

Pop quiz! How old is BES? How old is BMS? How old is BHS? Here are the answers. BES was originally built in 1957 with additions in 1983 and 1988. BMS was originally built in 1979. There was an addition in 1992 and another in 2008. BHS was built in 1979 with additions in 1996 and 2007.

As I have worked with the BOE and our administrators and directors the first 6 months, it is obvious that there are two key areas of improvement needed in the district. The first is the renovation of our science rooms. Current science initiatives in our STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) curriculum require a learning environment improvement for BHS and BMS students. Computers and technology have changed the work environment, especially in science classes. This is priority one for us educationally to improve these learning areas.

The second area that needs addressed is our BHS gym. Due to water issues from past years, moisture is under the gym floor and is causing problems with warping and swelling on the west end of the gym. We feel the underlying problem has been addressed with the new roof in the gym area and the dehumidifiers that have been purchased. Architects have let us know that they feel we may be able to get 2-3 more years out of the original floor if we continue to utilize dehumidifiers during humid months. The gym project is a “domino theory” situation. When you replace a 40 year old floor, you replace old bleachers, you paint, etc. You want to do these things while the floor is torn up. It becomes expensive. Many people may look at the gym as just a place for athletics. However, it is a learning environment for our PE classes, adaptive PE classes, a gathering place for many community events like alumni reunions and chamber of commerce business expos, as well as the annual craft fair, Christmas on Us drawing and many other events too numerous to mention.

The BOE is proposing a 1 mill increase to our capital outlay fund for 5 years only. This will generate \$2,249,980 for these projects. What will this do to your taxes? The information is listed below.

Homes with an appraised value of \$100,000 would increase \$11.50 a year.

Unimproved agricultural land with an appraised value of \$100,000 would increase \$30 a year.

Commercial, industrial and improved ag land with an appraised value of \$100,000 would increase \$25 a year.

We are trying to do these two costly projects with this 1 mill increase so we can continue to make routine improvements to our aging facilities with our existing capital outlay. Our 5 year capital outlay working document is posted on our website at www.usd244ks.org. Go to School Board, Documents and Capital Outlay 5 Year Plan.

There will be more information shared on our website, Facebook page and at public forums in the near future. If you or a group in the community would like more information, please contact me at your convenience via e-mail at cmarshall@usd244ks.org or call me at 620-364-8478 extension 3040. I would like to answer any questions the public may have in a future article. Please e-mail me any questions you may have in the month of January.