

P.A.S.S. GROUP SPREADS THE NEWS

I would like to devote this week's article to expressing the gratitude that I have for the members of People Advocating Superior Schools (P.A.S.S.). I would like to mention the names of each and every member who has been active in this organization since it's beginning. However, I don't want to run the risk of leaving out anyone's name, so I won't attempt it. This group has been involved with all of the community festivals thus far this fall. Booths have been staffed by volunteers who help spread the word of our pending projects. PASS has had an entry at the parades at Winchester, Peebles, and Seaman. Its members also concentrated on the fall carnivals held at the elementary schools and in some of our townships. In addition to spreading the good news about our opportunity to build new elementary schools in our district, they are also involved in a major fundraising project to pay for the campaign materials. Each and every resident can help us with this project. And it will only cost you \$20.00. I would suggest that you can obtain more information on this from the PASS website at www.superschools.org, or by contacting Joy Bauman, fundraising project chairperson, at 587-5279.

PASS has held meetings at each of our present elementary buildings, and has offered building tours to anyone not familiar with our old, outdated, and inadequate elementary facilities. Their most recent such meeting was held at West Union Elementary on October 13th, and was promoted as a public forum. This was done in an effort to get more people actively involved in the discussion through questions and answers. I was unable to attend that meeting due to a family commitment. However, in my absence, John Lewis and Mike Pell did an excellent job, and I certainly thank them for all of their

efforts in facilitating this meeting. With the remainder of this article, I would like to provide some answers to some of the frequently asked questions. So, here goes.

What is the OSFC? Ohio Schools Facilities Commission. This is the state agency that will be partnering with our school district on this proposed project.

What is the state/local match? This is a term that refers to how much money will come into our school district from state funds as compared to how much money must be generated locally through a bond issue. Our school district has one of the best state/local match percentages ever at 93/7. This means that the state will pay for 93% of the OSFC approved construction plan, and local taxpayers will pay for 7%. This does not include any LFI parts of the project.

What is an LFI? An LFI is a Locally Funded Initiative. It refers to such things as land purchases, possible road improvements, and anything else that would not be covered by the adopted OSFC Master Plan. No doubt, our project will include some LFI items as determined by public input and the board, along with guidance from the architectural firm representing the district.

Why are we proposing to work on the high school buildings and the Career and Technical Center when these buildings are newer? True; these buildings are newer. However, none of them were built in accordance with the OSFC design manual. Therefore, even though the high school buildings are not quite ten years old, they qualify for various upgrades.

The CTC facility is approaching thirty years of use and age. It qualifies for quite a bit of upgrading at its age. Also, our school district will be eligible to participate in the OSFC's CFAP program. CFAP stands for Classroom Facilities Assistance Program, and covers all buildings in the district that will still be in use once the building program is completed. This one question will actually be the subject of a future article where you will be given more details.

How many mills will we need for our local share? We are still several weeks from knowing this. We hope that the amount of local millage to pay for our portion of the project will not exceed 4.5 mills. However, this will be determined by the number of LFI's, which are paid one hundred percent locally, and the projected increases in steel and other materials, labor costs, etc.

How much of this money will be spent on any renovations at the central administration office? There are no current plans to do any work at the central office.

What do we hope to accomplish with these new schools? First, and foremost, we will be providing modern, state-of-the-art learning centers for our PreK-6 students and staffs. Secondly, this project is more than just a school building project. It is an investment in the infrastructure of our school district and community development as well for the next fifty years. Prospective businesses and industries will see our school district and communities in a more positive way. Property values will be enhanced. There is something to be gained out of this project for all of us.

My next article will deal with our October 2005 scores on the Third Grade Reading Achievement Test. I will also provide you with an update on our proposed building project. Until then, I want to extend a Happy Thanksgiving to all of you.

Charles P. Kimble

Superintendent