

RUTHERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Rooted in Excellence

176 Park Avenue, Rutherford, NJ 07070

Fax: 201-939-6350

JOHN J. HURLEY

Superintendent of Schools

Phone: 201-939-1717

JOSEPH P. KELLY

Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Phone: 201-939-1718

Dear Members of the Rutherford Schools Community,

Over the past three years, the Board of Education has been identifying and studying the challenges which face the District. The goal is to develop and implement a plan to face and overcome the challenges in order to maintain, improve, and expand the successful programs for our students.

Following extensive research, site visits, meetings with community stakeholders, and community-wide surveys conducted by a committee of school and community members, the need for expanded and improved facilities became clear. The enrollment in the district has grown and will continue to grow at the rate of one percent a year for the next five years for a total of approximately 120 additional students. There are currently 85 classes in district with 25 or more students. Enrollment numbers will increase and conditions will grow even more overcrowded. There are no science or STEM laboratories in Union School. The science labs in the High School were last upgraded in 1976. The 1958 facade of the Mortimer wing is energy inefficient; the windows can no longer be replaced and are not able to withstand strong winds. The gyms at Union and Pierrepont, the lunchroom at Pierrepont, the cafeteria at the High School, and classrooms and handicap accessibility at the Kindergarten Center are inadequate and sub-standard.

A plan to address these and other concerns has been developed and is currently being reviewed by the Board of Education. The Board will decide if a plan should go forward to a referendum vote. A referendum will ask the community to decide the direction of the future of the schools by voting to allow the BOE to bond for the needed improvements.

Full details about the research, the needs, the plans, and the tax impact on the community can be found at our facilities website (rutherfordschools.org/fac). The plans have been presented at two Superintendent Roundtables, as well as several board meetings. There have been numerous public discussions at Board meetings and PTA meetings. It has been the focal point of my monthly "Word from the Superintendent" and written about in several news articles.

I am asking you to please visit the website, review the facts, and let your voice be heard. The decision of the Board and the ultimate decision of the entire community needs to be guided by all of the voices in the school community.

As you may be aware, there has been a campaign by individuals who want the plan altered, and, if not altered, defeated so that the pool used by the YMCA at the High School is maintained. The only feasible way to provide the needed space for students and curriculum programs at the High School while maintaining the pool for YMCA use would be to build behind the High School. One proposal would include new construction for an additional cost of \$2.5 million with a loss of 15 to 20 percent of the field. Another proposal would add a two-story building with a \$6 million increase to the cost with little or no field encroachment. Most of the cost of either alternative will receive limited or no state aid. Keep in mind that the pool is not a part of the school curriculum. It is used exclusively by the YMCA with one exception: the RHS swim team uses the pool for two hours a day for approximately two and one half-months a year. There have been preliminary discussions with other pools regarding the swim

team practice and meets if the pool is converted to a cafeteria. The swim team would join our other sports, such as our championship football team, baseball, soccer, track, tennis, softball, and bowling teams, who practice and play at sites off-campus not owned by the Board of Education.

Today, I am inviting you to become more informed and to let your voice be heard. Visit the website and email me and the Board at the link you will find on our facilities website. Whatever the community decides in the upcoming months will shape the future of students for decades to come. Let us strive to make the best decision.

Sincerely,

Jack Hurley

Superintendent of School