



# Kenowa Hills Public Schools **Education inspired.**

Dear Parents and Community Members,

Thank you for your support in renewing the district's operating millage. Your support fills a void that would have been created in our already challenged budget. Nearly one-third (almost \$10 million) of our annual revenue used toward day-to-day expenses is generated from the operating millage without cost to primary residents.

Unfortunately, the district's bond proposal was defeated by 23 votes. Like the operating millage, it is imperative to have community support for the bond proposal. The district used nearly \$900,000 from its fund balance in the 2014-15 fiscal year ending June 30, 2015. The Board of Education made extremely difficult decisions associated with cutting approximately \$1.2 million for this school year, which still leaves an anticipated shortfall of \$800,000 when considering increases in costs and per-student funding not increasing at the same rate as expenses. The fund balance is teetering around 10%, which brings the district very close to needing to borrow money for day-to-day expenses due to a cash-flow shortage.

The needs outlined in the bond proposal were not included in this fiscal year's budget with the exception of a mandated Internet filtering device. The needs are enormous; the most pressing of which is the replacement of four (4) buses in the 2016-17 school year and ten (10) buses in the 2017-18 school year. Another three (3) buses will need to be purchased in 2018-19 and three (3) more buses in 2019-20. With the exception of the three buses the district had to purchase this school year following the May 2015 bond defeat, the district has not purchased buses with general fund money for several years. Funding for education has lagged behind increases in costs, creating a struggle for the Board of Education to remain committed to allocating 65% of the budget to the classroom. As day-to-day non-instructional costs have outpaced funding, it has not been possible to purchase **buses** on a replacement cycle using general fund dollars.

**Roofs** out of warranty, **boilers** approaching the end of their useful life, aging **parking lots** showing the effects of Michigan winters, and **technology** that needs replacing—all of these items are additional needs that were included in the bond proposal but are not in the school budget.

Simply put, the district cannot afford to continue providing high-quality programs and opportunities for students if the needs outlined in the proposal are to be addressed through the district's depleting budget. As such, the Board of Education will be putting the same bond proposal on the May 3, 2016 election ballot. The proposal focuses on **Safety & Security**, **Aging Facilities** and **Technology**. Please watch for information regarding the proposal and mark your calendars for May 3, 2016.

Your partner in education,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerald Hopkins".

Gerald Hopkins  
Superintendent

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