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## **Chippewa Valley Schools to conclude 2010 bond program**

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CLINTON TOWNSHIP/MACOMB TOWNSHIP — With a series of renovations scheduled for this summer, Chippewa Valley Schools is putting the finishing touches on the extensive capital improvement program that district voters approved four years ago.

On Feb. 24, the Board of Education voted unanimously to award contracts totaling more than \$3 million for construction projects to be completed by this fall. Most of the work will occur inside the district's 12 elementary school buildings. According to Scott Sederlund, assistant superintendent of business and operations for Chippewa Valley Schools, these improvements will mark the end of the 25-year, \$89 million bond extension that district residents supported in February 2010, with the exception of a handful of additional technology, equipment and furniture upgrades, along with other small purchases set to take place over the next couple years.

The board also gave the green light to more than \$1.25 million in renovations to the Dakota High School football stadium, a project that will be paid for using the remaining funds from the district's 2004 bond program. It will involve replacing Dakota's synthetic football turf, its eight-lane track surface and its electronic scoreboard system.

Sederlund noted that the 2010 bond program has resulted in a variety of needed improvements at every building in the district, rather than a handful of big purchases. This is considerably different from the 2004 program, which resulted in the creation of Seneca Middle School, Sequoyah Elementary School, the Dakota High School Ninth Grade Center and the Little Turtle Early Childhood Center.

"This bond has been unique because it's the first one we've had in probably 25 or 30 years that did not include the construction of any new school buildings," Sederlund explained. "But these upgrades have been tremendous for our district. They have allowed us to reduce our energy costs, improve our security with new surveillance cameras and door buzzers, upgrade our technology infrastructure, install new playground equipment and parking lots, and purchase new school buses."

For School Board Treasurer George Sobah, the addition of state-of-the-art technology has been especially significant for the benefits that it has brought to Chippewa Valley students at all levels.

"That's the most impressive aspect to me because it impacts every student in the district," he said. "It involves things that our kids use in the classroom every single day. Modern technology really enhances their learning and helps prepare them for the future and for the real world."

The \$3 million worth of projects approved by the board last week will take place at each elementary school, as well as at Little Turtle and at the district's administrative offices. These changes include everything from new carpeting and flooring to office and bathroom renovations, new cabinets and counters, heating and cooling replacements, improved lighting, new fire alarms, and additional storage space. The work will begin this spring, with most of it scheduled to occur while students are on summer vacation, and everything is on track to be finished by the time they return to school in the fall.

According to Sederlund, the 2010 bond program has been carried out in four parts. First, in 2011, there were exterior improvements to the elementary schools, as well as some electrical work, followed by high school projects in 2012, middle school projects in 2013 and upgrades to the interior portions of the elementary schools this year.

"When we first started this bond program," Sederlund said, "we separated everything into the levels and needs for each school. We decided to divide our projects up over four different summers so that we weren't inconveniencing too many people all at once."

Sobah pointed out that these improvements will also allow Chippewa Valley officials to keep the school buildings at the older, south end of the district compatible with those at the newer, north end.

Sederlund firmly believes, though, that the final results will do much more than just create school buildings that are brighter, shinier and more aesthetically pleasing. After all, modern, cutting-edge infrastructure is only useful to schools if it allows students to get a better education.

“Our hope is that all of these changes will ultimately have a positive impact on student achievement,” he said. “We also hope that it makes life a little easier for teachers in their classrooms and for everyone else who works in our district.”

Sobah thanked voters from across Chippewa Valley Schools — residents with and without children in the district — for recognizing the importance of this bond program four years ago.

“We’re just really lucky and really thankful that we have such a supportive community,” he said. “So many people in this area saw the value of investing in these improvements to our district and understood how much they would add to all of our property values. This program has really been a win-win for everyone who lives here.”

For more information on Chippewa Valley Schools’ 2010 capital improvement program, go to [www.chippewavalleyschools.org/ourdistrict/bond-improvements](http://www.chippewavalleyschools.org/ourdistrict/bond-improvements).