



Dr. McTague Message to Warrior Family

August 21, 2018

Dear Warrior Family,

I am pleased to announce the District 156 Board of Education voted last night to approve a referendum for consideration on the November ballot this fall.

District 156 continues to make excellent strides as we seek to prepare our students for post-secondary careers. However, we also face unique challenges that must be addressed so we can realize our ideal future.

Our facilities are aging, East Campus is approaching 100 years and West Campus is nearing 50 years of service to the community. Because of capacity issues, we are forced to use 26-year-old mobile classrooms, which pose a substantial security risk and expose over 200 students, every period, for eight periods a day, to outside forces. The district conducted a comprehensive facility assessment in 2017-2018 of both East and West Campuses. The facility assessments identified over 41 million dollars of necessary facility and life safety projects that need to be addressed to provide our students safe, secure, and accessible learning environments.

Additionally, inequity exists in our educational environment with twice as many students attending West Campus compared to East Campus. As a result, we are unable to replicate resources and courses at both schools, forcing nearly a quarter of our students to travel between campuses and many others to forego educational opportunities. Furthermore, student enrollment is shifting between campuses, which will further exacerbate the issues of equity and access to courses in the future.

Faced with these challenges, the district engaged the community and asked where they wished to see their schools in the future. Over one thousand members of our community provided feedback. Parents, students, teachers, business owners, community leaders, seniors, and taxpayers all collaborated to develop our path forward.

Community members proposed a number of ideas, including expensive long-term solutions like constructing new buildings, to inexpensive short-term solutions such as adjusting school boundaries. Costs were closely inspected, ensuring that the final plan is fiscally responsible. Ultimately, the community identified an affordable plan that solves our immediate challenges while still giving us the opportunity to pursue more ambitious possibilities in the future should the community wish to do so.

This community-driven plan, fully supported by our school board and administration, will:

- **Lower Your Property Taxes**
- **Renovate Our Aging Infrastructure**
- **Provide 21st Century Schools for All Students**

This plan will fund all priority life safety and facility infrastructure projects identified in the recently-completed comprehensive facility assessments of both campuses, maintain our investment in our schools, and extend the life of our current school buildings. The plan will also establish East Campus as a freshman center and West Campus for 10th through 12th grade students, eliminating 95% of student travel and ensuring all our students have equal access to educational opportunities. The plan renovates East Campus instructional areas to serve freshmen students, expands West Campus to house upper-level students, and eliminates the use of mobile classrooms. Additionally, this plan constructs a state-of-the-art Science, Technology, and Industry Center at the upper-level West Campus, providing our students real-world experiences in partnership with our business, medical, and high-tech industrial and precision manufacturing community in an innovative and integrated learning environment.

Due to the district's wise and careful fiscal stewardship, it is possible to fund this plan while also achieving tax savings for residents. As current district bonds are set to be paid in full, we can issue new bonds in the amount of \$44 million. These new bonds, in combination with investing from district reserves, allow the district to fully fund this plan. These new bonds lower our bond obligation by over 25%, resulting in tax savings of approximately \$70 per year for the median district homeowner.

This community-driven plan will help District 156 make even more progress as we seek to provide our students 21st century schools, modern courses, innovative learning environments, and current technologies to prepare them for their future. By moving quickly, we are positioned to complete most of these major improvements by the 2020-2021 school year. [Here is a link](#) to our Vision 156 Community Engagement Web

Page and we will continue to send informational items and updates over the next few weeks.

**We Are Warriors and We Are One
One School
One Family
One Community**

Thank you for your support,

Ryan McTague Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

