

January 25, 2008

Dear Parents:

Based on a citizen/staff committee recommendation, Ferndale School Board at its December 21 meeting approved a capital bond issue in the amount of \$21 million to be placed on a ballot for voters. If approved by school district voters, the bond issue would do the following:

1. Tear down the current Custer Elementary School and build a new state of the art, 60,000 square foot, two-story elementary school on the current site.
2. Tear down the 1938 North Bellingham Elementary School building which, in July 2007, was found to be seismically unsafe and no longer houses students or staff. In its place a new two-story structure would be built and portable classrooms removed from the school site. The 1969 and 1979 buildings would receive seismic upgrades, new air handling units, replacement of windows, painting and carpeting, refacing current cabinetry, new light fixtures, new vinyl flooring in all wet areas, new roofs and improved parking.
3. Address safety needs of the district and replace the districtwide telephone system.

The citizens' committee had, as one of its goals, maintaining the current tax rate. It accomplished that goal for the bond issue as follows:

|                                    |        |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| Estimated Total Tax Rate 2008      | \$3.95 |
| Estimated Total Tax Rate 2009      | \$3.95 |
| Estimated Total Tax Rate 2010-2024 | \$3.94 |
| Estimated Total Tax Rate 2025      | \$3.56 |

The committee spent a great deal of time evaluating, visiting and studying options and priorities associated with Custer Elementary School. In a building condition evaluation which is a standardized, detailed scoring of every physical component of Custer Elementary, it was determined that Custer rated a score of 40.4 which borders on the state's critical level. The committee unanimously approved the total replacement of Custer Elementary with a two-story, 60,000 square foot building. They did so because:

1. The total replacement of Custer Elementary School was financially a better expenditure of tax dollars when compared to renovating the old buildings. Better instructional spaces, more classrooms, more open space and better separation of bus/vehicle traffic would result.

2. The historical nature of Custer could and would be maintained.
3. School support systems such as fire sprinklers, heating, insulation, lighting and roofing, plus the septic system, are inadequate or do not exist.
4. The current building in some areas is sinking because of dissimilar soil conditions that support the school and are increasingly getting worse. Renovation would not solve these and other problems.
5. State match money which would lessen the local financial contribution would be maximized by replacing the total building.

The committee also studied North Bellingham Elementary School. The committee's recommendations were adopted by the board. These recommendations were based on the following conclusions:

1. To renovate, modernize and bring the 1938 building up to current seismic standards; replace the roof structure and improve parking and separation of bus/vehicular traffic would result in a \$153 square foot raw building cost when compared to a new two-story replacement cost of \$142 square foot raw building cost.
2. The 1969/1979 buildings also need new roofs, seismic upgrades, along with window replacement, replacement of air systems, new carpet and painting.
3. In building a new two-story structure classroom space is increased, flexibility improved, air systems are more efficient and more room is provided for parking, along with separation of vehicular/school bus traffic resulting in less congestion.

It is for these reasons, plus additional open space and additional classroom space that the board approved the Bond and Tech Levy Committees' recommendation.

If you have questions or would like additional information please go to our website at [www.ferndale.wednet.edu](http://www.ferndale.wednet.edu) or contact the people listed below.

Sincerely,



Dr. Roger L. Lehnert  
Superintendent

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| Mark Deebach    | 383-9203 |
| Aaron Kombol    | 383-9215 |
| Dan Coward      | 380-4614 |
| Andrew McLaurin | 383-0347 |
| Lee Anne Riddle | 384-9051 |
| John Hruby      | 366-5059 |
| Kellie Larrabee | 383-9500 |
| Nick Payne      | 383-9550 |

