

# **ISSUE 8 for SWCS**

## **Builds Our Future and Saves Taxpayers Millions**

### **Answers to Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: What do we get with Issue 8?**

**A:** With Issue 8, we get 13 new elementary schools to replace our oldest buildings, renovations to 2 other elementary schools, and a new Franklin Heights High School. The State will give us \$120 million towards the project costs, and the remainder will be funded by Issue 8 – without increasing our annual taxes.

**Q: How will passing Issue 8 not increase my annual taxes?**

**A:** SWCS taxpayers will *not pay any more* annually with passage of Issue 8 than they are currently paying, because SWCS has other bond millage that is expiring. Issue 8 just maintains our current collection rate.

**Q: What's the millage amount?**

**A:** Issue 8 is a 2.9-mill bond issue, and it equates to less than \$90 per year on a home valued at \$100,000. This is not an additional amount to your annual property tax. Issue 8 just maintains our current collection rate.

**Q: What's the difference between a bond issue and an operating levy?**

**A:** Bond issues raise money that, by law, can be used only for capital costs like building construction and/or renovations and major equipment purchases. Operating levies generate money for a district's day-to-day operating costs, such as salaries, benefits, and utilities. Issue 8 is a bond issue. All of the funds from Issue 8 and the \$120 million from the State are for new facilities, building renovations and other permanent improvements. None of the funds can be used for operating costs, salaries or benefits.

**Q: What happens without Issue 8?**

**A:** Without Issue 8, we lose out on \$120 from the State to help improve our schools. The State will give those funds to another district for their new schools if we do not pass a bond issue to pay for our local share. Our aging buildings, which now have \$40 million in deferred maintenance, will continue to deteriorate and the costs to maintain and repair them will continue to grow. Our students lose out on updated technology and the numerous educational benefits new schools would provide, and our community loses out on the opportunity to bring State money into our district without raising our local taxes.

**Q: Why now?**

**A:** The need and opportunity are now. With Issue 8, we can take advantage of \$120 million in State matching funds *and* fund our local share without increasing our annual taxes. We only have a limited time to take advantage of the State's program, our aging buildings will continue to deteriorate with time, and the costs to maintain and repair them will continue to increase if we don't replace them now with help from the State.

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**Q: Why replace the buildings rather than just renovate them?**

**A:** The State, through the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC), recommends that school buildings be replaced when the cost of renovating exceeds two-thirds the cost of building a new facility. More than half of the SWCS buildings were built in the 1950's or earlier and have seriously outdated infrastructures (plumbing, ventilation, electrical) that are costly to maintain and cannot accommodate today's educational needs. The cost of renovating many of our oldest buildings – bringing them up to state *minimum* standards – is nearly as much as, and sometimes even more than, the cost of building a new facility.

**Q: Will any of the elementary schools be merged into one building?**

**A:** Yes, Finland and East Franklin Elementary Schools will be replaced with one new building with passage of Issue 8. The Ohio School Facilities Commission has determined that it is not cost efficient to have a building with an enrollment below 350 students. By combining these buildings, we will be able to save operating costs, while keeping an elementary building close to the existing neighborhood.

**Q: Which two elementary schools will be renovated rather than replaced?**

**A:** Buckeye Woods and Darby Woods, both built in 1994, are SWCS' two newest elementary buildings and will not be replaced. They will receive minor renovations including technology upgrades. Only our oldest elementary schools will be replaced with new buildings.

**Q: What about the middle schools?**

**A:** Middle school students, as well as students in the other remaining buildings, will benefit from Issue 8, because this project eliminates \$40 million in deferred maintenance and repairs on the buildings being replaced. Eliminating those costs frees up funds that can be used to benefit other buildings and student across the district. The bond issue was created to address the largest number of buildings possible, to create the greatest operational savings, and to correct the issues in our most needy school buildings, without increasing our current collection rates.

**Q: How long before new buildings will open?**

**A:** With the passage of Issue 8 and the State contributing \$120 million, we can break ground in 2013 and begin opening new buildings in 2014. The entire project should take approximately five years to complete.

**Q: When is the election?**

**A:** Election Day is Tuesday, March 6 and early voting begins January 31. Any registered voter can vote early by requesting an absentee ballot from the Board of Elections. Visit the "VOTE" tab at [www.CitizensForSWCS.com](http://www.CitizensForSWCS.com) to access an early voting application and for more info.

**Q: What can I do to help pass Issue 8?**

**A:** Vote for Issue 8, spread the word to others you know in our community, and visit the "GET INVOLVED" tab at [www.CitizensForSWCS.com](http://www.CitizensForSWCS.com) for more info!