

SPECIAL EDITION!

Yes, I realize that it has not been two weeks since my last education-related article. However, it is the week before the May 2nd Primary election. By now, it is a well-documented fact that the Adams County/Ohio Valley School District has a great deal for our elementary students, our staffs, and our taxpayers. Obviously, my advice to you is to take the deal, and “**Vote YES for New Schools**” on May 2nd! This article will deal with a review of the most commonly-asked questions and answers concerning the proposed bond issue.

- *Where will the new elementary schools be built?*

The District now owns suitable acreage next to each of our present high schools to construct the new elementary schools. When finished, all students in each attendance area will be housed in buildings within sight of each other.

- *What will be done with our old elementary schools when we are ready to move into the new buildings?*

The old elementary buildings will either be sold to an interested buyer, or they will be demolished and the debris will be removed from each site. The OSFC program will pay 93% of these demolition costs.

- *Which new elementary school will be built first?*

All three buildings will be built simultaneously as soon as we have completed all of the design phase work.

- *What will the new elementary schools look like and will all three be identical?*

We don't know what the new elementary schools will look like at this point. The design phase cannot begin until the bond issue is passed by voters. An important part of the design phase is community engagement. During this phase, the architect will conduct meetings in each attendance area to gather input into each building's design. It is our goal that each of the elementary buildings will have a unique appearance, while housing all of the same amenities within the building.

- *When would the new elementary schools be ready for occupancy?*

We believe that we should be ready to begin the 2009-2010 school year in the new elementary facilities.

- *Why are we spending money to renovate the high schools and career-technical center when those buildings aren't that old?*

Plain and simple, we must include this as part of the overall project in order to participate in the Ohio School Facilities program. All facilities that house students must be included in the project. We do not have the option of constructing the elementary buildings and not renovating the high schools and career-technical center. These renovations and upgrades are based on an evaluation of the facilities conducted by an independent architectural firm commissioned by the Ohio School Facilities

Commission. The costs are what they have determined to be necessary to bring the high schools and career-technical center up to state educational and safety standards. Keep in mind that the State of Ohio is paying the majority of these expenses, and the bond issue is only paying our local share of these costs.

- *I've heard that the state will be paying 93% of the costs, but that our local bond issue is \$18 million and the total project is \$71 million. Why is our bond issue more than 7% of the total?*

In the master plan developed by the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC), the state/local ratio assigned is 93% State/7% local funding. This ratio applies to the basic project costs as outlined in the OSFC's master plan for our project. The OSFC will not pay for items in our project that are not included in the "basic project costs." These items include extra classroom space beyond OSFC's calculations of our needed space, high performance school designs for the new elementary buildings to maximize energy efficiency, and some other construction contingencies. These items which the OSFC does not include in the "basic project costs" are called "locally-funded initiatives" and must be funded entirely from the local bond issue.

- *How much millage will be required?*

The bond issue is 4.14 mills for construction/renovation and .50 mills for maintenance, for a total of 4.64 mills. The .50 mills for maintenance is an OSFC requirement, and this money is restricted for maintenance of the facilities included in

the program. The 4.14 mills will be for a period of 27 years and the .50 mill maintenance will be for 23 years, the maximum allowed by the law.

- *I've heard that the current millage for the high school indebtedness is being reduced. How much and when will this take effect?*

When the bond issue to build the high schools was passed in 1994, 5.97 mills were levied to finance the debt obligation. Since that time, taxpayers have continued to pay 5.97 mills. The County Auditor, working in conjunction with the District, has determined that as a result of increased tax valuation through new construction and periodic revaluations of property, the millage can be reduced to 4.73 mills, a reduction of 1.24 mills. This reduction will take effect on tax bills in 2007.

- *What will be the actual cost to the average taxpayer?*

For a single-family residence in Adams County, the average market value is approximately \$60,000. The net tax increase on this home would be \$62.48 annually. If you pay your taxes in half-year increments, the increase would be \$31.24 per half. On a residence with a market value of \$100,000, the annual increase would be \$104.13, or \$52.07 per half. These estimates are based on the net increase in millage of 3.40 mills (bond issue/maintenance millage of 4.64 mills minus 1.24 mill reduction on the high school bonded indebtedness). If you'd like to know how much your taxes would be affected, you may contact your County Auditor's office.

- *How will the funding for the elementary buildings be allocated among the attendance areas?*

Funding for each building will be based on student enrollment at each of the buildings. The OSFC calculates the size of the buildings based on a square foot per student formula. The budget is then based on OSFC's cost per square foot.

- *What happens if Peebles becomes a separate school district?*

Recalling Senator Tom Niehaus' article in the March 8 People's Defender, it appears unlikely that deconsolidation will occur at this point. However, if deconsolidation occurs at some point in the future, the new district would assume responsibility for its share of the new indebtedness based on current tax valuation. District buildings within the Peebles area would become property of the new district.

The bottom line is that this opportunity is a great deal for our taxpayers and our school district. The state of Ohio has pledged over \$50,000,000 toward this project. What a deal! We must do our part to take advantage of this offer. Let's provide state-of-the-art new facilities for all of our students.

Let's cap off this groundswell of support from our community with a **"YES"** vote on May 2nd! Thank you.