

From the desk of Superintendent Michelle Jensen...

Around Deerfield, the summer months have been filled with homeowners completing remodeling projects while the warm weather lasts. Our summer custodial crew spent the summer months doing similar work around our school buildings. While we continue to audit our facility needs to create a long term plan for repairs, we have taken advantage of some inexpensive approaches to sprucing up our buildings and grounds as we welcomed students, teachers and community members to the 2007-2008 school year.

As staff and students returned this month, they noticed freshly waxed floors, newly painted walls and curbsides, cleaned carpets, and sparkling windows to name a few. Behind the scenes, store rooms and garages have been sorted and cleaned out to make better use of our limited space. The community will see some of these "older" items for resale at our fall sports games. Many will also notice the new flooring in the high school small gymnasium. The floor was replaced under warranty by the installation company.

The focus of the Facilities Committee the past six months has been to examine the needs of our buildings and grounds and begin to establish a long-term plan to address those needs. This process is similar to what a homeowner might go through when trying to fix the needs of an older home. It is often difficult to decide which aging parts to repair first and then find the money to make the needed repairs. The homeowner may have the ability to make some repairs but would likely need to contact a professional to take care of specific repairs. Within the school we continue to make as many repairs as we can using our staff custodians, but there are some areas that require a trained or certified professional to complete the work to meet public building codes.

Funding needed upgrades and repairs takes a great deal of financial planning for public schools. Since revenue caps were established in 1993, we have continuously had to pare down our budget to meet the needs of the district. While cuts have been made to teaching staff, administration, educational aides, and classroom budgets, we have also had to make continuous cuts to the maintenance budget allowing us to address only a few of our highest priority needs each year while delaying others.

The School Board has approved the creation of a Citizens Advisory Committee to help the district address some of these very important needs as we move toward referendum planning. Deerfield is an exceptional community that has long enjoyed an excellent school system for our children. I would like to invite interested citizens to consider volunteering their time to assist us with creating positive solutions. Please contact Michelle Jensen at 764-5431 for more information.