

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Dear District 26 Parents,

This newsletter focuses on the District 26 REFERENDUM, scheduled for March 16th and I encourage all of you to vote. A huge decision faces the citizens of the District 26 learning community. Each individual must make a tough decision while considering the answers to these questions:

- Is it possible for the community to continue supporting a quality system of education that results in outstanding academic achievement by our students and a school system of which the citizens of Cary are proud?
- Can we afford to continue to maintain small class sizes in the primary grades?
- Finally, can we afford to maintain a total of seven schools, five of which promote the neighborhood concept?

District 26 has a great deal of information on its newly designed website: www.cary26.org. Please take some time to review the information contained in the Referendum link.

What does a superintendent do all day? A superintendent is a school district's Chief Executive Officer when compared to the business world. Although I have many roles, I believe the most important role is to assure that 3,600 students are educated in a safe, caring environment and are challenged to do their very best every day. District 26 has an outstanding staff that assists in accomplishing that goal. Another important job is to make sure that District 26 follows all of the state and federal laws as well as the rules of the Illinois State Code. I take this aspect of my job very seriously as does the Board of Education. We all make every effort to operate and make decisions based on a sense of integrity, following all rules and laws while focusing on what is best for students. It is an awesome task and one that I value.

One law that I have made every effort to follow is that District 26 is not allowed to tell you to vote yes or pay for any materials that say to vote yes

on the March 16th referendum. It was pointed out to me that in a recent Family Focus newsletter I mentioned the "Vote Yes" group named Epic26 – the group formed by District 26, but operating separately from the District with funds received through donations. The information provided by this group has been approved by District 26 personnel, but all their materials are organized and paid for through them. Epic26 has developed a website at www.epic26.org.

There is a group, not sponsored by District 26, which promotes the message to vote no on the March 16th referendum. Their information is at the following website: www.savecary26.com.

I ask you to **research the facts** and make sure that you are **an informed voter**. Then you need to go to the polls, exercise your privilege to vote, and make your own decision. We could not do our job to such a high level of excellence and integrity without your ongoing support and encouragement. We must all work together for the students of Cary, our future leaders. Thank you to our wonderful families.

As always, please call or email me if you have any questions, specifically regarding the referendum.

Yours for excellence in education,

Dr. Jacklyn L. Crosby

847-639-7788 x119
jcrosby@cary26.org



March 16, 2004 Referendum Facts

Approved Planned Reductions for 2004-05

The Board of Education has taken the following steps to restore the district to financial health and preserve the acclaimed quality of Cary District 26 education:

- Maintained existing permanent budget cuts of \$600,000 – Tier 1
- Identified an additional \$1.38 million in reductions/fee increases to be implemented in 2004-05 school year
- Proposed \$.70 referendum

What is included in the \$1.38 million in upcoming budget reductions?

The goal of the Board of Education and District 26 is to minimize cuts in programs, staff, and services while maximizing overall reductions. Forthcoming reductions include the following:

- Elimination of 15.5 teaching positions (6% reduction)
- Reduction of 16 educational support staff (8% reduction)
- Elimination of 3 of 17 administrative positions (18% reduction)

Overall, the district budget has been trimmed by nearly \$2 million dollars. For a complete list of budget reductions visit the District 26 website at www.cary26.org and click on the "Referendum" link.

What Happens if the Referendum is Unsuccessful?

Pending the successful passage of a referendum, no additional cuts would be required. However, if the referendum does NOT pass on March 16, 2004, the Board of Education and District 26 Administration have identified Tier 3 cuts, which will be implemented for the 2004-05 school year affecting the entire district.

- One small elementary school will be closed: (Briargate, Maplewood, or Oak Knoll)
- Class sizes will increase by 1-3 students in grades K-1 and 3-5 students grades 2-4
- Redistricting of students throughout the Cary attendance area will occur
- Some students may be walking who are currently bussed
- Other students will be bussed who are currently walking
- Eleven additional teachers will lose positions for a total of 26.3 teachers from across all levels for a total of 10.6% reduction in teaching staff
- Two additional administrative positions will be eliminated or restructured for a total of 29% reduction
- An additional 5 Educational Support Personnel (ESP) will lose positions for a total reduction of 22 or 10.5 % of the ESP workforce
- Overall District 26 will reduce approximately 53 employees – a total of 11% of its current employees
- Band may cost over \$300.00 per student
- Extracurricular activities will increase in cost

Tier 2 Budget Reductions To be Implemented in 2004-05 School Year Approved by Board of Education 1/28/2004		
1	Reduce portion of salaries of 3 retiring administrators	\$112,260
2	Reduce portion of salary of retiring bookkeeper & hiring of new bookkeeper	\$27,750
3	Reduce one administrator (curriculum/assistant principal)	\$100,583
4	Curriculum Travel/Dues	\$3,200
5	Reduce one Administration Center office secretary	\$31,160
6	Reduce one Special Education Administrator	\$63,500
7	Reduce Custodial Costs at Administration Center	\$8,225
8	Reduce Maintenance	\$17,737
9	Staff Recognition – Administration Center	\$2,500
10	Science Managers	\$6,360
11	Supplies, Supplemental, Consumables	\$12,210
12	Elimination of 7 Learning Center Aides	\$74,630
13	Reduce Night-time Custodial Services by 25% - 5	\$104,280
14	Reduce Private Special Education facility expenses	\$15,000
15	Reduce Supervisors to lunch time only	\$17,347
16	Reduce 1 Technology Assistant position	\$26,180
17	Increase Registration Fees \$20.00 and portion of technology fee	\$107,500
18	Implement fees for Extra-curricular and in-house sports	\$50,000
19	Eliminate 3 Gifted Resource Teacher positions	\$120,000
20	Eliminate 1 Junior High Band/Chorus Teacher position	\$40,000
21	Eliminate 4 Junior High core teaching positions	\$160,000
22	Eliminate 2 Prairie Hill classroom teacher positions	\$80,000
23	Eliminate 3 elementary teacher positions	\$120,000
24	Reduce 1.5 Special Education Certified positions	\$60,000
25	Eliminate 2 Learning Disability Teacher Aide positions	\$21,735
Tier 2 Total		\$1,382,157

Tier 3 Budget Reductions for 2004-05 School Year If March 16, 2004 Referendum is Unsuccessful Approved by Board of Education 2/9/2004		
26	Investigate leasing Administration Center and school to determine the most financially feasible plan	\$25,520
27	Close one small elementary school (Briargate, Maplewood, Oak Knoll)	\$516,340
28	Replace Junior High Assistant Principal with Dean of Students	\$24,210
29	Develop cost recovery model for Extra-curricular Activities/Sports	\$130,000
30	Develop cost recovery model for Grades 5-6 Band	\$96,100
31	Develop cost recovery model for Grades 7-8 Band	\$80,000
32	Eliminate 2 Gifted Resource Teachers' Positions	\$80,000
Total Tier 3		\$952,170

District 26 FACTS

- Students score 23 percentage points higher than the state average on state achievement tests
- District 26 ranks first in McHenry County on state achievement tests
- District 26 spends \$1565 less per student than the state average for total operating expense
- Teachers' & administrators' salaries are below state average
- 63% percent of District 26 teachers have masters degrees as compared to a 46% state average
- District 26 received the Bright Star Award in 2002 for outstanding achievement test scores, while being financially efficient
- The Board of Education has reduced \$600,000 from current budget and \$1.38 million for 2004-05 for a total of almost \$2 million
- District 26 total revenues have risen 5.6% per year during the past 5 years with increasing student population, staff, and an additional school
- District 26 spends only 2.8% of their total expenditures on general administration
- District 26 receives 1.4% of education funds from the federal government and 36.4% from the state. The District relies on 62.2% of funding from local sources
- State revenue has declined the last three years while costs have increased
- On March 16th District 26 is asking residents to increase property taxes by 70 cents over two years in the education operating fund – 40 cents in Year 1 and 30 cents in Year 2
- District 26 has not had an Education/Operating fund referendum since 1985
- District 26 has lost almost \$7 million in revenue due to the state legislated tax cap, enacted in 1991

Referendum

District 26 is requesting voter approval of a \$.70 referendum on March 16, 2004, to be phased in over a two-year period (\$.40 the first year and an additional \$.30 the next).

70 cent Education Rate Increase over Two Years

Property Value	\$.40 Tax Increase Year 1	\$.30 Tax Increase Year 2	Total \$ Impact Year 2
\$150,000	\$199.98	\$149.99	\$349.97
\$225,000	\$299.97	\$224.98	\$524.95*
\$300,000	\$399.96	\$299.97	\$699.93
\$425,000	\$566.61	\$424.96	\$991.57

*For the average homeowner in Cary the cost is approximately \$1.40 per day.

District 26 Teachers and Administrators Agree to Salary Freeze

Both the Cary 26 Board of Education and the Cary Education Association (CEA) are pleased to announce that a two year contract agreement has been reached. The contract will take effect for the 2004-05 school year. This agreement will help to significantly reduce the district's \$3.6 million budget deficit.

Details include:

- Salary freeze in Year 1
- Freeze on extra-duty pay and stipends in both years
- Year 2 base salary will increase by ½ of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or 1.2%, whichever is higher
- The 3.2% longevity increase in Year 2 will be restored
- Year 1 individual insurance costs will be covered by the District. Actual Year 1 costs will be used to determine a cap on insurance spending in Year 2
- Teacher Retirement System (TRS) contributions will increase between 1.5% and 2.5% in Year 1

The depth of this agreement will have a very positive impact on the financial health of the district. This agreement will help the Teachers and the Board to move forward and help restore the community's confidence in the willingness of both groups to collaboratively address issues of mutual concern. Administrators previously agreed to a one year salary freeze for 2004-05.

Why does the Ballot indicate that taxes will be increased by \$.49 rather than \$.70? I thought this was a \$.70 referendum.

Due to the tax cap, District 26's educational fund rate is currently only \$2.00, although voters approved \$2.21 in 1985. The difference between \$2.21 and \$2.70 is 49¢.

In addition, the ballot does not mention the rate increase is over two years. Legally that cannot be placed on the ballot. However, the District 26 Board of Education voted to increase the rate by \$.40 in year one and an additional \$.30 in year 2. See the following chart and ballot.

\$.70 Rate Structure

	Ballot Breakdown	Tax Year Phase-In Break down
Proposed tax rate	2.70	2.70 .30 in 2005
	2.21	2.40 .40 in 2004
(Current approved tax rate)		
Tax cap rate	2.00	2.00
	(1.9974)	

(Face of Ballot)

OFFICIAL BALLOT

CARY COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 26
McHENRY AND LAKE COUNTIES, ILLINOIS
MARCH 16, 2004

PROPOSITION TO INCREASE MAXIMUM ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL FUND TAX RATE

Shall the maximum annual tax rate for educational purposes of Cary Community Consolidated School District Number 26, McHenry and Lake Counties, Illinois, be increased and established at 2.70% upon all the taxable property of said School District at the value, as equalized or assessed by the Department of Revenue, instead of 2.21%, the maximum rate otherwise applicable to the next taxes to be extended for said purposes?

YES _____ NO _____

(a) The approximate amount of educational fund taxes extendible under the maximum rate now in force in said School District is the sum of \$11,086,652.

(b) The approximate amount of educational fund taxes extendible under the proposed increased rate is the sum of \$13,544,778.

(c) The annual rate at which educational fund taxes are currently levied is 2.21% and the percentage of increase between said rate and the maximum rate of 2.70%, if approved, is 22.17%.

(d) The total dollar amount of expenditures of the 2003-2004 budget of said School District, including bond and interest, is \$ 31,129,740 and the total dollar amount of the expenditures of the 2003-2004 budget of said School District, including bond and interest, is estimated to be \$ 33,587,866 if the proposition is approved, equaling a 7.9% increase.



Please help us highlight “**Fairness**” during the months of March and April.

- * Play by the rules
- * Take turns and share
- * Be open-minded; listen to others
- * Don't take advantage of others
- * Don't blame others carelessly

We're all ears! Questions about this publication or other school-related matters may be directed to GERALYN 847-639-7788 ext. 116 or gmohawk@cary26.org.

State & District Testing

The State of Illinois requires every public school district to administer the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE). These tests measure how well students are performing in specific academic areas to meet the Illinois State Learning Standards.

In an effort to protect instructional time and to limit interruptions, District 26 has selected to administer both state and district standardized achievement tests during the week of April 5-9, 2004. As part of this procedure all students in grades 1 through 8 will complete a battery of tests.

For more information about ISAT, visit the Illinois State Board of Education website (www.isbe.net). While at this site, you may also wish to try some of the interactive ISAT sample questions. If you have questions regarding our testing procedures, please contact Dr. Sandra Thornhill at 847-639-7788 x123 or sthornhi@cary26.org.

2004 Testing Schedule

Gates-MacGinitie – Grades 1 & 2
Reading

ISAT – Grades 3, 5, 8
Reading, Writing, Math

ISAT – Grades 4, 7
Science, Social Science

IMAGE
Students participating in English Language Learning (ELL) program

Stanford/Otis-Lennon
Grade 2 Otis-Lennon only
Grade 6 Complete battery of tests

Internet Safety Presentation

March 24th - 7:00 p.m. - Cary Junior High School

The Lake County Sheriff's Office in cooperation with the Cary Police Department and District 26, will conduct an Internet Safety Presentation.

By educating yourself and your child, the Internet can be a wonderful tool for research and a great place to communicate with others. Keep in mind that not everyone is who they say they are on the Internet.

The following are points of discussion to be presented:

- Why you need to talk to your child about potential online danger.
- The need to spend time with your child online.
- Help them understand how the Internet works.
- Why you should keep the computer in a common area of the house, not in their bedroom.
- How to utilize site-blocking software and/or parental controls provided by your online service provider.

- Why you need to randomly check your child's e-mail, and be alert to packages your child may receive through the U.S. mail.
- Knowing chat room dangers, scams, and attachment viewing.
- The importance of understanding that if your child is the victim of an online predator - that your child is not at fault.
- Rules for online safety.
- Resources for parents.

This presentation is for parents, grandparents, or anyone who uses the Internet.

To Register: Contact Cary Junior High School at (847) 639-2148. This is a free presentation.



CARY PRIDE DAY

The Village of Cary and CHARACTER COUNTS! in Cary invite village businesses, community groups, service organizations, and school groups (middle school and above) to participate in the first **Cary Pride Day** on Saturday, April 17th. We will clean up the Cary Cemetery on First Street and the Village Nature Area on Spring Street, and also honor youths with the American Youth Character Awards and adults with the Character Builder Awards for the first time.

Saturday, April 17th, 2004
10 a.m. - Noon (clean-up)
Meet at Cary Cemetery (First Street, 1 block north of Rt. 14)

Following the clean-up projects, CHARACTER COUNTS! In Cary will honor local youth and adults with the American Youth Character Awards and the Character Builder Awards in a ceremony at the Oak Knoll School on First Street in Cary. Six youths and two adults from Cary will be honored for demonstrating through their work in our community the Six Pillars of Character – *Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Respect, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship*. The American Youth Character Awards honor youths between the ages of 10 and 18, while the Character Builder Awards honor youth-serving adults such as mentors, coaches or teachers. Forms are available from CHARACTER COUNTS! In Cary for its member organizations and local schools who are eligible to make nominations for these awards. The deadline for submissions is Friday, April 9th. If your business or organization is not yet a member of CHARACTER COUNTS! In Cary and would like to make a nomination, please check the box in the registration form below and Mr. Tim Boivin, the CHARACTER COUNTS! In Cary Marketing Director, will contact you.

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REGISTRATION FORM

Return by Friday, April 9th, to: Cary Pride Day, 557 Glen Garry Road, Cary, IL 60013

Organization Name: _____

Main Point of Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Estimated Attendees: _____

Please send Information on American Character Awards:

Yes, Our Organization Can Provide Food/Supplies for Cary Pride Day Volunteers:

(NOTE: Food service or other organizations providing lunches or cleaning supplies for Cary Pride Day volunteers as an in-kind contribution worth \$50 or more will automatically be enrolled as annual members in CHARACTER COUNTS! In Cary and are eligible to nominate candidates for the American Youth Character Awards and the Character Builder Awards.)

For more information on Cary Pride Day or CHARACTER COUNTS! In Cary, contact Tim Boivin at 847-632-0040, ext. 229 (daytime), 847-516-2863 (nights/weekends) or by email at Boivin@mcihispeed.net.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF CARY PRIDE DAY!