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TEN REASONS WHY I AM VOTING NO TO THE BISD BOND PROPOSAL, AND I HOPE YOU DO TOO

Before I list any reasons, let me say that I totally agree that some of the schools in

BISD need serious work and that a bond proposal needs to be passed. HOWEVER, this

bond proposal is flawed, undefined and would leave 389 million dollars in the hands of a school board who have not demonstrated financial responsibility for many years.

Dr. David Teuscher, co-chairman of the Citizens Bond Advisory Committee, (CABC) stated at a meeting of the Press Club of Southeast Texas that it was time to hold hands and "jump off the cliff". Just like the lemmings do in Norway, where they plummet to their death. I would hope that any voter would have more sense than a lemming.

1. There are only 3 schools in BISD that received a rating of "EXEMPLARY" in 2006. They were Dunbar, French and Price. Under this bond proposal, BISD would close each of these schools and consolidate it with another one. DOES THAT MAKE SENSE TO YOU?

2. The chief reason that the CABC is giving for needing to pass this bond proposal is because most of the schools in BISD "are over 50 years old". Guess what?? In the PNG school district, the last elementary school built in Port Neches was Ridgewood Elementary in 1958. The high school and middle schools are even older. In Nederland, students still proudly attend Langham Elementary which was built in the 1920's. THE ISSUE IS NOT THE AGE OF THE BUILDING, IT IS WHETHER THEY ARE BEING PROPERLY MAINTAINED. Sadly, despite an annual budget of over 150 million dollars, BISD would rather spend their money on the most highly compensated superintendent for a district this size in the state and to create a BISD police force.

3. The Examiner characterized BISD schools as "dilapidated" in an article last week in endorsing the bond issue. It showed a picture of an unidentified room that had some ceiling tiles missing. Is it more cost efficient to replace the ceiling tiles or to raze the school and build a new one. There have been unsubstantiated reports of some schools having mice or other rodents. Has anyone heard of calling for an exterminator? Any building will fall into disrepair if it is not properly maintained. INSIST THAT YOU BE GIVEN SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF WHAT IT IS ABOUT A BUILDING THAT CAUSES IT TO BE LABELED "DILAPIDATED" AND WHY IT HAS TO BE RAZED AND REBUILT FROM THE GROUND UP INSTEAD OF REPAIRED AND MAINTAINED IN THE FUTURE.

4. South Park Middle School will be rebuilt at another location. Really, why? I went to this campus and toured it two weeks ago. The building is built like a fort. Even the 3D/I report admitted that the building was structurally sound. So why tear it down? The reason, I suspect, is because CABC co-chair Paul Brown views this structure as a reminder of a by-gone era of segregation when South Park ISD was wealthy and Beaumont ISD was struggling. Even though the school districts merged decades ago, I am told that Paul Brown will not rest until the centerpiece of what was South Park ISD is demolished. Is that a good reason to spend 28 million dollars on a "new" building?

5. Dr. David Teuscher and the CABC pledge to "oversee" how the BISD implements the bond funds, should it pass. The truth is, if this bond were to pass, only the school board

has the lawful authority to decide how the money is spent. Oversight by an outside third party might sound good in principle, but it is nothing but smoke and mirrors. Once the school board gets its hands on your tax dollars, WATCH OUT -- they can implement the schedule of construction of the improvements in any manner they like and what do you think will be the first thing built???????

6. THE NEW FOOTBALL STADIUM AND SWIMMING POOL AT A COST OF 30 MILLION DOLLARS!!!! Never mind the fact that we need a new elementary school in Northwest Beaumont, where homes are being built like crazy starting at \$200,000. There are no plans to build a school there, but "to buy some land for the future". It does not matter if the 30 million dollars is only 9 percent of the total bond package. That money could be used to build at least two new elementary schools. And for those who say that the swimming pool would benefit the whole community, I say FAT CHANCE. You can't even get BISD to turn the lights on at night so you can use the tennis courts at the high school. You really think they are going to let you in the pool??? And for those who say that a new stadium will attract UIL play-off games, how many teams from the Houston area do you think will come to Beaumont when they can play in Reliant Stadium, Rice Stadium or the facility at Galena Park ISD?

7. Regina Howell Elementary will be rebuilt on 15 acres. Really? Where? Does it not make more sense to secure purchase of the land before promising a new school? Dr. David Teuscher admitted that one of the sites being considered was at ROGERS PARK!!! That is totally absurd thinking. The City of Beaumont owns Rogers Park and BISD cannot simply annex the land for the use of a school. And even if the City of Beaumont wanted to sell the land to BISD, it could not do so without a mandate from the voters. Any attempt to convert the use of a city park to some other function must be voted on by the citizens of Beaumont. And what about Regina Howell, other than the portable buildings, is in such disrepair that a new school needs to be built?

8. Remember the last bond election in 1994 of 54 million dollars? BISD promised to rebuild Amelia Elementary with the proceeds of that money. Did it happen? NO! Furthermore, the true cost of that bond election turned out to be more like 70 million dollars when interest was calculated on the money that was borrowed and the true cost of this bond election is going to be more like 840 million dollars when you calculate interest.

9. Dr. David Teuscher is fond of saying that taxes for the senior citizens "will not increase". He is partly right. The tax rate on a senior citizen's homestead will not be affected. However, if the senior citizen owns rental property, WATCH OUT. Rental property is NOT EXEMPT from the tax rate increase for seniors or anyone else. Also, we all know that our tax appraisals on our homes are going up at 10 to 15 percent a year so do not think for a second that senior citizens are immune from paying higher taxes.

10. The rezoning of attendance boundaries should not be tied to the bond issue. BISD has made a "pledge" to Beaumont citizens that if the bond issue passes, Roy Guess Elementary and Homer Drive Elementary students will be re-zoned to go to Austin Middle School and Austin Middle School will be rezoned to go to West Brook High School. Local Realtors have said that development of Northwest Beaumont has been impeded because currently residents have their children zoned to go to Central High School and that re-zoning so that their children would attend West Brook would be the

number one thing that could happen to spur growth in Northwest Beaumont. One of the CABC's primary objectives was to attract new residents with modern educational facilities.

So if a simple re-zoning can accomplish this, why is it tied to the bond issue?

And why is there no elementary school planned for Northwest Beaumont?

The answer: BLACKMAIL AND EXTORTION. There is no justifiable reason to fail to rezone these attendance boundaries so that people living in those neighborhoods can have their children go to West Brook High School instead of Central. West Brook is closer to the neighborhoods of Northwest Beaumont and has superior objective academic performance, as demonstrated by TAAS scores.

## SO WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

Vote "NO" against this bond issue and insist that the school board come back with a new proposal that is more narrowly defined and created specific, identifiable projects to be funded with the first mandate being to get rid of all the portable buildings at every campus in Beaumont. That can be accomplished in many instances simply by adding a new wing to some of the existing structures, it is not necessary to start "from the ground up" and build a whole new school.

Insist that BISD begin a program to maintain your schools.

If you vote "YES" to this bond proposal, you are going to end up with new schools that are not being maintained and will look like heck in a few short years.

Mark my words.

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