

Bond Issue: North Hopkins ISD considering elementary addition

Written by By FAITH HUFFMAN, News-Telegram News Editor
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Residents of the North Hopkins area May 10 are being asked to decide whether the school district will issue \$5 million in bonds to construct a new elementary addition.

North Hopkins Independent School District administrators have scheduled a community meeting for 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 3, in the school cafeteria to discuss the proposed project and answer any questions community members may have about it.

NHISD Superintendent Donna George encourages all parents, staff and community members within NHISD to attend the meeting and participate in the discussion.

“We had a community committee discuss it and decide. We don’t know exactly how others are going to receive this and are anxious but excited at the prospect of a new elementary addition,” George said.

After discussing the matter with a community committee and weighing the options, NHISD trustees voted Feb. 27 to call for a bond election for a new elementary classroom addition to help with space issues.

George explained that the request is to help with district growth over the last two years.

“We’re averaging 480 kids. We’ve not been below that the last two years. We were about 450 before that. At one time, we reached 506 this year,” George said, adding that state teacher-student ratios in elementary classes and limited amount of classroom space have made that growth a challenge at times, depending on what grades the growth was experienced in. “With over 480 children, if we grow some more, we have no more usable classroom space.”

George said that building a new addition to house 14 classrooms plus elementary offices would free up space in the current elementary wing for special classes for elementary and other grade

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levels, such as pull-out classes and a computer lab — which has outgrown its current assignments — and for additional class sections should they be required due to enrollment.

“We are excited at the prospect of a new addition,” George said. “We are looking forward to it, but it will be up to the community, what they see for us. We are holding the community meeting to let the community know more about it. We just ask they come Thursday, listen and look at it.”

Voters will be asked to vote their choice regarding a new elementary wing during the May 10 election, which will be held in NHISD administrative office.

District officials had BWA Architects of Dallas draft a plan so community members could better see what the proposed addition would look like and where it'd be placed on the existing school grounds. A copy of the document can be downloaded from www.northhopkins.net by clicking on “North Hopkins Elementary Building Plan.”

“We evaluated need versus what we'd like to have. I think we've been very conservative. We'd love to have a new big new facility with all the bells and whistles. This will be simple and nice, but not extravagant. It will meet our needs,” George said.

If there are any funds left over after the new addition is completed, the district would use that money for upgrades such as painting and new carpeting at the older buildings.

George pointed out that the existing bond obligations will be paid off in 2016, so in two years, the bond for the new addition “would be the only debt we have in the next two years.”

Additional information about the plan, George said, will be presented at Thursday's community meeting. The district will be providing ice cream sundaes for those who attend the 6:30 p.m. meeting.