

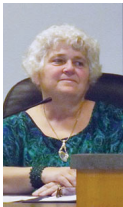
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L&T staff report

Seward County chair Ada Linenbroker attended several community meetings discussing the upcoming school bond election, and she has decided to support the issue.

“I have attended over a dozen committee meetings and public meetings and was really impressed with how the school board handled this bond issue,” Linenbroker said in her letter of support.

Linenbroker said the plan was modified several times as the community had a chance to make recommendations.



“I feel this bond represents what the citizens of Liberal and Seward County want, and I support the bond issue and the sales tax, and will leave it up to the voters from the City and County to vote on these issues,” she said.

The plan calls for modifying the current system that requires three transitions and four buildings during a student’s education to only two transitions and three buildings.

To reduce the transitions, schools will be changed from seven K-6 elementaries, two 4-6

intermediates and two 7-8 elementaries to five K-5 elementaries and two 6-8 middle schools.

Three new K-5 buildings will be constructed, one on the campus of MacArthur and two more in northeast and southeast Liberal.

Cottonwood and Sunflower will be converted to K-5 elementaries as well.

Two new middle schools will be constructed, one in northwest Liberal and the other in the southeast to accommodate the additional students, and the current West Middle School will become a part of the Liberal High School campus to handle growing student populations there.

Plans for the retired school buildings include the possibility of pre-K centers, alternative schools and other community needs.

The original plan topped \$150 million, but after a phone survey of voters who believed the price to be too high, the project was scaled back to \$127 million in the current plan, which 61 percent of those surveyed said they could afford to support.

At least 49 percent of the plan will be paid with state aid (\$63.5 million), but that percentage could increase.

A half-cent sales tax will fund an additional 22 percent of the project (\$28 million), leaving 29 percent (\$36 million) for property owners spread out over 25 years.

“This plan will take a huge burden off the property owners and will get some of our tax money back that we have been paying into the state all these years,” Linenbroker said. “And the sales tax will be a more fair way of spreading the burden on the public who shop in Liberal whether they are local or people or from the surrounding area.”

## County chair Linenbroker endorses school bond

Thursday, 20 February 2014 13:51

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The bond will have two questions on the ballot. The first approves the bond and allows the state to provide at least 49 percent matching funds. The second allows a half-cent sales tax to support the construction as well. It takes both “yes” votes to pass the issue.

“I am asking the people of Liberal and Seward County to take advantage of this bond and sales tax option and get out and get registered to vote,” Linenbroker said. “And then get out and vote.”

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