

August 8, 2008

**2008 BOND AND MILL LEVY ELECTION
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

BALLOT ISSUE 3A: MILL LEVY OVERRIDE (BUDGET) QUESTION

Q. What is a mill levy override?

A. A mill levy override allows a school district to request to spend more property tax revenue for day-to-day operational expenses than is provided by formula in the Colorado Public School Finance Act. Voters authorize these funds through an election. APS has not asked for a mill levy election since 1990.

Q. What is included in the mill levy proposal?

A. The mill levy (budget) proposal would provide \$14.7 million for operating expenses to strengthen the district's efforts to prepare students for their future. The funds would be used to maintain and expand educational programs to keep students in school and increase graduation rates; invest in full-day kindergarten; improve technology and computer applications; and provide a salary increase for teachers and all other employees.

Q. How were the mill levy priorities selected?

A. The projects support the district's VISTA 2010 Strategic Plan to increase student achievement. APS staff identified the initiatives with the greatest potential to accelerate student achievement.

Q. What is the cost to taxpayers?

A. The mill levy would cost homeowners \$5.15 per month for every \$100,000 of property value.

BALLOT ISSUE 3B: BOND QUESTION

Q. What is a bond?

A. A general obligation bond allows a school district to borrow funds for new school and major building improvements and renovation. Since Colorado school districts do not receive state or federal funding for new construction or major renovation projects, bonds are a means to raise the needed capital. Voters must approve the bond measure.

Q. Will my tax rate increase if the bond passes?

A. No tax rate increase would result from the passage of the bond.

Q. Why won't taxes increase if the bond measure passes?

A. The APS Board of Education directed the district to prioritize only the most critical projects, totaling \$215 million (the district's facilities study identified more than \$476 million in facility needs). The \$215 million represents the amount of funds for which the district can issue a bond without increasing property taxes.

Q. Why does APS need this money?

A. APS must maintain its school facilities to provide students a safe and comfortable learning environment. The average age of the district's schools is approx. 37 years. Several schools are in need of remodeling, roof repairs and other safety improvements. In addition, the district's high schools are increasingly overcrowded and are over capacity by 800 students. A new high school would relieve overcrowding and provide space for students in growing areas of the district. Other new schools would include a P-8 school adjacent to the new high school and a new child development center to meet the demand for preschool in the southern part of the district.

Q. What is included in the bond proposal?

A. The \$215 million bond proposal includes building and technology improvements at every school in the district. About 44 percent of the funding is for new schools, including a new high school (located at 6th Avenue and Harvest Mile Road) to relieve overcrowding at the district's existing high schools. Another 42 percent would fund remodels and renovations at the district's existing schools. The remaining funds are allocated to technology improvements, program contingency (to cover additional project needs and inflation), and program administration.

Q. What schools in the district will benefit?

A. The bond program includes improvements, such as building renewal and technology upgrades, at every school in the district. The bond will benefit every school and every student in the district, including the district's charter schools.

Q. How were the 2008 bond projects selected?

A. The recommended program was developed by the APS Long Range Facilities Advisory Committee, which includes APS community members, teachers, principals, and district and city planning staff. The LRFAC conducted a 30-month study to assess building conditions at all schools and support sites in the Aurora Public Schools district. The committee prioritized only the most critical \$215 million from a requirements list totaling \$476 million. Projects were prioritized based on factors such as student population, building age and condition, and predicted enrollment growth. The APS Board of Education spent several months reviewing the LRFAC recommendation before authorizing the bond election.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Q. If these measures are approved by voters, how will APS ensure that tax dollars are spent as promised?

A. The APS Finance Department will designate funds for each of the areas to be funded under the mill levy (budget) measure. The District Accountability Committee, which includes APS parents and community members, will monitor how the budget funds are spent.

For the bond, the district will authorize a Citizen's Bond Oversight Committee to monitor all APS bond projects. Superintendent Barry and the Board of Education will establish this committee to provide an independent review of the major bond projects. Due to the

diligence of the citizens committee formed to oversee the 2002 bond program, APS was able to fund an additional \$28 million of construction projects with interest and earnings on the bond.

Q. When is the election?

A. November 4, 2008.

Q. What is the deadline to register?

A. The deadline to register for the November 4 election is October 6.

Q. How can I register to vote?

A. You may register to vote at any office of the County Clerk and Recorder, City Clerk's office, Town Clerk's office or Colorado Driver's License office. If you have moved, you may update your voter registration record at any of these locations or by mail. Residents of Arapahoe County can find online information at www.arapahoevotes.com. Adams County residents can learn more at www.co.adams.co.us.