

August 2014

On Wednesday Guthrie Public Schools will start the first day of classes. I love this time of year because it signals new beginnings for many families. Students may be starting school, beginning Junior High or High School. Each progression signals a milestone in the lives of students and the families who support them. Many students will feel the anxiety that comes with something new and unknown. I'm thankful they will find an incredibly caring faculty and staff to welcome them to the 2014-15 school year.

Last week the Guthrie Board of Education passed a resolution calling for an election on November 4, 2014, to support issuing bonds for identified capital improvements within the district. The total of the bond issue, if approved by the voters, would be \$2.4 million over two years. Between now and November 4<sup>th</sup>, I'm sure there will be much discussion regarding the projects and how they will begin to address the many needs associated with our school district. I will attempt to use this space to inform the voters of the issues.

We have prioritized the needs of our current facilities and hope to address the most significant deficiencies in the district with this issue. The projects identified include roofs for Central, Fogarty and Guthrie Upper Elementary School. Estimates for the roofs alone total over \$1.4 million. Additional work at Central would include new energy efficient windows as well as tuck-pointing (repair and restoration) of the exterior brick and replacement of the heating and air conditioning units, which are 18 years old.

The track located at the High School practice field is in dire need of repair. Delaying the needed repairs would require complete replacement of the surface which is a much more expensive solution. This track is used by students district-wide as well as many community members who can be found walking or jogging in the evenings.

The last part of this bond issue is \$300,000 toward technology upgrades. The goal with this part of the bond issue is to provide each teacher with a district issued laptop computer. Currently, all teachers have a desktop computer and any use of technology for planning, grading or posting of assignments must be at school or teachers must use their personal computer if working elsewhere. The vast majority of computers used by teachers and students in Guthrie Public Schools are purchased from Edmond Public Schools when they have deemed them obsolete for their students and staff after five years of use.

This bond issue identifies a starting point addressing some of the most urgent issues with current facilities. Many needs exist beyond this election but it represents a fiscally responsible beginning to fund our many needs. The impact to homeowners would be \$16.64 per month for property assessed at \$100,000.

This is less than the tax paid by property owners inside the GPS district boundary in 2007 when the Jelsma Stadium Bond Issue was passed.

This bond issue still follows the priorities of recommendations made by the Long Range Planning Committee based on the funds available. While the top priority identified was an elementary school in the southern portion of the school district, land has yet to be purchased which could support such construction. An additional issue could be brought to the voters for authorization soon after the work on the November issue begins. The next election could address the elementary school need identified by the committee of community members who have met over the last two years.

We annually plot students on maps to determine areas under-served by district facilities. Last year we determined that 461 students in grades K-5 resided south of Seward Road. Due to residential construction over the last 6 months in this region of Logan County, I expect that number to grow when we plot our students for the 2014-15 school year.

Welcome to the 2014-15 school year and please drive carefully as traffic patterns in Guthrie will change dramatically on Wednesday morning. Your continued support of our students is what makes Guthrie a special place to live and grow.