



Thank you so much for seeking more information regarding the "underutilization" of our schools as some have claimed. It is important that you know the facts before voting, and that you not just accept a claim without relevant data and explanations to back it up.

Without the privilege of speaking to you personally to explain the many factors relating to your question, I have attached a detailed response that turned out to be quite long. There is a wealth of information on the district's website regarding demographics and the current bond we are working under. But the "short answers" to your question would be:

1. The excess capacity is a result of recent expansions at the elementary and middle schools. Without the expansions, we would have had to build Serene Hills Elementary at least a year earlier, and would need another middle school next year. The expansions have "bought us time" before building new facilities at a much greater cost.
2. The bond that was approved by the voters in September 2005 included seven tracts of land totaling over 300 acres at a budget of \$15.7 million. The Board is currently working with several landowners to satisfy the requirements of that bond. Delaying those purchases would most likely result in much higher costs, and might prohibit us from being able to purchase all tracts needed. We are committed to finding those tracts of land, and to staying within budget.

At our board meeting in December, during the Public Comment portion of that meeting, Mr. Weest complimented the district on the latest demographic study, saying that it was very thorough, much more comprehensive than previous studies, and had his support. That demographic study confirmed the needs proposed by the last bond committee, while allowing us a bit more time to plan for our next middle school and high school.

If you are interested in the more detailed explanation, please read the attached response. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have afterwards.

Since so many answers to the community's questions are complex, I would also be happy to visit personally with any of you to avoid having to write such long "essays" to respond.

I do urge you to seek answers to what you may be hearing about the district. We have no desire to "hide" any information, and I am happy to discuss anything you want to discuss. If several of you would like to meet together personally, I would be glad to do that, too. If you need to know where to find information, I'll try to point you in the right direction if I don't have it myself.

I do have a copy of the latest demographic study, along with our 10-year Long Range Master Facilities Plan, if you'd like to look at them. However, they are also on the district's website.

<http://www.ltisdschools.org/12331052672847750/site/default.asp?12331052672847750Nav=|284|&NodeID=284>

This election is very critical to the future of the district. We have made significant progress over the past five years, and the continuation of that progress would be in jeopardy with a significant change in the board and administration. Our superintendent is one of the best in the state, highly sought-after by other districts. Losing him would be devastating for the future our kids' education, and would mean halting the significant plans we have for the future while new leadership took over with their own plans. The current board and administration have worked to bring integrity and greater trust to the district, something that was lacking for many years. We believe in our schools and in the potential for becoming one of the premier districts in the nation.

Please call me if you'd like to visit about this or other issues.

Best regards,
Susan Tolles
263-3505