

## **Why are we voting September 12?**

The Linn-Mar Community School District is one of the fastest growing districts in the state. The student population totaled 7,429 in fall 2017, a more than 15% growth over five years, and is projected to reach 8,000 by 2021. Enrollment at Linn-Mar has outgrown current facilities. In order to accommodate current and future needs, the school board created a facilities advisory committee — comprised of parents, teachers, and administrators from every campus building — to create a restructuring plan to further support the growth of our schools. The bond will support the plan by funding the construction of two new intermediate buildings for grades 5 and 6 and a new future elementary school, improvements to Bowman Woods, Indian Creek, and Wilkins elementary schools and updates to Excelsior Middle School, which will become a 7/8 building along with Oak Ridge Middle School.

## **How can we plan for future growth?**

A team of architects and engineers took inventory of the district's historic buildings as well as Excelsior Middle School and assessed critical needs. With this assessment on-hand, the facilities advisory committee met from January through May to look at past student growth, predicted future growth, class size projections, condition of all current buildings, space utilization, and economic and census predictions. The result was a set of recommendations, cost estimates, and a design concept for new construction and renovations needed to accommodate all of the district's students from pre-K through 12th grade.

The grade restructuring plan is one piece of the district's strategic plan (approved by the School Board in October 2017) and is the result of more than a year of community and district input. The plan is the collaborative result of work by the district's board of education, steering committee, facilities advisory committee and OPN Architects.

## **Who recommended this plan? How were the needs identified?**

The Board of Education recommended this plan based on a great deal of data including steady growth trends over the past 10 years, facility and grounds studies, and community input.

Elements of the plan were recommended as far back as 10 years ago.

Over the past eight years, architects and engineering firms have been working with the district to identify needs and develop plans. The impetus for the construction and renovation, though, comes primarily from the growth in enrollment that Linn-Mar has experienced over the past 10 years.

## **How much has enrollment increased in the district?**

- **5,471** (2005-06)
- **7,429** (2017-18)
- **8,000** projected by (2021-22)

## **What will this cost in property taxes?**

If approved, the estimated tax increase for residents would be \$1.65 per \$1,000 of taxable value, implemented incrementally. The increase will equate to approximately \$15 a month in additional property taxes for the owner of a \$200,000 home.

## **Isn't there state money, lottery money or some other way to finance facility needs?**

There are only three options currently available to school districts for financing construction or repair. Districts can ask voters to approve:

- 1) an increase in the local sales tax (up to one cent).
- 2) a Physical Plant and Equipment Property Tax Levy (PPEL) which increases local property taxes.
- 3) a bond issue, which is only payable from a levy upon property taxes (increases local property tax).

The District currently uses the PPEL revenue for repair and maintenance of its buildings and for the purchase of school buses.

A bond issue permits school districts to sell bonds to finance construction. The bonds are sold when needed to cover expenses with a payback over a period of years, usually 20 years. The size of projects required by Linn-Mar to meet the growth in student enrollment cannot be covered by PPEL funds. PPEL funding will be used to continue funding the maintenance needs of the District's other schools and buildings.

For more than a decade, the District has used only Iowa Secure and Advanced Vision for Education (SAVE) dollars and Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL) dollars to fund all facility repairs and upgrades. The last bond referendum in 2006 paid for the construction of Linn Grove and Echo Hill elementary schools.

## **When does the district intend on building a second high school?**

Building a second high school was an option the school board considered when facilities planning originally began. However, the school district recognized that building a second high school at this time would not ease capacity concerns K-8 where there is the greater need for class space. When the high school's utilization of the Learning Resource Center has reached 100 percent, discussions regarding the need for building a second high school in the district will take place.

## **Where will the new schools be built?**

One 5-6 building would be located on district-owned property East of Echo Hill on Echo Hill Rd. The second building would be constructed on 35 Avenue which will eventually connect with 44th St. on the northern edge of Marion. (East of 35th St. and West of 44th S. Pending bond approval, both 5th-6th grade schools would be occupied in the fall of 2019. Each school would support approximately 800 students and would have roughly 36 classrooms. The buildings would provide safe and secure entry, collaborative learning spaces, a library/media center (flexible learning space), gymnasium, performance spaces and cafeteria. Actual design and development of the 5/6 intermediate buildings would take place after the vote September 12 if successful.

## **Is the Future Elementary School an additional elementary school**

The future elementary school is planned as a replacement for a yet to be determined elementary school. The date of construction is yet to be determined. The school would be

located on the campus of the 5-6 Intermediate school at 35 Avenue. (East of 35th St. and West of 44th St.) The school would further reduce class size across the Pre/K-4 spectrum.

### **What is Planned For The Current Buildings?**

Linn-Mar's plan includes additions and improvements to several schools. These improvements would provide safe, secure and efficient new and improved spaces. Identified needs at Bowman Woods, Indian Creek and Wilkins Elementary include roof repairs and replacement, restroom renovations, repairs to flooring and ceilings. Improvements to Excelsior Middle School include securing the entrance, improvements to traffic flow and a resurfaced parking lot are also a part of the plan. The advisory committee and OPN assessed needs of each of these schools. These needs were identified during several walkthroughs by OPN architects, engineers and the committee.

### **Where Can I Learn More?**

Please email your questions to [vote2017@linnmar.k12.ia.us](mailto:vote2017@linnmar.k12.ia.us)

The district will host community meetings on August 24 at Indian Creek, August 30 at Excelsior and September 5th at the LRC from 5:30 – 7:00. The meetings will provide the the community an opportunity to learn more about our plan.