students
- West Carroll High School dropped by 51 students
- These decreases are projected to continue for the next five years
  
- River Bend elementary increased by 18
- River Bend Middle School increased by 27
- Fulton high School increased by 2
- These increases will continue for the next 5 years

**ENROLLMENT PERCENTAGE PROJECTIONS FULTON ELEMENTARY**

<b>K</b>	<b>K TO 1</b>	<b>1 to 2</b>	<b>2 to 3</b>	<b>3 to 4</b>	<b>4 to 5</b>
<b>8.38%</b>	103.72%	104.00%	100.41%	106.30%	98.28%

**WEST CARROLL ELEMENTARY PROJECTIONS**

<b>K</b>	<b>K TO 1</b>	<b>1 to 2</b>	<b>2 to 3</b>	<b>3 to 4</b>	<b>4 to 5</b>
<b>8.94%</b>	94.46%	91.89%	97.65%	92.86%	96.75%

**River Bend M. S.**

<b>5 to 6</b>	<b>6 to 7</b>	<b>7 to 8</b>
<b>95.24%</b>	101.05%	101.82%

**WEST CARROLL M. S.**

<b>5 TO 6</b>	<b>6 TO 7</b>	<b>7 TO 8</b>
<b>98.17%</b>	94.58%	97.91%

**ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS FULTON H. S.**

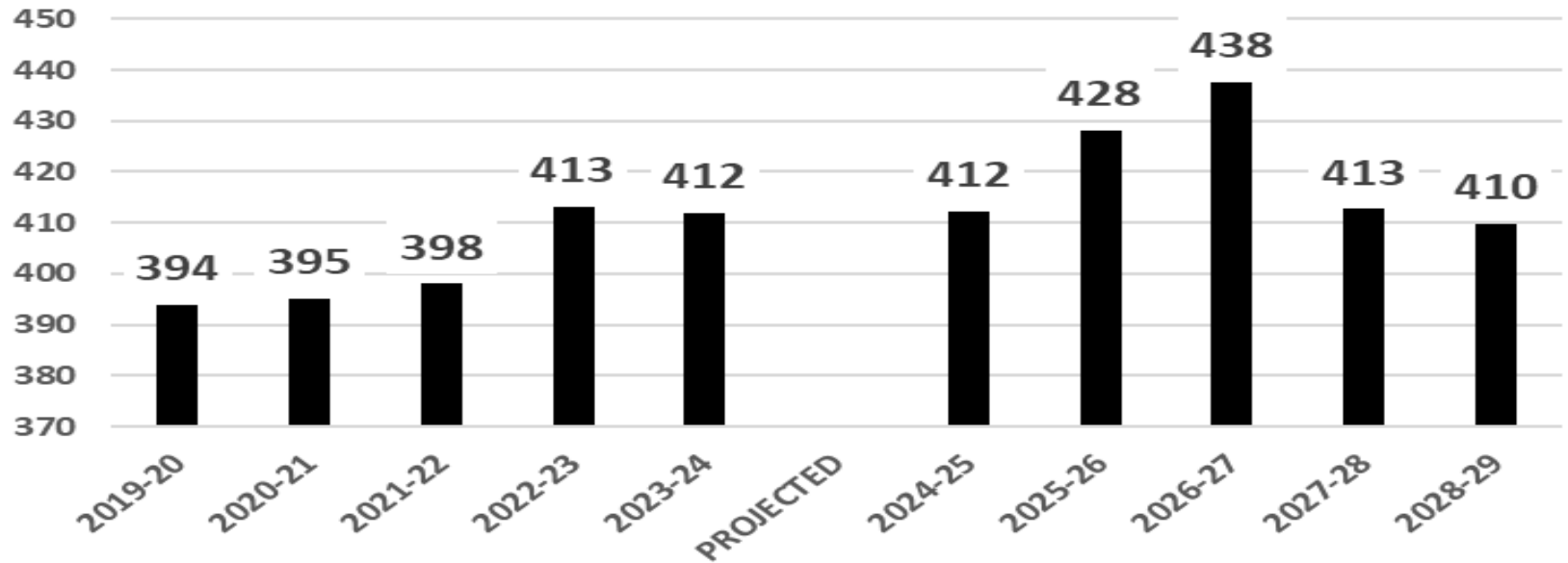
<b>8 to 9</b>	<b>9 to 10</b>	<b>10 to 11</b>	<b>11 to 12</b>
<b>104.04%</b>	95.7%	95.9%	96.7%

**West Carroll H. S. Enroll Projections**

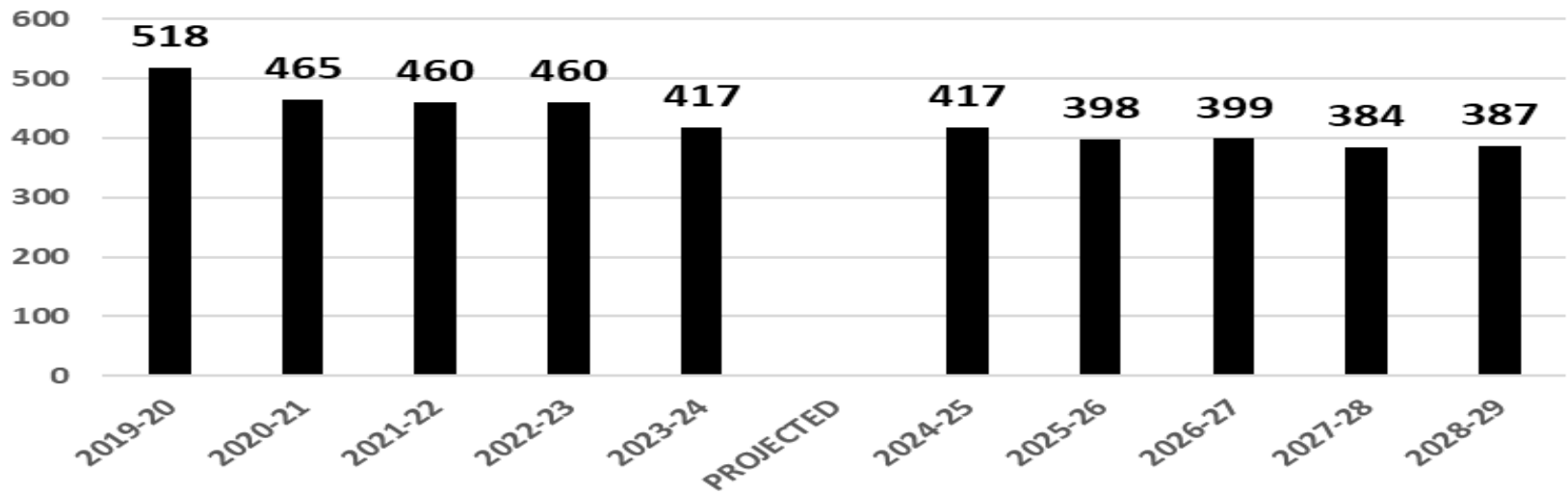
<b>8 TO 9</b>	<b>9 TO 10</b>	<b>10 TO 11</b>	<b>11 TO 12</b>
<b>116.8%</b>	78.9%	84.8%	91.7%



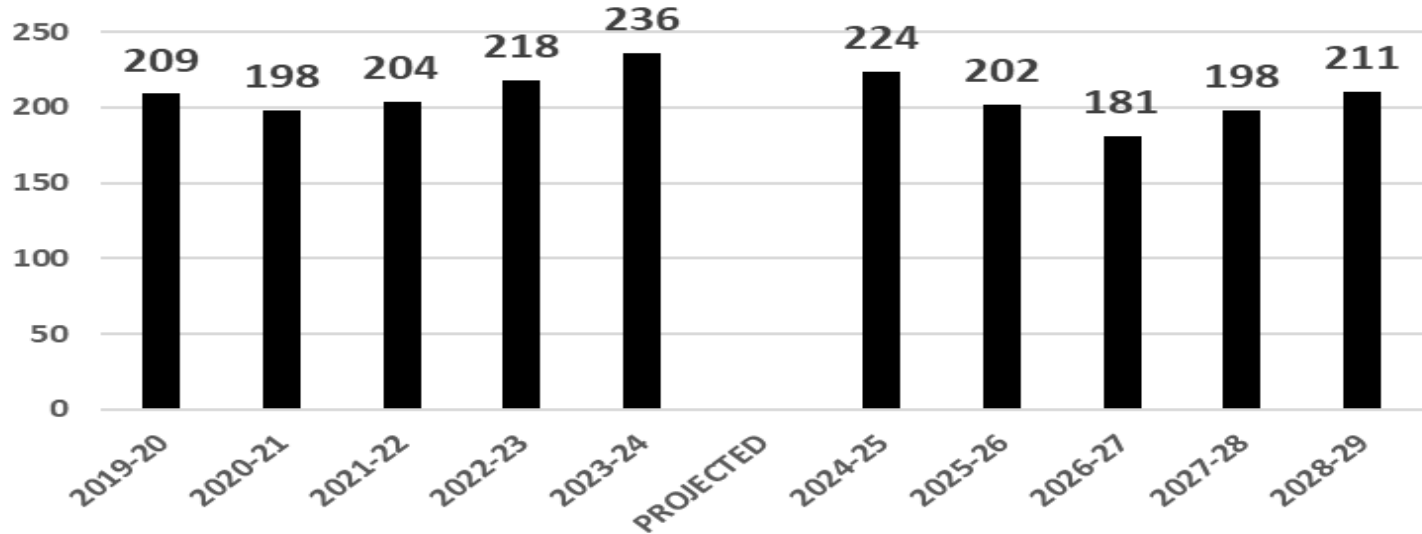
### FULTON ELEMENTARY



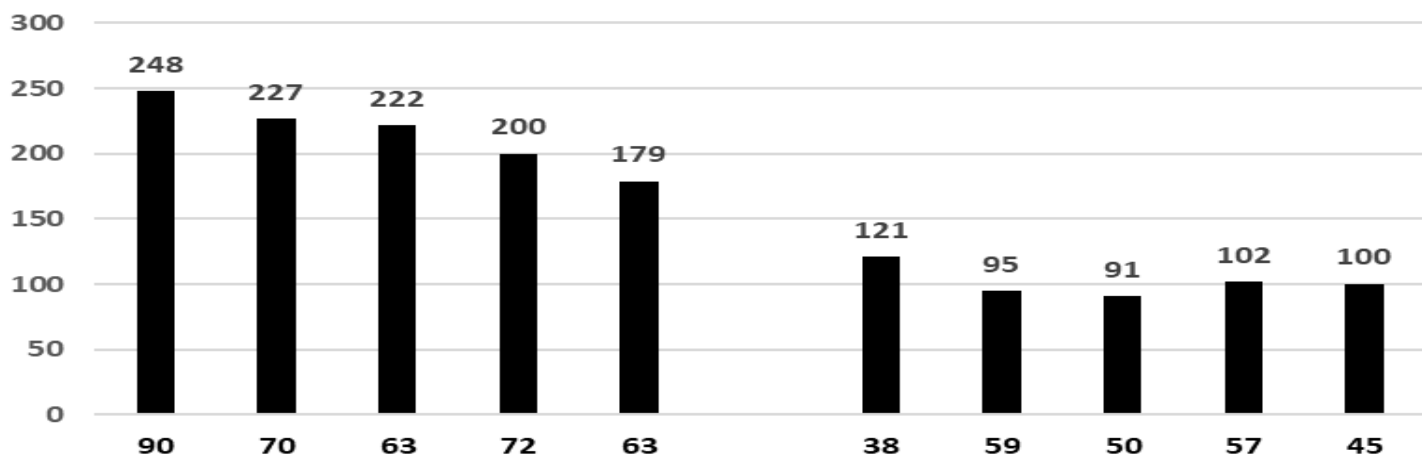
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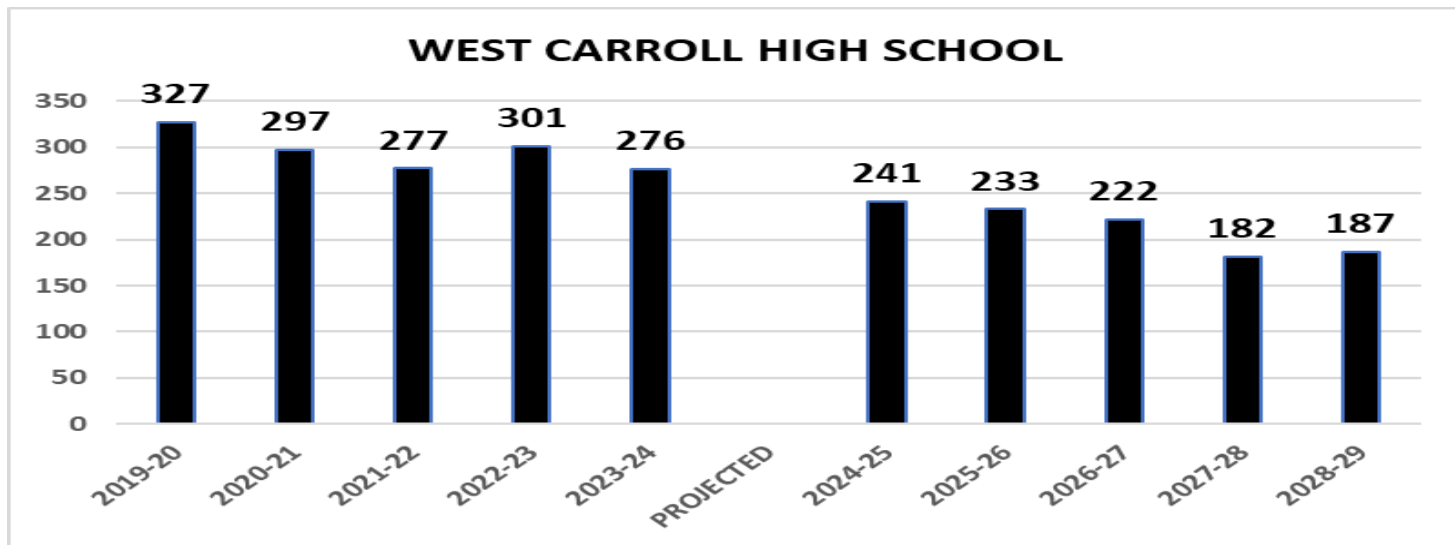
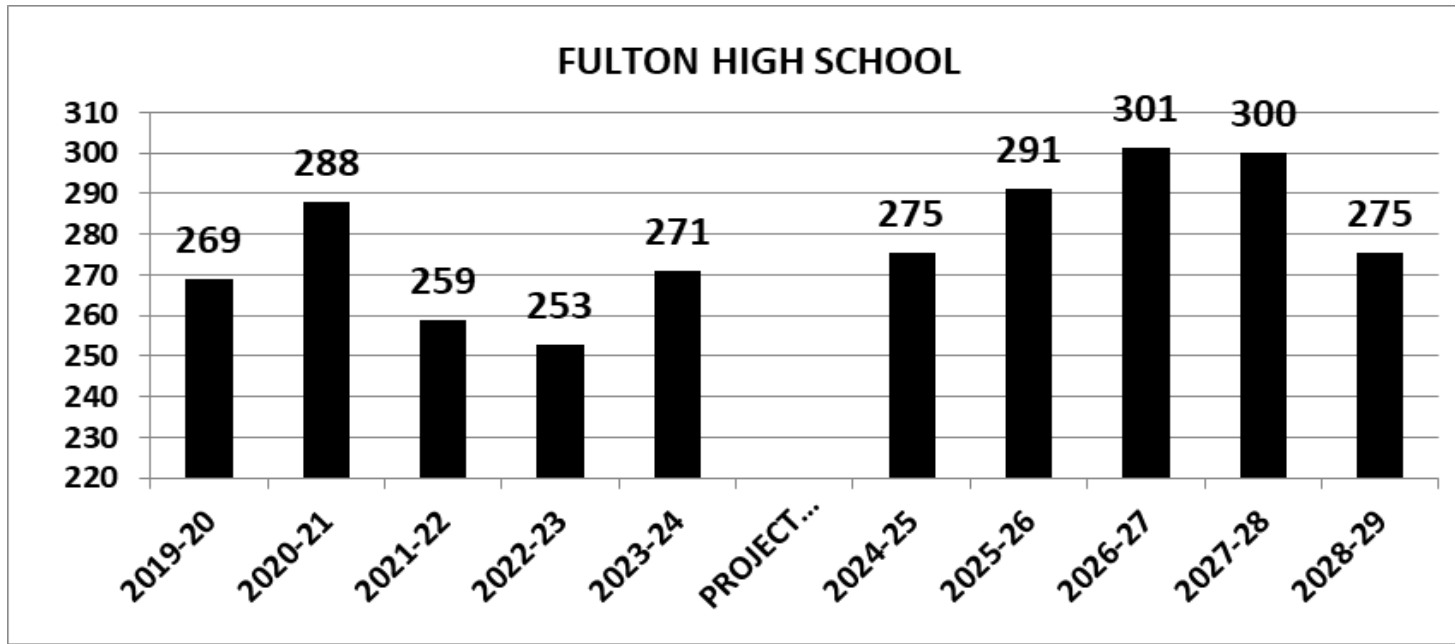


### RIVER BEND M. S.



### WEST CARROLL M. S.





# Summary

Enrollment is a critical factor as one looks at these two school districts and the impact the detachment could have on each district. As previously noted, the student populations of River Bend/Fulton increased at the elementary, middle school and high school sites. The transfer of the Thomson students from West Carroll would further reduce the student population at West Carroll while increasing the growing numbers for Fulton/River Bend.

# Transportation

Regular Route Information		
	River Bend	West Carroll
# Students Transported	780	488
Cost	\$387,013	\$215,933
Cost/student	496	442
Regular Route Miles	113,416	52,105
Cost/mile	\$3.41	\$4.14

Thomson to Fulton Increase					
		Miles between Thomson and Fulton	Number of busses required	Additional cost (Miles between schools x 2 x average cost/mile x # busses x 176 days)	TOTAL EXTRA COST
Total Cost	\$387,013				
Total Miles	\$113,416				
Average/mile	\$3.41				
		10*	3	\$36,009.60	\$36,010

- Distance is 8 miles. Added 2 miles to account for students needing to get to school.
- Would need to purchase (\$145,000 each) or lease (\$27,000 each) 3 buses
- Hire 3 drivers (\$37,000 each) = total \$111,000
- Build bus garage for new buses – would bid this.
- Need van for new Pre-K students (\$46,000)
- TOTAL ADDITIONAL FUNDS NEEDED: \$274,010 (Not including bus garage)

Thomson to Savannah Savings					
		Miles Thomson to Savannah	Number of busses	Reduction (Miles to Savanna x 2 x average cost/mile x # busses)	TOTAL SAVINGS
<b>Total Cost</b>	\$215,933				
<b>Total Miles</b>	52,105				
<b>Average/mile</b>	\$4.14				
		10	2	\$55,433	\$55,433

Thomson to Mt. Carroll Savings					
		Miles between Thomson and Mt. Carroll	Number of busses required	Additional cost (Miles between schools x 2 x average cost/mile x # busses x 176 days)	TOTAL SAVINGS
<b>Total Cost</b>	\$215,933				
<b>Total Miles</b>	52,105				
<b>Average/mile</b>	\$4.14				
		15	1	\$21,881.32	\$21,881

This detachment would result in a reduction of transportation costs of \$77,314 for the West Carroll District. The differences between the increase and decrease are a result of differences between the distances traveled, the number of busses required and the per mile cost.

## TRANSPORTATION SUMMARY

- Approval of the detachment would result in an increase in transportation expenses for the River Bend School District of \$274,010.
- This detachment would result in a reduction of transportation costs of \$77,314 for the West Carroll District.
- The differences between the increase and decrease are a result of differences between the distances traveled, the number of busses required and the per mile cost.
- There could be an increase in student cost associated with those students who access the Vocational Program at \$1,200/student.



# **Buildings**

## **WEST CARROLL SCHOOL DISTRICT #314**

- West Carroll School District consists of West Carroll Primary and West Carroll High School located in Savanna, Illinois and West Carroll Middle School located in Mt. Carroll.
- The high school was built in 1954 and has several construction issues.
- The intent is to close this building and move the high school to, what is now, the middle school at the start of the 2025-26 school year.
- Three science labs at the middle school will be remodeled during the summer of 2024 in preparation for this move.
- If classroom space permits, the Pre-kindergarten class will be moved to the high school. If the detachment is approved, the loss of 51 high school students would likely provide additional classroom space.
- The current primary school in Savanna will house the K-8 student population and a multipurpose room and four classrooms will be added. **Funds are available for the district to make these additions.**

## **RIVER BEND SCHOOL CUSD #2**

- The River Bend school district consists of four buildings located in Fulton, Illinois.
- These are Fulton Blended Pre-school, Fulton Elementary School (FEW) River Bend Middle School (RBMS) and Fulton High School.
- The district has spent \$277,298 on identified health life safety issues with \$27,962 items remaining.
- A new health life safety survey will be completed in 2024. The roofs are the next item to be addressed and the parking areas need to be resurfaced.
- The financial impact of having the Thomson students enter the River Bend District is the main focus of this study. Dr. Hogue and Principal Jeffry Hoese provided the following highly detailed list of needs should the detachment be approved.

## FULTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Per Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) guidelines, the recommended school counselor to student ratio is 250:1. FES is currently at 403:1 while anticipating the addition of 60-70 students. No counseling services are currently provided for preschool students. With an enrollment of 460+ in grades K-5, the district would need to add another counselor at FES.
- With an additional counselor added, the district would need an office location. The only available space would be the room designated as the SEL calm down space for students in crisis. This could potentially be negated with the additional counseling services available.
- Per [ISBE](#) guidelines, the caseload cap for a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) is 60. The current SLP has a caseload of 47. The district is doubling the enrollment at the preschool, where SLP services are frequently needed. The district may approach or exceed the caseload cap.
- FES, would be able to shift the proposed *Outside Services* room to become a classroom. Doing so would limit where they can host staff from Bi-County, Sinnissippi, etc.
- The district would still need another classroom with increased enrollment. The cost for this would need to be determined by the district through a bidding process.
- The district would need to add two new teachers (and potentially paras - \$15/hour each)\* as well.
- The addition of at least four (4) classrooms would be necessary at the high school.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

- The middle school would need multiple classroom spaces built in order to accommodate the increased enrollment.
- The middle school will need to add a minimum of three classrooms for the additional sections in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- With only one set of restrooms for students another set of male and female bathrooms be needed.
- A new gym will be needed to accommodate the additional students.
- The current gym is small and additional students participating in activities will require a space. Special education spaces may be needed.(Cost to be determined through the bidding process).

## **FULTON HIGH SCHOOL**

- Would need the addition of an English, Math, history and ½ Spanish and potential special education staff.
- Three existing rooms could be converted to classrooms.
- Additional staff would need to share rooms.
- Fulton High School has very little ability to add classrooms.
- The library could be reduced in size to add a classroom.

## SUMMARY

- Add 8 new teachers at Fulton Elementary School and River Bend Middle School
- Fulton HS will need 3-5 new staff members in the English, Math, history, special education, health/driver's ed, and foreign language departments.
- If each of these new hires were first year teachers, the cost including salary and benefits, would be \$50,000/teacher. This base salary (which will likely be low since finding first year teachers is very difficult) would result in an initial MINIMUM cost to the River Bend district of \$650,000/year (12 teachers + 1 counselor).

- The additional cost for the paras would depend on the final determination of how many are needed. This would equal \$15.00/hour for each para needed.
- Finally, the construction of at 4 classrooms at the high school and 3 classrooms at the middle school would be necessary. The cost for this construction depends on the bidding process which looks at the size of the classroom, the needs of the students within that classroom, state mandates for construction and the cost of materials.
- The construction would require the district to issue bonds to pay for these additional classrooms. Should the detachment be approved, the housing of the additional students would be an issue for the district and the board to resolve.

# **FINANCIAL AREAS**




<b>Fund</b>	<b>River Bend CUSD 2</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>West Carroll CUSD 314</b>	<b>Rate</b>
<b>Ed.</b>	3,424,787	2.60	4,704,702	3.25
<b>OBM</b>	658,611	0.50	715,010	0.49406
<b>Trans.</b>	263,446	0.2	286,013	0.19763
<b>Sp. Ed.</b>	52,690	0.03955	57,208	0.03953
<b>Working Cash</b>	65,861	0.05	71,507	0.04941
<b>Bonds</b>	687,763	0.5163	1,400,570	0.96777
<b>IMRF</b>	132,449	0.09942	340,008	0.23494
<b>Social Security</b>	163,050	0.12239	260,513	0.18001
<b>TORT</b>	463,640	0.3480	455,004	0.3144
<b>Lease</b>	65,861	0.05	71,507	0.04941
<b>Life Safety</b>	65,861	0.05	71,507	0.04941
<b>Total</b>	6,044,019	4.57566	8,434,058	5.83

- In comparing the tax rates and extensions of the school districts, there are several trends and factors that are evident from the chart. All levies for the major funds are similar except West Carroll levies much more in the Ed Fund than River Bend. The only other significant levy difference worth mentioning is the Bonds levy with West Carroll higher.
- Each district has a bond levy rate to pay off its outstanding bonds of various varieties. It can also be inferred from this that the districts have sold bonds of a variety of authorized sources, working cash, construction, life safety, etc. If the detachment is approved Thomson would be responsible for the bond rates for both West Carroll and River Bend.
- Current tax rates become an important variable that will be used to determine the increase in revenue for River Bend and decrease in revenue for West Carroll should the detachment be approved. Keep in mind that tax rates of the detached constituents will revert to the current tax rates of each district.

	<b>River Bend CUSD #2</b>	<b>West Carroll CUSD #314</b>
<b>Average Daily Attendance</b>	889	916
<b>Evidence Based Funding Revenue</b>	111,131	27,434
<b>EBF Revenue/Per Student</b>	125	30
<b>Total District Expenditures</b>	17,334,411	17,713,554
<b>Operating Expense Per Pupil</b>	11,537.65	15,183.29
<b>Assessed Valuation Per Pupil</b>	149,845	160,020
<b>EAV 2020-2021</b>	133,212,379	146,579,227

- The average daily attendance indicates the two districts are similar in the enrollment size.
- The very important Operating Expense Per Pupil varies between River Bend and West Carroll. This is an extremely important variable and indicates the average cost to educate a student per district. River Bend has a lower Operating Expense Per Student. This relative cost to educate a student annually is generally reflective of the ability of a district to generate more revenue per student.
- The Assessed Valuation Per Pupil indicates that West Carroll has a higher EAV/per pupil. This figure normally denotes the relative reliance on local property taxes per student enrollment.
- EBF funds for the districts are significantly disparate with River Bend getting more in EBF annually but they have a lower student enrollment. EBF will be recalculated after a successful detachment. It is unknown at this time the actual amounts of change that will occur if the detachment is approved.

## EVIDENCE BASED FUNDING

	River Bend CUSD #2	West Carroll CUSD #314
<b>EBF 22-23</b>	111,131	27,434
<b>Average Daily Attendance 2022-2023</b>	889	916
<b>ADA 2021-2022</b>	871	967
<b>ADA 2020-2021</b>	915	1024
<b>Personal Property Replacement Tax 2022-23</b>	464,532.43	786,092.35
<b>Operating Tax Expense Per Pupil</b>	11,537.65	15,183.29

- The student populations of River Bend/Fulton increased at the elementary and middle school and high school sites. The transfer of the approximate 134 Thomson students from West Carroll would further reduce their overall population while increasing the growing numbers for Fulton/River Bend.
- Both districts receive revenue from the Personal Property Replacement Tax with West Carroll getting the higher amount.
- The relative share of the state revenue continues to be the same percentage as allocated in 1979. Therefore, districts having a larger allocation at that time will continue to receive that percentage of the annual state revenue regardless of a loss in EAV. *Until the State of Illinois changes its formula for this revenue source, these districts will continue to receive the same combined revenue from this source.* This annual amount would not be affected by consolidation and should continue to be allocated to the new district in the same amounts as they were allocated individually.

## EQUALIZED ASSESSED VALUATION

	2022	2021
River Bend CUSD #2	133,212,379	130,815,934
West Carroll CUSD #314	146,579,227	141,177,116

	Total	Total Extension
River Bend CUSD #2	4.57566	\$6,095,345
West Carroll CUSD #314	5.83	\$8,545,568

In the case of detachment, will taxpayers in the community that is detaching be responsible for the debt that has been previously accumulated in the district they will attach to? **THAT ANSWER IS YES**

## CURRENT RATES AND EXTENSIONS

	EAV 2022	Tax Rate	Extension
River Bend CUSD #2	133,212,379	4.57566	\$6,095,345.54
West Carroll CUSD #314	146,579,227	5.83	\$8,545,568.93

## RATES AND EXTENSIONS IF DETACHMENT OCCURRED

	2022 EAV with Detachment of \$41,146,640		Extension
River Bend CUSD #2	174,359,019	4.57566	\$7,978,075.89
West Carroll CUSD #314	105,432,587	5.83	\$6,146,719.82

## FINAL LOSS/GAIN IF DETACHMENT APPROVED

(LOSS)/GAIN	
\$ 1,232,730.35	RB new extension minus teacher salaries
\$ 958,720.35	RB new extension minus teacher salaries AND transportation
\$(2,321,535.11)	Reduction to WC with transportation removed reduction removed

**Based on the analysis of each area (Curriculum, Facilities, Transportation, Student Enrollment and Fiscal changes) the recommendation is that this DETACHMENT BE DENIED.**

A: If the detachment was to be approved, the low-income rate for West Carroll would increase by 3.61% increasing the poverty level from 55.47% to 59.08% which is in violation of the school code guidelines.

B: The loss of students from Thomson could reduce the capability of West Carroll High School to continue to offer certain classes.

C: The increase of students to River Bend would create the need for 3 rooms at the middle school and 4 at the high school plus a gymnasium to accommodate the increase in students.

D: The increase of students at River Bend would require hiring 12 teachers plus another counselor. The minimum cost would be \$650,000.

E: The transportation expenses would increase by \$274,000.

F: River Bend would need to pass a bond referendum for the construction of 7 total classrooms and a bus barn.

G: The citizens of Thomson would see an increase in their required payments of existing bonds. This amount would increase from .96777 to 1.48407. For a \$150,000 home this would be the annual increase of \$775.00.

H: West Carroll would see a reduction in their annual tax revenue of 2.3 million dollars. This loss could do serious fiscal damage to the district over time.

I: The CPPRT would not change if the detachment is approved. This presents an issue for River Bend in that the district would have additional students they are fiscally obligated without any additional funds.



# Questions from the Audience

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