

On Tuesday, April 2nd, voters who reside inside the boundary of the Guthrie school district will vote on a bond issue that could provide the next segment of needs identified to continue providing a quality education for our community. The priorities laid out were proposed by the most recent long range planning committee as well as district administration and finally the Board of Education. We have established a conservative approach to financing the needed work which, if approved, would raise your property taxes an estimated \$2.40 per month on a home valued at \$100,000.

The ultimate goal with all of the identified projects is to enhance the environment where our students receive an education. One of the key elements to this plan is to provide secure entrances to our school sites which will assure any building visitor must register in the office and receive a visitors badge before they can gain entry into the building.

Prior to opening Charter Oak Elementary this fall, the average age of our school buildings was 71 years old. Guthrie Upper Elementary (our previously newest building) is now 30 years old. In many cases, the mechanical and plumbing systems of these buildings are still the original systems that were installed when the building was built. By opening Charter Oak Elementary, we have reduced the average age of our buildings to 64 years. We all know of many other buildings in our community with comparable age but few of those buildings are under the daily load of the current volume of people that our schools have. Additionally, student safety was a much different consideration when all but our newest school were designed.

We critically examined how to best allocate our resources provided by the community through the last bond issue as well as what will be voted on next Tuesday. The last bond issue passed with almost 77% approval of the voters. It came with an average tax increase of 18% to property owners. We took this confidence seriously and have delivered what was promised on time and under budget.

Now we come with a modest request to continue the work we have started. The largest item under consideration is replacing Cottrel Elementary. This 69 year old building would be replaced on the current site with a school much more conducive to serving students with special needs as well as a much more secure configuration for student safety. Portable buildings have been used to address student growth at this site. Also, a separate building known as the "quad" has been in use since 1972 when it was built by a construction class from Guthrie High School. These buildings all have outside entrances that are in conflict with current student safety standards.

Other work within this bond issue includes plumbing and mechanical work at Fogarty Elementary (82 years old), Guthrie Upper Elementary (30 years old), Guthrie Junior High (95 years old) and Guthrie High School (51 years old). Also, the auditorium at Fogarty Elementary would receive new chairs to replace the original seating from 1937.

Much has changed in our school district and community since our last bond issue was passed. We have moved past the 'Guthrie Proper/South County' debate to realize that we are ONE

SCHOOL DISTRICT. Whether they are under your roof or not, they are OUR CHILDREN. A focus of this community has been to create an environment that encourages our children to live here after they graduate. This is OUR FUTURE. Securing this environment starts with OUR SCHOOLS! PLEASE VOTE ON APRIL 2nd.