

From: [Cohn, Gary](#)
To: [EPS.Maillist](#)
Subject: The Sound of 10,000 Voices ...
Date: Tuesday, November 03, 2015 7:08:53 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

Dear Colleague:

At its meeting this evening, our school board will move toward making decisions about future capital funding for our schools. It is a very important meeting for all of us.

For the last year, the school board has engaged community members, parents, students, and staff in conversations about community expectations and what schools need. On Oct. 27, the board reviewed what it heard from the more than 10,000 voices contributing thoughts, advice, insights, and suggestions. These thousands of people took advantage of numerous opportunities to do this during:

- Last February's [Thoughtexchange](#) process
- This fall's [Thoughtexchange](#) process
- Last spring's [Fishbowl](#) conversations
- This fall's community conversations about school technology
- Meetings of the [Capital Facilities Advisory Council](#)
- Meetings of the [Technology Advisory Council](#)
- Input from district staff

[Last February's online conversation drew interest and comments from more than 7,000 people. The second online conversation this fall brought 3,000 voices to the cyber table. Dozens attended the in-person meetings.](#)

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[WHAT WILL THE BOARD DO WITH ALL THIS INPUT?](#)

[These conversations with constituents are helping the board decide IF or WHEN to ask for voter support of:](#)

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1. [A Capital Levy to provide equitable access to the Internet and computing devices for students and increase safety features at schools, or](#)
2. [A Capital Bond to add new classroom space for the district's growing student population and replace aging school buildings, or](#)
3. [A combination of both](#)

[At tonight's meeting – and likely at some others to follow – the board will balance district needs with what it asks voters to pay to meet those needs.](#)

[The district has long worked to maintain a “flat tax rate” for our residents. Historically, the district has planned its bonds and levies to avoid spikes and dips in the local tax rate – balancing student and school needs with a predictable local school property tax for district residents.](#)

When the bond failed in 2014, our local school property tax rate went down. As a result, any voter-approved bond or any levy the board might propose will result in a higher tax rate than what residents are paying now after the tax rate dropped when the bond failed.

In 2013, the year BEFORE the bond failed, voters paid \$6.55 per \$1,000 of a property's value. Today, the local school property tax rate per each \$1,000 of a property's value is \$5.48 – more than a dollar less than it was before the bond failed.

In the multitude of scenarios the board is considering, NONE would bring the local school property tax rate back to the 2013 \$6.55 level. However, each of the scenarios does increase the rate over today's \$5.48 rate.

In the weeks ahead, our board will contemplate a reasonable “ask” of the community and when to make that ask. Then our community will go to the polls to cast their ballots in response to that request.

I encourage you to stay tuned to the board's discussions and to how its decisions and that of our community will impact our work of continuous student learning improvement.

One good way to stay in tune with board news is to subscribe to [InTouch](#). This electronic newsletter arrives in your mailbox each Monday before a board meeting. It gives you a “heads up” about board agendas. Providing [InTouch](#) before a meeting and [BoardNotes](#) after a meeting is a way to share information with you. As knowledgeable staff, you are important messengers about our work.

Thank you for make the effort and taking the time to be well-informed. It is sure to make a difference the knowledge level of our community.

Best wishes for a great week!



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