



## **Bond Planning Committee Meeting 3**

**September 24, 2009**

The third meeting of the GCISD Bond Planning Committee was held at 6 p.m. on Thursday, September 24, 2009, at the Professional Development and Education Center. Thirty-eight members of the 52-member committee were present.

### **Welcome and Review**

Paula Barbaroux, GCISD Chief Operations Officer and Administrative Facilitator/Advisor to the Committee, welcomed members and introduced Ray Turco of Raymond Turco & Associates to present the process and results of the 2009 Bond Attitudes and Awareness Survey.

### **Bond Attitudes and Awareness Survey**

Mr. Turco provided an overview of the telephone survey conducted in July 2009. He emphasized that the purpose of the survey was to provide the District with a snapshot of voter opinions at that time concerning a possible future bond election. The survey is designed to measure intensity of emotions, whether enthusiasm, resistance, or ambivalence, about particular elements of a bond election. Mr. Turco added that the results will aid the committee and the District in discussing, planning, and educating the community about a future bond proposal.

The survey methodology included 400 randomly selected voting households from a pool of residents with a history of voting in municipal/school and primary elections. Mr. Turco indicated that most people who vote in municipal/school district elections generally are older, do not have children currently in school, are long-term residents of the district, and are more conservative in spending money. People least likely to vote typically are more liberal in their spending habits, he added. Survey findings from July 2009 are at a +/- 5 percent, which indicates a 95 percent confidence level in the data.

The presentation summarized survey results to the following questions:

- Level of satisfaction with the quality of GCISD schools;
- Familiarity with 2005 Bond Program efforts;
- Level of agreement with election-related statements;
- Pre-test and post-test election questions as relating to a bond election of up to \$120 million;
- Willingness to support based on a range of potential tax increases;

- Items supported and opposed including campus renovations and improvements, an early childhood education center, expansion of the career and technology program, technology improvements, safety and security measures, nursing equipment upgrades, athletic improvements, an indoor multi-use practice facility, and Districtwide improvements.
- Likelihood of support based on factual statements about the District;
- General attitudes about the District;
- Respondent profile.

Mr. Turco reported that survey respondents were slightly more satisfied with the quality of GCISD than they were in 2004 when a similar survey was conducted prior to the 2005 Bond election. Nearly nine in 10 voters (89%) sampled in July 2009 indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with GCISD schools, compared with 88% in 2004. He did report that respondents were not as familiar with the projects completed in the 2005 Bond Program or the success of the program in terms of cost savings and prudent management.

Mr. Turco indicated that at the time the survey was conducted, the approval threshold seemed to be \$76-\$100 million before any work by the Bond Planning Committee, communication to patrons about requested items, or any subsequent promotional efforts by supporters. In the various scenarios presented, the degree of support increased as the total bond amount decreased. One scenario did consider no tax increase.

Mr. Turco answered questions from committee members about the age and demographics of respondent groups, trends in support of athletics, whether the difference in the tax impact of the various scenarios presented typically makes that much difference in support of a bond measure, and whether he believed an improving economy would affect community support of a bond. Mr. Turco said that at the time the survey was conducted, respondents were more hesitant of a larger bond program cost but were more accepting of the lower-cost scenarios even though the difference in the yearly increase was not large. He added respondents were more supportive once the needs of the District and the potential tax impact were communicated. Therefore, he emphasized that between now and the time the bond election is called is a prime opportunity to educate voters about the reasons for a new bond program, and added that it certainly is possible that support would increase as the economy improves.

### **Bond Election Laws and Ethics**

Jennifer Clariday of Huckabee and Associates used a PowerPoint presentation to explain the laws, rules and ethics governing bond elections. The requirements are provided in the Texas Election Code and enforced by the Texas Ethics Commission. Ethics laws prohibit the use of public funds for political advertising during the election period. The committee learned that all political advertising, whether in support of or against a bond referendum, is considered advocacy. Factual information describing the purposes of the measure is allowable under the law as long as it does not advocate for a particular outcome of the election. Laws apply to anyone acting on behalf of a particular outcome including parents, individuals, and school district employees. Ms. Clariday provided examples of appropriate communications as well as violations. She explained what is

appropriate for individuals and employees of school districts, and discussed the role and requirements of Political Action Committees (PAC).

Ms. Clariday and Administrators addressed questions regarding employee participation in a PAC, distribution of advocacy materials by non-District groups at District facilities or events, advocacy rules for individuals and school-related groups such as PTAs, and use of email for advocacy communications. Ms. Barbaroux reiterated that election ethics laws are in effect only during the time between when the Board calls the election until the election date. The GCISD Board of Trustees is scheduled to take action on a bond referendum recommendation in February 2010, which (if approved) is when ethics laws would go into effect for a May 2010 election.

### **Subcommittees, Liaisons and Process**

Ms. Barbaroux provided an overview of the subcommittees and District liaisons and asked voting members of the committee to complete a form listing their first, second, and third preferences for the subcommittees on which they would like to serve.

### **Elect Committee Officers**

Ms. Barbaroux outlined the roles and responsibilities of committee leadership and asked for nominations for two chairpersons and a secretary. Mr. Brian Rosamond volunteered to serve as a chairman and the committee voted to approve the nomination. Mr. Rosamond is a resident of Grapevine and a parent representing Cannon Elementary and Grapevine Middle. He worked on the 2005 Bond Program as a construction contractor and has experience in the planning and implementation of bond projects. He expressed his excitement about being involved in the Bond Planning Committee and appreciation of the opportunity to serve.

Ms. Barbaroux thanked Mr. Rosamond on behalf of the District for his willingness to serve on the committee and in a leadership role. She announced that the committee would receive the master list of requests for the 2010 bond program at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 8, 2009, 6-7:30 p.m. at the Professional Development and Education Center.

### **Handouts provided:**

- 2009 Bond Attitudes and Awareness Survey Results PowerPoint presentation by Ray Turco
- 2009 Bond Attitudes and Awareness Survey Results Executive Summary by Ray Turco
- Bond Election Laws and Ethics PowerPoint presentation by Jennifer Clariday
- Membership Roster
- List of Subcommittees and District Liaisons, and Explanation of Committee Leadership Roles and Responsibilities
- Subcommittee Preference Form
- Meeting 2 minutes: September 10, 2009