

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## Superintendent search on hold

Pottstown school directors will delay their search for a new superintendent until the fall.

The Montgomery County Intermediate Unit, which is conducting the search for the school district, will begin advertising the position in October with a deadline for submissions at the end of February 2017.

We now anticipate the new superintendent will start July 1, 2017.

When we started our search last February, the school board received applications from 20 candidates and interviewed nine. We did not find a good fit.

### Rodriguez takes over

Stephen Rodriguez, formerly our human resources director, then agreed to be acting superintendent until we elect a new superintendent. At that time, Rodriguez will become assistant to the superintendent.

### Long term commitment

Hiring a superintendent is a long-term commitment, and we want to do everything possible to ensure the success of the person we hire.

Pennsylvania law gives special protections to superintendents, who must be given contracts of three to five years. Asking a su-



**Acting superintendent  
Stephen Rodriguez**

perintendent to leave before his term is up is often difficult and expensive.

### Financial issue

Our greatest challenge is financial. For more than a decade, Pottstown has had among the highest taxes in Pennsylvania — higher than 95 percent of the state's 500 school districts.

### Declining tax base

Our tax base has been declining for years. Finding a superintendent willing and able to deal with our financial situation is not easy. Many candidates are well versed in curriculum and instruction. But our first priority must be someone with a strong fiscal and managerial background.

### Human resources director

Last week, the school board hired Deena Cellini from the Ridley School District as human resources director. This takes a lot of pressure off Mr. Rodriguez, especially since the summer is Pottstown's main hiring season.



**Deena Cellini**

### Residency incentive

Cellini will be eligible for the district's homeowner incentive. If she buys a house in Pottstown, the district will offer her a \$10,000 interest-free loan, forgivable over a five-year period. We hope she takes advantage of it.

### Administrative costs down

At present, our administrative costs are down from 2012, when Reed Lindley resigned as superintendent. His replacement, Jeff Spargana, eliminated the assistant superintendent position, a big savings.

When the new superintendent is hired, I hope we can reassign responsibilities to keep costs down. If the will is there, there are usually creative ways to become more efficient.



**Commentary by  
Tom Hylton**