

WEST DEPTFORD TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

675 GROVE ROAD

WEST DEPTFORD, NEW JERSEY 08066-1999

Kevin A. Kitchenman, Superintendent

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August, 2014

To The Residents of West Deptford:

On Tuesday, September 30, 2014, you will be asked to vote on two school facilities bond proposals posed by the West Deptford Township School District. It has been 16 years since the last Referendum for building improvements. The Board of Education and Administration have spent two years working on creating and analyzing alternate solutions to the District's facility needs. Many building systems are deteriorating simply due to age. Other areas suffer from delayed maintenance due to multi-year budget constraints. Much of the proposed work is to protect the multi-million dollar investments you have already made in our schools and to add many years of useable life to our buildings. *The Board believes that this "Building Excellence" Referendum will alleviate all of our must-do repair, retro-fit, renovation and revitalization needs.*

The Board, in crafting this proposal, was very sensitive to the economic hardship every member of this community has suffered in the recent recession. In fact, cost benefit has been a most important part of the needs review. The plans and the scope of work have been presented for public comment at numerous Board meetings. Not all potential projects made the priority list, but \$18 million of individual projects touching each of the schools did. *We believe the final assessment of the competing building needs truly represents the aspirations of the community at large.*

Our timing could not have been better. Last May, the New Jersey Department of Education announced a new round of Grants and Aid programs for facilities construction. We submitted under both the ROD Grant and the Debt Service Aid programs. Our combined offer is for \$5.15 million of our total of \$18.0 million, or 28.5% aid. A decision was made to accept the offers. *The Board of Education believes this is an offer that should not be ignored and that we now need to seek your opinion in a Referendum.*

A final list of projects has been determined with the offer and acceptance of the ROD Grant and Debt Service Aid funds and, with that, the final amount of the bond sale is finalized at \$15 million. The Referendum is offered with two (2) bond proposals. Our current estimate is that the annual tax impact of this Referendum on the average assessed residential property of \$203,319 would be about \$76.76 for Bond Proposal I and \$8.41 for Bond Proposal II which is for two synthetic turf multi-use fields - one in the stadium and a second behind our home bleachers.

You can be assured that your thoughts and concerns about maintaining our District as an outstanding academic institution, while minimizing the tax burden on each of you, have been heard. This Referendum proposal provides a great balance of school needs and fiscal responsibility.

Please tell your friends about the September 30, 2014 Referendum election. We have a responsibility to get the word out to the community to let all of your voices be heard on this important issue. There is plenty to do and we are asking for volunteers to help with communications. Telephone my office at 856-848-4300 X-3211 to participate in the Referendum outreach.

For your convenience, you can find details on every aspect of the Referendum on the District website at www.wdeptford.k12.nj.us. Information will be updated regularly.

And now, the choice will be yours. You, the residents of West Deptford, have the opportunity to evaluate, assess, and offer your opinion. Mark your calendars to come out and vote on Tuesday, September 30, 2014.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin A. Kitchenman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kevin A. Kitchenman
Superintendent of Schools