



# STAFF Special Bond Issue Edition

# NOTEBOOK

A Newsletter for All Employees

www.kckps.k12.ks.us

Volume 31, Issue 21 January 29, 2001

## Bond Issue for School Improvements, Air-Conditioning Goes to Voters April 3

Calling the decision to ask school district patrons to approve a bond issue to air-condition schools a "significant bold step by this Board of Education," Superintendent of Schools, **Dr. Ray Daniels**, said the improvements would have an impact on the First Things First initiative.

At their meeting Tuesday, January 23, Board of Education members accepted a recommendation from a community steering committee to ask voters this spring to approve a \$120,000,000 bond issue for improvements at every school in the district. The bond issue will be on the Municipal Election ballot April 3.

In addition to school improvements, the bond issue would also support improvements at the city's three public libraries. KCK is one of the few remaining cities in the country where the public

library system and school district are under the same elected board.

Only one-third of district schools now have air-conditioning. During the past three school years, the school day has been shortened 26 different days because of the heat.

Most other school districts in Wyandotte, Johnson and Leavenworth counties have air-conditioned or are in the process of air-conditioning schools.

Under Kansas law, district taxpayers contribute tax dollars to help school districts throughout the state build and remodel schools. For years, local taxes have gone to support bond issues in Shawnee Mission, DeSoto, Olathe and Blue Valley. Now it's our turn.

If voters approve the bond issue, the state will pay 33 percent of the cost, which is based on assessed property values and district enrollment.

**Dr. Tom Kurucz**, assistant superintendent of business services, said the bond issue also would support technology and help the district bring the Internet to both staff and students. He said \$2.1 million of the bond issue would be used as leverage to secure \$10.5 million in e-rate money available from the federal government to wire classrooms.

A community steering committee co-chaired by Dr. Deloris Pinkard, a former teacher and administrator in the district, and The Reverend Rick Behrens will assist the district in planning for the successful passage of the bond proposal.

If the bond issue is approved, taxes on a home assessed at \$50,000 would be \$4.51 a month. The district has had no bonded indebtedness since a 1970 bond issue was paid off in the early 1990s.

### A Review of the Annual Cost Estimates

The plan to provide technology updates, improvements and air-conditioning in all schools has been broken down into a three-year span. Because of this, base project estimated costs have an eight percent factoring for inflation. Costs will include asbestos abatement, commissioning, the ATS, the public libraries, technology and a contingency reserve.

Year 1	\$ 41,858,000
Year 2	\$ 41,598,760
Year 3	\$ 36,393,937
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$119,850,697</b>

### Q & A

**Q:** What is the role of staff and the Board of Education in connection with a bond question election?

**A:** It depends. Private citizens (i.e. the Citizen Committee) are free to advocate positions of their choosing utilizing private resources and funds. School employees and Board members do not have this freedom. They may not raise  
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# Poll Shows Voters' Support for Bond Issue

In an effort to determine the depth of support for a bond issue to support air-conditioning schools and enhancement of technology in classrooms, the Board of Education approved a study of community opinion in the form of a telephone poll.

In December 2000, 625 registered voters (approximately a one percent sampling) were contacted and asked a number of questions. All geographic areas of the school district were sampled and all ethnic groups were represented. Thirty-two percent of the respondents had school-age children.

Overall, the research concluded there is strong support for a \$5 per month tax increase, and possibly support for a larger tax increase if a successful public information campaign is held.

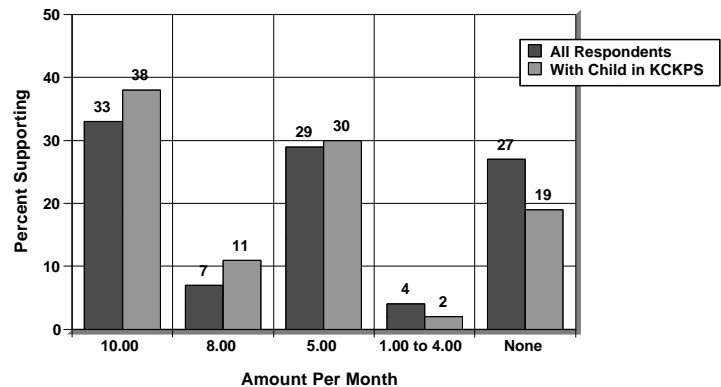
What was especially surprising about the results of the poll was the level of support from the elderly population, according to **Dr. William Moore**, director of educational research and assessment. Among those aged 60 and older, 55 percent said they would support a \$5 per month increase.

"A lot of times the elderly are on a fixed income and don't have kids in school anymore so they aren't always willing to accept tax increases," Moore said. "So, this was a surprising and pleasing finding."

Here are some of the other results:

- ◆ One-third of all respondents said they would support a tax increase of \$10 per month.
- ◆ Twenty-seven percent were not willing to pay any additional taxes.
- ◆ Taken together, 69 percent of the sample of registered

Willingness of KCKPS Registered Voters to Support a Tax Increase



voters would support a tax increase of \$5 per month to air-condition schools and enhance technology in classrooms.

- ◆ Respondents with a child in the district were even more supportive of a tax increase: 79% would support a \$5 per month tax increase.
- ◆ Only 19 percent of voters with a child in the district would not support any tax increase.
- ◆ Less than half of registered voters have a personal computer in their home.
- ◆ Ninety percent of registered voters believe their children should have access to computers in their classrooms.

## Scope of Work

Through community input and the annual District Needs Assessment for Capital Improvements, the Board of Education has determined a Bond Issue consideration is necessary for the following improvements as estimated:

Window and entry replacement	\$ 18,808,173
Upgrades of existing restroom facilities	\$ 220,331
Ceiling and lighting replacement	\$ 10,907,392
Air-conditioning and mechanical	\$ 69,428,471
Electrical for HVAC and technology	\$ 14,286,330
Technology	\$ 5,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$119,850,697</b>

## Q & A

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or solicit funds in their official capacities or by and through the use of equipment or resources paid for with public dollars. However, nothing in Kansas law prohibits officers and staff of the school district, in their private capacities, from advocating a position on an issue subject to election by voters. Of course in doing so, school officials must take every precaution, including declaring that such opinions and positions are made in their individual capacity.

**Q:** I know public funds cannot be used to advocate a certain position in connection with a bond election question, but is there any prohibition to raising private funds to advocate a certain position in favor of the issuance of bonds?

**A:** The state Board of Education has consistently stated that a school district has the obligation to "educate" the electorate regarding issues to be voted on by the electors, but may not "advocate" a position regarding that issue. Public funds may only be expended for the purpose of educating the public; they may not be used to advocate a particular vote for or against the question presented.