



Oberlin USD 294
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USD 294 Voters to Decide on School Facility Improvements

Oberlin—The community will have an opportunity to learn what the proposed \$29.15 million bond will mean for the Oberlin Elementary School and Decatur Community Junior/Senior High School at townhall meetings in August. The schools will also be open for community tours.

The bond proposal, if passed in the special election on August 29, would be the first major facilities improvement project the district has undertaken in nearly 60 years.

“We had an independent facility assessment last year, and the architects were very complimentary of the way that our staff members have maintained both buildings. They said constituents of USD 294 definitely got their money out of these buildings as most of the infrastructure and finishes are more than double their expected life spans. We should all be very proud of that,” said USD 294 Superintendent Joel Applegate. The full facility assessment is available on the district’s website at usd294facilities.org

“Unfortunately, the age and condition of these facilities no longer lend themselves to incremental improvement projects. It’s time for a full-scale replacement,” he said. Oberlin Elementary School is nearly 100 years old, and parts of DCJ/SHS were built 85 years ago.

“The townhall meetings are an opportunity to learn about the tax implications of the bond as well as how the funds will be used,” Applegate said. Questions will be taken following the presentation.

Townhall meetings are scheduled for:

- Monday, August 7 at 7 p.m. at the DCJ/SHS Auditorium
- Sunday, August 13 at 1 p.m. at Sunflower Cinema

The *It's Time* community group will provide pizza at the theater townhall meeting beginning at 12:30 p.m. on August 13.

The bond will have an impact on the district's mill levy for property taxpayers. A mill levy is the tax rate that is applied to the assessed value of a property. One mill is one dollar per \$1,000 of assessed value. If the bond issue passes, the mill levy would increase by 28.25 mills. For a \$100,000 home, this increase equals \$27.07 per month.

Proceeds from the bond would be used to create a PK-12 campus on the site of the existing DCJ/SHS building. A new high school wing would be added onto the south side of the existing high school and a woods shop added to the Vo-Ag building. The shop building would connect to the school through a practice gym and locker rooms.

The north side of the existing high school would be remodeled to become the new elementary school. Systems throughout the schools would be updated and brought up to code. Where needed, the building would get a heavy remodel affecting layout and all finishes; areas that are in good shape would get a lighter remodel, like new LED lighting and fire sprinklers. The high school and elementary would have separate, secure entrances but take advantage of a shared kitchen, media center and cafeteria/commons. to become the new elementary school. Systems throughout the schools would be updated and brought up to code. Where needed, the building would get a heavy remodel affecting layout and all finishes; areas that are in good shape would get a lighter remodel, like new LED lighting and fire sprinklers. The high school and elementary would have separate, secure entrances but take advantage of a shared kitchen, media center and cafeteria/commons.

"If you haven't been inside the schools since you were a student 20-, 30- or even 50-years ago, I'd encourage to you to take a tour," Applegate said. Tours of both the elementary school and DCJ/SHS are available over the next month. Residents can visit either school office any weekday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. for a private tour between now and August 28. The Elementary School is offering group tours each Thursday beginning July 27 at 5:15 p.m. DCJ/SHS will provide group tours Tuesdays at 5:15 p.m.

"My goal is to make sure that taxpayers understand what this plan means and why we need to update our school facilities," Applegate said. "I'm excited about this approach. Bringing all of our students together on one campus offers benefits from both the learning opportunities we can provide students as well as our efficiency as a district."

Dates for the Upcoming Special Bond Election

Last day to register to vote is August 8

Early voting begins August 9 and ends August 28 at noon

Last day to request an absentee ballot is August 22

Election Day is August 29

The key for the attached "Floor Plan" graphic is:

1. New High School/Junior High School classroom addition. New secure school entrance and DCJ/SHS main office addition.
2. New wood shop addition.
3. New practice gymnasium, locker rooms, storage rooms and connecting corridor.
4. Existing vo-ag / bus barn building to be remodeled.
5. Existing DCJ/SHS to be fully remodeled into new HS/JH classrooms.
6. Existing gymnasium to be lightly remodeled.
7. Existing High School/ Junior High to be fully remodeled into a shared cafeteria, kitchen, commons area, and concessions.
8. Existing DCJ/SHS to be fully remodeled to house Elementary School grades Pre-School – 6th Grade.
9. Existing gymnasium to be lightly remodeled to serve the Elementary School.
10. Existing interior courtyard to be remodeled.
11. Existing auditorium to be lightly remodeled.
12. Choir rooms to be fully remodeled.
13. Band room to be remodeled.