

## AUGUST 2017 VOTE - Mark Stewart on the Proposed Farmington High Rebuild.

Dear Teachers, Staff, and Administrators,

I wanted to reveal how one governor candidate, I, decided on a vote that may have been important to you: the Farmington High Rebuild.

At an estimated \$138,000,000, for a building, it was a mis-prioritization. I believe strongly in education (I've worked with private and public schools for almost 20 years.), but look what \$138,000,000 alternately buys for our students:

30 science teachers (5 per grade at Robbins and FHS), plus support staff for them...for thirty years!

OR

For our above-average teachers teachers district-wide: a nearly \$100,000 bonus.

OR

For our above-average support staff district wide: a nearly \$70,000 bonus.

OR

For every 4th, 7th, and 10th grader: a high-end laptop, design computer, robotics kit, AND maker-space producer... in perpetuity.

Buildings don't teach. Good teachers do. To spend on an inanimate building is to slight the very good teachers we have.

Buildings don't guide students. To wholly renovate spaces that need just a tweak, or need no renovation at all, is to pull money away from students who could use more support and more counseling, especially college and post grad non-college counseling.

Buildings don't speak. But students do. My tutoring firm attracts 10 - 20 Farmington High students each summer for SAT Prep. This summer I asked three rising seniors and four recent alums whether **THEY** felt FHS needed the proposed renovations. None of them said "yes".

I am a governor candidate very much in favor of better education. I would support in my town more money that truly enhances our students' experiences. I'd like to see my home town school pay our teachers more. I'd like to see my home town attract great new teachers every year. A \$138,000,000 bond would stifle that.

A good teacher is worth more than a good lawyer (I'm a former lawyer with a decent perspective here). A good guidance counselor may be worth more than a good engineer (I've seen how excellent guidance propels students to greatness, and how bad or absent guidance lets kids languish).

I urge town leaders to keep "improving education" on their priority list. But it's best to channel the efforts to improve students capabilities, improve teachers work, and improve staffers' daily ability to facilitate both students and teachers.