

## **Frequently Asked Questions About The Existing High School**

### **1. Why is the school bond needed to finance this project?**

**Answer:** School districts are limited in the way they can pay for buildings and improvements. The funding options are: general obligation bonds, Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PEEL) and/or School Infrastructure Local Option Sales Tax (SILO) fund proceeds, grants, or donations. A portion of the SILO fund will be used to help pay for the new high school. Our district spends approximately \$540,000 of the annual SILO proceeds to repair and maintain all our schools.

### **2. What will happen to the old high school if a new one is built?**

**Answer:** The Board of Education held two work sessions in August, 2008, inviting the public to share their ideas. A People 4 Progress committee, consisting of developers, realtors and other citizens, also dedicated many hours to exploring various options and made their recommendation on October 9, 2008 that the buildings be torn down within 12 months of completion of the new school. On October 27, 2008, the following resolution was approved by the Board of Education:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Independence Community School District that, when the December 16, 2008, bond referendum has been successfully voted upon, the following action will be taken by the District with regard to the existing high school buildings and site:

1. Upon the passage of the December 16, 2008, bond referendum, the District will retain an appraiser to determine the estimated fair market value of the old high school buildings and site.
2. Upon obtaining that appraisal, the District will, with appropriate professional assistance, market these buildings and site to a developer for appropriate consideration and with the condition that the buildings on the site are razed by the purchaser to the extent established in the purchase contract within twelve (12) months of completion of construction of the new high school, with sufficient restrictions and penalty clauses to ensure that the demolition is completed by this specified time period.
3. In the event that no agreement is reached with the developer established in the above paragraph within six (6) months of the passage of the bond referendum, that marketing effort will be abandoned.
4. If the above marketing effort is so abandoned, the District shall immediately retain the services of a contractor to raze the buildings on the high school site and to convert the area into marketable property/green space, with the requirement that the project be completed within twelve (12) months of completion of the construction of the new high school.
5. In the event that the December 16, 2008, board referendum is not successful, the plan of action set forth in this resolution shall be null and void.

### **3. What are the code violations at the present high school?**

**Answer:** The building was constructed prior to the current code standards. If any major renovations are performed, the high school will have to be brought into compliance with current codes including:

- International Building Code
- International Fire Code
- International Plumbing Code
- International Mechanical Code
- Iowa State Building Code
- Iowa Energy Code

## **CODE VIOLATIONS**

LIFE SAFETY DEFICIENCIES, include, but are not limited to the following:

- Exits from the Gymnasium and stage area are too narrow.
- All classrooms do not have access to two legal emergency exits.

- Exposed wood roof structure in many parts of the building is no longer allowed.
- Current codes require fire sprinklers throughout the facility.
- Wire glass used in the fire wall separations is no longer allowed.
- Smoke compartments and separation walls are not in compliance with current codes.
- Emergency lighting and alarm systems need to be upgraded to meet current standards.

**Life Safety** improvements to meet current standards could be in the range of \$1,500,000 - \$2,000,000

### **SECURITY ISSUES**

- Numerous un-supervised entrances and exits from the building create serious security issues. Current standards call for electronic door monitoring and a single supervised entrance to the building during school hours.
- Several doors must remain unlocked during school hours for access from the annex building, sports fields and shop areas. Also, doors can be easily blocked open without anyone's knowledge.
- Security camera system must be installed to meet current security requirements.

**Security Issues** improvements could be in the range \$1,500,000 - \$2,000,000.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS**

- Although regular maintenance and equipment replacement has been performed, the age of the structure and wear and tear has taken its toll. The roof has been repeatedly repaired and is still in need of work. Sagging over the years has created low spots that pond water contributing to early roofing and seam failures.
- The boiler heating plant is over 50 years old and has exceeded its useful life expectancy. The current boiler is approximately 50 percent efficient.
- Several terminal radiator units have failed and are unreliable and need replacement.
- The temperature control system does not adequately control temperatures leading to extremes throughout the building.
- Fresh air exchange is virtually non-existent leading to stagnant air and unhealthy air in classrooms.
- The existing electrical system does not meet current power or future needs and must be upgraded.
- The current elevator does not meet any code and must be replaced.
- Some existing windows need replacement to meet energy standards.
- Energy saving light fixtures should be installed to meet current energy standards.

**Infrastructure Improvements** costs could easily top \$3,500,000 - \$4,000,000.

### **IMPROVEMENT REQUIREMENTS**

- In addition to the required life safety, security and infrastructure requirements, the existing facility would need to be generally upgraded to meet current teaching standards.
- The existing media center is undersized and needs constant improvement to furnish current technology requirements.
- The building finishes, including floors, walls, and ceilings need refurbishing.
- Many existing doors and hardware need replacement.
- Total remodeling of the locker rooms, weight room, science rooms, music rooms, stage, cafeteria, kitchen, family and consumer education and industrial technology areas, with new casework and layouts, are required to make these spaces as usable as possible.
- Exterior walks and parking areas are showing serious wear and need replacement / re-surfacing.
- Exterior tennis courts are in need of replacement / re-surfacing.

**Improvement** required could be in the range of \$3,500,000 - \$4,000,000.

Current architect estimate to completely renovate the existing structure is \$11,000,000. Additions to the existing structure would be extra cost.

**4. If the current high school was good enough for me, why not my kids/grandkids?**

**Answer:** The current building has served to the best of its capabilities for the last 50 plus years considering it was never meant to serve as a high school. It has consistently evolved as education needs change, including the addition of peripheral buildings to serve as classrooms, the retrofitting of technology where possible, and the integration of special education classrooms. The costs of updating and maintaining the current building are escalating due to the age of the building and its systems. An assessment by an outside source confirmed numerous significant safety issues and code violations. Replacing the facility is the most cost-effective manner to address all the efficiency, space and safety issues. Most importantly, a modern facility will remove the limits the current infrastructure has on the education of our students.

**5. In light of school violence around the country, how safe are my children in the present high school?**

**Answer:** The school district's insurance carrier, EMC Insurance, conducted a safety audit in the spring of 2008 and provided recommendations on how to make our schools safer. While the board is making every effort to implement these suggestions, the design of our current high school limits our students from having the safest environment. For example, holding classes in the Annex, which has no restroom facilities, necessitates the entrance/exit to the main building be left unlocked.

**6. Are all classes held in the main high school building?**

**Answer:** No. There are Family and Consumer Sciences Classes and Spanish Classes held in the Annex. The Annex was built as a "temporary" classroom in 1971. This building has no restroom facilities and requires students to leave the building throughout the day.

**7. Is there asbestos in the present high school?**

**Answer:** Yes, there is asbestos in the floor tile of several science rooms on the lower level.

**8. Was the present high school designed to be a high school?**

**Answer:** No, it was originally designed to be a Junior High School building.