

## **Recommendation from the Citizens' Advisory Committee for April 6, 2004, Bond and Levy Election**

R-7 Citizens' Advisory Committee Chairperson Mark Manning presented the Citizens' Advisory Committee's recommendations for an April 6, 2004, school bond issue and levy issue to the Board of Education in November 2003. The group developed this recommendation after 11 well-attended meetings that included in-depth presentations on the district's growth issue, enrollments and projected enrollments, facility needs, a tour of district schools, information about the ongoing reductions in state funding for R-7 schools and updates on the R-7 cost containment process. In addition, Piper Jaffray funded a community telephone survey, conducted in September 2003 for the Citizens' Advisory Committee. CAC members used the informational presentations, the community survey and their own perceptions of local public opinion as tools in their development of the recommended bond and levy issues.

The Citizens' Advisory Committee is recommending three bond issue options. All three are for \$25 million and would not increase property taxes. Each of the three no-tax-increase bond issue options includes the following common components: a new elementary school, a middle school addition, an addition to Meadow Lane Elementary (including a cafeteria), instructional technology, school buses, an addition to the R-7 warehouse, performance contracting (a method of implementing and financing capital energy conservation improvements) and a number of capital projects involving numerous schools. The middle school addition would be targeted for either Pleasant Lea Middle School or Summit Lakes Middle School, depending on the upcoming decision on secondary attendance boundaries. Two of the options also include \$2.2 million to go toward construction of the R-7 Parents As Teachers/Early Childhood Center. Close to \$3.6 million for this facility has already been raised by the Lee's Summit Educational Foundation, including a \$2 million anonymous challenge grant. The third bond issue option includes \$2.2 million for either an R-7 Administrative Office renovation/addition or funds to purchase land for future facilities and funds for additional capital projects improvements.

The Citizens' Advisory Committee recommends that a levy be placed on the April ballot ranging from 53 to 61 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. The levy would allow the R-7 School District to maintain its quality educational program while minimizing the need to make further cuts. In addition, the CAC recommended that this levy issue include funding to reduce class sizes and combination classrooms, provide staffing for growth and provide staff salary increases. (CAC members were concerned that staff salaries have been frozen since July 2002.) Both class sizes and staff salary increases received high approval ratings as part of the group's community telephone survey.