

September 12, 2012

East Troy Board of Education Places Referendum Question on November Ballot

Referendum to address first phase of district's facilities master plan

EAST TROY, Wis. – The East Troy Community School District board of education has voted to place a referendum question on the November 6 ballot that aims to address a number of the district's needs.

If passed, the referendum would address critical safety and security issues at all of the district's schools and allow for the renovation of some high school classrooms to enhance and support learning. In addition, this would enable the school to adopt advanced modern teaching methods in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and improve career and technical education. The referendum would also allow the district to renovate the high school kitchen to address storage, prep work and service area space issues, as well as upgrade some athletics facilities and create the first auditorium for the community.

The cost of the referendum would not exceed \$17.2 million, and thus would have a debt service tax levy increase of \$20 for a \$150,000 home. The district's ability to make additional debt payments in 2011 lessened this tax impact.

As part of the process to evaluate the needs of the district, the board of education enlisted the assistance of the Facilities Advisory Committee, comprised of community members from across the district. The committee considered various options before making its formal recommendations to the board last month.

After unanimously endorsing a master facilities plan that includes a number of projects with a total cost of approximately \$41 million, the board voted on the referendum question to serve as a first phase toward achieving the master plan.

"The goal of this referendum is to transform the East Troy High School building from a place that prevents us from offering the world-class educational programming our students need into a facility that begins to support that mission," said Brian Wexler, board of education president. "We have a responsibility to ensure the ongoing quality of our schools and the safety of our students, which will only enhance our district and community."

A major factor for board members to consider was open enrollment. Under state law, community members are allowed to enroll their children in districts outside of their own community, which has had a significantly negative financial impact on the East Troy Community School District over the years.

"Whether we want to admit it or not, we are competing with neighboring districts for students," said Dawn Buchholtz, vice president of the board. "Addressing the high school portion of the district's master plan now will allow many of our students to benefit from improved facilities, while at the same time assisting the district and taxpayers with the problem of open enrollment."

Additional information about the referendum can be found on the district's website at www.easttroy.k12.wi.us.

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