

Albany school launches 'Our Huskies Our Future' website

Over the years, our local community has been a strong partner in ensuring all aspects of our students' education – including our school facilities – help nurture students' development and gifts. Despite our best efforts to alleviate space needs in both Albany and Avon Elementary, these schools are still over capacity and enrollment is projected to grow over the next several years.

Over the last few years, we've journeyed through the planning process, ultimately seeking to find a long-term solution for our district. We feel confident this process has developed a plan that would provide more room to support our current programs and prepare for growing enrollment in the future.

The school board is proposing to purchase and reno-



**Albany Area Schools
superintendent**

By Greg Johnson

and financing costs. The school board believes reusing an existing building in our community is a more fiscally responsible decision than building new, and the former hospital provides amenities complementary to education, like a playground, green space and close proximity to the city park and necessary parking lots.

That being said, the decision to invest is ultimately up to the Albany area community. As we start to near the referendum, we want everyone to be aware of and clearly understand the plan and its impacts. We encourage residents to visit our referendum website, ourhuskiesourfuture.org, to learn about the proposed project. On the website, you will find details about our growing space needs, the plan and how it was developed, its benefits and the tax impact on local property

vate the former Albany Hospital, transforming it into an Early Learning Center. The building would add approximately 16 classrooms to the district, various breakout and collaborative learning areas, office space and space for other necessary support services. Ultimately, this solution would allow us to maintain the small class sizes we know are critical for our students' success, recapture much needed space for our current programs and services and prepare for projected enrollment growth.

On Tuesday, Aug. 9, local voters will be asked to consider a single-ballot question on whether the former hospital building should be purchased and renovated. The bond referendum requests \$16.96 million, including all issuance

and agricultural land owners.

We cannot thank the community enough for their partnership and previous investments in students' education. Our district prides itself on building a strong community, and we will continue to take great care in ensuring this plan contributes to that. Your perspective is important, so please share your thoughts and questions.

Keep an eye out for future columns where I will share more about how this investment will better meet our students' needs now and into the future. In the meantime, please visit OurHuskiesOurFuture.org to learn more and reach out to me with any questions by email at gregjohnson@district745.org or phone at 320-845-5050.