

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

*From the community meetings held May 15, 16, 22 & 23, 2012*

## **1. Why are the schools in need of repairs?**

- a. Many of our facilities were constructed in the 1960's and early 1970's or before, and time has taken its toll. Also, with the District's well publicized financial struggles, we have had to cut back on departmental budgets and staffing. That being the case, many preventive maintenance tasks were simply put on hold. While the deferred maintenance may have saved revenue, the facility needs continue to compound.

## **2. How much money does the current bond which is expiring generate?**

- a. For a home with an assessed valuation of \$100,000, the expiring bond currently costs a taxpayer approximately \$77.00 per year. This tax will fall off of the tax roll December 31, 2012.

## **3. What will happen to the abandoned / closed buildings when new buildings are built?**

- a. Each site will be evaluated for potential reuse by the District or for possible sale at a public auction as required in the Ohio Revised Code 3313.41. The Board understands that local residents do not want vacant buildings in their neighborhood and we will plan accordingly.

## **4. Why combine both middle schools?**

- a. By combining both buildings we can achieve operational and personnel savings while providing an optimizing instructional and enrichment opportunities for middle school students.

## **5. Please stop misleading the public, this is really a new bond issue, tell us what it will cost!**

- a. Each taxpayer will have a different increase/decrease as everyone has a slightly different assessed valuation for their property. However for a \$100,000 home approximately \$77.00 per year will drop off of the tax bill at the end of this year. Given this unique opportunity, the district is in the process of analyzing community input and other data that will guide us in developing a plan that will address most of the facility needs of the District by maintaining this \$77.00 per year on the property tax roll with a slight increase. One proposal has that additional amount at \$8.00 more (2.23 mills), another proposal has that additional amount at \$48.00 more (3.56 mills) and a third proposal has that amount at \$80.00 more (4.50 mills). Obviously, we can do more with the higher amount of additional dollars; however, we really want input from the community as to what that amount should be.

**6. How much does the Ohio Schools Facilities Commission charge?**

- a. The Ohio Schools Facilities Commission (OSFC) is a state agency and assists all public schools with construction plans when requested. They have been involved in 1,000 school building projects across the State of Ohio. Their services are **free of charge!** In fact, they provide some matching dollars towards our project based on the state-wide equity list and the amount of construction we undertake. The Strongsville School District matching amount is currently set at 7 percent of all OSFC approved construction.

**7. You need to clarify for the average citizen what an Operating levy is, what a Permanent Improvement (PI) levy is and what a Bond issue is!**

- a. An **operating levy** generates money for a school district on an annual basis from property tax revenue. This money is used for the general obligations (day to day expenses) of the District such as supplies, utilities, bus fuel, new computers, wages and other such expenses. This is referred to as general fund money.
- b. A **Permanent Improvement (PI)** levy is restricted to specific uses. Once again, these funds are raised annually (with no interest paid on these funds) from property taxes; however the money can only be spent on **“capital” items** that will last 5 years or more such as new busses, new roofs, new HVAC equipment. It cannot be used for salaries and benefits or supplies or utility bills.
- c. A **bond issue** is offered for **construction activities** with a specified term and amount. Proceeds are used to pay off principle and interest on the bond issuance. Mills are adjusted annually to meet debt service requirements. When debt is retired, the issue that created the tax terminates.

**8. Will technology be part of the plan?**

- a. All new buildings designed under the OSFC specifications will have a very “robust” technology package. Additionally it is our intent to upgrade security and to promote energy conservation. Technology needs will also be addressed at SHS and the elementary schools.

**9. Why a middle school, why not a high school?**

- a. Center middle school was built in 1908 and is currently 104 years old. The high school is not a good candidate to be replaced at this time for 3 main reasons: 1) The bond issue that is expiring was used to upgrade the high school in 1998 and the voters have not received full value for that investment as of yet; 2) The student population at the high school will slowly decrease over the next 10 years; 3) The cost of a new high school could be as high as 85 to 90 million dollars by itself. It appears to be cost prohibitive and unnecessary considering all of the other pressing needs we have throughout the District. The high school can be renovated and upgraded to serve the District for many years to come.

**10. What is the location proposed for the new middle school?**

- a. The sites that have received a lot of discussion are the 17 acre site near the high school and the current site of Center Middle School. Both of these sites are centrally located and are on Pearl Road. There have been 2 locations that have not received a lot of attention that may be a possibility. The Albion site and the Allen site have been briefly discussed and have not been

ruled out; however, they are not as centrally located and only have 2-lane roads leading to each location.

**11. Concerns (positive and negative) heard during our 4 meetings.**

- Building the middle school close to the high school will cause traffic congestion.
- Center students currently take walking field trips, if the middle school moves away from that site these opportunities will go away as well.
- What happens if you do all of this planning and the wetland permit is denied or the rezoning is not approved?
- Technology throughout the district needs to be upgraded.
- The campus concept would be great with the high school and middle school that close to each other.
- The highest bond level would only be an additional \$20.00 a month for a \$300,000 home; that is just one less trip to a fast food restaurant.

**12. Can the Fire Department take down the schools as part of training so we don't have to pay for it, or pay as much?**

This idea is being investigated; however, there are some concerns with even a controlled burn in a residential area and any effects it may have on people with breathing problems. If it can be done, and be done in a safe way, it could be a savings to the Board.

**13. I am excited about this opportunity for the community of Strongsville and want to get more involved, how can I help with this effort?**

- a. If you would like to see more information regarding our Facilities go to [www.strongnet.org/facilities](http://www.strongnet.org/facilities). You can also find a link to this page on the District web site. From our main web page go to the shortcuts menu on the right side of the page and click on Facilities. The survey statistics, summary, community presentation power point and much more information is posted there. Please visit often to see the most current updates to this on-going process. Also, we hope to form a Bond Issue committee and many volunteers will be needed to assist with that process.

**“Thank you” for all of the questions and for taking the time to attend our public information meetings!**