FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 12, 2018

Media Contact:  
Mark Witty, Baker School District 5J, 541-620-2109, mark.witty@bakersd.org

Baker School District Long Range Facility Planning Committee  
Presenting Report to BSD Board of Directors February 15, Baker City Hall

(Baker City, Ore.) - Baker School District’s Long Range Facility Planning Committee (LRFPC) will present recommendations culminating from nearly 12 months of research to the Baker 5J Board of Directors at 6:00 pm on Thursday, February 15 in the Council Chambers of Baker City Hall.

Based on its research and discussions, the committee identified 8 priorities including: Capacity, Safety and Security, 21st Century Learning Environment, Operational Costs and Energy Efficiency, Deferred Maintenance and Repair Costs, Community Facilities, Technology, and Limiting the Transitions for Children and Families.

"As a member of the LRFPC for the last year it has become clear to me that our schools face significant challenges, especially regarding deferred maintenance, safety/security, and capacity issues," stated Pat Heriza, Clinical Social Worker and long-time Baker resident. “It is my belief that the solution to these problems will come through strong community and financial support focused on our children's and grandchildren's needs now and into the future." Heriza and fellow committee member Kim Mosier will present the committee’s findings to the Board on February 15.

The LRFPC held its first meeting March 6, 2017 and has met 12 times over the course of the past year. The committee’s task involved reviewing the Facilities Master Plan (which outlined the current conditions of all BSD facilities), reviewing program needs to meet 21st century educational requirements, gathering information from a wide variety of stakeholders (including district staff and community members), considering potential renovation and/or new construction options, and identifying potential sources of funding.

During this process, LRFPC members toured all BSD educational facilities as well as school district facilities in Hermiston, Morrow, Nyssa, and Pendleton. “The LRFPC has spent numerous hours researching and studying Baker School District facility needs as it relates to providing 21st century education for our students, critical work
spaces for programs, as well as creating quality community spaces that support healthy community interaction,” said BSD Superintendent Mark Witty.

Long Range Facility Planning, Committee Members include Rosemary Abel, Aletha Bonebrake, Kevin Cassidy, Charlene Chase, Richard Chaves, Tabor Clarke, Josey Gaslin, Sonny Gulick, Bruce Nichols, Pat Heriza, Ma’Lena Wirth, Mark Johnson, Chris Knoll, Katie Lamb, Tammie McEnroe, Kim Mosier, Dawn O’Grady, Beth Shirtcliff, Tim Smith, Dan Srack, Jeff Tomac, Jim Tomlinson, Craig Ward, and Mark Witty.

“I am grateful for the dedication and hard work the committee has invested in this critical planning process. The work of every individual on the committee is foundational in creating a vision for a prosperous, thriving community,” Witty said.

About Baker 5J School District

Nationally recognized Baker School District 5J (BSD) in Baker City, OR, is the largest of three rural school districts in Baker County, serving 1,700 students and employing over 110 educators and staff. District elementary schools include Brooklyn Primary School, Haines Elementary, Keating Elementary School, and South Baker Intermediate. Baker Middle School and two high schools, Baker High School and Eagle Cap Innovative High School, are also part of BSD. Additionally, BSD sponsors two charter schools, Baker Web Academy and Baker Early College, each offering teacher-supported online education. BSD provides next generation education for the future of Eastern Oregonians and launched Baker Technical Institute (BTI), a career and technical program that partners with regional employers and industry experts to provide an innovative education in hands-on fields. BSD believes strong schools are the foundation of strong and vibrant communities and is committed to prepare students to become successful life-long learners.

###