

**Could we vote for a new school and then still watch
Lake Crystal's children get shipped off to the Mankato school?**

Sounds crazy at first, but think about it. Even with the addition of Bridges Elementary, Mankato still lost 205 elementary students since 1997-98 and 375 students overall (down 5%), according to state records. If due to continued budget problems the state would force us to merge with them and LCWM would come to the merger with \$18 million of outstanding debt - due to this current proposal - how willing is their board going to be to absorb our debt and the \$1.3 million of annual cash required to service it? Would Mankato take our debt and let us keep our new school building open, especially when they have more space than ever?

Some may think it not possible for a new school building in Lake Crystal to sit empty or be sold off. Keep two things in mind: Few in Minnesota have experience administering school budgets under the demands of long term declining enrollments. Decisions once thought *impossible* are looming. Also, the Watertown, SD district (about 60% of the size of Mankato) shut down their Garfield elementary school a couple of years ago, due to continued declining enrollments, even though it had an 11 year old \$3 million dollar addition to it. A newer school building in their district is sitting 1/4 empty, yet their taxpayers are still paying off the bonds on both of them. How will it be any different for the proposed Lake Crystal buildings in a few years, when all of Minnesota keeps losing its children? One should be most skeptical of rosy forecasts in this environment.

If we stay out of debt, keep our property taxes down and still be forced to merge with Mankato - our board could come to the negotiating table with something to bargain with. Without the \$18 million in debt, we stand a much better chance of securing an attendance center for our children in Lake Crystal for years to come. Sometimes in life the hard decisions turn out to be the best ones.

Think about what is truly best for Lake Crystal. If we are going to be forced into a merger that none of us want, let's give our board the strongest negotiating hand they can possibly have. Let's fight to keep our kids going to school in Lake Crystal for years to come. To do so, join us and vote NO September 14!

Prepared and Paid For By

Citizens for Quality Education Committee, Joel Brude, Chairman, P.O. Box 656, Lake Crystal, MN 56055

HELP!

We need your help!

We are having quite a time finding out the correct dollar amounts from the school district and from the county assessor's office of projected tax increases if District #2071 Lake Crystal Welcome Memorial's \$18.5 million new school proposal would pass.

Why do we need your help? Recent campaign literature by the Yes committee is still telling LCWM voters that your taxes on an average \$125,000 home will increase by \$254 if this proposal goes through. This was before the proposal went up in cost and before the 2005 valuations have been finalized. We believe the increase in taxes will be over \$300 on such a home and want to make sure you are aware of what the figures will really be, prior to the vote.

If you could help us - and help yourself if you own property - call LCWM at 726-2323 and ask for an estimate of what the tax increase on your house valuation based on the new 2005 valuations would be, if the referendum passes. Then call the Blue Earth County Assessor's Office (389-8257) and ask them to release the actual estimate of the "taxing rate" for LCWM's proposal. Be an informed voter and at the same time help us encourage these offices to release this material to the general public, well before voting day.

Also, remember in 2006 the District will need the current excess levy renewed. Under Minnesota equalization laws school districts that have a high market value real estate base and declining enrollment receive less state subsidies of their excess levies. LCWM has such a high market value base and is definitely losing enrollment. As a result when this levy is renewed in 2006 we will have reduced state subsidies which will have to be replaced with more local property taxes. The excess levy should increase taxes at least \$250 per year for an average home in Lake Crystal in 2006, regardless of how you vote next month.

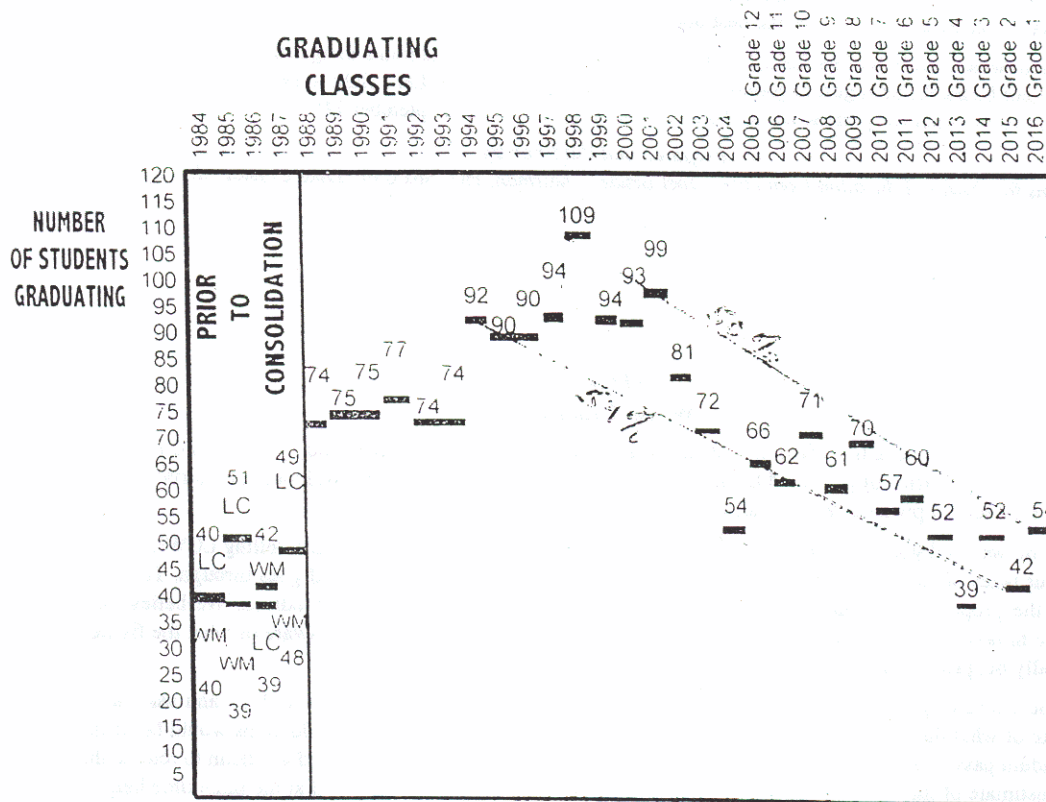
If you'd like to help support our voter education efforts please send a donation payable to Citizens for Quality Education Committee at the address below. For more information call 278-3506.

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There have been many comments and remarks concerning the upcoming building referendum. Since our districts consolidated, our enrollments have continued to decline. The frustration of losing their schools, attitudes within the district, have all contributed to the students open enrolling out of the district. For these reasons, we have one of the highest percentage of students in the State of Minnesota opening enrolling out. We currently do not and will not have any more students in school then we did prior to consolidation. Assumptions can be made to look rosy, but facts don't lie. The enrollments are now, what they were 20 years ago and will be, at best, the same for the next 12 years. With a 50 and 54% decline in enrollments since 1994, can we afford to build a facility that will cost nearly \$40,000,000 over the next 30 years?

LOOK CLOSELY AT THIS GRAPH!



LCWM STATISTICS

PAID ADV.--Prepared and paid for by Wayne Hohenstein, Vernon Center