

Recommendation for an April 2002 levy issue

The Citizens' Advisory Committee recommended placement on the April 2002 ballot of a 25-cent levy increase that would include the following components:

- Staff salary increases to maintain and attract quality R-7 employees
- Additional staff to meet growth needs, including staffing for the opening of the third high school
- Additional classroom technology for students
- Funding for a new middle-level program to offer expanded opportunities to seventh- and eighth-graders
- A gifted program for students from kindergarten through third grade (a gifted program is currently offered for students in grades 4 through 6 at the elementary schools).

Citizens' Advisory Committee members discussed the following objectives during their study:

- Providing financial resources and support to maintain our district's quality program
- Increasing staff salaries to make R-7 more competitive
- Hiring employees to staff new facilities (including the third high school)
- Purchasing additional instructional technology
- Implementing the new middle school and primary gifted programs

Citizens' Advisory Committee members also discussed the fact that the R-7 School District has not seen an increase in its operating levy since 1985. The overall property tax levy has increased to fund construction of new schools several times since then, but there has not been an increase in almost 17 years. Constant, significant enrollment growth has strained the district's financial resources as the district has funded the staffing and operating costs of 10 new schools since 1990.

Board of Education members unanimously placed a bond and levy package on the April 2002 ballot. These issues followed the recommendations of the Citizens' Advisory Committee and were both approved by voters in April.