

March 17, 2008

Dear Devine Independent School District (DISD) Faculty and Staff, Students and Parents, Patrons and Friends:

Over the past eight years student enrollment in DISD has increased by an average of 6% with larger student groups entering K-3. At the same time the State of Texas has increased the curriculum requirements, assessment mandates, and program demands in regular and special education. With increased enrollment and state mandates, our facility needs have increased to the extent that we must increase classroom space at DMS, make older restrooms ADA compliant on all campuses, and must improve older classrooms at the elementary. Historically, we have had 135 students per grade, but in grades 1st & 2nd there are 170 and 163, respectively. DISD's increased enrollment move to DMS, a campus that is already over capacity (that campus was built for 335 students and currently has over 410).

How do we pay for more classrooms and restroom renovations?

We have two options: 1. Use our funds from Maintenance and Operations (salaries, materials, equipment funds); or 2. ask District voters to consider a bond.

Why has the Board asked District voters to consider the bond instead of simply using the Maintenance and Operations money for these classrooms and restroom renovations?

Using M & O money for these purposes reduces amounts otherwise available for salaries, materials, equipment, etc. Also, there is a limit to the amount of M&O funds that is available. Relying solely on M & O money will result in the planned renovations and improvements being delayed indefinitely due to limited funds and competing expenses. As do many school districts, DISD has decided to ask its voters to consider the authorization of bonds, much like a home mortgage or a long-term loan, to finance these renovations.

Will the District pursue State financial assistance to repay any authorized bonds?

The State of Texas allows school districts to seek assistance in the repayment of its debt obligations. One program for which the bonds being considered by the voters on May 10, 2008 would qualify is the Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA) program, which provides payment assistance for bonds issued to finance instructional facilities. IFA funds are generally made available by the State legislature every two years (the next funding cycle of which occurs in June 2008). The DISD Board will seek state IFA money, which (if received) is expected to cover approximately 62.1% of the repayment of the bond. The Board has pledged to NOT issue any bonds if the District does not receive the IFA funds to assist the DISD in repayment of the bond.

How will DISD provide the classrooms/restroom renovations if the bond does not pass?

The District will accommodate enrollment growth through its purchase of more portable buildings. We will make these short-term accommodations by using Maintenance and Operations funds, which (as discussed above) will affect funds available for day-to-day activities. Additionally, these purchases will be financed entirely by the DISD taxpayers, as the IFA State assistance program described above is not available using this method of facilities acquisition.

How did the DISD Board determine which projects received priority if the bond election passes?

Several years ago Devine Independent School District initiated a facilities master plan that covered our population growth as well as a thorough study of the physical facilities. Administrators, parents, and community members participated in the facilities master plan, and this study from 2005 was used to determine district priorities. Appropriately, the Board of Trustees reviewed those priorities and rated them from most to least critical.

Based on the priority list, the Board unanimously approved an order to call a bond election for May 10, 2008. The bond referendum will ask voters to consider one proposition for classroom construction and renovation projects for the district for an aggregate total of \$6.5 million.

What happens if the voters authorize the issuance of bonds?

After the May election, the District would apply for State IFA funds, which (if secured) are expected to fund 62% of the bond's repayment cost. If DISD receives this State assistance, then it will issue and sell the bonds. The Board has pledged NOT to issue the bonds unless it receives State repayment assistance.

It is very important that all Devine constituents inform themselves and participate in the election process. For this reason, we would appreciate your contacting the Interim Superintendent if you are interested in receiving additional factual information regarding the bond or any planned capital projects to be financed thereby:

Linda McAnelly, Interim Superintendent (830) 851-0710 linda.mcanelly@devineisd.org.

Cindy Morales, President
Wayde Anderson, Vice President
Lori Peery, Secretary
Carl Brown, Facilities Committee
Dwayne Gardner, Facilities Committee
Tommy Ramirez, Facilities Committee
Eva Marquis, Trustee