

October 6, 2016

Greetings to our District 57 families!

I hope your school year is off to a great start. I want you to be aware of a few things that were discussed at the September 29<sup>th</sup> Board of Education meeting.

The Board adopted the budget for the current 2016-17 school year. Although the budget reflects a deficit of approximately \$2 million, our fund balances are projected to remain stable this year since the board approved issuing \$2 million in bonds to pay for the parking lot expansion and other capital improvements at Westbrook School.

Adoption of the budget means that planning for this year is complete and we now turn our attention to future years. A major concern is the recent increase in enrollment. Our student population has grown nearly 10% in just the past 5 years. Of four schools, Lions Park School is the only one that is not full or near capacity. Our current 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grades are quite large and as these students move on to Lincoln, that aging building will be serving 800 or more students. We also had an unexpected spike of 232 kindergartners at Westbrook. All classrooms there are being used and we will have a shortage of space to serve these children in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. The board discussed two options for addressing this need for next year: 1) installing two mobile classrooms at Westbrook, and 2) moving the Early Childhood (preschool) program to Lions Park. Administration will continue to determine the costs and feasibility of these options before any Board action is taken.

On Thursday, Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> the Board of Education will host a community forum. We will share what information we have regarding facility needs and would like to hear your feedback before we move forward. We will also consider the future of Lincoln and whether the community would support replacing that 65-year-old building. The community forum will be held at 7pm in the Westbrook School multi-purpose room.

Next spring, Board of Education elections take place. There will be 4 seats up for election and I strongly encourage members of the community to consider running. It is very important that we have a thoughtful discussion of our vision for our schools. If the election is uncontested the media will not cover the issues facing District 57 and the larger public will not be informed. This will make it harder to accomplish our goals. To find out more about the job of a school board member and how to run, please contact me or any current member, or Dr. Elaine Aumiller at the district office. The deadline for filing paperwork to be on the ballot is mid-December.

Finally, I would like to remind everyone and especially those who have recently moved into the district to register to vote by the October 11 deadline. You can register at Mount Prospect Village Hall, Monday-Friday, from 8:30am-5pm. You can also register when you update your driver's license with your current address at any Secretary of State's facility. Participating in the elections this November and in the spring is both a privilege and responsibility. It's also a great example to set for your children.

Thank you for your ongoing support of your children's education!

Sincerely,

Joe Sonnefeldt