

## A STATEMENT FROM THE DISTRICT AS TO WHY THE SPECIAL BOND ELECTION HAS BEEN CALLED

Following the recommendations of a 40-member committee made up of civic and business leaders, the Casa Grande Elementary School District Governing Board has approved a resolution calling for a \$44.66 million bond election this November. The vote by the Board was unanimous.

### **Will this result in a tax increase?**

No. In fact, the average tax rate over the repayment period for new bonds would be around ten cents lower than the current secondary property tax rate of \$0.55 for existing bond debt.

### **Why did the citizens' committee recommend the sale of \$44.66 million in bonds?**

A consultant was employed to identify the facility needs throughout the district. That consultant identified \$52 million in needs. The sale of \$52 million in bonds would have resulted in a tax increase, and both the citizens' committee and school board members were opposed to a tax increase. It was determined that the sale of \$44.66 million in bonds would address most of the facility needs throughout the district without increasing taxes.

### **How will the funding be used?**

Proceeds from the bonds would be used as follows:

- To increase safety at the schools through improvements intended to bring greater security;
- To repair and replace equipment and facilities throughout the school district;
- To construct replacement space for Saguaro Elementary School and Casa Grande Middle School (schools that are 43 and 66 years old, respectively); and
- To replace older buses in the district's fleet of 70 buses.

### **Why replace Saguaro and Casa Grande Middle Schools?**

The citizens' committee determined that it made more financial sense to replace rather than to renovate the schools. 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.

### **Doesn't the state provide funding for facilities?**

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

the Great Recession amount to a loss of \$23 million in funding that could have been applied to the District's capital needs. There is no indication that this funding will be restored anytime soon.

### **Voters just approved Proposition 123. How will those funds be used?**

Proposition 123 settled a lawsuit over inflation funding for operating schools. The vast majority of a school district's operational costs involve compensation and benefits for teachers and other employees. Proposition 123 funding will not address the facility needs in the schools.

### **Why should voters support this proposal?**

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

- Avoid a tax increase,
- protect the community's investment in its schools,
- recognize the fact that the world is a different place today than it was 10 or 20 years ago, and employ security measures to account for that change,
- strengthen neighborhood schools, and
- improve facilities long overdue for renovation.

The Casa Grande Elementary School District has beautiful new schools, as well as older schools that need attention. Consistent with the school district's adopted mission statement of "Success for Every One – The Responsibility is Yours and Mine," the Governing Board seeks to ensure that all children in the school district are able to attend school in settings that are comfortable, safe, and conducive to learning.