JOIN US FOR A COFFEE CHAT OR COMMUNITY MEETING

If you’d like to learn more about the Troy City Schools’ new plan for neighborhood schools, why not join us for a coffee chat or community meeting? This is your chance to not only hear from Superintendent Chris Piper, but also to ask questions and provide feedback.

Please join Chris at an upcoming coffee chat or community meeting to share your thoughts on topics including: the need for new facilities, growing pride in the district, future opportunities and more.

COMMUNITY MEETING
DATE: March 12, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
LOCATION: Kyle Elementary School, 501 S. Plum St.

COFFEE CHAT
DATE: March 13, 8-9 a.m.
LOCATION: Boston Stoker, 1293 S. Dorest Rd.

A NOTE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT
Chris Piper, Superintendent, Troy City Schools

It’s hard to believe the Troy City Schools are well into our second semester! We are proud of what our students have already accomplished this year and excited about the possibilities that still await them. We know our students will continue to excel and make us proud and we are excited to see our graduates receive their diplomas in just a few short months.

Without question, the biggest opportunity for Troy City Schools in the coming months is the chance to act upon our New Plan For Neighborhood Schools should you, the voters, pass a school bond issue on March 17.

Most of this newsletter is devoted to explaining why it is important to build new schools and how that is a responsible financial decision. Maintaining and operating buildings that average 77 years old is simply not fiscally sustainable or appropriate. By partnering with the state of Ohio, we have developed a plan that makes financial sense while providing better learning environments for our students and teachers.

As always, I would encourage you to learn more about our New Plan For Neighborhood Schools by visiting our website, www.troy.k12.oh.us or joining us at our final community meeting or coffee chat before the March 17 election. Those dates are listed in this newsletter. You may call us at 937.332.6700 or email us at info@troycityschools.org if you have more specific questions.

HOW THE COST WILL BE SPLIT

The total cost of the proposed project is $98.7 million.

Although the initial millage is 7.04 mills, when the state funds are received, it will result in a large decrease to the cost to taxpayers. How much the millage will drop will depend on the market at the time.

By partnering with the state of Ohio, Troy City Schools will receive a $31.8 million refund in the near future (likely 3-6 years). Local businesses will be responsible for paying $20.3 million. This leaves taxpayers responsible for paying $46.6 million, or roughly 47 percent of the total cost.

A NEW PLAN FOR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS

On March 17, the Troy City Schools will be putting a combined 7.04-mill bond issue on the ballot. If it passes, the money from this bond issue will be used to build four new elementary schools in Troy: A PreK-4 on the east side of Troy (on the current Cookson site), a PreK-4 on the west side of Troy (near the current Concord site), a PreK-4 on the south side of Troy (on Swales Road near County Road 25-A) and a 5-6 building (on the current Hook site).

How would building new elementary schools benefit our district?

• On average, our school buildings are 77 years old. Two of those buildings, Concord Elementary School and the Van Cleve Sixth Grade Building, are 100 or more years old. We cannot continue to ignore our aging buildings.

• The district spends roughly $734,035 annually on maintaining and repairing buildings in an effort to keep students warm, safe and dry. Additionally, we spend another $250,000-$300,000 from the general fund on maintenance costs, as the $734,000 does not cover our maintenance expenses. This money that should be used to educate our students.

• This project, at 7.04 mills, will cost taxpayers $20.71 a month per $100,000 in home valuation.

• The Troy City Schools are partnering with the state on this project and will receive a $31.8 million refund from the state.

• This project will put elementary schools in locations best suited to serve students in areas where they live.

• This plan allows us to build schools that are handicap accessible, more efficient, healthier, safer and better equipped to meet the learning needs of our students in the 21st century.
Since we announced our New Plan for Neighborhood Schools, these are our most frequently asked questions:

Why can’t you just renovate the current elementary schools for less money?
The average age of our elementary buildings is 77 years. Two of those buildings are over 100. Maintenance costs continue to escalate because of their age. The state conducted an assessment report to see if renovation was a viable alternative. They found that the cost to renovate would be 97.49 percent of what it would cost to build new buildings. As a result, the state recommends we build new and will not partner with us to renovate because they don’t see that as a sound financial decision. We would lose $31.8 million in state funding if we chose to renovate instead.

Many of our buildings contain original boilers. Parts are no longer available for these boilers, should one of them break. Roofing issues continue to be a problem throughout the district. Last summer, we spent roughly $309,000 to replace 40 percent of the roof at Cookson Elementary School. Our electrical systems are dated and unable to support current technology needs. Plumbing continues to be an issue within our schools. Many of the buildings need foundation and masonry repair.

Our maintenance and facilities teams do an outstanding job maintaining our schools, but at some point, it is simply cost prohibitive to continue to maintain buildings this old.

What will become of the buildings no longer in use?
The Concord, Cookson and Hook buildings would be demolished to make room for the new buildings. With purchase of the new land near the current Concord site, we would sell the property on which the school currently sits.

We would likely keep the Forest Elementary School building. It’s the building we’ve put the most money into recently, with a new roof and other upgrades. We could use that space for alternative education programs.

We are working with the City of Troy to decide what would be best for the Kyle, Van Cleve and Heywood sites. Options include demolishing of the buildings and returning them to green space or finding an alternative use that will benefit the community.

Will the new buildings be handicap-accessible?
All of the new elementary schools would be handicap-accessible. Our plan is for each building to have a handicap-accessible unit at their neighborhood school. Currently, many of our students with the greatest need for assistance are bused from all areas of the city to a single location.

All of our preschool students are bused to Van Cleve. All of our multiple-disability students are bused to Cookson. Each of our four new schools would be able to offer these services to students closer to where they live.

Will the new schools be safer?
Our current elementary schools are safe. All of them have locked doors and visitors must be “buzzed in” to the building. At all of our elementary schools, however, once they are inside the first door, they have full access to the entire building. In our new schools, they would then have to enter a second set of doors through the main office before being allowed entry to the rest of the building. There also are additional safety features, such as egress windows.

Will the new schools have air conditioning?
Of the district’s nine buildings, only Troy Junior High School, which was built in 1974, has air conditioning. Not only do our current buildings not have air conditioning, but we have different safety standards now than we did less than 20 years ago. Because of changes to the world we live in, no longer are we able to prop open our doors and windows for extended periods of time.

Hot days in the early fall and late spring affect our students’ ability to learn. Will the new schools have air conditioning?

Our current buildings do not have air conditioning, but with improvements in modern technology, they would have improved air circulation, which also makes for an improved learning environment and lessens the chance for illness amongst students and staff.

The total cost
The total cost of the project is $98.6 million.

We are putting a 7.04-mill bond issue on the ballot.

That only tells part of the story, however. The state of Ohio is partnering with us on this building project and is contractually obligated to give us a $31.8 million refund at some point in the near future (most likely 3-6 years). Every cent of the state refund must be used toward paying down the debt of the project.

Once we receive the refund from the state of Ohio, we can lower the annual millage residents are paying, we can shorten the length of the bond or we can do some combination of the two. While we won’t be able to decide which option we will use until we receive that state refund, as the decision will be dictated by market forces at the time, we do know that it will significantly reduce the cost to taxpayers at that time.

Will what you pay?
On the March 17 ballot, this will appear as a 6.54-mill bond issue with a 0.5-mill maintenance levy. This 0.5-mill levy is mandated by the state in order to maintain the new buildings during the life of the bond issue.

This will cost a homeowner $20.71 per month per $100,000 home value.

HOW MUCH ARE YOU CURRENTLY PAYING?

We wanted to see how much district residents are paying compared to taxpayers in other school districts.

In order to do this, we compared the amount of school taxes being paid in Troy and 18 other districts from our area.

Looking strictly at property tax millage, Troy was third-lowest on this list. Troy also has an earned income tax, however, as do several other comparable districts. Other districts, meanwhile, have no income tax.

In order to get a true apples-to-apples comparison between all 19 districts, we converted income tax to mills to find a combined effective tax millage. When we did this for all 19 districts, we found Troy still was third-lowest on the list in terms of what residents are asked to pay.

Passing the bond issue on March 17 would move Troy up the list, but it still would not be near the top of the list.

Being a strong financial steward for the district has been, and will continue to be, one of our primary goals.

HOT WE WILL PAY FOR THE NEW BUILDINGS?

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