

**Olathe Chamber of Commerce Resolution  
in Support of the November 2008 Bond Election**

**Whereas**, the Olathe School District Board of Education has approved a \$68 million bond proposal, to be placed on the November 2008 general election ballot, to pay for the following:

- Additions to the district's four high schools to implement the district's plan to move ninth-grade students to the high school level, and sixth-grade students to 6-7-8 middle schools, beginning in 2011.
- More space in elementary schools to alleviate overcrowding caused by Olathe's rapid growth.

**Whereas, moving ninth graders to the high school level and sixth graders to middle school is advisable for the following reasons:**

- The district's elementary schools are seriously overcrowded and enrollments continue to grow. Moving sixth graders would free two to four classrooms per school, accommodating increased enrollments. If the district does not reconfigure ninth and sixth grades, **additional space at the elementary level would still be needed** and would necessitate building additions to elementary schools at **substantial construction costs, increased operational costs, and additional boundary changes.**
- **Reconfiguration of grades would be cost effective.** It is estimated that such a move would save \$1.26 million a year in operational costs, based on current enrollment (including savings on transportation for the ninth-grade academic and athletic programs; sixth- and ninth-grade core teacher staffing; elementary teachers shared between buildings).
- **Olathe's students would benefit from broader, higher-level learning experiences** (science labs, international language, and more than 50 additional electives at the high school level) and will have greater access to age-appropriate sports, debate and other extracurricular activities.
- Studies suggest that sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students are a **better match developmentally** than seventh-, eighth-, and ninth-grade students, who are currently grouped by the district.

**Whereas**, most districts nationally group sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students in middle schools and ninth through twelfth grade students in high schools; and **whereas, every other public and private high school in Johnson County includes freshman students at the high school level;** and **whereas freshmen already are being educated at the high school in all but two districts in Kansas;**

**Whereas**, a \$68 million bond issue is the minimum amount possible to provide appropriate additions to the high schools, and **whereas** the Board of Education estimates the **cost to taxpayers at less than \$3 per month for the owner of a \$200,000 house;**

**And whereas**, the District is committed to minimizing the impact to taxpayers, **as demonstrated by the fact that it has lowered the overall mill levy a cumulative five mills over the past three years;**

Therefore, be it is resolved that the Olathe Chamber of Commerce supports its nationally recognized school system—a major contributor to Olathe's quality of life and the city's most important economic development attraction—in its quest to secure \$68 million in bonds through the November 2008 election.