



WEST OTTAWA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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RE: Low interest rates allows more bond construction up front

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe summer has come and gone and we are four months since the bond passed in May. I want to take this opportunity to provide you with an update on what has been happening since then. Please know the most difficult part of this process is that there was no design work completed before the bond was passed, so we are now in the middle of the design/scheduling phase.

The first thing – we were able to get to market before the other 30 districts that passed bonds in May. This allowed us to secure an interest rate of 3.55%, which resulted in being able to generate \$47.5 million in bond funds now out of the \$90 million authorized by the community's support. This is about 10% more than we had originally hoped for during phase one, meaning we can do some more of the construction up front!

Again, we are able to do this while keeping the current millage rate of 7.75.

As I mentioned earlier, I realize that you have not seen a bulldozer in the district nor any construction at this point. I want to assure you that much work is being done as we plan the construction phase. This fall we will assemble two design teams to begin the planning for a project to begin spring break of 2015 and another five projects next summer with an emphasis on safety and security. In addition, there will be two longer term projects with designs starting this fall with winter construction in 2016. The recommendations to GMB's architects from the design teams will be completed by late October, and GMB will then be ready to go out to bid by late January.

We will be replacing the roof at Lakeshore Elementary School beginning September 22, with construction completed by the end of October.

A decision-making process has been developed for the acquisition of the instructional technology. We have established a steering committee to oversee budgets, project schedules and ensure implementation. Four design teams have also been established at the K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12 grade levels. These teams have representatives from all grade levels, principals and content areas. They will make recommendations to the steering committee on teacher devices, multi-media for the classrooms and finally student devices.

Preparing Students to be College, Career and Life Ready!

Again, no decisions were made before the May election, so we have been designing the decision-making structure. Our hope is to have recommendations to the steering committee by early December in order to get devices in teachers' hands, because the research is very clear that one of the strongest predictors of student success is for teachers to have devices before students.

We will be developing a page on our website where you will be able to go to see periodic updates on the bond work. We are hoping to launch this page within the next couple of weeks. The passing of the bond will allow for many exciting improvements to the already great things that we offer our students. Again, we appreciate your continued support as we seek to fulfill our mission of preparing all of our students to be 'College, Career and Life Ready.'

Sincerely,

Thomas K. Martin
Superintendent of Schools