

# Building a Better Belleville High School A School for the Students and Community

What you need to know about the Tuesday, November 4, 2008 Bond Election

## From the Superintendent

We are acutely aware that this bond election is occurring during difficult financial times. You only have to look in the current newspapers to see that school districts across the state are susceptible to the same pressures as that of other businesses. But, financial shortfalls do not give us the right, as a community, to dismiss our responsibilities to our youth. So, I ask you: If not now, then when? If not us, then whom? The financial situation does not change the fact that we have a pressing need in this district when it comes to our children's educational facilities.

## Facility Environment and Student Achievement

The topic of school environment, and whether a building can help student achievement, has become a hot topic over the last decade. In 1998, our 42<sup>nd</sup> president, Bill Clinton, identified school construction as "a national priority", noting that schools across the country are aging and are in dire need of replacement. Two years later, George W. Bush, our 43<sup>rd</sup> president, declared that no child should be left behind. Both of these leaders are addressing the same subject: The quality of education in America.

There is no reason to believe that the demand for new and renovated schools should be addressed apart from academic achievement. Many studies have proven that the environment in which the child learns is just as important as the teacher who instructs or the book from which the information comes.

## Belleville High School Academics

Belleville High School students have more academic opportunities than ever before. New for this school year is Project Lead the Way (PLTW), a hands-on, project based curriculum for Middle School and High School science and technology education. The nationally successful PLTW curriculum and delivery approach teaches traditional science and math subjects in a highly effective way that meets the requirements of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education while stimulating the relevant career interests in these fields, which are critical for today's global economy.

We have some great kids attending BHS. A facility that meets the educational standards that these kids need to survive in a global society is just one way the community can support them. Great programs like Project Lead the Way is another. I am urging you to consider this proposal.

This brochure has been designed to answer the most frequently asked questions about the current bond proposal. Should you need additional information, please telephone (734) 697-9123, ext. 201 or email [BHSinput@vanbureschools.net](mailto:BHSinput@vanbureschools.net) and we will provide the answers to your questions within one business day.

## Did You Know?

**Belleville High School students are granted hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships by colleges and universities every year?**



# New BHS Bond Proposal – Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: When is the election?**

A: Tuesday, November 4, 2008.

**Q: What is the proposed amount of the bond?**

A: 2.98 mills, or \$2.98 per \$1,000.00 of taxable value, over 30 years not to exceed \$79,040,000.

**Q: Where would the new BHS be located?**

A: The new BHS would be located on the current site, thereby reducing the cost of the proposal removing land acquisition cost of past proposals.

**Q: How will the new BHS increase the square footage on the same sized site?**

A: The architect has recommended a multi-winged building that include two, three-story academic structures, maximizing the current space by utilizing the vertical possibilities of the site. This space saving design will allow for the class space necessary for the students while returning BHS to the original three story structure of the 1920's. The existing cafeteria, music wing, and auditorium will be incorporated into the new structure in an innovative way, thus preserving the best of the old with the vision of the new. Using these spaces, totaling 50,000 sq. ft., saves the community in construction costs. (50,000 sq. ft. X \$150 per sq. ft. = \$8.5 million in savings!)

**Q: How will a new high school positively affect our students' academic performance?**

A: One study (Lewis, 1999) found that facility condition may be a stronger predictor of academic achievement than many family background factors and socioeconomic conditions. Maxwell's 1997 study found a significant relationship between improved facility condition and increased math scores.

Current Facility	New Facility
257,500 sq. ft.	389,969 sq. ft.
40 acre site	40 acre site
1,743 student capacity	1,998 student capacity
70 classrooms	94 classrooms
7 science classrooms	16 science classrooms
6,500 sq. ft. media center	11,750 sq. ft. media center
Two-station gym with auxiliary gym	Three-station gym with running track and auxiliary gym
5-lane pool without diving well	8-lane pool with diving well

**MILLAGE PROPOSAL  
BUILDING AND SITE BOND PROPOSITION**

Shall Van Buren Public Schools, Counties of Wayne and Washtenaw, State of Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed \$79,040,000 and issue its unlimited tax general obligation bonds therefor, for the purpose of defraying all or part of the cost of:

Improving, remodeling and replacing the current Belleville High School, which would include equipping for technology and technology improvements, and furnishing and improving the existing site, including construction renovation and equipping of athletic fields thereon.

YES  NO

The following is for informational purposes only:

The bonds may be issued in series, with the maximum number of years any series of the bonds may be outstanding, exclusive of any refunding, not to exceed thirty (30) years. The estimated millage that will be levied for the proposed bonds in the year 2009 is 2.98 mills (\$2.98 per \$1,000 of taxable valuation). The estimated simple average annual millage anticipated to be required to retire this bond is 2.77 mills (\$2.77 per \$1,000 of taxable valuation).

The bonds shall be qualified pursuant to Section 16 of Article IX of the State Constitution of 1963. In the event the School District borrows from the State of Michigan to pay debt service on the bonds, the School District may be required to continue to levy mills beyond the term of the bonds to repay the state.

*(Pursuant to state law, expenditures of bond proceeds must be audited and cannot be used for repair or maintenance costs, teacher, administrator or employee salaries, or other operating expenses.)*