

The 2008 School Bond will be on the May Ballot

Back in August of 2006, news came that the Guilford County School Board was planning a new school bond referendum. The Southeast school system was basically overlooked in the last two bonds in 2000 and 2003. The Southeast School System over the last 30 years has seen little to no funding for maintaining and growing our school system. This neglect has left Southeast Schools in major disrepair and struggling with major overcrowding. Our schools have deteriorated so bad that they have become a deterrent to potential home buyers in our area. The Southeast Educational Advancement Coalition (SEAC) was formed by Linda Welborn and Cindy Farmer Wood August 2006 to give the Southeast a voice and to make sure the Southeast was not left out again. After attending many school board meetings and writing numerous e-mails, SEAC was successful in getting funding allocated for the Southeast on the new bond referendum for over \$100 million.

On 1/8/2008, the Guilford County School Board voted 7 to 3 to take the \$457,315,000 school bond package to the county commissioners. School Board Members, Deena Hayes, Walter Childs and Anita Sharpe, Southeast's School Board Representative, voted against the bond.

The \$457.3 million bond includes 27 projects plus \$45 million for restoration of Eastern High School. Of those 27 projects 5 of them are Southeast projects totaling over \$100 million.

Southeast Projects Proposed for the 2008 Bond Referendum

Southeast High School	\$33,311,222	New classrooms, media center and gymnasium addition
Alamance Elementary School	\$20,300,161	Addition, demolition and renovations to convert to 700 student elementary school
Southeast Area Elem. School	\$24,893,360	New 700 student school in Southeast area including cost of site
SE Area Autism Wing	\$8,438,515	Autism Wing at Southeast Area Elementary School for 48 students
Southeast Middle School	\$13,088,725	New media center, auxiliary gym and dining room expansion. Convert existing media to classrooms
	\$100,031,983.00	

For a full listing of all the Projects see the Projects Proposed for the 2008 Bond Referendum.

On 1/17/2008, the 2008 Bond Referendum went before the county commissioners. The county commissioners requested that the \$45 million for Eastern High School stand alone on a separate bond leaving the 2008 Bond Referendum at \$412.3 million dollars. The commissioners passed the motion to put the 2008 Bond Referendum at \$412.3 million on the May Ballot 8 to 3. Skip Alston, Steve Arnold and Bruce Davis voted against the bond referendum. So there will be two school bonds listed on the May Ballot, one for \$45 million for Eastern High School and one for \$412.3 million.

Now it's up to the voters to decide whether or not they are going to support these bonds in May. Residents of the Southeast need to support this bond. Our children deserve adequate school facilities that are healthy, safe, and encourage learning. Our schools set the stage for learning for the faculty, parents and the students.

There are concerns about taxes escalating; I myself am not excited about tax increases. However, I am at a loss as to how else to get the capital improvement funding that our schools desperately need. As I mentioned earlier, our schools have deteriorated so bad that they have become a deterrent to potential home buyers in our area which hurts our property values. The Southeast can't afford not to vote for this bond. If there is one place where we should be investing our money, it is in our schools and communities. Good schools are crucial in promoting thriving communities. The Southeast is on the cusp of expansion. I've been told by the older residents, 30 to 40 years ago, the Southeast School System was considered one of the best. If we can get our schools back to those standards and get some shopping centers, the Southeast will excel like never before.

Our children hold the future of this county, state and country in their hands, and their education should be top priority. The choices we make determine our future. I choose education! Please support the 2008 Bond Referendum in May! Please feel free to contact me with questions.

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