

From the Superintendent

Did you ever get one of those envelopes in the mail that promise a million dollars if you meet certain criteria (like having and returning the winning number)? Well, the offer we have presented to us this month is a lot like that, except the odds of “winning” are much better. One out of one to be exact.

Thanks to the recognition on the part of the State Legislature that many schools across New York are in need of repair and renovation (many of them having been built, like ours, in the 1930's), we have an opportunity to receive an unprecedented 87.4% State Aid on any building project approved after July 1, 1998. That's an added 10% incentive supplied by the State for Districts to do capital improvements. Coupling our capital reserve account with some other local sources of revenue (a member item, back aid and retirement incentive savings) we have the winning number - \$217,000 - which will entitle us to over one million dollars in State Aid with NO TAX IMPACT. What we do need, however, in order to claim that aid is voter approval of the proposed project. That's where you come in.

Details inside of this edition of the Bulletin outline the proposed work, the proposed financing, and the special meetings being held to share information and to solicit your vote. Please take a good look at the work we propose doing - work defined for the Board by a community committee on facilities as part of the long range plan developed over three years ago. This work centers around public use aspects of our building, and seeks to capitalize on State dollars available during this legislative year (who knows what next year's State budget may bring ?).

On behalf of the Board of Education, I encourage you to learn all you can about this proposed project and to cast your vote on the proposal on November 16. The children of Romulus will thank you for years to come.

Chris Manaseri

1998 Capital Project Proposal in Brief

What: \$1.5 Million worth of work to the following areas of the Romulus Central School

Gymnasium:

New gym floor
New Entryway/Foyer
New addition for special education - Occupational and Physical Therapy room (open to the public for after hours use of equipment and exercise space).
Reconstructed South Parking Lot and Driveway with safe, lighted Bus Loading Area
Resurfaced Tennis courts with basketball backboards and lights added.

Auditorium:

New Sound System
New Curtains
Seat Reupholstery
Replacement of all rheostatically controlled stage lights
Additional digitally controlled stage lighting
New Carpeting

Distance Learning Lab

New equipment installed in the Media Center Lecture Room to provide live, interactive television connection to the RAITN Project out of Rochester. Connection to MCC, SUNY Brockport, RIT, and a consortium of two dozen area schools, offering coursework via teleconferencing with full video and audio as well as internet connectivity. This Distance Learning Lab would also be available for adult education programming and other community use teleconferencing after hours.

How: Special 10% Incentive from Albany allows us 87.4% State Aid
Local share of \$217,000 already on hand
Entire Project is 100% Tax Neutral - Zero impact on local taxes
Public Approval Required to expend and to gain access to State funds.

When : **Information session at November 10, 1998 Board Meeting-** special session at 7:30 in the auditorium. Hear from the Board, the architect and the financial planner directly.

Public Vote on Monday November 16, 1998 from 2-9 p.m.

Construction to begin in Summer 1999. Distance Learning Lab operational for Fall '99.

Why: Areas targeted for work were selected by community committee.
Areas targeted for work involve high public as well as student use.
Areas targeted have repair needs beyond our ability to do locally with available funds.
10% incentive aid allows us to stretch local dollars further - added \$150,000 in State Aid.
Total State Aid will be over \$1,300,000 for this project, money we don't get unless we spend our own dollars in this aidable fashion. State money which will go elsewhere if we don't use it here.

Gymnasium Addition and Alterations:

The shaded areas above depict the changes which would occur in the gym foyer and locker room areas, as well as the addition of the OT/PT special ed room.

This would double as an exercise area for public use after hours.

The extensive work in this area makes work on the contiguous south parking lot also eligible for State Aid at 87.4%.

This area would become the main entrance to the school for all students, adding a safety element to the proposed work, and replacing the front -drive idea previously defeated in 1994.

Why a Capital Project at Romulus?

The proposed capital project is the first offered since 1994, when several of these same items were included in a 1.1 million dollar proposal which failed to gain public support. At that time we included a front driveway for buses, computerization of classrooms, and office renovations along with the gymnasium floor replacement and auditorium lighting involved in this proposal. Since 1994 we have been able to make some improvements to the building through an energy performance contract, although this proposed work has not been part of that effort. We have abandoned the front drive and now suggest a main entrance at the Gymnasium Lobby. We have completed the necessary installation of an office safe ourselves, and have computerized our classrooms through BOCES aid at 65%. The work that remains however, is either beyond our means to complete ourselves, or will cost us much more if done at a local level without State aid.

What is the Need?

In the gym the floor is popping up and we have begun to screw the loose boards down one by one. The public lavatories are small and inaccessible to the handicapped. The weight room currently used for instruction is dangerously undersized, and our occupational and physical therapists working with handicapped students do so out of a bookcloset and in the hallway. When the community uses the gym on weekends, the teacher workstations are currently exposed to high traffic for telephone and shower access. An addition to this area for special education could also be used to serve the public during non-school hours. Such an addition will also allow us to draw State aid on the reconstruction of the contiguous parking lot.

The south parking lot and driveway have needed repair for over a decade. By adding a walkway and lights to the north side of this parking area, we can offer our students a safe bus loading area away from traffic at the driveway portion of the lot. A canopy will provide weather protection. The parking area reconstruction necessary is extensive because of the deteriorated condition of the lot currently, and because of the heavy traffic from buses. This reconstruction will be aided at 87.4% along with the rest of the project as site-work related to the gymnasium addition.

The auditorium curtains, carpet and seating have gone untouched since its construction 30 years ago. The lighting and wiring are antiquated. It needs a facelift. We installed high performance house lighting as part of the EPC, but stage lighting and sound are still incomplete. As many parents know too well, the current sound system picks up radio interference during performances, and the lighting, while improved, is still in need of work as it is now partially controlled by both the old rheostats and the new digital panel. Seats are noisy and need reupholstery. The carpet is worn, torn and stained. This facility is used regularly for large groups, musical programs and stage productions by the elementary and secondary students as well as by the community.

A Distance Learning Lab is proposed to bring Romulus into the 21st century with the possibility of small enrollment special classes and whole school events. The technology is in use in neighboring Districts and our students deserve not to be left behind. We have applied for grants

for this portion of the project and have received a special \$25,000 member item from Senator Nozzolio to support this effort. The proposal calls for outfitting the Media Center Lecture Room with this added capacity, while still preserving the room's current multiple purpose nature. We propose joining several of the schools in our BOCES area in the RAITN project available from Monroe I BOCES as a cross contract, and allowing our students and public access to an expanding network of Distance Learning courses. By using BOCES for this service, any ongoing costs will be BOCES aidable as well.

Why Now?

During the first few years of the Pataki administration, regulations were put in place to slow down the outflow of State dollars to schools, including building aid. Rules were changed which required a ten-year amortization of bonds for all projects, and approvals were delayed during these changes. The legislature last year, however, provided an ADDITIONAL 10% incentive for capital projects approved by voters after July 1, 1998. This additional State aid will allow us to draw up to 87.4% of the costs of this proposal from Albany, making the local share only less than one in eight dollars spent. We have that money on hand right now in several sources:

- a Capital Reserve account established in 1993, currently containing \$118,500
- an additional \$25,000 member item from Senator Nozzolio specifically to support the Distance Learning portion of the project
- A payment of back-due Federal Impact Aid from the Seneca Army Depot (\$44,500)
- and Salary Breakage on a retirement incentive offered last summer.
- We also have received a \$47,000 grant and loan combination from the Department of Agriculture to support our Distance Learning Lab.

This unique combination of circumstances allows us to project a **zero tax impact** in turning our \$217,000 local share into the required State aided payments on a ten year loan. **The entire project will be completely tax neutral** - using local sources on hand and State Building Aid.

The Board of Education has deliberated this proposal for six months, and has honed the list of items to be addressed to those it feels best meet the needs of the children and the community at large. They feel the proposal is worthy and offer the public a chance to approve it by vote on November 16th. **Please come to the polls that Monday WITH I.D.** in hand, to cast your vote.

Public Vote on Proposed Capital Project

November 16, 1998

2-9 p.m.

Elementary Gym

Proof of Residence Required

Bring I.D.