

December 19, 2012

Dear EPS Community:

The Edmond Public Schools Board of Education recently took a significant step forward to address the needs of our growing school district that now serves more than 22,500 students. With growth of more than 2,500 students over the past five years, a need exists to provide additional classroom space for youngsters at both elementary and secondary levels.

The most prominent projects among the \$80M slate include construction of a seventeenth elementary school and sixth middle school to serve our children. The new elementary school will be located on Sorghum Mill Road just east of Broadway while the middle school is set to be built on Pennsylvania Avenue south of Frontier Elementary School, our newest school that will open the fall of 2013.

Among other bond issue items is the purchase of land for a future high school site. Should growth trends continue, we anticipate within a decade, the need for a fourth high school to be built and operational. In the meantime, bond monies will be set aside to upgrade current high schools and to provide appropriate care for all existing Edmond schools.

Directly related to academic program support, bond monies fund the purchase of classroom technology equipment and instructional technology licensing for all schools, and supplement the purchase of library media and classroom textbooks and materials. Additionally, co-curricular offerings that are so vital to students' well-rounded education receive funds for the purchase of specialized band and orchestra instruments and athletic equipment and facilities.

The timing of the bond election will be fifteen months after the most recent election and pending passage, another election is likely to be scheduled no sooner than August 2014. So, in essence, the February election combines two years of bond projects into one vote, reducing election costs that are now in excess of \$35,000 per district-wide election.

Due to several factors, we are confident that property tax millage rates will retain the exceptional stability that has characterized Edmond Public Schools' sinking fund rates for more than a decade. Since 2001, the district's bond millage rates have varied less than 1.2 mils. While the total bond package is greater than past issues, the following factors will help ensure stability: 1) A schedule of four bond sales set to coincide with the retirement of existing bonds, all of which are on a 5-year payout schedule, 2) conservative ad valorem revenue growth projections, 3) a build-as-funded strategy, 4) well-researched cost estimates for specific capital projects, and 5) a commitment to initiate and complete projects in a timely fashion and within budget.

In so many ways, this community has a remarkable tradition of support and engagement with our school district. A quite visible and laudable aspect of the partnership is the passage of 54 consecutive bond issues dating back to 1959! The accomplishment is even more impressive considering that school bond elections require 60% of voters' approval.

The upcoming election is set for Tuesday, February 12, 2013. Any registered voter living within the Edmond Public Schools' attendance area may participate, including *EPS residents* who live in OKC or other areas outside of the city of Edmond proper. Polling places should be those established for other elections and will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Again, Edmond Public Schools Community, "Thank you!" for your incomparable commitment to and support of quality public education for our children.