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New Fremont Middle School OK'd

By *LESLIE BIXLER*
Staff writer

FREMONT -- City residents voted for a new middle school Tuesday. Results are unofficial, according to the Sandusky County Board of Elections. "We're so excited and so happy," Superintendent Traci McCaudy said. "Thank you to Fremont voters who came out and supported and to all the people who worked on the levy campaign. They really made the community aware of the need."

There were 7,671 who voted for it and 6,665 against.

The bond issue and permanent improvement levy will provide the local share to construct a new middle school with the State of Ohio Exceptional Needs Program. The project is estimated to cost \$27.5 million. The ENP award, valued at \$8.8 million, is earmarked to replace the existing middle school which was built in 1909. The city's middle school was ranked first on a list of buildings most in need. At a June school board meeting, McCaudy said the district has one year to raise local funds, which is estimated to be about \$18.7 million. That breaks down to 32 percent provided by the state toward the total cost and a 68 percent contribution from the community.

The district is renewing, yet reducing the current permanent improvement levy which was passed in March 2004 from 2 mills to 1.35 mills. The permanent improvement levy money will continue to be used for technology upgrades and repairs for the district's current buildings. However, by adding the bond issue, there will be a net increase of 1.45 mills. The bond will be paid with a 5 percent interest rate per year over the next 28 years.

Mary Green of Fremont, said the levy and bond issue were some of the issues she was most concerned about on the ballot. Green, whose grandchildren attend Fremont Schools, said she voted for the issues.

"People supported my children when they were in school, so I'm hoping people will support my grandchildren, too," she said.

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