

Community Survey Seeks to Determine Facility Priorities

By Neil Hufnagel, Superintendent/High School Principal

In last month's Eagle Flyer, I shared that the district is developing priorities for a Phase 2 follow-up to our successful renovation and construction project in 2013. This process includes identifying specific district facilities needs and potential improvements that are sought or supported by the community. Extensive communication and surveying was done as part of that previous construction project that indicated interest in additions to our facilities that would serve both our students and community well. These included the addition of a new gymnasium at the high school and a fitness center that would serve both our students and community. Phase 2 would also include some significant district needs that were not included in Phase I including renovations of our 1959 high school kitchen and cafeteria, renovations of locker rooms, and roof replacement at both school buildings. We will also reevaluate the other facility and infrastructure needs with the goal of making improvements that will serve our students and community well for the next generation of Fowler Eagles.

It is important to acknowledge that this project will certainly include many components that are needed to provide a quality education to our students, but will also include components that offer shared benefit to our community as a whole. One of the most important things we can do to ensure a great education for future generations of Fowler Public School students, is to assure that Fowler remains a community of choice to young families. When young families choose our community as the place in which to raise their children, our schools benefit from a sustaining flow of kids; our business benefit from a sustaining customer population; our churches benefit from a sustaining number of kids and families in their pews; our local governments benefit from a sustained tax base, our home owners benefit from sustained or increased property values; and our retirees benefit from a community that welcomes and serves their children and grandchildren close to home.

But if we are going to be a community that welcomes and encourages young families, we need to seek ways to meet their needs. Certainly a huge component of that is providing outstanding educational opportunities, but it is also providing those things that young families see as important to their desired quality of life. These things may be a bit different than those that my generation sought, or those sought by my parents' generation. I suspect opportunities for recreation, entertainment, and enrichment for themselves and their children are likely a high priority. I also believe they retain many of the same values our community has held for generations such as relatively low property taxes, a safe and secure community, and quality services at a good price.

To help update and clarify these priorities, we are conducting a survey, similar to the one done a few years ago. Please take some time to complete this survey about your priorities for our schools and community. To get as much feedback as possible, please share with others who may not receive the Eagle Flyer. The link to the survey is provided below, and you can also access it by going to our website at www.fowlerschools.net.