**Fillmore Superintendent and Board of Education pursue ways to improve the school in a cost efficient manner.**

The Fillmore Board of Education and I are committed to being fiscally responsible while focusing on continuous improvement of our programs and facilities. Below are two projects that will allow us to make significant gains in both our ability to use technology in the classroom and save money annually by adding products that increase our energy efficiency. Our Board of Education and I will continue to look for opportunities through grants and aid agreements to make improvements at Fillmore while being fiscally responsible.

**ERate Grant presents an opportunity for Fillmore to upgrade wireless internet network for minimal cost**

E-Rate is a federal funded subsidy that provides discounts to eligible schools and libraries for purchasing telecommunication services, internet access and in some cases technology hardware to support these services. This program is administered by the Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) under the direction of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC).

Fillmore just received notice that a proposed $165,000 E-Rate project to upgrade our wireless access throughout the building has been approved for funding. E-Rate will cover $111,000 of the cost of the project and the balance of the cost is eligible for BOCES Aid. This project is scheduled for the 2013-2014 school year.

**Wireless E-Rate Project Cost Break Down**

* Estimated cost of project - $165,000
* ERate Funds Available -$111,000
* Difference Remaining - $54,000
* BOCES Aid on remaining cost of project-$45,900
* Total Revenue (E-Rate Grant and BOCES Aid) - $156,900
* Estimated remaining cost to Fillmore= $8,100

**Why does Fillmore need to upgrade wireless internet services?**

Computers and other wireless devices are playing an increasing role in day to day instruction. Fillmore needs to have the infrastructure and bandwidth to support this increased usage. By placing a wireless access point inside of every classroom, it will allow several classrooms to use the internet at the same time in a single hallway without delay or disruption.

In addition to creating the wireless infrastructure needed for everyday learning, this project also meets the demand being placed on schools by the State Education Department to prepare for computerized testing. “The Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department (NYSED) have set a course to prepare the State's education system for a transition to computer-based testing. Specifically, NYSED is planning for the implementation of computer-based tests statewide starting in the 2014-15 school year.” This quote is taken directly from a memo written by the NYS Commissioner of Education to all School Superintendents on May 16, 2012. This E-Rate Project will place access points in larger areas that we currently use for testing including our gymnasiums and the cafeteria.

**100,000 Energy Savings Project will result in net zero cost to Fillmore School Budget!**

On November 15, 2012, the Fillmore Board of Education approved a Request for Proposals from Energy Performance Contract Providers. Fillmore is hoping to be able to take advantage of the Net Zero Energy Performance Plan. Net Zero means you add $100,000 of energy saving products to the building at zero cost and you reap the energy savings from those products annually.

Our 2013-2014 budget proposal will include $100,000 being transferred from our fund balance (savings) to a capital fund. The State Education Department allows for small capital projects of $100,000 or less to be approved by the voters as part of the annual budget. The “Net Zero” plan uses our state building aid, rebates from NYSERDA and our local energy companies, and reductions in our utility bills to fully fund the cost of the project. The return on investment can be more than 100% in the first year depending on the energy savings achieved.

Sample Project – actual project may be different

* Scope of Project - Replace oldest inefficient fluorescent bulbs with energy efficient LED light fixtures which use 30-40 percent less electricity, last ten times longer and require less maintenance. Older fluorescent light fixtures would be the first to be replaced if the budget proposal is approved.
* Initial cost to the district for project- $100,000
* State Aid Rate for Energy Savings Project –Fillmore receives .85 cents in return for every $1.00 spent. Return value to district $85,000
* New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Rebates for each individual fixture. Estimated value in rebates - $10,000
* Energy savings from installation of fixtures is estimated to be around $10,000
* Total estimated return to the district $105,000 for a positive gain of $5,000 added to our annual budget.

\*Fillmore Board of Education will determine the scope of the proposed project on Thursday, December, 20, 2012.

\* The Request For Proposal includes language that allows the district to not be liable for any expense going forward with the project if this year’s 2013-14 budget is not approved. If the budget is not approved the project is not approved. It will not be voted on separately, it is included in the budget proposal in accordance with state regulations.

It is important to note that **this opportunity is only possible if our voters approve our annual budget proposal**. The $100,000 will be transferred from fund balance into the capital budget line as part of the 2013-14 school budget. We will be able to replace the money in the general fund within the same budget year and possibly add more revenue when we receive the money for the district in the form of aid, energy rebates, and energy savings. This is a great way to make energy efficient improvement to the building at cost effective rates!

These two projects are examples of how we can upgrade our building and improve educational opportunities while minimizing the cost to local taxpayers. These challenging financial times require that we continue to search for and take advantage of creative ways to fund reasonable projects. The Board of Education and I are committed to making needed improvements in a fiscally responsible manner.

Written by Ravo Root, Superintendent of Fillmore