

Kieleidoscope  
January 19, 2017

There is much enthusiasm among two parent/community groups who are seeking to provide the Kiel Area School District students with upgraded facilities. One group is leading a campaign to build a new auditorium and another organized group from the Kiel Booster Club is hoping to finance a new football stadium and track.

Both groups have presented to the school board to ask for the Board's approval to move forward in trying to raise money for each of these projects. The Board has given their blessing to begin the fund-raising.

An effort is underway by the "Raider Nation Renovation" Committee to have a track up to code and ready to hold conference meets and WIAA competitions. The condition of the current track has prohibited Kiel from hosting track meets for a number of years. All track meets are held in other districts that have adequate facilities to host.

Current seating at the football stadium is limited. In addition, the restroom and concessions facilities are out of date and inconvenient to spectators and guests. The Raider Nation Renovation Committee has drawings and plans to share when soliciting donations for the project. They have a goal of achieving the 2.5 million dollar project without a referendum.

The fine arts auditorium committee is currently working to hire an architect to create plans so costs of the project can be estimated. The current auditorium is original to the school which was built in 1970. The goal of the committee is to have a facility large enough to hold community events in addition to the school plays and musicals. The current auditorium has seating for less than 300 guests. The plans for the new one would seat 600. A new auditorium would allow an experience for our students not currently available within the small stage setting and seating. Musical concerts now held in the gymnasium could be performed in the upgraded facilities, plus a student art gallery is an addition requested within the auditorium plan. The goal of the planning committee is to raise one million dollars from area businesses for naming rights and from other members of the community who support the arts. The total cost of the auditorium is estimated at six million and will need support through a referendum vote to complete the project. The Committee is required to return to the Board in 2018 with an update. At that time the Board will have to determine if they can support going to referendum to begin the building phase.

Both the football stadium, the track and the auditorium are in need of upgrades. School districts around the area have much better facilities. Parents on both committees believe that upgrading the facilities would be an attractor for new families moving into the area. They also believe, as do I that our kids deserve the best experiences we can provide. It is an investment in the future.