



## **Pro: Community interests are key - BALLOT QUESTION 3A**

***By Jared Polis, Terre Rushton and Bill Berens  
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Ballot question 3A offers an exciting possibility to voters in the Boulder Valley School District community. 3A is a reasonable, equitable school-bond measure to improve our aging facilities and support student achievement. Often, when making an important decision, we are forced to choose between our values and our interests.

By voting "yes" on 3A, we have the rare opportunity to advance both. We value community. Our schools provide an anchor and a rudder for our communities. The current bond package has "community" written all over it. For two years, a citizen group reviewed our district facilities. They toured buildings, heard from architects and engineers, and collected input from survey respondents throughout the district. This grassroots effort then submitted their recommendations for a bond measure to the BVSD Board of Education, which endorsed it unanimously and without revision.

We value our health and safety. Our outdated facilities are energy inefficient and pose threats to our children's health. Asthma, exacerbated by polluted indoor air, causes U.S. kids to miss more than 10 million school days a year. Health problems result from our outdated restrooms. In addition to being difficult to clean, students avoid using them, and often sprint home at the end of the day to use their own. Safety issues are present when locks and entrances have outdated and mismatched hardware, fire escapes are antiquated and signage is unclear.

If you've visited our schools, you might have found it difficult to know which is the front door, or been challenged to find the library or specific classrooms. In the case of an emergency, law enforcement and firefighters are depending on existing signage, and we are depending on them.

We value high achievement. And we get it. By every measure, including CSAP, ACT, National Merit Finalists and Schools of Excellence, BVSD continues its record of "academic domination" (Daily Camera, August 2006). Sixty nine percent of total bond funds are directed toward program compatibility. We need 21st century classrooms to support and expand student achievement. The average age of a district school is 43 years. These libraries were not built to accommodate computers, and the space is tight and overheated. Language requirements have been changed at the local and state levels, but no additional classrooms were wired as language labs.

We value leadership. The district is now beginning the search for a new superintendent, following the announcement of Dr. George Garcia's retirement, effective spring 2007. Think for a minute at how that candidate pool might look. A top superintendent will be attracted to a community that supports education. Issue 3A includes 24 boilers and 48 roofs. Making cuts and stretching an already tight dollar comes with the territory in many public school districts, but there are limits, and we have reached them. Our needs are assessed at \$450 million, and 3A would address \$296.8 of the most pressing and immediate projects. A great district, moving ahead for student achievement, will attract and hire a top-notch superintendent and recruit and retain quality faculty.

Our interests suggest that our individual needs be addressed. Every school benefits. Visit the Web site at [bvdsbond.com](http://bvdsbond.com) to view the projects for the schools in your community.

It is our interest to get good value for our investments. BVSD currently has the lowest tax rate of Front Range districts, and should 3A pass, will still be well down the list.

Additionally, you can anticipate a low interest rate. For the first time, BVSD is bidding this bond competitively. This process, combined with our excellent credit rating, will ensure the best outcome. It's in our interest to receive a return on investment. Our energy and water bills are too high. Replacing single-

pane windows, outdated boilers and irrigation systems with new, green-built construction will provide that return.

Property values increase substantially in better school districts. Even if you have no students in our schools, Realtors will tell you that when selling your home buyers shop schools.

In the end, when you vote for 3A, our values intersect with our interests. It's the right thing to do to support our schools, for this generation, for ourselves and for the future. Vote Yes on 3A.

Jared Polis, Terre Rushton and Bill Berens are co chairs of the Building for our Future Campaign.

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