

OPINION

EDITORIAL

Vote yes on needed improvements for Central, South

✓ Yes
No

Residents in Hinsdale High School District 86 certainly have more than one reason to oppose the \$76 million facilities referendum on the Tuesday, April 4, ballot.

They might think the board should have included \$94 million worth of projects in the ballot question. They might believe the board should have agreed on a finalized list of projects earlier in the process. They might want the district to more thoroughly explore options to better balance enrollment between Hinsdale Central and Hinsdale South high schools.

But none of these issues, in our opinion, is enough to warrant a no vote.

We encourage residents to vote yes so the district can make many critical improvements at Hinsdale Central and Hinsdale South high schools.

We asked two main questions in reaching our conclusion.

1. Are the improvements necessary?
2. What would be gained by forestalling the referendum to spend additional time and energy further refining it?

The answer to the first question is easy.

Hinsdale Central is literally bursting at the seams, unable to schedule science classes and study halls in dedicated spaces because there aren't enough classrooms in the school. The pool, part of the original 1949 building, is outdated and out of compliance with National Federation of State High School

Associations' 12-foot depth standard for diving standards. Counselors' offices have been carved out of other space, leaving staff and students to meet in rooms that are too small and from which their conversations can be too easily overheard.

Money also would be spent to create better spaces to meet the needs of special education students and their teachers and fine arts students.

Finally, \$4 million of the \$46.4 million earmarked for Central would be spent on the required separation of storm and sanitary sewers for the entire site.

At Hinsdale South, \$24.9 million would be spent for a significant renovation of the library, a new serving and kitchen area in the cafeteria, an expansion of special education support spaces, upgrades and an addition to fine arts space, a technology wing addition and a major renovation of the existing aquatic facility.

The second question is a little more difficult to answer.

Some argue the process to reach the final list of referendum projects was too rushed. That might be a fair assessment if you're looking at the time frame between Jan. 9, when board members decided to go to referendum, and Feb. 22, when they agreed on the final list of projects.

But this process began in December 2014, when the board decided to refresh its master facilities plan. A master facility plan steering committee and board members have spent almost two years reviewing what started as a list of about 94 projects at a cost of about \$200 million before arriving at the current list of critical needs.



We agree with facilities committee Chairman Jennifer Planson, who noted last week that the board could spend endless amounts of time going back and forth on which projects to include and which ones to exclude.

As to the question of better balancing enrollment between the two high schools, we agree the board should pursue this objective. And we're excited about some of the options that have been discussed to create a magnet program at Hinsdale South. But voters need to remember that process will take a year or more of planning and lead time, and no student-shifting solution would completely eliminate overcrowding at Central.

Waiting until 2018 to put a different referendum on a future ballot would only further delay projects that need to be started now. And there's no guarantee a different question approved by a different board would pass.

Is this ballot question perfect? No. But it represents the best opportunity for taxpayers to make an appropriate investment in projects that have been fully considered by District 86 administrators, board members and residents who served on the task force.

We hope residents agree and vote yes.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LaPlaca brings leadership, supports 'guided growth'

I respect any resident who dedicates their time to public service, but we need to move beyond the eight years of President Cauley's "no growth" leadership, which is why I support Laura LaPlaca for president.

As a previous village trustee, I had a front row seat to Cauley's position for Hinsdale. He was the leading voice opposing the development proposed for the Hinsdale Office Park, which ultimately resulted in the developer abandoning a project which would have brought annual tax revenues of over \$1 million to the village and \$3 million to our schools.

After eight years of Cauley's presidency, ask yourself, "Is Hinsdale any better off than we were eight years ago?" An abandoned and shameful looking Amling's property welcoming you from the west, valuable Ogden Avenue property like the GM Training Center left for years to

produce no revenue, empty-nester housing proposals at 55th and County Line stalled from 2008 to 2017 and no progress on the growing downtown retail vacancies. It is any wonder why our property taxes keep going up and our streets keep deteriorating?

We need new leadership with a fresh "pro growth" approach that will give entrepreneurs a reason to trust and invest in Hinsdale to make it more vibrant and economically viable.

Laura LaPlaca has served Hinsdale for over two decades on the plan commission and village board. She believes in "guided growth" and has the leadership style to find compromise that will move Hinsdale forward. Vote Laura LaPlaca for president on April 4 to bring new life and new leadership to Hinsdale. — **Vic Orler, Hinsdale**

Writer supports Dems in Downers Grove Township

The Downers Grove Township election may be the most "under the radar" part of the upcoming April 4 general election, but as the ground floor of our local government, township offices do matter. I ask you to consider the Democratic candidates: Ardyth Duhatschek Krause for supervisor, Mehrunisa Qayyum and Karol Sole for trustee, Anne Sommerkamp for clerk and Steve Leopoldo for highway commissioner.

Although space does not permit a more exhaustive list, among the responsibilities of the township are general assistance, maintenance of roads in unincorporated areas, assessment of property values, transportation for seniors and people with disabilities, and youth programs.

These candidates bring a fresh perspective to positions long held by Republicans and are committed

to closely reviewing spending and programs with the goal of better expense management via the coordination and consolidation of services within the county.

These candidates bring relevant experience and credentials for these positions. Further, the two trustee candidates are running with four Republicans for the four positions, and are committed to working in a bipartisan fashion. I have met these candidates and believe they would be excellent choices for these positions in our township. In order to improve the chances of the two Democratic Trustee candidates for the four open positions, please consider voting for just these two candidates rather than for four. More information can be found at www.DGDemocrats.org. Please take your voting privilege seriously and make your voice heard. — **Laurie McMahon, Hinsdale**

LETTERS POLICY

Requirements

- 250 words or fewer
- include writer's name, address and day-time phone number
- documentation must be provided for num-

bers, statistics and other facts mentioned in the letter

- no form letters

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