

EDITORIAL

LS-H referendum puts students first

By Rachel Miller
Editor



Rachel Miller

Growing up, I always chuckled at Helen Lovejoy's over-the-top exclamation, "Won't somebody please think of the children?" as Springfield residents usually faced some sort of moral dilemma on the hit show "The Simpsons."

Clearly I was not the only one who found humor in Helen's emotional proclamation, since that phrase has been turned into an internet meme many times over.

But there is a very real issue facing the children of the Le Sueur-Henderson School District that needs to be addressed: the state in which those children learn, especially our youngest learners, the 6, 7, 8 and 9-year-olds who attend Park Elementary School in Le Sueur.

I know there are people who are frustrated with the state of the school and feel school officials and administrators allowed Park to deteriorate. I'm not going to have that debate, because frankly it is as pointless as a circle. Unless one of our readers is in possession of a time machine, there is nothing we can do to change what happened. And if one of our readers DOES have a time machine, I wouldn't say no to a weekend foray into the past — I have always wanted to see the Seven Ancient Wonders of the World. Give me a call at 715-610-0936, I will bring snacks.

Back to the present...I have spent the better part of the past three years reporting on LS-H's referendum efforts. I was there for every initial Task Force meeting, and the building tours.

For those that may not so easily recall my Oct. 30, 2019 article, "Is Park Elementary School worth saving? School tour shines light on numerous health and safety concerns" here are the highlights:

- The art room at Park Elementary School shares an air vent with the school's garage, and art teacher Erika Kuhlers informed our tour group that during one instance she began to feel faint from exhaust fumes wafting into her classroom. Luckily, no students were in the classroom at the time and the incident was quickly identified and fixed.

- Although I have not been in the Park girls bathroom since COVID hit, the main floor bathroom smelled of mildew during my 2019 tour. Other

physical conditions include peeling wallpaper, buckling carpets and water-damaged ceilings.

- The teacher's lounge cannot handle the modern-day electrical load, and if staff members try to use two microwaves at once, it will trip the breaker.

- I have worked at the Independent for 4.5 years now, and have written at least three stories in that time about boiler failures in winter months, not to mention the water damage the gymnasium suffered from a cracked pipe in the wall during the spring of 2019.

The children of Le Sueur-Henderson deserve better, and this is not about having "the best" or keeping up with the Joneses, Kardashians or anyone else. It is about providing a safe and healthy facility for children to learn.

Do you know what the referendum will actually cost you? You can calculate your increase by going to <https://www.ehlers-inc.com/microsite/lsh2022/> and entering your property value into the residential, commercial or agricultural calculators. A \$160,000 home would pay \$20/month for just a new school, or \$29/month if all three questions were to pass. A home valued at \$250,000 would pay \$34-50/month, depending on what passes.

Frankly, even \$50/month would be a good deal to build a new K-5 elementary school, address deferred maintenance at the Middle/High School, and build a third gymnasium and expand the Career and Technical Education space and programming that currently prepares LS-H students for much-desired, good-paying careers in the trades. Not to mention that increase will be short-lived, as the Middle/High School bond payments will drop off at the end of 2024, and taxes would be roughly what they are now.

While I don't reside in the LS-H School District and my

taxes are not at stake, I would happily pay for a new school if they were, because I can relate to the struggles. The building that has housed the *Independent* for the past 70 years was built in 1860 and is the oldest commercial building in town. Like Park, maintenance was not done for one reason or another, and the building is in poor shape.

It has dropped below 60 inside during winter months, as I have had to run a space heater to keep my hands warm while typing. We have damaged floor tiling (which likely contains asbestos); peeling ceiling tile paint (which likely contains lead); damaged and missing brick which allows water to seep into the basement; missing drop ceiling tiles which resulted in a bat dropping in one time; and for 3.5 years we had 3.5 walls in our bathroom which was finally fixed when my husband and father-in-law did the repairs this spring.

As a grown woman, it was my decision to remain with the paper and stay working in an office that frankly, was impossible to be proud of. I would hear comments of "they should tear that building down" and quietly agreed.

As the now business owner, I finally have recourse, and in August the Independent office will be moving down one block, to 507 Main St. We look forward to being completely moved out by Aug. 31 and hope to have an open house celebration after we are settle in.

But Park Elementary students don't have that option. They CAN'T advocate for themselves, they have to make the best of a bad situation. Their only recourse is if their parents decide to send them to a neighboring school district, and based on enrollment trends over the past decade, many have done just that.

These children are the future of Le Sueur and Henderson. They will hopefully grow to be future leaders, school board members, business owners, volunteers, parents, neighbors and friends. An investment in them is an investment in our two communities.

So I will encourage everyone to 1) GO VOTE on Tuesday, Aug. 9; and 2) regardless of how you vote, try your best to put past grievances aside and focus solely on what is best for the children, current and future, of the Le Sueur-Henderson School District.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LS-H is worth the investment

I am voting YES on all 3 Questions in the upcoming Aug. 9 LSH School District Bond Referendum for the following reasons:

1. I respect and trust the current School Board members who voted unanimously to pursue the Aug. 9th Bond Referendum.

2. Passage of this Bond Referendum is crucial for providing quality facilities to support our students and also "level the playing field" for retaining and attracting student enrollment.

3. For the past 3 years — despite the COVID disruptions — the School Board developed and followed a strategic process to address our significant facilities maintenance is-

sues. They partnered with our Admin Teams and collaborated with numerous professional and citizen consultants, school staff, and the MN Dept. of Education to analyze needs and develop potential solutions.

4. For the past 3 years, the School Board provided numerous ongoing public information and citizen input opportunities including public surveys, task forces, mailings, newspaper articles, and public meetings in regard to prioritizing solution options.

5. A year ago, the School Board hired a tireless, "take-charge" Superintendent to partner with them to continue building public engagement and to promote the Nov. 2021 Bond Referendum...which failed, but provided needed perspective for a revised solu-

tion.

6. Since last November, the School Board (1) analyzed the failed bond referendum results, (2) solicited additional public input, (3) collaborated with the constituents referred to in #3 above, and (4) developed a scaled-back, 3-question Bond Referendum that address all facility needs, will attract student enrollment, and frees up funds for educational priorities rather than band-aids for facility maintenance.

Assuming you value the future of the LSH School District, please invest in LSH and take time to VOTE YES on Aug. 9th.

Dave Johnson
Facility Task Force consultant (2019-22)
Retired Supt. (2000-2011)
Former HS Principal

WORSHIP SERVICES

Centennial Lutheran Church
701 Locust St., Henderson
Pastor Dennis McManus, vacancy pastor;
Cell: (320) 808-0624
Sundays - 9 a.m. Worship

Church of St. Joseph
213 S. 6th St., Henderson
Msgr. Eugene Lozinski •
507-248-3550
Sunday morning service - 9 a.m.
Tuesday morning service, 8:30 a.m.

St. John - Assumption Parish
26523 - 200th St. Belle Plaine
Msgr. Eugene Lozinski •
507-248-3550
Saturday evening service - 5 p.m.
Wednesday morning - 8:30 a.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church
32234 431st Ave. Gaylord
Pastor Scott Richards
507-248-3550
Sundays: 9:30 - Faith Formation
10:30 - Worship

Creekside Community Church
Christian & Missionary Alliance
114 Shamrock Dr., Arlington
Pastor Tom McCracken
(507) 964-2872
Email: creeksidecma@gmail.com
Video worship at www.creeksidechurchcma.org

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church (WELS)
229 S. 6th St., Le Sueur,
Church 507-665-3477
Rev. Patrick Feldus
920-918-9949
Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran Church
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
38597 State Highway 19, Arlington
Pastor Gary Ruckman (507) 964-2400
stjohnsarlingtonmn.org
9 a.m. Sunday School and Bible Study
10 a.m. Sunday Service

New Hope Baptist Church
2020 Marshall Road. Shakopee
Pastor Tim Douglas (952) 403-5146
Visit www.newhopebaptistchurchmn.com for links to online services

Word of Life Church
890 Kingsway Drive, Le Sueur
Pastor Jason Lang
Sunday worship in-person and online, 10:30 a.m.
www.wordoflifemn.com
New Prague Campus, 830 4th Ave. SW
Sunday worship, 9 a.m.

Sunrise Church
722 Sunrise Dr., St. Peter
Pastor Mark Thompson
10 a.m. Sunday service live streaming

Zion United Church of Christ
240 South Elmwood St., Le Sueur
Rev. Rosemary Rocha, Interim Pastor
Listen to a radio broadcast, 10 a.m., on KCHK 1350 AM or 95.5 FM.
In person worship has resumed at 9 a.m. Sunday.

St. Anne's Church
217 N. 3rd St., Le Sueur
Fr. Chris Shofner
Parish Office: (507) 665-3811
www.stanneschurchlesueur.org
See archspm.org/covid19 for mass and prayer resources

St. Paul's United Church of Christ
111 S. 6th St., Henderson
Rev. Deb Meyer - (507) 248-3594
9:00 a.m. Sunday School
9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

Gaylord Assembly of God
26958 MN-5, Gaylord • (507)237-5341
Pastor Bob Holmbeck
Thursday, Feb. 24 Norwood Bible Study, 9 a.m.
9:15 a.m. Sunday School
10 a.m. Worship Service 6:30 p.m. Wednesday Evening supper, Bible classes and Youth Focused
Need a ride? Call (507) 237-5117

Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
14226 W. 280th St., Henderson
(507) 665-2932
Pr. Foy Christopherson
9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship service
Also on Facebook Live

United Methodist Church
730 South 6th St., Le Sueur
Pastor Terri Horn
1:30 & 7:30 p.m. broadcast CATV #7
lesueurumc.org
All services will be livestreamed on Facebook and later available for viewing on www.lesueurumc.org

Jehovah's Witness
Kingdom Hall, South 9th St., Henderson
Go to www.jw.org/en for video to download, or watch online

River Rock Church
PO Box 184, Belle Plaine (952) 873-5453
Chris Teien-Senior Pastor
Dan Jetto-Worship Pastor
330 S. Market St. in Belle Plaine.
www.riverrockchurch.com
Watch services online at www.riverrockchurch.com/watch

Our Lady of the Prairie Catholic Church
200 E. Church St., Belle Plaine (952) 873-6564
Father Michael Kaluza
www.ourladyoftheprairie.com
Mass Times: Saturday 4:15 p.m.,
Sunday 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.
Tuesday 6:30 p.m.,
Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8:30 a.m.
Sacrament of Reconciliation 1/2 hour before Mass

First Lutheran Church
116 Inner Dr., Le Sueur
(507) 665-2615
9 a.m. In-person worship
Communion first & third Sunday
Visit www.firstlutheranlesueur.org for links to our live broadcast on our YouTube page

First Presbyterian Church
219 W. Main St., Belle Plaine (952) 873-2966
Email: fpcbelleplaine@frontiernet.net
Pastor Wayne D. Waibel (612) 750-3443
Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.

HENDERSON SENIOR DINING MENU

- Thursday, July 28:** Swedish meatballs, scalloped potatoes, carrots, bread/margarine, dessert, low fat milk
 - Friday, July 29:** Baked fish, rice pilaf, Oriental blend vegetables, warm apple slices, low fat milk
 - Monday, Aug. 1:** Spaghetti with meat sauce, romaine salad with dressing, pineapple, Texas toast, cookie, low fat milk
 - Tuesday, Aug. 2:** Pork loin, yams, broccoli, bread with margarine, dessert, low fat milk
 - Wednesday, Aug. 3:** Chicken pasta salad, sliced cucumbers, fruit salad, dessert, low fat milk
- Phone number: 1-866-985-8514 (10 a.m. to noon, best time to call)**

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Commissioner



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