

## Edgefield County Voters to Determine School District's Future

The taxpayers in Edgefield County have the choice of borrowing \$54,670,000 to address the facility needs of the school district in the November 6<sup>th</sup> midterm elections. The cost to a tax payer that owns a \$100,000 home would be approximately \$226.00 a year. The yearly tax bill on a \$100,000 could be less in the first few years if the school district borrows the money in stages instead of borrowing all at one time. The proposed projects to be funded by the bond would be completed in phases in order to more effectively manage and oversee the projects.

This past year, a tax payer with a home valued at \$100,000 paid \$98 dollars a year for school debt. The \$98.00 dollars a year was based on 24.5 mills. The school bond on the November 6<sup>th</sup> ballot would increase the mills paid by tax payers in Edgefield County by approximately 32 mills for a total of 56.5 mills.

If more people move to Edgefield County in the upcoming years, the amount that each tax payer pays will decrease as the mills needed to pay the off the bond decrease. In addition, if property values increase, individual tax payers will pay less.

The funds in the bond approved in 1991 provided for three new schools and the renovation of four schools. On the November 6<sup>th</sup> midterm election, Edgefield County voters will make the decision of adding \$128.00 in taxes to what they paid in 2017 for a total of \$226 a year per \$100,000 of property value.

The bond passed in 1991 added 77 mills for the new schools and major renovations. After twenty-eight years, the number of mills needed to pay for the bond dropped to 24.5 because property in the county increased in value. This property value increase resulted in less mills needed to repay the bond and it is projected that the county's property values will continue to increase resulting in a decrease in mills for the new bond also.

The funds generated by the bond, if approved, will provide for construction and redesign of all school entrances to meet safety needs. The funding would also be used at every school to address other district needs including renovations, expansions and new construction.

At this time the HVAC (heating and cooling) and lighting systems are approaching thirty years of age. These systems are inefficient and in need of constant repairs. In addition, the Merriwether area is experiencing rapid growth with a projected increase of 400 students. Part of the bond funding will allow the district to construct additional classrooms in the Merriwether area to address the increase in the number of students.

Strom Thurmond Career and Technology Center is slated for major renovations and expansion along with a new gym, auditorium and track at Strom Thurmond High School. Presently the entire student body cannot meet in the gym, the track team practices in dirt around the football practice field and the drama program uses the cafetorium.

Voting "Yes" on the ballot measure on November 6<sup>th</sup> means the residents of the Edgefield County approve the funds needed to address the immediate and long term needs of the school district. Voting "No" means the residents of Edgefield County decline to approve the funding for the safety upgrades, renovations, expansions and new construction.

The referendum will appear on the ballot as follows:

Shall the Board of Trustees of the School District of Edgefield County, South Carolina (the "School District") be empowered to issue, at one time or from time to time, general obligation bonds of the School District, in a principal amount of not exceeding \$54,647,000, the proceeds of which shall be used to finance the costs (including architectural, engineering, legal and related fees) of acquiring, constructing, improving, equipping, expanding, renovating, and repairing school facilities, within the School District, as follows:

- Security Upgrades and Renovations
  - Douglas Elementary School
  - Johnston Elementary School
  - W.E. Parker Elementary School
  - JET Middle School

Strom Thurmond High School

- Security Upgrades and Expansion
  - Merriwether Elementary School
  - Merriwether Middle School
  - Strom Thurmond Career and Technology Center
- New Construction
  - Auditorium, Gymnasium, and Practice Track at Strom Thurmond High School

If the voter wishes to vote in favor of the question, fill in the oval next to “In favor of the question/yes;” if the voter wishes to vote against the question, fill in the oval next to the words, “Opposed to the question/no.”

- In favor of the question/yes
- Opposed to the question/no