

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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If District 200 voters choose to allow the District to borrow money to build a new school, I'll accept that result. What I won't accept is the district ignoring the will of the community expressed in two separate referenda, to pile on more debt our District can't afford with our already high property tax bills. For that reason, I have filed a lawsuit to stop Wheaton-Warrenville, Community Unit School District (CUSD) 200 from borrowing and building without the permission of our community in a referendum.

District 200 is tampering with election results right here in DuPage County. On January 11, 2017, the District 200 Board told the community that the April 2017 referendum – the Board's second attempt in four years to get the community to approve a new school building – was “all about giving the community their chance to vote.” Our community did vote, and we voted NO. Yet barely a year after that election, the Board began colluding with its financial advisors to take away our vote, through an alleged loophole in Illinois law. In direct defiance of our legally cast votes, it is trying to do the exact same thing the voters rejected twice – borrow money to build another new school building – simply by calling the transaction a “lease”. Elections have consequences; the Board needs to listen to the taxpayers and comply with the law.

The District signed a deal to “lease” a building that doesn't even exist. Even if the building isn't completed or does not comply with life safety requirements – the District would still have to make the “lease” payments. The District thinks that by using the magic word “lease” its two failed referendum efforts and the will of the community are somehow erased, and it can proceed in an identical manner as if a referendum had been adopted by the community to build and finance a new school.

Not only is the District ignoring its own voters, it's ignoring financial reality: it doesn't have the money. At the time of the 2017 referendum, Superintendent Schuler claimed the District would need to spend \$6.5 million a year extra just to maintain its existing buildings if the referendum did not pass. The District hasn't said where it will find that money, let alone pay for its other obligations such as raises under the new teacher contract, yet it wants to add to its existing debt load to build another brand new building, even though the Board made a specific finding on March 14, 2018 that “there are insufficient funds on hand and available to pay the costs” of the new building. Its own advisors say this “could squeeze other operating expenditures over time.”

District 200's Vision statement talks about being regarded for the “character of our students”. The District does not model character when it breaks its word to the voters and looks for legal loopholes rather than creating community consensus. I have researched this issue and I believe the District is wrong; I am hopeful that our courts will agree.

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