

## **From the Desk of Superintendent Michelle Jensen**

Throughout August, school board members and district administrators have been visiting community organizations and government board meetings to share information about the September 9<sup>th</sup> school referendum. We have also hosted two information sessions at the school. Some questions that have been asked during these conversations include:

***How long has the revenue cap been in place for school districts across Wisconsin?*** The revenue cap began in 1993. Under the revenue cap, districts have been allowed annual increases of about 2-3%. The 2008-09 increase is 2.75%. However, the cost of operating a school district and providing a quality education for students exceeds the revenue cap restrictions. The only ways for districts to raise money to pay for cost increases above the cap is through new money from increased enrollment or through a referendum.

***How many students come from the townships versus the village?*** Deerfield Community School District includes students from the village of Deerfield and the townships of Deerfield, Christiana, Pleasant Springs, and Cottage Grove. Of the 750 students in our district, approximately 330 reside in the four townships which accounts for 44% of our total enrollment. The other 420 students reside in the village.

***Is referendum money being used to fix the track/football stadium?*** The community survey results indicated the reconstruct/repair of the track should be on the list of priorities in the referendum. The track is 31 years old and needs repairs to the original structure so that it can be maintained for future use. The survey indicated a strong preference to reconstruct the current six lane track and move the jumping pits closer to the edge of the track away from the football field. The survey results also indicated that the community did not want referendum money spent on plumbing to the concession stand or outdoor bathrooms so these items are not included.

***Is the referendum primarily for the middle and high school?*** The referendum benefits all students. Funds spent on updating textbooks/curriculum, improving technology, and the daily operating costs of the district impact students in the elementary, middle and high school. The facility needs are focused on the middle/high school due to the age of the building and infrastructure.

***How much additional money will the district receive from the referendum?*** The referendum begins at \$275,000 the first year and escalates \$50,000 each of the next four years. This will provide an additional \$1,875,000 to the district over five years. The community survey respondents indicated support for a referendum in the range of \$300,000-\$500,000 for each of the next 5 years. The Citizens Advisory Committee used this information to create the escalating referendum. A priority of the committee was to minimize the initial tax impact to the district residents while adequately addressing the needs of the district.