

Herscher Community Unit School District No. 2

501 N Main Street – PO Box 504
Herscher IL 60941-0504
Ph: 815-426-2162 – F: 815-426-2872

DR. RICHARD S. DECMAN, SUPERINTENDENT
SHELLY COWELL, SPECIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR
PETE FALK, CURRICULUM DIRECTOR

August 22, 2014

Faculty/Staff,

Hopefully, everyone has had a great return to school despite the heat. Fortunately, it looks like the heat wave is going to break early next week. Anyway below are some items that may be of interest to you.

Below is this week's up-date(s):

1. **Are you a Bucket Filler?**

Each of us has an invisible bucket. When it is full, we feel great. When it is empty, we feel awful. Each of us also has an invisible dipper. When we use that dipper to *fill* other people's buckets (with encouragement), we also *fill* our own bucket. But if we use that dipper to dip *from* other's buckets (by doing things that decrease their positive emotions) we *diminish* ourselves. When our cup runneth over, a full bucket gives us a positive outlook and renewed energy. Every ounce of water in our bucket makes us more optimistic. An empty bucket poisons our outlook, saps our energy and undermines our will. That's why every time someone dips from our bucket, it hurts us. Each day we have a choice – we can fill one another's buckets or we can dip from them. This is an important choice – one that profoundly influences our relationships, productivity, health, and happiness. I don't know about you but I want to be a bucket filler!

This article is not something I made up but one of my daily readings from 'How FULL is Your Bucket?' by Tom Rath and Donald O Clifton, Ph.D.

2. **Transportation** – Compared to last year, our first week of transportation has been pretty good. However, we still have a couple of routes that Beth Wilcox is working on adjusting due to children being on the bus more than an hour. After she resolves the issues with a couple of these routes, she will be looking at individual requests from parents (example – move the pick-up or drop-off location to different spot, drop students off at a different location, change the route to pick-up students earlier or later, etc...).

We have received a few strong-worded complaints from parents who do not want their children on buses for a long time (A long time is defined differently by each person. The District has determined that we do not want any student on a bus to or from school more than 60 minutes). Unfortunately, I do not believe we will be able to accommodate many of these parents' requests without increasing transportation costs significantly. In other words, we can lower the transportation times, but that usually means extra routes which means the District would be spending thousands of more dollars that we do not have. In order to even contemplate adding routes, we need additional revenue.

"Education... The Ultimate Investment."

Herscher Community Unit School District No. 2

501 N Main Street – PO Box 504
Herscher IL 60941-0504
Ph: 815-426-2162 – F: 815-426-2872

DR. RICHARD S. DECMAN, SUPERINTENDENT
SHELLY COWELL, SPECIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR
PETE FALK, CURRICULUM DIRECTOR

3. **Lights at Seebach Stadium** – The lights have been installed and are working at Seebach Stadium. Frankly, I saw them turned on this morning and they are pretty impressive. If you get a chance to stop by, I encourage you to do so. Our first home varsity football game is September 5th against Peotone.
4. **Rain and damage** – Due to the heavy rains, we have several areas in the District where we have leaking roofs or water seeping into the building. Larry Houberg and his crew(s) are busy cleaning these areas up.
5. **Hot Weather and Releasing Early or Not?** – Several areas school districts have decided to release early today and Monday due to the predicted heat. At this point, I have decided based upon the following reasons to stay the full day in school.
 - According to my weather application (The Weather Channel) today’s high will be 89 degrees at 5 pm. and Monday’s high temperature in Herscher is 90 degrees. My threshold in the past for releasing school early has been an air temperature of 95 degrees or higher. I realize the humidity is high and it is uncomfortable, but I think we need to “push” through these times.
 - All buildings have air-conditioned areas where students/staff can get relief, if needed.
 - Faculty/staff should allow students to have unlimited access to water.
 - BGS (PK-1ST grade students) has the entire 2nd floor air-conditioned. (I worry about our youngest students the most in these conditions).
 - Last year when we released early, I drove around the District and saw numerous kids outside playing baseball, basketball and running around. At the time, I thought we were releasing for safety reasons, but seeing all the kids playing outside made me re-think my decision.
 - Whenever we release early, we put a burden on our K-4 parents to make sure they are home and meet the bus. Oftentimes, our bus routes are significantly longer on these days because parents are not at home to meet with students. (Our bus drivers have been directed to not release our K-1 students from the bus unless we see an adult home).
 - If Districts are contemplating an early release due to safety reasons, releasing 1-hour early does not remove students from any perceived dangers. In other words, if we thought the heat was seriously dangerous we would not have school at all or we would release school at 10 or 11 am. So, I guess I am saying, that school districts that are releasing early are doing it for political reasons, not for safety reasons. Just my opinion.
6. **Enrollment Up-date** – The following is the most up-dated enrollment information.

K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th		Total	
128	112	129	121	125	119	123	146	153	149	152	136	176		1769	

“Education... The Ultimate Investment.”

Herscher Community Unit School District No. 2

501 N Main Street – PO Box 504
Herscher IL 60941-0504
Ph: 815-426-2162 – F: 815-426-2872

DR. RICHARD S. DECMAN, SUPERINTENDENT
SHELLY COWELL, SPECIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR
PETE FALK, CURRICULUM DIRECTOR

7. News Links of Potential Interest –

Deficits eroding Sycamore School District 427 reserve funds <http://bit.ly/1oD4JGg>

The focus this year at McHenry District 156 will be in tying the technology purchases made last year into the curriculum <http://tinyurl.com/kon7bba>

Elgin U-46 criticized for paying parents \$1,000 in minority leadership program <http://bit.ly/1r1OPII>

Indian Prairie board members factoring heat into budget <http://tinyurl.com/mqt7x3j>

Galesburg District 205 teacher contract negotiations last into night <http://tinyurl.com/kjy6Golf>

Belvidere teachers back on the job without a contract; negotiations pending <http://tinyurl.com/lxcymIt>

More about our bulging public school payrolls <http://www.publicsectorinc.org/2014/08/more-about-our-bulging-public-school-payrolls/>

Frankfort School District 157C will have a projected \$500,000 deficit in its operating budget for the 2014-15 school year <http://bit.ly/1s3f6Rv>

Quincy School Board unveils \$70.3M budget with \$1.56M deficit <http://bit.ly/1q2e8FM>

The uncertain outlook of state funding for education means there could be a "wide swing" in the amount of revenue the Charleston school district might receive in the coming year. <http://bit.ly/YDhwOe>

Rock Falls High OKs budget with \$500K shortfall; More than \$340K cut since January <http://bit.ly/1wclpSp>

Stark County schools expect deficit budget <http://tinyurl.com/opv33z2>

While the budget picture for Indian Prairie School District 204 appears rosy from a document perspective, the reality of fickle state funding looms large on the horizon. <http://tinyurl.com/lghla5g>

That is all for this up–date. Have a great weekend!

Dr. Richard S. Decman, Superintendent

Herscher CUSD No. 2

501 N. Main Street

Herscher, IL 60941

815-426-2162 (office)

815-426-2872 (fax)

217-369-7877 (cell)

"Education, the ultimate investment".



"Education... The Ultimate Investment."

One-Cent Sales Tax

For Herscher CUSD No. 2 Facilities

On November 4, a one-cent sales tax proposal is on the ballot in Kankakee County. The revenue from this sales tax, if passed, can only be used to improve school facilities or retire new or existing building bonds. Our Board of Education voted to place this proposal on the ballot because it will provide a reliable source of revenue to keep our schools up-to-date and, at the same time, provide property tax relief to our residents.

This one-cent sales tax can be used to provide:

- 21st century classrooms
- Energy efficient heating and air conditioning
- Improved safety and security for our students
- Funding to keep roofs, windows and doors in good working order
- Up-to-date labs and technology
- Property tax relief for our residents

Property Tax Relief

All across Illinois there has been a call for property tax relief. This proposal, in part, is an answer to that call. Traditionally, all school building improvements have been funded through property taxes. By passing this proposal, much of the burden for funding public education facility improvements will be shifted to a sales tax – and a sales tax that is very equitable and fair in its design (see the back page).

If this proposal passes, our District will have the ability to keep our facilities up-to-date and in good working order without a total reliance on property taxes.

Specific Improvements for Our District

Listed below are the specific plans for our District should this proposal pass.

Herscher CUSD No. 2

1. Up-date all buildings entrances/exits to ensure our students are safe.
2. Provide Air conditioning for our buildings.
3. Replace Herscher High School gym floor.
4. Install security fence(s) around playgrounds at Herscher Intermediate School and Bonfield Grade School.
5. Up-date and improve power in all buildings in the District.
6. Replace bleachers at Limestone Middle School.
7. Add parking and connect buildings at Limestone Middle School.
8. Maintain and improve technology infra-structure at all buildings in the District.
9. Use for school facility emergencies.
10. Abate property taxes.



Be Informed and Remember to Vote

This proposal is important to the future of our District. Please be fully informed on this issue and remember to vote. There is more information about this proposal on the back of this flyer.



Election: November 4, 2014

One-Cent Sales Tax

For Herscher CUSD No. 2 Facilities

The County School Facility Sales Tax represents the first shift away from relying on property taxes for local school district funding in Illinois. The law went into effect in 2007 (based on a similar law in Iowa) allowing voters to approve a sales tax to fund school facility needs. The sales tax is for one cent on every dollar spent on qualifying retail purchases. School Boards representing almost 100% of the resident student enrollment in Kankakee County have passed resolutions approving the sales tax resolution, and the question will be placed on the ballot at the next scheduled election.

A More Equitable Sales Tax

The design of this sales tax is more equitable to those living on fixed incomes or in professions that could be severely impacted by a new sales tax.

It is important to know what is **NOT** subject to this tax

- Unprepared Food (groceries)
- Prescriptions and over-the-counter medications
- Cars, Trucks, ATVs, Boats, RVs and Mobile Homes
- Farm Equipment, Parts, and Farm Inputs
- Services are also not taxed
- If it is not currently taxed, it will not be taxed

How much more would I actually be paying if this passed?



- \$100.00 of grocery food = **no increase**
- \$50.00 of gas = 50 cents
- \$15,000 car/truck = **no increase**
- \$7.00 of fast food = 7 cents
- \$450.00 TV = \$4.50
- \$40.00 of medicine = **no increase**
- \$70.00 pair of shoes = 70 cents

Revenue Can Only Be Used to Support Facility Improvements

Revenue from this one-cent sales tax can only be used for improving school facilities or for retiring new or current building bonds. It cannot be used for salaries, instructional materials, or other operating costs. Specifically, it can be used for:

- New School Facilities
- Additions and Renovations
- Land Acquisition
- Safety and Security Improvements
- Energy Efficiency
- Paying Off Building Bonds
- Architectural Planning/Engineering
- Durable Equipment



Questions or More Information

To learn more about what the county school facility sales tax means to you call the Herscher CUSD No. 2 Office **(815) 426-2162** or visit our website at **www.hcusd2.org**. Please take the time to learn about this important issue.