



*A Community of Learners*

## **Informational Memo – Crow Island Stewardship Report**

To: School Board  
Trisha Kocanda, Superintendent

From: Dr. Julie Pfeffer, *Principal Crow Island School*

November 18, 2014

### **Overview:**

At the March 21, 2005 meeting, the Winnetka District #36 School Board, by resolution, established the Crow Island Stewardship Fund for the purpose of “*preserving, contributing to, and disseminating the significance of building design in the lives of students.*” The Crow Island School Stewardship Group has been meeting since 2005 to carry out this purpose with the goals of “*sustaining the legacy; maintaining the integrity; and informing the future.*”

In celebration of the school’s upcoming 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015, the Crow Island Stewardship Group is planning to use its funds to commission a Historic Structures Report for the purpose of informing future facility work & the maintenance of specific historically significant features of Crow Island School. The Historic Structures Report format includes a large component of archival examination and consolidation, as well as guidelines and resources to support possible future projects. It doesn’t mandate the projects. However, if a project is planned, it can serve as a guide through the choice of materials and expertise needed to complete that project successfully, thus saving resources that might be used on research.

The most recent proposal submitted to the Stewardship Group from Benjamin Historic Certifications, LLC estimates the cost of the Historic Structures Report to be approximately \$33,000. Currently, the Stewardship Fund, held on the District 36 balance sheet, has a balance of approximately \$26,000. The balance of the HSR commission would come from private donations already committed. This Historic Structures Report is a gift to Crow Island School & District 36 from the Crow Island Stewardship Group on the occasion of the school’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### **Description of Initiative/Topic**

For the specialized expertise required of the report's principal author, the Stewardship Group interviewed Susan Benjamin & Laura Knapp of Benjamin Historic Certifications, LLC. This particular firm was selected due to Susan Benjamin's extensive resume with historic projects in the North Shore area as well as her thorough knowledge of Crow Island School.

The proposed report has 3 parts:

- I. Background history: the document will summarize the extensive history of Crow Island School and the significance of its many recognitions and awards. An oral history component will be included.
- II. Physical description: The writers will create a matrix of significant spaces and features. This section will include a Condition Assessment. Writers will examine the original drawings and do a comparison; take a detailed inventory of furniture and artwork in the building (room by room). Further, the conditions of the rooms (the materials, the flooring, the paneling) will also be surveyed to determine possible future repairs.
- III. Guidelines & recommendations: This section will examine the materials for the architecturally significant features and make suggestions as to how they should be treated. It will include a list of consultants who are expert in particular areas and will give us a list of possible resources.

### **Financial Implications**

There will be no cost to The Winnetka Public Schools for this Historic Structures Report.

### **Next Steps**

The Stewardship Group would contact Benjamin Historic Certifications, LLC to finalize the cost estimate, determine initial payment and to finalize the sequence of the contents of the report (i.e. facilities condition assessment, archival review, provision of guidelines). BHC would then coordinate the following: a plan with the District and Green & Associates to gain access to facilities information required for the report; a plan with the Stewardship Group to gain access to archival information; and, a plan with Crow Island School to gain access for the purpose of a conditions assessment and inventory. Finally, the Stewardship Group, in coordination with the District, would develop a system to oversee the entire process. I am happy to be the liaison to the Stewardship Committee for this project.