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Citizens' Committee Submits Recommendations to Casa Grande Elementary School District Governing Board

Board calls for \$44.66 million bond election to repair and replace facilities and buses, and to improve technology.



June 7, 2016

Casa Grande, AZ - Following the recommendations of a 40-member committee made up of civic and business leaders, the Casa Grande Elementary School District Governing Board called for a \$44.66 million bond election this November. The vote by the Board was unanimous. If approved by voters, proceeds from the bonds would be used to repair and replace facilities throughout the school district, to construct replacement space for Saguaro Elementary School and Casa Grande Middle School, and to replace older buses in the district's fleet of 70 buses. The funds would also help to increase safety at the schools through improvements intended to bring greater security.

An important consideration for both the citizens' committee and the school board was the fact that voters' approval of the measure would not increase taxes. In fact, the average tax rate over the repayment period for new bonds would be ten cents lower than the current secondary property tax rate of \$0.55 for existing bond debt.

The primary reasons given for the committee's recommendations were that this approach would:

- Protect the community's investment in its schools,
- Increase security in schools,
- Strengthen neighborhood schools,
- Improve facilities long overdue for renovation, and
- Avoid any increase in taxes.

The committee was led by the husband-and-wife team of Jerry Stabley and Evelyn Casuga. After assessing the status of the school district's capital needs over a five-month period of time, the committee members produced a consensus recommendation – to sell \$44.66 in bonds to repair and upgrade facilities and to resume the replacement of buses.

All major repairs and vehicle replacement stopped in the district in 2008 when state appropriations for school districts' capital funding fell dramatically. Today, the state appropriates just 15% of the capital funding to school districts that is stipulated in statute.

In making its recommendation, the citizens' committee argued that it made more financial sense to replace rather than to renovate Saguaro Elementary and Casa Grande Middle School. Needed repairs to the two schools would cost over \$11 million, whereas replacing the schools with space that could serve the community for several more decades would cost an additional \$6 million.

Following the vote, Governing Board President Judee Jackson thanked the members of the citizens' committee for their efforts.

Prior to the election, all registered voters will receive an informational pamphlet regarding the proposed sale of bonds. Information about the recommendation is also available on the District's web site.

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Citizens' Committee Members:

Colleen Bechtel	Shea Nieto
Breanna Boland	Larry Rains
Evelyn Casuga	Orlenda Roberts
Nancy Caywood	Mary Lou Rosales
Steve Chasse	Richard Rosales
Fernando Cornejo	Moh Saleh
Rona Curphy	Norm Sam
Frank Davidson	Adelphia Sisson
David Fitzgibbons	Jerry Stabley
Bryan Harris	Kay Steward
Bob Jackson	Jeff VanHise
Kevin Kelty	Blanca Varela
Jeff Lavender	Ralph Varela
Matt Lemberg	Ken Waddill
Renee Louzon-Benn	Brett Wallace
Roger Lyle	Grant Walton
Tim Mace	Eric Wilkey
Donna McBride	Barbara Wright
Craig McFarland	Chuck Wright
Helen Neuharth	Dennis York