

From the desk of Superintendent Michelle Jensen

In recent weeks, the Citizens Advisory Committee and Board of Education have confirmed the need to go to referendum to address the needs of the district. I thought it would be useful to share with you a few common questions and answers about the referendum.

Why is the Deerfield School District asking for more money through a referendum?

The middle/high school facilities are in need of repair. In addition, due to a state restriction on funding schools, known as revenue limits, the district no longer has the money needed to maintain current programs and staff. In order to fix the roof, update the heating systems, improve energy efficiency, and replace outdated textbooks and technology, the district is asking the community for permission to increase the tax rate. Over the past years, the district has been fiscally responsible to the community. Cuts have been made that have not substantially affected student achievement as measured by state and national tests. The situation is now at the point where this may no longer be possible, if cuts in educational programs need to be made to pay for building maintenance and facility updates.

What is the revenue limit and how has it affected the Deerfield School District?

In 1993 the state imposed revenue limits which control the amount of money districts can receive. Districts have been allowed annual increases amounting to about 2%, to address rising costs. The only ways for districts to raise money to pay for cost increases above the 2% is through new money from increased student enrollment or through a referendum. The Deerfield district continues to be a steady enrollment district which means that the state-allowed increase has failed to cover district costs. As a result, the district has had to make reductions in the budget. Over the past five years, the board cut nearly \$1 million out of the budget, which included 11 full-time staffing positions and cuts to classroom budgets and textbooks. Programs were cut, employees were cut, student activity fees were increased, and services were reduced--all due to budget restrictions.

In the upcoming months, we will continue to share information with the community regarding the needs of the district. Please look for this information in the Independent newspaper, on the WDEE cable channel, and by visiting the district website. In our continued efforts to save postage, we will be mailing informational postcards in place of large flyers. Walk-thrus of the middle/high school building will also be held to help community members become better acquainted with our facility needs. As always, thank you for your continued support of our students, staff and district. Deerfield continues to be an exceptional place for our students to learn and grow