

Growth is coming to our neighborhoods, let's get our schools ready!

Our Cresson neighbors consistently tell me they do not want Cresson to change as the like its' current quality of life. Realistically speaking, growth is upon us, and we need to manage it in a measured way. We have been working hard to improve Cresson and our efforts must continue; they are more important particularly considering the growth we see upon the horizon. My unscientific prediction has us growing in population by 7,500 + citizens within the next 5 to 10 years! For reference, Cresson's population grew over 162% during the last 10 years based on recent census data. With this new demographic forecast of over 7,500 new citizens, the Granbury Independent School District (GISD) will be significantly impacted with increasing student needs..

Using an independent and experienced firm researching District growth, GISD presented their demographic results to the Long-Range Planning Committee during their 3-month in-depth review of GISD requirements. One aspect of the research tracked births within GISD boundaries and predicted the Elementary School and corresponding 6 through 12 grade facilities requirements over the next decade. This methodology, used throughout Texas, has proven to be very accurate, and showed substantial growth is inevitable within the GISD boundaries.

I love that our current GISD Superintendent, Dr. Jeremy Glenn, and his School Board members are being proactive, aligning our schools with the growing demographics. In essence they are metaphorically "building the train track" before we experience the "train wreck". They are building the train track leading us to the excellent "education destination" that our community deserves!

The GISD School Board unanimously voted, on January 24th, to move forward with a bond election in May. There will be two bonds, with a 20-cent tax increase, one for the High School academic facilities (Prop A at \$355M) and one for the athletic facilities (Prop B at \$39M). Approval of the bonds will allow for a "4 for 1 concept" that produces the best facilities return for the investment. This plan builds a new High School Northeast of Granbury, converts the current High School to a facilities rich Middle School and changes the two current Middle Schools to Elementary schools. Our growth capacity problems are then covered for more than the next decade.

It is important to note that with a much better Middle School facility, the Career Technical Training (CTE) is made available, for the first time, to give Middle Schoolers hands-on experience with industry-based disciplines that better facilitate their decisions, for both the student and their parents, in determining their direction for college or industry-based employment. Further, a new High School will have increased capacity for the next decade in a state of the art facility that permits for better innovation, academic instruction, increased CTE certifications and superb athletic programs.

Another key point is that money will never be cheaper than today! Our GISD School Board and leadership has been great stewards of our money, decreasing our tax rate from 1.70 to 1.08 percent since the last bond in 2013, a 36% reduction. This puts GISD as one the two lowest tax rate ISDs in our North Texas ISD group of 23 ISDs. Even after the bond passes, GISD will still be in the lowest ^{third} of area tax rates for our North Texas ISDs.

As a voter in Hood County, I fully support, without question, the upcoming GISD bonds! We need to take advantage of the 60-year low interest rates now, as waiting will only cost more money. Property values continue to increase adding value to home investments which ultimately will permit GISD to continue

their superb stewardship by paying down the loans early. Keep in mind that Seniors have their property taxes frozen.

I realize this is not my normal type of column input; however, I feel it is most important to position our future students with proper facilities and not have to revisit this facility solution again for well into the next decade.

Growing up in Cresson and attending the first two grades at the Cresson school, then getting the opportunity to attend school through High School graduation inside of the GISD, was a very positive impact on me personally. I appreciate greatly my former education, the teachers and administrators and the abilities they gave me.

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