



WHITESIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT 115

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Dear Whiteside School District 115 Parents and Community Members,

At the December Board of Education meeting, the board approved ballot language for the upcoming March Primary Election. This language asks you, the taxpayers, to approve a building addition at our Elementary School. The planned addition will allow for a Pre-Kindergarten and Early Childhood Special Needs hallway containing six classrooms. The hallway will include needed spaces for therapy intervention services for our elementary children and additional bathroom spaces for our primary grade levels. This building addition will replace and eliminate the current mobile classrooms at the Elementary building.

The District leaders identified the need for this project due to our concerns with the increased maintenance costs and student safety associated with these mobile classrooms. While the mobile classrooms continue to pass occupancy safety inspections by the Regional Office of Education, we have concerns with the current building design if an intruder crisis situation were to occur. In addition, these classrooms have a greater risk to structural damage when experiencing severe storms or weather.

In the last five years, the Whiteside School District has replaced external steps, a classroom floor, updated mobile HVAC motors, and multiple other items too numerous to mention. We are fortunate that our team has the technical expertise to maintain these mobile classrooms for the past 30 plus years. The original building life expectancy was slated at a maximum of ten years.

The District's architect estimates that the investment for the planned addition is projected to be \$10.6 million dollars. This would be an increase to taxpayers at approximately .52 cent per \$100,000 assessed evaluation which would cause \$140 impact on the tax bill. While this may sound like a substantial increase, the Whiteside Board of Education lowered the tax rate to \$2.51 in 2020 when the middle school was paid in full. At the current time, Whiteside School District has the lowest tax rate for all feeder districts in the Belleville area.

If you have questions, please contact me at (618) 239-0000 or at mark.heuring@wssd115.org.

Respectfully,

Mark Heuring
Superintendent