

## “A Vote for Our Future”

Much has been written and said about the proposed Bond package for the Lake Travis Independent School District on the November ballot. My perspective comes from that of a parent of a high school student in the district, the Chairman of the Lake Travis Chamber of Commerce and a 32 year career in home building.

First, my wife Sue and I have 5 children, the youngest of which is a high school student. We are a firm believer in the public school system and all of our other kids attended and graduated from public schools. That said, we, as with most parents, always did our research to be sure that our children received the best education possible. As home builders we are able to observe first hand this dynamic continuation of parental research. Today the local builders are working with a greater percentage of relocating families than ever before. When I started my real estate career in 1979 the three buzz words for the industry were location, location, location. Today those words are schools, schools, schools. The exemplary status of the LTISD is single handedly responsible for much of the family migration to our area. Everyone we build homes for requests information on the school district before they consider a home or home site. The availability of new home inventory priced in the \$300,000 range makes the Lake Travis area more affordable for families than in the past. To look at numbers, the subdivision of West Cypress Hills for example on Hwy 71 is platted for 1100 new homes, 95 are currently built.

The Citizen's Bond Committee did an excellent job of assessing our “sticks and bricks” needs to accommodate the new students that are coming. The School Board voted to send this package to the voters in May. Some have said that we should wait until the new Superintendent arrives before we ask for a bond approval. Dr. Rocky Kirk, LTISD's former Superintendent was well respected in both the business and private community. In January at the Chamber's annual Lake Travis Economic Forecast he described the growth ahead for the district and the bold steps required to maintain our level of service to the students. Dr. Kirk had seven years experience in our district. He sat on committees considering this Bond package and ultimately

endorsed the School Board's actions. I think that relying on his 7 years of running the district to support this decision makes sense. If passed the new Superintendent will begin their job with sufficient funds to cover the projected expansion rather than dealing with immediate problems of overcrowding.

Lastly, as more people move to our area new business will follow. At the Chamber of Commerce we work daily to support our local business members and encourage new firms to set up shop here. Last week our Board of Directors was joined in the support of the LTISD Bond initiative by the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce. The business community is grateful for the growth that the school district brings to the area and understands the need for "non-Robin Hood funds" to build new schools. I encourage everyone to vote "FOR" the LTISD Bond Proposal so that the district can continue its course of excellence. For residents over 65, there is no financial impact on property taxes. Should the proposed Bond fail to pass what we will see is overcrowded classrooms and a degradation of service in our schools that could have a negative impact on property values. If our district does not pass the "research test" from relocating families they will look elsewhere.

Our son will be long out of the LTISD before any of the proposed Bond money makes any difference in the district. However, we still live here, we still do business here and we are still all in this together.

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