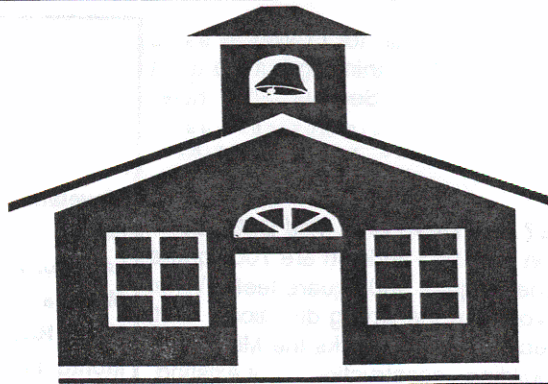


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**LCWM  
Proposed  
\$18.6 million  
School Bond  
Referendum**



**Tuesday  
Sept. 14**

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Citizens for Quality Education (CQE) is a political committee made up of members from the communities of Lake Crystal, Rapidan, Vernon Center, Good Thunder and Garden City who believe the school board has again floated a bond proposal that should be rejected. The proposal is to spend a whopping \$18.6 million for a new secondary school for Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial (LCWM).

Would you please consider this information and then join us and vote "NO" on Tuesday, September 14? Here are some of our reasons.

#### **An Important Lesson For The Children**

One of the most important messages we can send to our children in these turbulent economic times is to consider the long term consequences of buying something that is unnecessary and too costly just because someone will loan us the money to do it. This poor idea has gotten too many households, farmers, businesses and now our state government into a lot of financial trouble the last 4 or 5 years. If they see adults just borrow and spend, what example does this provide them? When the borrowing bubble crashes, we as communities will be in a much better shape with lower public debts and taxes hanging over our heads. Further, based on the Bond Issue calculations provided to our board by Ehlers and Associates, Inc. (Ehlers) LCWM's proposal calls for us to pay back \$18,595,000 in principal plus \$19,519,628 interest for a total of nearly **\$40,000,000 of new taxes** which will have to be levied from the communities of LCWM.

#### **Even in 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Math They Learn "\$1,333,000 > \$25,000"**

From the beginning, the school board provides us a good illustration of poor economics that we can use to teach the children of LCWM **not** to copy. The board believes they will save up to \$25,000 (mostly state tax money) per year in operating costs through energy efficiencies, etc. gained by building new, according to their statement at the Aug. 31 public meeting. And the annual investment required by LCWM property taxpayers to achieve this savings for the state is "only" \$1,333,000 each year for the 30 years needed to pay back the principal and interest on the bonds, according to Ehlers. Even a 4<sup>th</sup> grader at LCWM knows that spending \$1,333,000 each year to save \$25,000 is bad arithmetic. What we can't understand is with all of the Statutory Operating Debt deficits we have been struggling with and are forecast to incur again in the 2005-06 school year, how does the Board think that taking on an additional tax obligation of over \$1.3 million per year is going to improve anything? Such an unaffordable obligation will most likely plunge us into a merger with Mankato.

#### **Enrollment**

One of the ways the board believes their proposal will help our finances is that the new school will appeal to the 240 students who have tuitioned-out this past year so that they will hurry back to LCWM and as a result bring the lost state revenue back with them. In the Board's Review & Comment Submittal presented to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) on May 24, 2004, they wrote, "It is hoped that many of these students will choose to return to the school district after there has been significant improvements in the school facilities."

#### **Will They Come Back?**

The problem with this hope is that it is not grounded in reality. We've surveyed the parents of 90 of those children (38%) and asked them the question – would you send your kids back if LCWM built a new high school? **Not one** of them said "Yes". Most said things like, "A new school doesn't give a better education"; "no way", "absolutely not". Mark and Kris Streit of Vernon Center were two of those parents. They raised concerns as to how LCWM pushed to have their oldest child unfairly labeled as a Special Education student while only in Kindergarten. It is not uncommon for many schools to label children - who for example are in need of a little extra phonics reading instruction - as a special-ed child regardless of what harm the label may do to him/her in the future. Why do schools do it? For the extra "special-ed" cash premiums the state provides, of course. Good special education teachers have been known to quit teaching because they were under pressure to help place as many children in their classes as possible and to pass as few back into the mainline classes as possible. They were not willing to sacrifice their students to solve the school's budget problems.

For the Streit family, when their oldest son was tuitioned out, they saw marked improvement and he never needed special