



INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE



Informational Packet Regarding the March 7, 2023 Bond Referendum

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mark Olmstead

There is growing evidence of a correlation between the adequacy of a school facility and student behavior and performance. Almost all of the studies conducted over the past three decades have found a statistically significant relationship between the condition of a school, or classroom, and student achievement. In general, students attending school in newer, up-to-date facilities score five to seventeen points higher on standardized tests than those attending in substandard buildings.

As far back as the 1920s, industrial research established the relationship between environmental factors and employee productivity and morale, but these lessons have not been applied widely in educational settings. In recent years, however, the importance of school facilities has been increasingly recognized. There are now eight states where the courts have explicitly made the funding of capital facilities a part of education equalization remedies.

School facility factors such as building age and condition, quality of maintenance, temperature, lighting, noise, and air quality can affect student health, safety, sense of self, and psychological state. Research has also shown that the quality of facilities influences citizen perceptions of schools and can serve as a point of community pride and increased support for public education.

Of special importance is the effect that facilities have on time in learning, which is universally acknowledged as the single most critical classroom variable. Every school year, many hours of precious and irreplaceable classroom time are lost due to facilities-related problems.

Each of us should be concerned about the relationship between school facilities and student learning and achievement, not only because of health, security, and psychological issues, but also because the failure to do so can undermine the next generation of Bearcats.

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BOND VOTE
March 7, 2023

Why Are We Voting Again?

The issues in the elementary and high school haven't gone away. Both buildings do not meet current needs of our students and educators. While they may be structurally sound, the building's spaces are dated, and in some cases either undersized or used in ways not originally intended. The communities of Allison and Greene have always derived great pride from its schools and each community has held a long-standing commitment to investing in the spaces where we educate our next generation. We believe it is time for the district and community to again invest in our schools to better serve future generations of North Butler Bearcats.

Why Renovate Our Schools?

The School Board is committed to protecting the community's investment in our schools and other buildings. Not only do these facilities wear out over time, but they become outdated, both instructionally and technologically. Therefore, it is imperative that we renovate our schools to ensure that all students have safe, effective, and efficient learning environments.

What is The Plan?

The plan focuses on improved learning spaces with extensive renovations throughout both the elementary and high school. The elementary school, which is our district's oldest building, is structurally sound. However, the building's spaces are dated and, in some cases, are either undersized or used in ways not originally intended. We have focused on three themes that the renovation projects will address, those are: (see the following pages for more specific project plans).

- Improving Safety
- Improving Health
- Improving Classroom Learning Environment

How Will We Pay for It?

The renovations and addition will cost around \$12,600,000 million dollars. A general obligation bond will pay for renovations throughout both buildings.

What is a Bond?

The sale of municipal bonds is a form of long-term borrowing that spreads the cost of major capital improvements over the years facilities are used. This method of financing ensures that current and future users help pay for the improvements. People in the North Butler Community School District will vote on Tuesday, March 7th on a general obligation bond.

Why Are Bonds Needed?

The building and renovation of schools are not financed through the school systems operating funds, but through bonds. Similar to an individual or a family obtaining a mortgage on a residence to spread the cost of home buying over several years, bonds spread the cost of major capital improvements over a number of years.

Why a Referendum?

The law requires that voters approve general obligation bonds since they are a future obligation for taxpayers. The estimated expense to underwrite and issue bonds is reflected in the bond referendum total.

How Much Will the Bond Be?

The School Board has approved the placement of a \$12,600,000 bond issue question on the ballot. If approved, the bond issue would have a tax impact of no more than \$2.70 per year on every \$1,000 of assessed property value in our community. The school district has been a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars and has looked for ways to reduce the impact on taxpayers as we maintain our facilities. However, we are at a point at which we cannot delay addressing these needs any longer.

How Much Will It Cost Me?

\$2.70 Tax Levy Impact Rate

\$100,000 Home

\$139 Year
\$11 Month
.36 Day

100 Acres of Average Butler County Ag Land

\$350 Year
\$29 Month
.96 Day

**100 acres cropland cash rented would generate approximately \$25,600 in income (nationwide avg.)*

VOTE ON MARCH 7TH, 2023 TO INVEST IN OUR FUTURE

While North Butler schools are a big point of pride in our community, the district has facility needs that continue to hinder our ability to provide the best possible learning opportunities for our students.

- The elementary school, which is our district's oldest building, is structurally sound. However, the building's spaces are dated and, in some cases, are either undersized or used in ways not originally intended.
 - At the same time, our nearly 70-year-old elementary school is a testament to our community's long-standing commitment to investing in the spaces where we educate our next generation.
- There are also a number of needs at our high school, including expanded locker room space, relocating our wrestling and weight rooms, and providing more space for career and technical education programs.
 - The kitchen also needs to be renovated, while the ventilation and cooling systems in the gymnasium need to be brought up to code.
- By acting now, we believe we can address these needs that will ensure we continue to provide excellent learning environments for students now and in the years to come.

We are taking a community-driven approach to finding solutions to our facility needs.

- In September 2021, a bond issue on the ballot fell short of the 60% voter approval required to pass. Since then, the North Butler School District has been gathering feedback and reviewing potential alternative solutions to the district's facility needs.
- As part of this process, the district and board launched a community-wide survey, which asked a series of questions related to the district's needs and potential solutions. The survey was available in November 2022.
 - The survey indicated that 80% of those who completed it believe (agreed or strongly agreed) the district's needs should be addressed now. Additionally, 74% believe (agreed or strongly agreed) that they would support a March 2023 bond vote if the tax levy does not exceed \$2.70.
- Our School Board and district administration will continue to seek the input and feedback of community members throughout the process, leading right up to election day.

An approved bond issue would allow the district to move forward with a series of targeted improvements to the facilities at North Butler Elementary School and North Butler High School.

- The School Board has approved the placement of a \$12,600,000 bond issue question. This is far less than the \$19,305,000 bond proposal in 2021, which did not pass.
- The following facility improvements would be made at our elementary school:
 - Improve outdated classrooms with finishes, mechanical, electrical, and technology (specifically, the 1950s- and 1980s-era buildings)
 - Create a safe and secure entry into the front of the school, centrally locating administrative offices in this location
 - Bring ventilation requirements to code minimum to improve indoor air quality and comfort by replacing mechanical systems and improving controls
 - Move all learning spaces within the building for security purposes
 - Improve the playground area
- The following facility improvements would be made at our high school:
 - Add an addition to the front of the school for the relocated wrestling and weight room
 - Renovate the main restrooms
 - Build a new kitchen addition to the front of the school
 - Create new concessions and learning commons space to open up the media center to the commons and create more collaboration spaces where the current kitchen is located
 - Bring ventilation and cooling up to code in the gymnasium and improve the seating and spectating experience
 - Meet code requirements for lower-level exiting
 - Add additional locker room spaces into the existing wrestling room in the lower level

We look to make wise investments in our facilities to protect our district's assets.

- The school district has been a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars and has looked for ways to reduce the impact on taxpayers as we maintain our facilities. However, we are at a point at which we cannot delay addressing these needs any longer.
- If approved, the bond issue would have a tax impact of no more than \$2.70 per year on every \$1,000 of assessed property value in our community. The impact would be \$350 a year on 100 acres of agricultural land.

- The district and board aim to keep property taxes as low as possible in our community. We have worked to balance the needs of our students and schools with those of our community members. We look to make the most of every dollar community members invest in their local schools.

Bond Vote Timeline

Monday, December 5th - Emergent Architect presents final options to our facility task force committee and task force finalizes project scope of work.

Monday, December 12th - facility task force committee makes recommendation to the Board for project scope of work and Board approves project scope of work and dollar amount.

Tuesday, December 13th - Board approved scope of work and dollar amount provided to Ahlers (Barb) to draft the petition for circulation/signatures (25% of Ballots cast in last school election November 2021). 455 ballots cast in last school election – 25% = 114 signatures

Monday, December 19th through January 5th - Collection of necessary signatures (approximately 114) on petition. Shellee needs a couple of days to review all signatures.

Monday, January 9th - Petition presented to the Board at Board meeting with necessary signatures. Board adopts resolution calling for March 2023 G.O Bond election.

Tuesday, January 10th - Resolution calling for election presented to the controlling county auditor (*must be done on or before January 20th*).

January 10th – March 7th – Get out the vote campaign to include informational meetings, board input sessions, open houses, informational and how to vote flyers, letters and information to the newspapers, calling eligible voters, etc.



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Hasn't the School Board Already Completed Updates This Year?

In September 2021, district residents voted on a bond issue proposal that fell short of the 60 percent approval required to pass. Since then, the Board of Education has been busy at work finding solutions to address the district's most critical infrastructure needs. To date, the Board of Education has invested more than 2 million dollars towards addressing the outdated heating and cooling systems in both buildings.

Below is a list of projects that will begin in the next several months to address the district's needs. **This is just the beginning of the process to address the district's facility needs, that is why we need your support on March 7th, 2023.**

PHASE 1

- Allison School
 - Remove existing steam boilers (2)
 - Install two new steam boilers that can be converted to hot water in the future.
 - Project is to be contained to the existing boiler room.

Project budget is \$540,000

Project Schedule:

Board approval – August 8, 2022

Board approves bid – September 12, 2022

Construction Starts – May 2023 (or as soon as boilers are not being used)

PHASE 2 Remainder of the HVAC system

- Allison School
 - Provide 3 new RTUs to heat and air condition the gym, the auditorium, and the multipurpose room. The units shall be natural gas heat. The auditorium unit shall be ground mounted located adjacent to the stage. The others will be on a new roof platform designed by Emergent. Units shall be DDC controlled.
 - Existing Multipurpose Room AHU would be removed.

- As an alt bid remove and replace the two steam to water heat exchangers from the crow nest and provide new equivalent in the storage room directly below. By doing this, it would eliminate all mechanical equip requiring maintenance from the crow nest.
 - Convert the existing hot water heat zones in the school with new DDC controls. New valves, new thermostats, new sensors and dampers.
 - Convert the existing shop building from steam to natural gas . The shop will have radiant heaters, the Art classroom shall be heated and cooled by a residential furnace and air conditioner with a ventilation ERV.
 - Equipment lead time for the RTU's are trending 27 weeks once released for production.
 - The electrical service and switchgear to be replaced to support the additional air conditioning load and to support air conditioning throughout the facility.
 - Update the Fire Alarm system with voice notification and extend throughout the facility.
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- Jr/Sr High School in Greene
 - Replace the air-cooled roof mounted chiller and pumps. Add a dwell tank to the chilled water system.

Project budget is \$1,820,000

Project Schedule:

Board approval – September 12, 2022

Board approves bid – October 10, 2022

Construction Starts – May 2023

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