



DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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October 16, 2017

Dear Big Walnut Parent:

As you know, the upcoming election contains important races and issues. Local issues affect us all, and especially the issue that is on the ballot for our district.

Over these many months, we have worked hard to communicate with you about the overcrowding and needs in our building. We have significant safety and security updates that are also needed and included with the ballot issue. These needs are placing significant strain on our daily operating budget, a budget intended for the day-to-day operations of our schools.

With the ballot issue, we can adequately address the overcrowding and growth while providing safety and security updates to all of our existing buildings. Without it, our district's financial future is jeopardized and we risk having to return to voters far earlier. As I have shared many times, this issue is very important to our instructional and financial stability.

So that you can feel prepared to vote in the Tuesday, November 7 election, I have attached for you an FAQ on our district's ballot issue. Please take the time to review this and to reach out to me with any questions.

Just as important, please schedule in time on your calendar now to vote in this election. You can vote early by mail by contacting the Delaware County Board of Elections or you can vote in person on Election Day at the polls from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Regardless, please make sure you vote.

Sincerely,

Angela S. Pollock
Superintendent

Enclosure

Safety, Security Upgrades, New Schools on Tuesday, November 7 Ballot

Before you vote, make sure that you are up-to-date on Big Walnut's ballot issue.

What's on the Ballot

Big Walnut is on the ballot for a combined bond and permanent improvement levy.

What will the bond issue provide?

It will provide a new high school and additional elementary. It will also include security upgrades to our existing buildings.

What if it passes?

Then we can move forward immediately with construction and protect the quality that we expect in our schools.

What if it fails?

If it fails then overcrowding worsens and we only further delay a long-term solution. More trailers and short-term fixes only serve to divert funds from the classroom and drain our operating budget. This would jeopardize our district's financial stability and likely force us to the ballot for additional operating dollars earlier than expected.

When would the district be on the ballot for operating dollars?

It depends.

If the November 7 ballot issue passes, then the district will only need to seek renewal of the existing substitute levy. This would come at zero increase to residents.

If the November 7 ballot issue fails, then the financial stability of the district will be in jeopardy. That is because the district would have to take funds from the operating budget and use them on fixes and expensive solutions like trailers. Operating funds are intended for the daily operations of the schools. Using them otherwise drains our budget and would mean that we would have to return to voters sooner and would need to ask for additional dollars.

Does the district have land for a new high school?

No. Simply put, we do not have the funds to purchase the land. That would come only as a result of bond issue passage.

Do you know where a new high school would be?

No. We cannot purchase land because we do not have the funds. That cost is included with the total high school package that appears on the ballot.

Is there a design for a new high school?

No. That requires architectural fees and those are funds we do not have. Once a ballot issue is approved, then we will complete the design process. Any plan that is developed will be with community and staff involvement and it will directly meet the needs of Big Walnut, not of any other district. When we arrive at a budget for the building, based on market costs for the size of building that we need to accommodate our number of students, we will stay within that budget.

Is our high school going to cost more than Olentangy's newest high school?

In fact, the cost is comparable as we have factors that they do not have to consider. First, Olentangy's costs do not include a land purchase (they purchased the land long ago). Second, their costs only contain minimal architectural fees (they are using the same design previously used for two other high school buildings). Third, our high school would have a larger capacity than theirs (1,850 vs 1,600 for Olentangy). Finally, we have to factor in the inflation of construction costs as we would be building a few years later. Once these items are factored in, our costs compare favorably to theirs.