

# *South Lewis Central Schools*

**Mr. Douglas Premo, Superintendent**

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Dear Parents and Guardians:

We hope this letter finds you well. We are writing to inform you that on August 28<sup>th</sup> the Board of Education approved to have a re-vote on the Capital Project referendum to build a new Elementary School addition to our Middle-High School campus. The re-vote is a revised, scaled-down version of the Capital Project vote that was defeated by 82 votes last December. The re-vote is scheduled for Tuesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> from Noon to 8:00 PM at the Middle/High School Music Suite.

Last December the voters of South Lewis narrowly rejected the \$44,261,000 proposed project. At the polls, many voters completed an Exit Poll providing feedback to the District regarding their thoughts and feelings on the vote. In reviewing these Exit Polls, the District learned of the varied concerns about the single-campus project. The major concern identified by many of the voters was related to the financial impact and new taxes created by the project. The District took this feedback and has revised the project in overall scope and cost. These changes have helped to significantly lower the impact to the local taxpayer.

The revised Capital Improvement Project has a reduced total cost of \$38,889,800. Additionally, the District will be utilizing \$2,000,000 from a Capital Reserve. Use of these funds will lower the cost further to \$36,889,800. With these changes the tax impact on the average home owner in South Lewis has been reduced from the original project by 30% from \$170 to \$120 for a home assessed at \$75,000. Furthermore, the District has identified savings and efficiencies of at least \$500,000/year that will only be realized if we have a single-campus. These efficiencies include savings from transportation, energy/maintenance, technology expenditures, and minor staffing reductions through attrition. If we are to factor in the savings from operating as a single-campus, the local tax impact is reduced from the original project by 59% from \$170 to \$70 for the average taxpayer.

The proposed Capital Improvement Project not only includes an Elementary School addition onto the Middle-High School, but also select renovations to the Middle-High School, Biomass and Bus Garage facilities. Additionally, the project also includes the acquisition of needed land adjacent to the Middle-High School for athletic field additions. This needed land, approximately 40 acres in size, is needed to replace athletic fields lost to make room for the elementary addition. This land is generously being donated to the District by a local property owner should the voters approve of the project.

It is the intent of the Board of Education to be as open and transparent as possible throughout this entire process. Over the next several weeks we will be undertaking a Public Campaign to educate and inform the voters and community of South Lewis. This will include mailings, School Messenger Robo-Calls and media interviews. We will also hold a Public Hearing on the Capital Improvement Project on Monday, October 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM in the Middle-High School Auditorium. Additionally, we have already scheduled several meetings with local community groups. If a group you are involved in, or a group that you are aware of, would like us to attend a meeting we would welcome and appreciate that opportunity.

This Capital Improvement Project is about the future of South Lewis Central Schools and our community. The vote outcome will have impact for the next generations of children and their families. We encourage you to become educated, engaged and involved.

Sincerely,



Douglas Premo  
Superintendent of Schools