

**Lee's Summit R-7 Board of Education approves
no-tax-increase bond issue for April 6 ballot**

Ballot issue designed to benefit students, improve existing facilities

The Lee's Summit R-7 Board of Education unanimously approved a citizens' recommendation for an April no-tax-increase bond issue at the Board's Dec. 17 meeting. The recommendation came from the R-7 Citizens' Advisory Committee, a broad-based community group, after a comprehensive study that included a community survey.

The \$16 million no-tax-increase bond issue will appear on the April 6 school and municipal ballot and requires a four-sevenths majority for approval.

According to CAC presenters at the November Board of Education meeting, the group prioritized a number of projects that will positively impact each student enrolled in the R-7 School District. The 14 projects selected include improvements at a number of R-7 schools, technology enhancements, energy-saving upgrades, new school buses and funds to purchase land for a future school site. CAC members emphasized that the comprehensive list of projects is designed to address facility needs at existing schools while benefitting students throughout the school district.

As part of the Citizens' Advisory Committee study, the group evaluated results from a fall random telephone survey, funded by Piper Jaffray. The survey, which included approximately 400 residents, included general opinion trends about the school district and about proposed bond-issue projects. A total of 80 percent of those surveyed "strongly favored" or "favored" the bond issue after learning of potential components and the no-tax-increase aspect.

Projects recommended for inclusion in the April 6 no-tax-increase bond issue are:

- A second-phase remodeling project at Hazel Grove Elementary to complete first-phase improvements funded through a voter-approved 2008 no-tax-increase bond issue. Work would include construction of a first-grade classroom, art room and music room; renovations to the office area, focus room and staff work room; new public restrooms; and new storage areas.
- The addition of a new auxiliary gymnasium at Bernard Campbell Middle School. The school's second gymnasium, this addition would serve physical-education classes, school athletic teams and activities. This project would provide parity among all three middle schools since both other schools have two gymnasiums.

- A remodeling project at Pleasant Lea Middle School to improve spaces for the school's teacher planning center and guidance area.
- Technology improvements to address instructional and operational technology needs, laptop and desktop replacement, network infrastructure, security and storage, and emerging technology initiatives in the areas of student instruction.
- Resurfacing of all three R-7 middle-school tracks to serve physical-education classes, athletic teams and community walkers and runners.
- Construction of two unlighted, multi-use women's softball fields at Lee's Summit North High School that would serve physical-education classes and athletic teams, eliminating team travel to Legacy Park for practices and home games.
- A Lee's Summit High School multi-use physical-education/activity/athletic project that would remodel the school's existing spaces for wrestling, athletic training, mechanical and robotics team activities while constructing an approximately 7,700-square-foot new building. The new building would serve men's and women's programs and include restrooms, a weight training/strength-conditioning area, locker rooms, offices and storage areas.
- Remodeling of the area currently used by Lee's Summit High School wrestlers to create a district-wide robotics center. This project would be made possible by the addition planned for the LSHS physical-education/activity/athletic facility listed above. All three high schools' robotics teams would use the remodeled space, allowing them to share materials, tools and shop facilities.
- Renovation of existing tennis courts at all three high schools that would upgrade court surfaces and serve physical-education classes, athletic teams and community members.
- Replacement of the existing grass turf at all three high schools' stadiums with multi-use, all-weather artificial turf to serve physical-education classes, high-school and middle-school football and soccer teams and high school marching bands, drumlines, cheerleaders, flag and dance teams. Community organizations would also have the opportunity to use the artificial turf fields. The project would eliminate the need for rescheduling and relocation of R-7 stadium events due to weather-related challenges while providing safe and dry fields for physical-education and extra-curricular activities. It would also offer a partial operation and maintenance cost savings payback over the life of the turf while bringing the district's stadiums in line with artificial-turf stadiums at the majority of metro-area high schools.

- Funds to go toward the sixth phase of the district's ongoing performance contracting energy-conservation efforts, including upgrades to lighting; heating, ventilation and cooling equipment and controls; water-use equipment; high-efficiency boilers and chillers; and irrigation systems.
- Money earmarked for a number of smaller capital improvements at schools across the district in areas such as flooring renovations, painting, paving, roofing and general maintenance.
- Funding for new school buses and improvements to the existing bus parking area.
- Money designated for the purchase of approximately 35 to 40 acres for a future R-7 middle school to meet growth needs in the years to come.

During comprehensive discussions by the Citizens' Advisory Committee members, the group prioritized projects selected for the \$16 million bond issue from initial presentations totaling close to \$20 million. Group members determined that funds initially designated for the purchase of land for a fourth high school site could be deferred for a future bond issue based on enrollment growth and existing student needs. Initial presentations also included the sixth phase of energy-saving performance contracting totaling \$750,000, and committee members recommended that this amount be reduced to \$250,000. Elimination of the funds earmarked for land for the future fourth high school site and reduction of the amount requested for energy-saving efforts allowed the Citizens' Advisory Committee to make the recommendation for the \$16 million bond issue while staying within restrictions for a no-tax-increase issue.

The Lee's Summit R-7 Citizens' Advisory Committee was originally established in 1952 and serves as an advisory council organized to make recommendations to the Board of Education. The approximately 40-member group includes parents and non-parents as well as representatives from the R-7 Board of Education, district staff, PTA, the Lee's Summit Educational Foundation, Economic Development Council, Chamber of Commerce, higher education, health care and small business.

The Lee's Summit R-7 School District continues to be among Missouri's fastest growing districts although enrollment growth has slowed due to the struggling economy in the last couple of years. Since 1990, the district has gained an annual average of 430 new students, reaching 17,238 students in kindergarten through 12th grade this year.

For more information about the Citizens' Advisory Committee recommendation, visit the district's Board of Education meeting website at <http://www.boarddocs.com/mo/lsr7sd/Board.nsf/Public?OpenFrameSet> and select the Nov. 19 meeting and then "Presentations/recognitions."