

# Q APRIL 1, 2008, SCHOOL ELECTION UESTIONS & ANSWERS

## **What's on the April 1st ballot?**

The April 1st School Election asks voters to give the Lawrence Board of Education the authority to increase the school district's Local Option Budget (LOB) by 1%, from 30% to 31%, to fund student instruction and support services.

### **Ballot Question:**

“Shall the Board of Education of Lawrence Unified School District No. 497, Douglas County, Kansas, be authorized to increase its local option budget by an additional 1% authority, from 30% to 31%, of its state financial aid and be continuously and permanently authorized to adopt a local option budget, for 2008-09 school year and for each school year thereafter, in an amount not to exceed 31% of the amount of state financial aid determined for the current school year, for the purpose of using the additional local option budget authority for student instruction and support services?”

To vote in favor, mark an X after the word “YES”

To vote against, mark an X after the word “NO.”

YES\_\_\_\_\_

NO\_\_\_\_\_

## **What is the Local Option Budget (LOB)?**

The LOB is a local funding option enabling communities to supplement state aid in order to enhance their public school systems.

## **Isn't the state responsible for funding public education?**

Yes, state aid provides for a basic public education for all Kansas children. The Lawrence community expects a high-quality education for its children and has been willing to support it.

## **What is the general fund?**

State aid and the local funds raised through the LOB comprise the school district's general operating fund. The general fund is used for instruction, personnel, employee benefits and other non-facility and non-equipment-related expenditures. At the present time, 83% of the Lawrence Public Schools' general fund supports salaries and benefits for teachers and staff.

## **How is state aid allocated to school districts?**

The state of Kansas uses a formula to allocate state aid to school districts. The current formula is Base State Aid Per Pupil (\$4,374) x Student Enrollment Full-Time Equivalency (FTE).

In addition, the state provides weightings for at-risk, bilingual, transportation and other special student needs; these targeted or restricted funds may not be used for general instructional needs.

### **What is the capital outlay fund?**

The capital outlay fund is made up of revenue generated by a local property tax levy. It is used for the acquisition, construction, repair, remodeling, additions to, furnishing and equipping of school buildings. By law, capital outlay funds for facilities, furnishings and equipment may not be used for general fund instructional needs, such as teacher salaries.

### **Why is the school district asking voters to approve a 1% increase in the LOB?**

The Kansas Legislature recently raised the maximum LOB to allow school boards the authority, with the approval of local voters, to generate up to 31% of their school district's general operating funds at the local level. The LOB is the only financial mechanism available to school boards to supplement state aid to school districts.

Schools, like taxpayers, are paying more for utilities, gasoline, groceries and other products and services. While the cost of living\* increases at about 2.7%, the Lawrence Public Schools estimate a 1.36% increase in unrestricted state aid for 2008-09. With successful passage of this election question, schools could expect a 2.4% increase in unrestricted general operating funds.

*\*U.S. Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index for Midwest Urban Markets (Dec. '07)*

### **What would the 1% increase in the LOB cost taxpayers?**

For the owner of a home valued at \$200,000, a 1% increase in the LOB is estimated to cost an additional \$1.15 per month, beginning in the 2008-09 school year.

### **How much would a 1% increase in the LOB generate for Lawrence schools?**

A 1% increase in the LOB would generate an estimated \$679,000 for student instruction and support services in the Lawrence Public Schools.

### **Contacts for more information:**

Lawrence Board of Education Members

- Craig Grant, 842-8298
- Mary Loveland, 842-9333
- Marlene Merrill, 832-2203
- Rich Minder, 760-3791
- John Mitchell, 843-2954
- Scott Morgan, 842-6268
- Linda Robinson, 865-3738

### **Important Dates:**

- March 12 – Advance Voting Begins for the April 1 Election
- March 17 – Last Day to Register to Vote in the April 1 Election
- April 1 – School Election, Polls Open 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

### **On-line Election Resources:**

- Douglas County Voting and Elections Web site:  
<http://www.douglas-county.com/clerk/vedivision.asp>
- Lawrence Public Schools' Web site: [www.usd497.org](http://www.usd497.org)

*Poster produced by Lawrence Public Schools to provide information about the April 1, 2008, School Election.*