

RCTA Newsletter

What YOU Should Know and Why June 3rd at 6:30 PM Building Committee Meeting \$500,000 for stairways on 2 schools

June 2010

The Rochester School District plan to spend nearly \$500,000 for two fire exit stairways on two schools that are seriously outdated is another fine example of how the School Department is completely out of touch with the current economic times. As everyone is struggling to make ends meet the School Department is thinking of new ways to spend money that is no longer available.

Everyone needs to remember that this project will need to be bonded. How long will this bond be 20 years, 30 years? These schools will not be around in 20 to 30 years yet we will still be paying for the stairs, in essence, paying for nothing. If Mr. Hopkins wishes to create a much safer environment for the students then the students should be in another building. How many parents are aware that there are no sprinklers in the Maple Street School? Do you truly want your child to continue going to a building that has no sprinklers and in need of additional fire exits? Will the State one day mandate ALL schools have

sprinklers? How costly will that be?

It is also well known that the State, if not already broke, soon will be and that 60% reimbursement on the bond will likely never happen. As Mr. Hopkins stated, applications submitted before July 1, will be considered for aid. The key words are WILL BE. The State MAY bond to cover their current obligations but there is still NO commitment from them. Not to mention that the taxpayer is going to be on the hook for 100% of the interest and if the state does not come through, 100% of the bond. Mrs. Hubbard and Mr. Brennan, School Board members and state representatives both have stated that you cannot count on receiving 60% from the state because there is no money available. If this is true, which we all know it is, why would Mr. Hopkins continue to deceive the taxpayers of Rochester and the members of this council?

The *estimated* student population provided by the School District is inflated

by 550 students. This is a numbers game to keep the budget bloated. With an obvious decrease in student population the time has come to take a long hard look at the schools we have. If the School Department has a contingency plan now is the time to put it into action. Now is the time to consolidate underpopulated schools. The elementary schools class sizes range from a low of 13 to a high of 23. **Maple St. School has only 4 classes, School St. has 5 classes and Nancy Loud has only 7 classes.** The School Department is a bureaucracy and sees nothing wrong with running a business in this manner. What are they teaching our young children?

I have also attached the District Map for Rochester Schools. The map gives one a new perspective when one tries to make the point of keeping *neighborhood schools*. The map certainly shows how *neighborhoods* are varied in size and expansive in miles. I would also make the argument that moving

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students to a larger school gives them access to expanded technology and books while enhancing the opportunity for socialization. Aides could be added to classes as needed while cutting administrative and other support staff, again saving the taxpayer dollars.

With decreasing enrollment, decreasing tax base, increasing utility, water, sewer, gas and food bills, along with a wish list that would make Santa Claus envious, I hope the City Council tells the School Department to get in line with the times. They are so used to getting everything they want and have never had to deal with the fact the well is running dry. They have lost perspective, it is not the best education money can buy it is the best education the taxpayers can afford. I would like to have Mr. Hopkins produce the studies he spoke about that show shuffling students to new schools has an immediate impact on their performance. I have a problem with that concept. If one truly believes that shuffling students impacts

performance then none of us would have made it out of elementary school.

To put a half million dollars into these two schools is without a doubt financially irresponsible at best and one has to wonder why the School Department would burden the taxpayers in such a manner. Hopefully, those teaching economics and accounting in our high school are able to teach our students about balancing or balanced budgets and being fiscally responsible.

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Summary of the SCOPE OF THE REVIEW and SPACE ISSUES presented to the Building Committee May 6th.

This 2 page summary report was created by Doris Gates on 5/16/10 from the original 3 page report

SCHOOL	PRESENT CONDITION	REPORT COMMENT	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
Bud Carlson Academy	Needs an expansion for fire exit per FD report	Does NOT meet Code	Remodeling boxing area, adding walls and doors. Adding kitchen sink and equipment. To be completed by August by school maintenance
Chamberlain	Modulars/4 classrooms and 1 smaller unit	Add four rooms and intervention space Add addition for preschool?	Design could be approved now??? *Architect to review This could cause traffic issues.
East Rochester Elementary	Modulars/4 classrooms, REACH Program Traffic and parking issues Walls to be reviewed	Addition to school Need to resolve HVAC and sprinklers a concern	Or move to BSF location? *Architect to review Safety issue Safety issue
Gonic	Not enough bathrooms in school **Driveway to be widened **Parking area to be expanded	Need 2 bathrooms off gym A safety issue A safety issue	*Architect to review This may be added to the list This may be added to the list
*Maples Street	K& 1st graders must stay on 1st floor	Plans presented this May Want neighborhood school	Need additional stairwells to meet Code
McClelland	Band space is unacceptable	Convert current space	To be completed by August by school maintenance
Nancy Loud	K & 1st graders must stay on 1st floor	Plans presented this May Want neighborhood school	Need additional stairwells to meet Code
RMS	Guidance suite too small, no privacy	FCS space could work"	*Architect to review
William Allen	Modulars/2 classrooms and 1 smaller unit Issues: Parking, traffic, space Review open space	1) reassign to McClelland 2) Addition?? Where?? Purchase 2 homes Add office space	*Architect to review *Architect to review Make into parking lot Convert space back to classroom space
*SHS	Review total needs assessments	2 lecture halls for 100-150	*Architect to review

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		New music suite Drama programs Special ED space Attic space as potential rooms	*Architect to review *Architect to review *Architect to review *Architect to review
Big Step Forward	Need funding first!	Request joint building committee if funding is secured	

Per the report:

* Architect to review: The previous 10 year review of all the buildings cost approximately \$40,000. With a more specific focus, it should be less expensive.

Per the report: The school is building a database listing all boilers, roofs, HVAC units, fire alarm units and kitchen equipment. This will include ages, expected life and possible replacement date.

Per Fire Marshal's Rochester School Inspection Report 2009/2010, page 9 of 10, item C: they recommend these schools be sprinkled.

**These projects were discussed as safety issues at previous meetings but expect they may be added to this present list.

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School Budget Dollars returned to City

School Year	School Budget Dollars	Dollars Returned to City	Percent of Dollars Returned
2005-2006	\$42,992,680	\$1,168,000	2.72%
2006-2007	\$46,938,859	\$ 645,000	1.37%
2007-2008	\$49,273,668	\$ 777,000	1.58%
2008-2009	\$51,268,435	\$1,039,000	2.03%
2009-2010	\$54,328,678	W/A	
2010-2011	\$54,455,200	W/A	

Dollars returned to the City are expected to be less this year.

Stimulus Dollars per e-mail from Michael Hopkins on January 28, 2010

These are programs that we are currently keeping afloat with stimulus money. All stimulus money is expected to be gone by 2011-2012. This will be a budget shortfall that the School Department will expect the taxpayers to continue to fund. Grant funded positions usually end when the grant expires. In the past it has been the practice of the Rochester School Department to continue these positions and use taxpayers dollars to maintain the current level of staffing increasing the size of the budget.

2009-2010

IDEA-ARRA	\$ 622,717
Preschool-ARRA	\$ 21,810
Title 1-ARRA	\$ 602,541
Homeless Grant ARRA	\$ 31,013

Total \$ 1,278,082

2010-2011

IDEA-ARRA	\$ 622,717
Preschool-ARRA	\$ 21,810
Title 1-ARRA	\$ 602,541

Total \$ 1,247,069