

Article for Newspaper 12-22-17

Tri-City United Building Strong Futures (Part 3)

By guest columnist Mrs. Deb Dwyer, TCU Montgomery PreK-Grade 8 Principal

This is Part 3 of the Tri-City United Building Strong Futures series of articles. Part 1 focused on the need for additional space for growing enrollment. Part 2 focused on the need for addressing critical maintenance needs at TCU Le Center and the proposed solutions. This week's article focuses on the proposed solutions and impacts the bond referendum would have at the TCU Montgomery PreK-Grade 8 School and TCU Lonsdale PreK-Grade 4 School.

How will the upcoming (February 13, 2018) bond referendum affect TCU Montgomery and TCU Lonsdale Schools? This is a question being asked by many residents of our school district.

Currently, students from TCU Lonsdale come to TCU Montgomery after fourth grade. The upcoming referendum would provide additional classrooms at the TCU Lonsdale School so students could remain in Lonsdale through grade six, thus becoming TCU Lonsdale PreK – Grade 6 School. This move would also mean that educational programs such as band and choir would be provided for 5th and 6th Grade students at TCU Lonsdale, just like our other schools.

Having enough classrooms for Lonsdale students to remain at TCU Lonsdale School allows for our elementary students in each community to be educated in their hometown. This also means that TCU Montgomery School would then gain additional classroom space and be able to address the overcapacity issues and provide appropriate educational settings for students. For example, K-3 students at Montgomery are unable to use the music room for their general music class because 5-8 music, band, and choir occur simultaneously. We have also displaced a computer lab to create an additional classroom and some support services need to use hallways for instruction. Unfinished areas of the school are also currently being used for student support and instruction.

The bond would also include renovating the lower level of our TCU Montgomery existing building for additional pre-school/early learning space. TCU Montgomery PreK-8 is unable to offer a four-day preschool program. Neighboring school districts already provide this option for preschool and we are currently only able to offer this at TCU Le Center, which fits well into the TCU Le Center Primary Building along with other community education and early childhood special education programs.

By renovating this lower level area at TCU Montgomery and adding classrooms at TCU Lonsdale, our district would be able to provide more early learning opportunities at both locations. We want to keep our students at TCU and preschool is the beginning of that important partnership with families.

The renovation would also include a secure and separate entry for our early learners. Moving the entrance to this location would alleviate the constant flow of parents coming in to drop off and pick up their children throughout the day. The construction of a separate/secure entrance for the early learning area would reduce congestion and create a safer entry for children and families.

Where can you find more information? Several resources are available to inform our public about the February 13, 2018 bond referendum:

- Our website has up-to-date information: www.tcu2905.us Look for the Referendum button at the top of the main page.
- Public Information Meetings
 - **Tuesday, January 2**
TCU Lonsdale Gym
7:00 p.m.
 - **Thursday, January 4**
TCU Montgomery Auditorium
7:00 p.m.
 - **Tuesday, January 9**
TCU Le Center Commons
7:00 p.m.
**Tours available after each session and upon request*

If you have not been in the TCU Montgomery PK-8 building lately, I encourage you to do so. Please do not hesitate to call our main office line (364-8119) and arrange for a time to tour the building.

Early Voting or Absentee Voting begins Friday, December 29, 2017 through February 12, 2018. You can either come to the TCU District Office at 101 2nd Street NE, Montgomery, MN (located in the TCU Montgomery PreK-8 School) or request an application for early/absentee voting over the phone (507) 364-8100. The application will be sent to you and once received, a ballot will be sent to you as well.

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