

Kieleidoscope  
October 1, 2015

Last April, we went to referendum for a new pool. The citizen's vote told the Board of Education and the Administration that the proposal allowing authority to build a new pool, in addition to a therapy pool and a remodeling of the locker rooms was too costly. The vote was a message from the citizens to review the needs related to the pool.

We can all learn from actions we take, and this learning is exactly what our Board of Education and I took away from the defeated referendum. In retrospect, we believed that we had the right process of listening to the advisory committee and responding to the district-wide survey that supported a new pool. The School Board made a decision to go to referendum with those key pieces of information. However, it was evident by the results from the vote on the referendum that the survey was not an accurate picture of what the majority of the citizens supported.

We can find excuses and blame the failed referendum on those who did not respond to the survey or find some other justification for the defeat, but we have not. We have taken ownership of our decisions, learned from them and have determined our next steps.

During the past five months, district facilities staff, the administration and the School Board set out to repair the most critical concerns with the pool to ensure its safety and continued operation. The previous School Board made a decision to save funds from the successful 2012 referendum specifically for the pool. These funds have allowed the district to hire a structural engineer to recommend the immediate repair needs of the pool so that it can operate as it has for the past forty years. The district has purchased a new chemical feed system and will hire a firm to repair the drains and the window in the pool. The structural crack that is evident in the pool has been there for many years. It has been recommended that we continue to monitor the water loss from the pool to determine if there is any increase in water loss. The repairs we are doing should bring us up to code and allow the pool to operate as is.

The pool is in safe working condition. The swim program issues, such as size of the deck, observation space and number of lanes will remain as a need to consider in the future, as will the prolonged use of the existing structure. For now, we will continue providing the quality swim program the Kiel Area School District is proud to have.