



Berlin Journal Article

Berlin Area School District

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Topic: Investing in Schools and Community

The citizens of Berlin and the surrounding municipalities that make up the Berlin Area School District have been funding the building of schools and their operation for over 160 years. For all that time they have proudly supported the education of our children and have placed value on a high quality, publicly funded school system, available to all. This investment in our children and schools has been a point of pride for our community.

Last Monday the Berlin Area School District school board voted 9-0 to bring two referendum questions to the voters on April 4th. The board had been researching and deliberating on the needs of the school district for many months. They have taken their decision seriously, making sure they balanced the need for ongoing investments in children and schools with the costs of these investments on the taxpayers. In the end, they felt the need for additional operational funding as well as capital improvements in our schools was necessary and they wanted the voters to weigh in on whether they agreed to making these investments.

I encourage everyone to learn more about our schools, inform yourselves regarding the referendum questions and the needs behind the questions, and then get out to vote on April 4th. In the coming weeks there will be mailers, social media posts, videos, articles in the Berlin Journal, and community meetings with a school walkthrough. Since all taxpayers in the district boundaries support our schools through property taxes, it is important to learn more about our schools and the value they bring to the community.

When I talk about investing in children and community, what exactly does that mean? The Oxford Dictionary provides us with multiple definitions of the words "invest" and "investment". These definitions range from "buying property or shares with the hope of making a profit" to "spending money on something in order to make it better or more successful". Both of these definitions could apply to the act of providing tax dollars to improve or make the schools better or improve the success of our students and communities. The community has been investing large amounts of money in our schools for over 160 years, with the "hope" that these investments turn into real future value for our children and community.

Some of the value that has come about from these investments include the countless students who have gone on to earn college degrees or certifications, prepared themselves for work straight out of high school, started up businesses or took over the family farm, served in the



military, or many other post high school opportunities. A high percentage of our students leave high school, go off for school or work, and then return to the Berlin area to settle down, raise a family, and contribute to the community. The investment in our children's K-12 schooling not only improves their lives and provides for a strong future for them, but it literally brings about future profit and benefit to the community.

There is one final Oxford Dictionary definition of investment that is particularly powerful and important for our community, that being to invest is "to spend time, energy, or effort on something that you think is good or useful." Since arriving in Berlin I have been impressed by the countless acts of kindness and generosity I witness throughout our community. I see people every day providing service to others, volunteering in schools and the community, giving of their time to their churches, serving on committees and clubs, adopting highways to pick up litter, and the list goes on and on. We are strong because so many people have for so many years given of themselves for each other and for the community. When we give of our time, talents, and energy we are truly investing in our children and community.

As I wrap up this article, I challenge you to think about what it means to you to invest in our children and community. Think about who has invested in you and how we have all benefited from those who came before us. Think about how we can all work together to continue to invest in our collective future. As the superintendent of the Berlin Area School District and a new resident of Berlin, I commit to you to do my best to ensure that all investments of taxes, donations, time, talent, and energy are carefully and thoughtfully utilized to provide benefit to our children and community for years to come.

Thank you for your continued support of our children and community.