



*Chequamegon School District*



# Consolidation Information Newsletter

A Glidden elementary student recently asked me, "Does the Glidden School have to consolidate?" I replied "No". The student continued, "So, its 'kinda' like there is a path to the right and a path to the left and we have to choose one." That is something we can all agree on. This newsletter combines the information produced by the committee members, community members, and staff members that have committed themselves to telling the story of education in our region in the coming years. The intent is to help voters choose a path with the information provided.  
-Tim Kief, Glidden District Administrator

## Committee Reports

The Consolidation Task Force was comprised of approximately 100 community members from Glidden and Park Falls. The task force separated into six subcommittees to study finance, transportation, facilities, staffing, curricular and co-curricular programming, and the school name.

### Transportation Information

Here is information provided by the transportation subcommittee.

#### **Question 1 – How much money will it cost to shuttle the students between Glidden and Park Falls?**

The state offers additional transportation aid to districts transporting students over 12 miles. The projected new revenues for transporting the Glidden High School students to Park Falls and the Park Falls Middle School students to Glidden would be approximately \$51,700. We believe that transportation expenditures will not exceed the additional transportation revenues.

#### **Question 2 – What will be the longest ride for any child in a normal school day?**

The longest ride would be approximately one hour and twenty minutes. That is the same or less than four neighboring school districts of similar geographical size.

#### **Question 3 - What will be the pick up and drop off times?**

The earliest pick up time would be 6:45 am. That is consistent with this year's schedule.

Drop off times would be approximately 25 minutes later than this year's schedule.

#### **Question 4 – Would the additional miles require buses to be replaced more often than they are currently being replaced?**

The additional miles traveled would equal about 15% of the total miles traveled per year in the consolidated district. Those additional 35,000 miles would be divided among several buses. The additional miles are not great enough to impact the rate the buses need to be replaced.

#### **Question 5 – Will there be an activity bus?**

An after school activity bus has been discussed. The cost, funding source, and amount of riders would impact planning for an activity bus.

#### **Question 6 – Can time on the bus be used as part of the required minutes of the school day?**

No.

#### **Question 7 – Will extra-curricular buses stop at both schools even if the bus does not go by on the route?**

This is to be determined.

### Facilities Report

In recent board action the Glidden and Park Falls Boards determined that both facilities would house pre-K through grade 3 and grades 4 and 5 from Glidden and Park Falls would be located in Park Falls.

Here is information provided by the facilities subcommittee.

#### **Question 1 – Would all of the Glidden students fit into the Park Falls facility if the school boards had not ordered the middle school to be located in Glidden for five years?**

No. Even if the consolidated district dropped the elementary SAGE program there would not be enough room. Four smaller size classrooms would be available for 200 middle school students. If all the elementary students in grades Pre-K through grade 4 had been assigned to the Park Falls facility the 5th grade students from Park Falls would have to be located in Glidden.

#### **Question 2 – How will the two facilities affect co-curricular offerings?**

The middle school offerings would be restored without scheduling conflicts with the high school co-curricula.

#### **Question 3 – How would we manage the current cooperative programming with St. Anthony School if the middle school was in Glidden?**

St. Anthony School personnel have indicated an interest in continuing a cooperative arrangement for band. Addressing this question includes discussions about scheduling and staffing. One consideration is to schedule beginning band in the morning during first hour in Glidden. Seventh and 8th grade band could be scheduled during 8th hour. This would allow the St. Anthony students in

those programs to travel on the regular morning and afternoon runs.

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## Committee Reports Continued

# Financial Committee Report

Here is information provided by the finance subcommittee.

### Question 1: How will consolidation impact my school property taxes?

(Your total property taxes include payments to city or towns, school district, county, state, and technical college. What is shown below is only the school district portion.)

Please See Slides on Page 4 & 5

### Question 2: Will taxpayers in a consolidated district be faced with an operations referendum to exceed the revenue cap if consolidation occurs?

A consolidated district will face an operations referendum to exceed the revenue cap. The referendum's impact to the taxpayer will be less in consolidation. The tax numbers that were used to answer question number one included an operations referendum to improve the financial health of the district and to pay down the unfunded retirement liability over 15 years.

### Question 3: Will taxpayers in either district or both be faced with an operations referendum to exceed the revenue cap if consolidation does not occur?

Both districts will have to ask for an operations referendum to exceed the revenue cap if they remain separate. The taxpayers of the Park Falls District will need to approve an operations referendum by spring of 2009 to continue operating in the 2009-2010 school year. The Glidden community will need to approve a second operations referendum one year later, to continue operating in the 2010-2011 school year.

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### Question 4: What is the State incentive aid for consolidation?

See the chart below. The 5th year of consolidation aid incentive is not calculated. Many variables needed for the calculation are not known at this time. One example is the children who would be members of the Pre-K class of 2013-2014 are not yet born.

#### State Consolidation Incentive Aid

2009-2010	\$1,109,250
2010-2011	\$482,871
2011-2012	\$1,207,075
2012-2013	\$765,923
2013-2014	To Be Determined

### Question 5: What is the potential savings realized with consolidation? How is this savings realized?

The potential savings will be in excess of \$500,000. This reduction in expenditures is related to reducing staff and eliminating duplicate costs.

### Question 6: What comprises the fund balance?

Cash on hand plus receivables (uncollected state aids, grants, and property taxes) minus current unpaid bills.



A portion of the elementary library in the Park Falls building.

### Question 7:

#### What is the fund balance of the Glidden District?

\$1,004,193 as of June 30, 2008.

#### What is the fund balance of the Park Falls District?

\$894,832 as of June 30, 2008.

\*As we said above, this does not equal cash in the bank.

### Question 8: How much fund balance does each district need to avoid cash-flow borrowing?

The Glidden District would need \$1.1 million in fund balance and the Park Falls District would need \$2.7 million in fund balance to avoid cash flow borrowing.

### Question 9: Why do the Glidden and Park Falls Districts have to short-term borrow?

The majority of revenue for the Glidden and Park Falls Districts comes from local property taxes that are received in January, February, and August. The August payment is for the previous school year. The school receives state aid payments in September, December, March, June, and July. The July payment is for the previous school year. When state aid payments used to be a greater portion of the total revenue for the district, short-term borrowing was less of an issue. Now, property tax revenue is the majority of revenue and it comes later in the year and even into the next school year. Fund balance bridges the gap between when bills must be paid and revenue comes to the district.

## Public Comment



A view of the commons in the Glidden building.



A portion of the library in the Glidden building.

### Consolidation, What's Happening...

Here is some financial information to address questions about the Glidden and Park Falls School Districts that have been asked.

#### How much does Park Falls owe on the remodeling of the facility in 2005?

Park Falls owes \$518,244 at this time.

#### What is in the Fund 80 budget in Park Falls?

Park Falls approved Fund 80 at the annual meeting in August for \$30,000 to fund sports programs for community children ages 11-14. The swimming pool is not a part of the Fund 80 budget for 2008-2009.

#### How much unfunded liability does Glidden and Park Falls owe?

Park Falls owes \$1,577,258 of unfunded retirement liability. Glidden owes \$313,602 for the same debt. If you consider the number of students, the Glidden School has more debt per student than Park Falls in this category. Both districts currently pay 7.8% interest on that category of debt.

#### How much debt remains on the track renovation in Park Falls?

Park Falls owes one more payment of \$29,000, payable in 2009, on the track renovation project.

#### Does the Park Falls District own or lease the buses?

The Park Falls District owns the buses that transport the district's students. The Park Falls District usually purchases one bus per year and makes loan payments for buses. The buses are not leased.

#### Why should we consolidate? Can't Glidden last a lot longer than Park Falls anyway?

It is true, the Glidden School District could operate one year longer than the Park Falls District due to their already approved referendum to exceed the revenue cap for the years 2007, 2008, and 2009.

#### What happens to the third year of Glidden's operations referendum if we consolidate?

The third year of the referendum would not be levied or collected.

### Public Comment

The Glidden and Park Falls School Boards heard public comment in a joint meeting in Glidden on Tuesday, September 23, regarding the planning for elementary grades. Here are some of the public comments made concerning the elementary planning with responses in italics when appropriate.

"The age of the students being transported is not important to me. Smaller kids get along better."

"I think the early socialization would have a benefit for any kid."

"I support keeping grade 5 in Park Falls."

"I'm concerned we may lose some kids to St. Anthony School."

"Why can't Park Falls Elementary come to Glidden?"

Since the middle school students have already been ordered by the Boards to be in Glidden, all the elementary students would not fit in Glidden.

"I think peace of mind for the community [Glidden] is to keep the young kids in Glidden. Grade 4 and 5 are ok to go to Park Falls."

"Would Glidden suffer if the SAGE contract went to Park Falls?"

No, the Glidden building

class numbers are already below SAGE teacher student ratio requirements. It is better for the students in Glidden to have the new consolidated district get the most revenue as possible because that will benefit students both communities.

**"Could we choose one option [for elementary plan] and then change our minds?"**

That might be necessary someday. The new board may need to consider the elementary planning in light of changes in student numbers, facility, or community needs.

**I have heard the rooms in the elementary in Park Falls are too small. Can't we just knock a few walls down to make them bigger?**

The room size of each classroom limits the number of students to 24 or less. The number of rooms available is not enough as well. Since the construction of the elementary facilities in Park Falls, the use of the rooms has changed. Of the 21 rooms in the elementary that used to house grades K-6, one is now a computer lab, one is a Title I room, two are special education rooms and another houses the four-year-old program which began in 2006-2007.

# Consolidation Information Newsletter

## HOW MUCH WILL MY “SCHOOL TAXES” BE:

How much will my school taxes be in **PARK FALLS without consolidation** and **with an operations referendum of \$1.3 million in 2009-10 and 2010-11?** This option **does not** begin paying off the unfunded retirement liability.

	Fair Market Value		\$50,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$200,000
Now	2008-09	6.45 mil rate	\$323	\$645	\$968	\$1,290
Year 1	2009-10	8.91 mil rate	\$446	\$891	\$1,337	\$1,782
Year 2	2010-11	9.31 mil rate	\$466	\$931	\$1,397	\$1,862

How much will my school taxes be in **PARK FALLS with consolidation** and **with an operations referendum of \$800,000 in 2010-11?** This option **does** begin to pay off the unfunded retirement liability.

	Fair Market Value		\$50,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$200,000
Now	2008-09	6.45 mil rate	\$323	\$645	\$968	\$1,290
Year 1	2009-10	7.57 mil rate	\$379	\$757	\$1,136	\$1,514
Year 2	2010-11	7.79 mil rate	\$390	\$779	\$1,169	\$1,558

## Addressing Students’ Needs

Much of the discussion about consolidation has been about money, facilities, and buses. Those are important and demand careful study. The “social consolidation” for each schools’ kids and their culture is no less important. Many of the decisions regarding facility use relate to how our community schools will bring two groups of kids together for a successful social consolidation.

Among the many considerations that went into the elementary planning, two issues became the most important. First, many people supported reducing the transportation time for the youngest students in the district. It is comforting for parents to have their young children close to home. There was unanimous board support from both Glidden and Park Falls on that issue. That is why there is a preK – grade 3 in each community. Secondly, it is important to bring kids from the two communities together as early as possible. The purpose of having the fourth and fifth graders begin this consolidation is an attempt to do this. Fourth graders’ social circles are naturally expanding through greater friendships, more independence, and more out-of-the-home activities. This is a natural time to bring kids together.

Middle school students need room to grow. The advantages of having their own space without worrying about impressing older boys and girls allows them to stay with age-appropriate activities. Past and present research has shown better experiences and performance of middle school students in a separate facility. Our culture has kids growing up fast, and a separate facility for middle school students will help support educators and parents of middle-level kids.

High school is a time where students start to define their futures by making choices with a variety of required and elective course offerings. College prep courses, Advanced Placement courses, transcribed credit courses, and dual credit option courses all should be a part of a student’s high school days. This helps to reduce tuition expenses and increase success rates as students move out of our homes to face the world. Career-related courses in Business and Technology Education help kids make choices about their futures. Both districts bring their collective high school strengths to the table for the benefit of all the students.

Planning for the students’ transition will be a high priority in December and January. Getting the kids familiar with their new buildings and meeting new teachers and students prior to next September will help smooth the transition to the consolidated district. In the years to come, we (teachers, staff, administration, board of education, parents, community, and students) must make a continued effort to discuss issues openly and teach students the importance of interacting with those from outside their friendship circles. Our long-term success will depend on the two communities working to form one stronger community.

**HOW MUCH WILL MY “SCHOOL TAXES” BE:**

How much will my school taxes be in **GLIDDEN without consolidation** and **with operations referendums of \$350,000 in 2009-10 and \$700,000 2010-11?** This option **does not** begin paying off the unfunded retirement liability.

	Fair Market Value		\$50,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$200,000
<b>Now</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>11.4 mil rate</b>	<b>\$570</b>	<b>\$1,140</b>	<b>\$1,710</b>	<b>\$2,280</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>12.52 mil rate</b>	<b>\$626</b>	<b>\$1,252</b>	<b>\$1,878</b>	<b>\$2,504</b>
<b>Year 2</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>14.06 mil rate</b>	<b>\$703</b>	<b>\$1,406</b>	<b>\$2,109</b>	<b>\$2,812</b>

How much will my school taxes be in **GLIDDEN with consolidation** and **with an operations referendum of \$800,000 in 2010-11?** This option **does** begin to pay off the unfunded retirement liability.

	Fair Market Value		\$50,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$200,000
<b>Now</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>11.4 mil rate</b>	<b>\$570</b>	<b>\$1,140</b>	<b>\$1,710</b>	<b>\$2,280</b>
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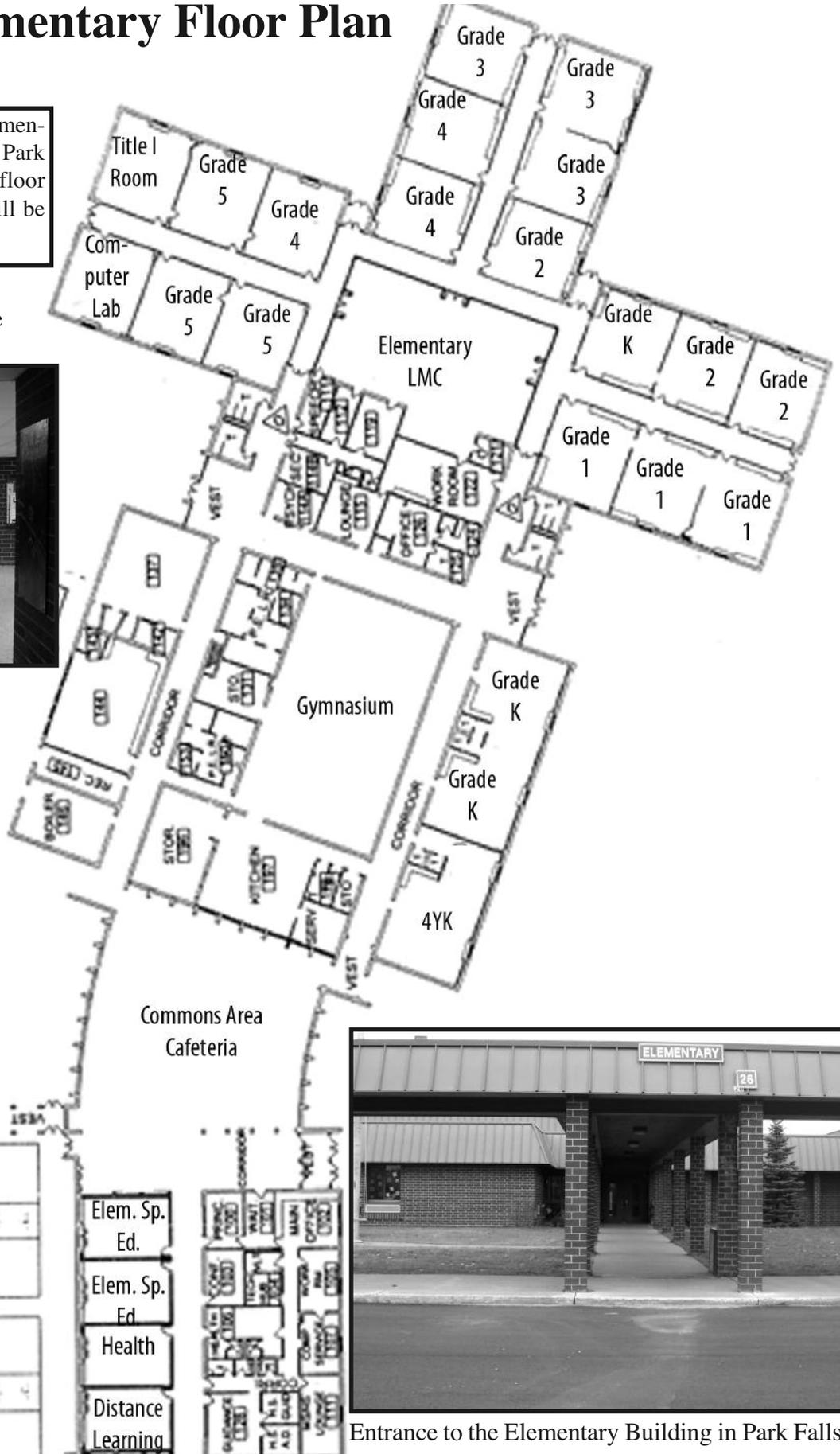
## Facts

1. An operations referendum to exceed the revenue cap will be a part of any school district’s future individually or in consolidation.
2. Students will have more course offerings and extra-curricular opportunities in a consolidated district.
3. Taxpayers will pay lower school taxes for a longer period of time in a consolidated district.
4. Without consolidation school boards will have the following choices:
  - An operations referendum to exceed the revenue cap resulting in taxes higher than in a consolidated district
  - Substantial and devastating reductions in programming
  - Dissolving the district
5. Dissolving the district results in the loss of all local control; school taxes will be paid to neighboring districts.

# Projected Elementary Floor Plan

One of the Chequamegon Elementary Schools will be located in Park Falls. This is the projected floor plan where grades 4 and 5 will be combined after consolidation.

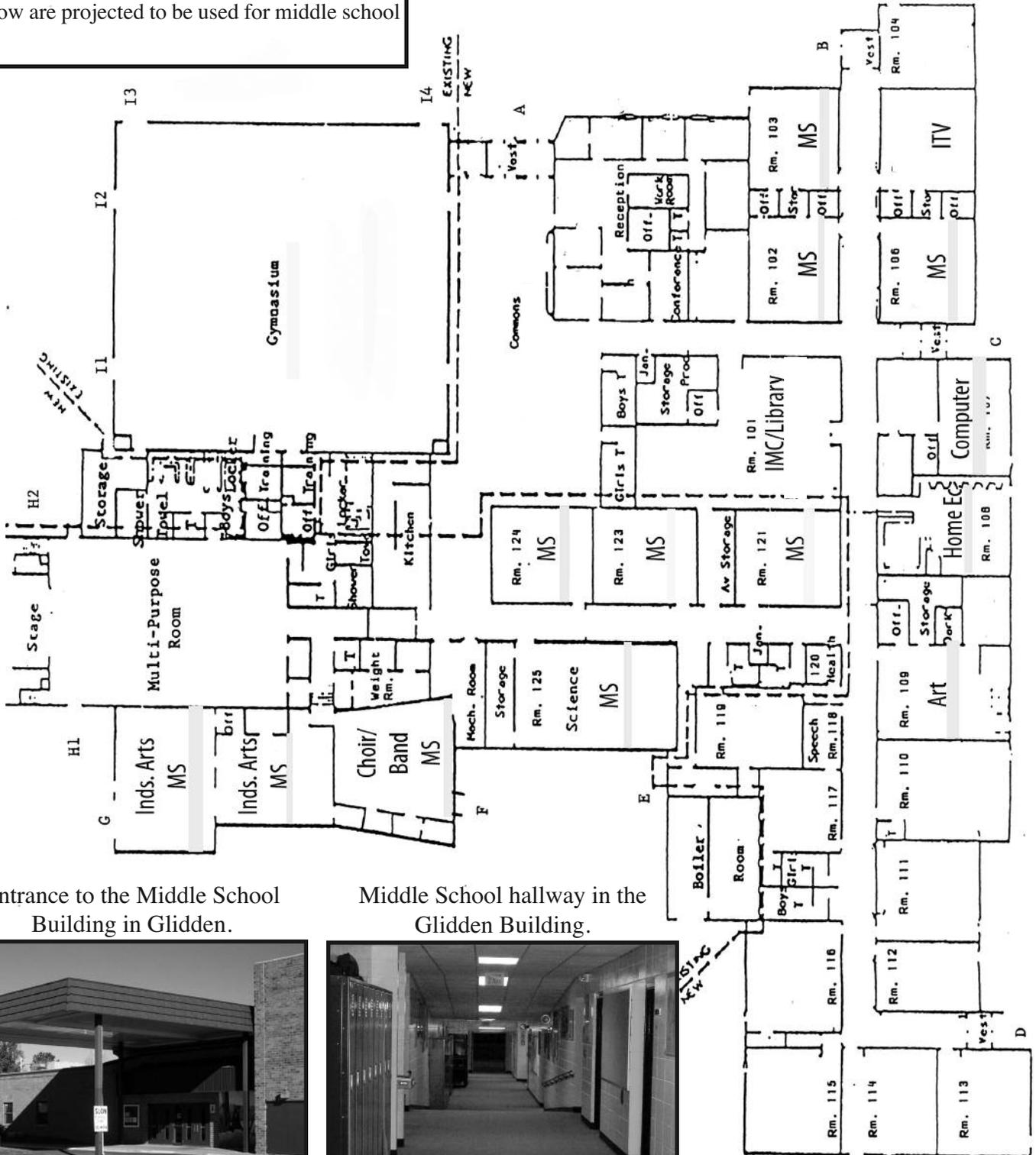
Elementary Hallway in the Park Falls building.



Entrance to the Elementary Building in Park Falls.

# Projected Middle School Floor Plan

The Chequamegon Middle School will be located in Glidden. The classroom titles underlined in yellow are projected to be used for middle school use.



Entrance to the Middle School Building in Glidden.

Middle School hallway in the Glidden Building.



# Benefits of Consolidation

- The K-3 students in the Park Falls building will have lower student/teacher ratios.
- The Glidden K-3 students are able to stay in the Glidden building.
- Glidden 4th and 5th graders will have more friendship opportunities and excellent student/teacher ratios.
- Park Falls 4th and 5th graders will have better student/teacher ratios.
- Park Falls middle school students get facilities and elective offerings that support success.
- Glidden middle school students will have a true middle school experience.
- Glidden and Park Falls high school students join forces to strengthen programs such as musicals, madrigal singers, touring marching band, core academics, elective offerings, sports programs, and 21st century learning in the Class ACT Charter School.
- Residents will experience lower tax rates.

