An Honest response to the “Yes Matters” “Mythology” Letter

We certainly never imagined that a simple bond issue could deteriorate to this level. We live in the greatest nation ever formed on this planet. This nation is great because of tolerance of those different, respect for all points of view, complete transparency of our governmental entities, honesty, freedom, respect for our neighbor’s rights to disagree and other important qualities. Hopefully, MISD teaches those attributes everyday so this great nation does not vanish. We have seen when these simple things are put aside; nations go to war, races are discriminated against, innocent people perish, the young are abused, and on and on. But we have probably never seen anything go as badly in Marshall as this proposed school bond issue. This “Yes Matters” response may have outdone all the other rhetoric. The main reason this proposed bond should be voted down is because if the debate has deteriorated to this level, something is clearly wrong with this bond.

Despite it being very late in the game, we do not believe a diatribe with many inaccurate and misleading statements as the “Yes Matters” response should be allowed to float around. Also, that document reveals a number of issues that are just now coming to light. Have you ever seen a presidential debate where one candidate just says “that’s a myth” after all 22 comments the other candidate states? We simply wish to find common ground and get these schools fixed; while the “Yes Matters” response wishes to find no common ground.

Without boring everyone to tears any longer, a few honest and truthful comments in response to the “Yes Matters” letter may be in order:

The “Yes Matters” response asked why our document is unsigned, and then goes on to speculate untruthfully about the reasons. Just so you know, this is the truth: The proponents of this bond have harassed and threatened people that oppose this particular bond issue. You can see evidence of this throughout emails, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and website postings. Our spouses and children and property have all been threatened and/or ridiculed. In a sea of sadness related to this bond issue, that may be the saddest. After reading all these posted comments; would you put your spouse and kids in danger by signing a document that is merely a posting of facts anyone can look up in moments? You know a bond is a bad idea, if people that support it must resort to personal attacks on anyone speaking in opposition.

The remainder of the “Yes Matters” response states everything we have posted is untrue. They substituted the word “myth” for “untrue” but they are the same in this context.

**Item #1:** The first thing they claim is a “myth” is “The total property taxes (school, city, and county) will be 67¢ higher than Elysian Fields, 28¢ higher than Hallsville, 30¢ higher than Tyler after the 40¢ MISD bond increase”
This is simply true. Why did we use these cities? We used these cities because in the second colorful mail out from MISD, these are some of the ones they referenced under the title “Numbers”. See the MISD enclosed copy.

Here is the evidence:

**Elysian Fields:**
- School Taxes: $1.237
- County Taxes: $0.317
- City Taxes: $0.00
- **Total Property Taxes:** $1.554

**Tatum:**
- School Taxes: $1.17
- County Taxes: $0.415
- City Taxes: $0.319
- **Total Property Taxes:** $1.904

**Hallsville:**
- School Taxes: $1.393
- County Taxes: $0.317
- City Taxes: $0.279
- **Total Property Taxes:** $1.989

**Tyler:**
- School Taxes: $1.375
- County Taxes: $0.323
- City Taxes: $0.22
- **Total Property Taxes:** $1.918

**Marshall:**
- School Taxes (if bond passes): $1.44
- County Taxes: $0.317
- City Taxes: $0.476
- **Total Property Taxes:** $2.233

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**THE NUMBERS**

Regional School Bond Referendums in Recent Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>ENROLLMENT</th>
<th>BOND AMOUNT</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>RESULT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Longview ISD</td>
<td>8,819</td>
<td>$266,875,000</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyler ISD</td>
<td>18,216</td>
<td>$160,500,000</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallsville ISD</td>
<td>4,598</td>
<td>$96,000,000</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilgore ISD</td>
<td>3,921</td>
<td>$55,000,000</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Tree ISD</td>
<td>4,603</td>
<td>$29,995,000</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatum ISD</td>
<td>1,631</td>
<td>$29,000,000</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elysian Fields ISD</td>
<td>1,003</td>
<td>$13,000,000</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall ISD</td>
<td>5,554</td>
<td>$150,000,000</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 SOURCE: Texas Education Agency - wgisdata.tea.state.tx.us/SDL
2 SOURCE: Texas Bond Review Board - www.bbr.state.tx.us

$150 Million
Dollar figure of proposed MISD School Bond Referendum to fund Capital Improvement Program
The Marshall Taxes are actually much higher than shown above since our water & sewer rates are much higher than the other cities. Twice as high as Tyler’s, etc.

Notice that in the “Yes Matters” response, they switched from the school districts in the MISD enclosed mail out (Elysian Field, Tatum, Hallsville, & Tyler to an entirely different group (Spring Hill, White Oak, Harleton, Waskom). He just simply changed the subject that MISD originated, to avoid the true statement made by us.

Nobody contemplating moving a company or a family to a city ask how much is this or that property tax? They simply ask what the total property tax will be. That’s what the realtors publish. If this bond issue passes and they received this true data, they probably would locate and live outside of MISD. Thus, economic development and population growth would suffer in Marshall. By the way, we used the same website that the “Yes Matters” response used. We also used the same website on the enclosed MISD mailer, under the chart. We used MISD numbers, and they later claim our numbers are “myths”.

**Item #2** is regarding how extremely high this bond is compared to the State of Texas Average School Construction Cost & Cypress-Fairbanks school construction costs.

The first untrue statement in the “Yes Matters” response to this item is the State does not track the construction cost of schools. It is the responsibility of the State Comptroller for the State of Texas to track these costs. A few pages from the State Comptroller’s website are enclosed; proving our statements are true. The sheets the following data was taken from are enclosed. They came from the following:


The following data is from the Office of the State Comptroller, the State of Texas for the years 2005-2012 with added data for schools completed in 2013 & 2014 (The data these calculations were made from is enclosed for absolute verification they are true.):

Using the State of Texas Data:
A. Cypress-Fairbanks ISD has built 5 elementary schools in the last 8 years that cost from $88 to $120 per square foot with an average cost of $101.16 per square foot. The average size per student is 95.66 square foot per student. By comparison to Cypress-Fairbanks ISD:
   a. New Marshall ISD elementary school should cost (700 students x 95.66 square foot per student x $101.16 per
square foot = $6,773,876. Marshall ISD is proposing to spend $16,700,000 on the same building. A waste of almost $10 million per elementary school which is a waste of $40 million on just 4 new elementary schools proposed in Marshall. Remember that it was the MISD bond consultant that said at a school board meeting that there had not been any significant construction inflation over the last few years, but it was about to happen.

B. MISD is proposing a new 1200 student junior high building for $38,000,000.

The State of Texas Data shows a new junior high for 1200 students has a state average cost of (1200 students x 148.78 square foot per student x $153 per square foot average construction costs =) $27,316,008. Marshall construction costs should be 90.3% or less of the State average which equals $24,666,355. So the $38,000,000 should be $13,000,000 less according to the State of Texas.

Cypress-Fairbanks ISD has built 5 junior high-middle schools in the last 8 years with an average cost of $108.20 per square foot and an average size of 150.4 square feet per student.

Therefore, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD can build a 1200 student junior high-middle school for (1200 students x 150.4 square foot per student x $108.20 per square foot =) $19,527,936.00. Marshall ISD proposes $38,000,000 for the same building, a waste of $18,000,000 by comparison.

C. A new 700 student elementary school should cost (if we use the State Average Data):

700 students x 114.957 square feet per student x $160 per square foot average construction costs =) $12,875,184.

So the State average for a 700 student elementary school is $12,875,184.

In Marshall, Texas the construction costs is 90.3% of the State of Texas average based on costs of living index. Construction labor costs in Marshall has historically been about 71% of the National average and construction material being 93% of the national average, for a total of 87% of the National average. Therefore, conservatively if we use the higher number, a 700 student new elementary school should cost less than $12,875,185 x .903 = $11,626,291.

But MISD is proposing $16,700,000, which is almost 1/3 more than the State of Texas average shows it should cost.

If the MISD new elementary schools are the same size the State of Texas recommends, then the buildings are costing $207.53 per square foot instead of ($160 State average x .903 for Marshall =) $144.48 per square foot that the building should cost in Marshall.
D. Marshall High School is currently approximately 250,000 square feet. It originally costs under $8,500,000 with stadium, road, etc. to build. Today, the State of Texas says it should cost (approximately 250,000 square feet x $178 per square foot State average costs x .903 or less Marshall adjustment) = $40,183,500. So the State says to build it brand new today would be under $41,000,000.

By comparison, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD has built 3 high schools in the last 8 years with an average cost of $119 per square foot. So Cypress-Fairbanks ISD could build the current Marshall High School for (approximate 250,000 square feet x $119 per square foot =) $29,750,000.

Marshall ISD is proposing the following at Marshall High School:
1. Add on to the Stage and Auditorium.
2. Add on to the Kitchen.
3. Add a new main entry with minor classroom addition.
5. Minor renovations of other areas.

They propose these very small additions and minor renovations to cost $30,700,000; when Cypress-Fairbanks could build the entire facility from scratch for this amount of money.

Cypress-Fairbanks ISD made a great decision to not overspend on school construction or associated tax increases. This decision has set them on a path of unprecedented growth. Cypress-Fairbanks ISD has grown 46.8% in the last 11 years. Marshall ISD has decreased 5.4% in the same 11 years. If Marshall approves this current bond, this decrease will accelerate in Marshall ISD and the City of Marshall. We need to make the correct decision that Cypress-Fairbanks ISD made to not overspend on physical facilities to put Marshall on a path of future growth.

BOTTOM LINE: Marshall Independent School District could have the best school facilities in this area of the State of Texas for one-half to two-thirds of the costs of what the current bond proposes. If we reject this bond and come back in 6 to 12 months with one to build better (state of the art) schools than this current bond proposes at half to two-thirds the costs (utilizing local builders, architects, sub-contractors, and suppliers), Marshall will set itself up for explosive growth like Cypress-Fairbanks ISD. If the current bond passes, an acceleration in the decline of MISD and the City of Marshall could occur.

On the first item response, “Yes Matters” claims you cannot compare Marshall to Elysian Fields because Elysian Fields is too small. In the item #2 he claims Cypress-Fairbanks is too large for comparison. Apparently there is no acceptable comparison to MISD, just spend more than everybody else per student.
So we no longer have to disagree, let’s only use MISD data for comparison:

The “Yes Matters” response pointed out that Cypress-Fairbanks ISD has a $1.2 billion bond up for vote in May, with a student population of 104,231. Marshall ISD has a $150 million bond proposed & only 5524 students. So according to “Yes Matters”, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD is spending $11,512 per student, while Marshall ISD is proposing to spend $27,154 per student. So it appears Marshall ISD is spending 2.36 times too much in this current bond proposal. All these numbers are found in the “Yes Matters” response.

Let’s look at more MISD provided numbers on the second mailer enclosed:
Tyler ISD 2013 bond cost $8,811 per student; Elysian Fields ISD 2006 bond was $12,911 per student; Kilgore ISD 2011 bond was $14,027 per student; Pine Tree ISD 2011 bond was $6,516 per student. The current Marshall ISD 2014 bond up for vote proposes to spend $27,154 per student (the MISD mailer data contradicts “Yes Matters” letter slightly). It appears based on the MISD enclosed mail out and simple mathematical division, that MISD is proposing spending somewhere between 2 and 4 times too high.

**Item #3:** Release of information by MISD on why the costs are so extremely high based on the data above in this document.

MISD has refused to release the actual cost breakdowns on each project that they have in hand, despite repeated request. MISD has release 1301 pages of unimportant documents, but not the costs breakdowns of each project as requested. This is a violation of the opens records law and freedom of information request. What are they hiding?

More importantly, MISD has refused to take verbal questions at the vast majority of meetings & forums. At the vast majority of forums, a person could write down a question and it would be read only if the question appeared to be in favor of the bond. Members of the opposition were specifically told that they could not ask questions at any committee meetings. Why the complete lack of transparency in this process? We have never heard of something like this happening in a free society.

Hopefully, the teachers & principles at MISD teach their students every day, that this cannot be tolerated. If this trampling on the Constitution is allowed to spread, the USA will be a footnote in history in the distant future.

**Item #4:** Local participation will not occur.

This is simply true. No local general contractor, electricians, plumbers, HVAC contractors, etc. will be allowed to work on these projects because the projects are so extremely expensive they cannot
provide the bonds per state law. Many of the local contractors here are much better at their trades than the huge wealthy companies from out of town that will do the work. The travel expenses alone will be very high costs which MISD will receive no benefit. This is completely unnecessary. Projects built and designed by local companies would be far superior and less expensive than these schools proposed in the bond. Then these local companies with their profits would buy new equipment & buildings; their employees could buy new homes & autos; they would save & invest. Every person & company in Marshall would benefit. The benefit to Marshall would exceed at least 600 million dollars. This is much more important than new schools. New schools will happen either way.

**Items #5 & 6:** For $150 million, students are not getting ipads or laptops. Schools will not receive the technology they need. Career & Technology training is not addressed in the bond.

I think the response agrees that all students are not getting laptops or ipads. 150 million dollars and we cannot afford 2 million dollars for Wi-Fi portable computers for every student. Sad.

The public has no idea about career training since no Vo-tech campus is proposed and no partnering with TSTC, ETBU, Wiley, and Panola is proposed. Maybe this is true, but since we have received no cost breakdown & it does not say it on the ballot, we have no idea.

**Item #7:** The taxpayers will be saddled with so much debt that teacher & principle pay raises will be unlikely in the next 25 to 40 years.

This response was unbelievable. The response is that all the money we used to maintain our facilities, buses, equipment, etc. are going to be used on teacher raises. What brought us to this bond is the lack of maintenance on the existing facilities for decades. Now we plan to stop taking care of anything according to the “Yes Matters” response.

A member of a school board in a nearby district made the following observation the other day: “The Marshall ISD Bond is crazy. MISD originally proposed a bond of about 28 years. They now claim they would extend it to 40 years to prevent raising property taxes more than 40¢. Every school board member knows that all the roofs, air conditioners, and other equipment will wear out in 15 to 20 years and you must have the bonds paid off or you are facing another huge maintenance bond. Otherwise the new schools will deteriorate into worst condition than the schools you have now.”

**Item #8:** Economic growth and population growth would by stymied or impossible with a higher tax rate than surrounding school districts that have higher academic performance.
The response appears to be: Longview ISD passed a big school bond, but the City of Longview also now collects 31% more property taxes since the school bond passed. So what “Yes Matters” is saying is the huge 40¢ tax increase will probably be followed by a 31% tax increase in City Taxes. Kind of curious as to where they think a reasonable limit is on total property taxes, since we will be among the highest taxed already if this huge school bond passes? See total property tax comparisons above.

The “Yes Matters” response to education quality at MISD appears to be that MISD has 3 schools that did not meet standard (but is doing better than 6 not meeting standard last year) while Hallsville, Tatum, Elysian Fields have zero that did not meet standard. That is sad. Do you also think that shiny new schools will hypnotize parents into not looking at academic performance & moving to other school districts?

**Item #9:** Home values could suffer due to a challenging economic development tax burden. This could hurt people over 65 since the majority has their home as their largest asset.

The “Yes Matters” response is according to Longview, home & property values will increase. Therefore, the actual tax increase shown in the MISD flyer is wrong and they will actually be much higher per house, business, and property. Then your city property taxes you pay will increase 31% like Longview’s. Is your actual number that you now think total Marshall property taxes will go up if this huge bond issue passes is in the 75% range according to Longview? That’s what you are apparently saying, not us. Aren’t you also saying, in comparison to Longview, every one over 65 should be expecting a 31% increase in property taxes from the City of Marshall if this huge school bond passes? They (the 65+ year olds) should also receive a school property tax increase as property appraisals increase after this bond.

**Item #10:** Home rents, apartment rents, nursing home rates, & virtually all living expenses will increase to cover the huge increase in property taxes.

Your response is that maybe/maybe not a landlord would increase rent when cost of doing business increases. We have yet to find a landlord that just decides to lose money or make less money; and therefore not increase rents when he encounters a huge property tax increase.

You also state that “nursing home rates are set by Medicare and/or Medicaid.” While we are not experts on this topic, Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services on page 101 of 204 of its facility directory state that only 3 facilities in Harrison County accept any part of payment from Medicaid or Medicare. They are owned by companies in Brooklyn, New York & Frisco, Texas. The others apparently do not. Even the 3 that accept Medicaid/Medicare payments require patients to pay in addition to the Medicaid/Medicare payments, at least until the patient is assetless. So our original statement
appears correct that all nursing home payments could rise when property taxes rise.

Item #11: The cost is too high based on all data shown above. If the money was spent locally the price would fall dramatically. If spent locally, money would multiply within Marshall instead of out-of-town.

The response is shocking. For the first time, we are told here, that MISD has been working on this bond for two years. The vast majority of the public heard nothing about it until a few months ago. We do not think a costs or plan was released until January, 2014 (4 months ago). Now we hear that in one and one-half years before this information got out, the MISD had been conducting secret meetings. In the one and one-half years not ten, not even one, town hall meeting was held to find out what the taxpayer, who will pay for this, wants.

The response also states “MISD & its consultants determined that renovation of old facilities would not be cost efficient.” In reality, since the consultants are from Dallas & Houston, they determined they could make much more money building new buildings with drawings they already had. They never reported the exact dollar costs & breakdowns to renovate the existing facilities. They did a first-grade level point system instead of due diligence.

The “Yes Matters” response states “If MISD had decided to try and renovate the facilities, the bond proposal would have exceeded $150 million.” This is simply untrue. It is almost always cheaper to renovate buildings because you do not have to pay for the parts you reuse. We do agree that there is a point where the return on investment is exceeded by the net result. This was never even considered or compared by MISD. We did not see the actual report and discussion of the diminishing returns, just a quick walk through without financial numbers.

The “YES Matters” response asked “Where was the opposition during the 2 year time frame?” We had no idea a bond was being considered in secret in America. The “Yes Matters” response states “There is no other plan.” The plan has been published & follows later in this letter. Other plans could be better, but this plan would be transparent, supported by at least 85% of the voters in our opinion, & is a logical approach. It is similar to what other school districts have done. It is due process in lieu of secret ideas.

Item #12: The high school renovation is 3 times higher than it should be. The fixer-up is also more than it would cost to build a brand new high school this size if you use the Cypress-Fairbanks ISD number from the State of Texas data enclosed.

The truth is: If it cost $30.7 million to renovate some areas of the high school, then this building needs to be torn down and rebuilt. In the last 8 years, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD has built 3 high schools with
an average cost of $119 per square foot. So they could build Marshall High School for approximately 250,000 square feet x $119 = $29.75 million. MISD just wants to patch it up and paint it for $30.7 million.

We have all been in the Marshall High School Auditorium. Never have we seen it full. How often do they need to have 1300 students in one single meeting? Could they not use the Marshall Convention Center up the hill for these rare events? We think the convention center may hold 1500 students in the auditorium.

Item #13: See the “Yes Matters” report.

The MISD response claims there was a bond advisory committee (BAC). No one that we know was ever asked to be on this “bond advisory committee”. Hopefully they are mostly Marshall Construction Professionals, since this bond is about construction not instruction.

Item #14: The wealthiest entities in the world have buildings older than 57 years old that serve more demanding educational needs every day. This includes Harvard and the University of Texas (2 of the wealthiest educators of their type).

The “Yes Matters” response appears to be we should not compare these 2 educational entities because they are so wealthy. The truth is, the wealthiest private & public Universities in our great nation cannot afford financially to tear down the vast majority of their buildings based on age & renew them. Texas A&M is building new end zone seating as we speak. They are very wealthy, but could not afford to tear down a facility & build it brand new, so they added on. Only Marshall ISD has determined that Marshall Taxpayers (not Harvard, not the University of Texas, not Texas A&M) are so wealthy, they can afford to build almost everything brand new.

Item #15: The decision to build new buildings or renovate existing buildings is always based on the comparative construction cost analysis in the real world. If you establish a basic quality of the finished product, then the analysis begins. Perhaps the basic quality should be "Nicier, better functioning, higher quality, better technology, more attractive than any other school district buildings within 50 miles." The in-depth analysis will quickly reveal if new schools are always better or not. It is unconscionable that someone from outside of Marshall walks through a building with a tiny check list, rates the schools with 1 to 5 "points" and emerges and says "you need all new schools but one".

Item #16: We propose to pause and all come to an agreement on a bond issue we all could support within 6 months. We are definitely willing to listen & compromise. What would be wrong with this?
The “Yes Matters” response is that “the time is Now.” Well MISD is claiming the time wasn’t NOW in the last 57 years. Whatever time period they have in their mind today, MISD thinks 57 years is o.k. to wait, but 57 and one-half years (to come up with a near universally supported bond plan) is too long. In fairness to MISD, they can change the times to 30 years and 30.5 years if they wish. Hopefully, both sides can agree this is ridiculous on face value.

**Item #17:** Many more city and county bonds need to be passed at this time to maintain city streets and county roads, water & sewer infrastructure, etc. If this huge school bond issue passes, will there be room left to pass bonds to do this other, more expensive task? Will the taxpayers also support those required, more expensive bonds which may make the citizens of Marshall ISD the highest taxed people in the State?

The “Yes Matters” response appears to be if you pass a 40% school tax increase then Marshall’s City property taxes that all taxpayers will pay will go up 31% (from 13 million dollars to 17 million dollars) like Longview very soon. MISD is clearly stating that if you approve this huge property tax for schools; that is just the start of other huge city property tax increases in the next few years.

**Item #18:** The logic in some of the MISD press releases is interesting. A person in a wheelchair cannot get into the office main front door at an elementary school, so we need to build a $16 million dollar building instead of a one thousand dollar ramp. We need a $2.9 million dollar Ag building because pigs cannot live and grow in weather below 60 degrees. There are 20 piglets under deer feeders in this county in 20 degree weather every winter. We actually badly need a new Ag facility after an in-depth feasibility study, but current logic employed throughout this bond issue shows a lack of due diligence.

Please note: We cheerfully concede on the magnitude of the porcine presence at feeders and further emphasize our support for a new Ag facility. The main thrust of Item #18 (and the one being avoided by the Yes Matters writer) are the shallow logic and poverty of diligence used to construct this bond proposal.

**Item #19:** Payments to Dr. Hooper, an acquaintance of Dr. Smith’s in Houston, of over $68,000 to consult on this bond.

At least no one is denying this happened. After MISD clearly stated in last Sunday’s Marshall News Messenger that there have been no payments of any kind to bond consultants, they now agree this was incorrect. The fourth check to Dr. Hooper had “pre bond consulting” on the memo line.

**Items #20-22** are simply true.
The “Yes Matters” response is there is “no other plan”. The other plan has been published and is available at either of these links.

http://www.misdcanadobetter.com/a-better-plan.html

or

http://easttexasnews.com/siteMOL/eteEarticleViewer0.cfm?ident=wecan140426&menu=h

We are sure, someone can devise a better plan than the proposed plan. But, this simple & quick plan is a great plan compared to the current proposed bond plan.

Note that we used the MISD supplied numbers or the State of Texas Comptroller’s number for all of this data. We did not use some obscure website.

A few other facts the voters may wish to consider:

1. What is debt? What is the debt? You have probably heard on television that Washington D.C. has run up more debt in the last 5 years than all the preceding years of the United States history. People say they ran up more debt than any other human to live on this planet. They have run up approximately $6,799,502,000,000.00 in additional debt in the last 5 years. This is approximately $22,000.00 per person in our great nation. It took them 5 years to do this. With one proposed school bond, MISD on one voting date proposes to run up $7,000.00 in debt for every voter in MISD. It took Washington a year to do this. MISD’s bond proposal makes Washington D.C. look like a conservative spendthrift. This data can be looked at www.treasurydirect.gov/NP/debt/current & www.census.gov/newsroom/release/archives/population

2. What this proposed MISD bond actually cost a family:

A MISD bond consultant implied at one forum that the bond would be extended to 40 years to keep your taxes from going up more than MISD said. He also said over 40 years we could estimate an average bond interest rate of 5% “conservatively”.

So a $150 million bond for 40 years at 5% actually cost $347 million. In fairness to “Yes Matters”, if this huge bond is paid off in 25 years at 5%, then the payment drops to $263 million.

$347 million is over $16,000 for each voter in MISD. So let’s assume you live in a house in MISD with your elderly mother, your spouse, and your 2 grown kids. Then you would have to pay (on average) 5 x $16,144 = $80,720 over the next 40 years. Now, in fairness to MISD, you actually pay based on the value of your home and property and
businesses pay on the appraised value of their property, etc. This is just the simplest way to compare it to the national debt.

3. What is big, new debt? This past Monday it was reported that Ms. Susan Combs, the State of Texas Comptroller, announced that school district debt in Texas was approximately double what it was 10 years ago. This is mainly due to these huge school bond projects. You may want to think about how long these huge increases in debt can continue and Texas School Districts continue to educate your children and grandchildren. You may want to visit the following website consisting of parents & teachers for the article on “Texas Educator’s Witness Protection Program”.
http://parentadvocates.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=article&articleID=3173

4. The “Yes Matters” response claims new schools will be more energy efficient. This is probably true. The number will be very small since the total sum of the building will be larger than the current size. MISD has said for years how energy efficient their current facilities are. They have said they have reduced energy consumption by over $1 million dollars annually. Mr. Wendell Jones, other staff, and energy consultants have done a very good job at controlling energy costs. Now MISD wants to tear them down. They instead want us to spend $150 million dollars on a new vehicle because it gets one mile more per gallon.

5. What is huge local spending? This proposed huge school bond is a tax increase of 0.40. The City of Marshall total tax is 0.47604 Harrison County’s total tax is 0.3169. The City of Marshall appears to have about 10 buildings plus maintenance facilities. The City of Marshall has to take care of all the street, water pipes, sewer pipe, water treatment, sewer treatment, police & fire protection, pay all the employees, pay all the employees insurance & retirement, pump water from Caddo Lake to Marshall, sponsor tourist events, do economic development, and the list goes on. This one MISD bond to build 6 buildings, renovate another, and 3 other small items wants to spend 85% annually of what the City of Marshall spends annually.

6. We received an email this week that basically said if we wait 6 months to come up with a better bond proposal then his grandchild would not go to a renovated school. Now, we realize most people for this bond are not this self-centered. But the point of the bond was completely missed. The real question is: “Do you want to saddle your children & grandchildren with 25 to 40 years of large debt so they can get an education in a new, shiny building for a few years when they are kids?

7. “Yes Matters” assumption that the people not in favor of this bond are in favor of no school bond is untrue. The vast majority (maybe 90%) of the people against this bond are for a bond to make our schools the best in the region. Those in opposition to this huge bond just want what is best for the kids, teachers, principles, MISD, and the City of Marshall. They do not want to throw away huge sums of
money for nothing. They want transparency and the truth. These things are missing in this bond.

8. “Yes Matters” may want to take a look at church by-laws in the region. Many churches will only build a new church if over 80% to 85% vote for it. Hopefully, MISD will heed this logic and not move forward with these projects unless 85% vote in favor. There is no reason to split a town for the next 40 years. We are confident a good bond in 6 months as we outlined in our plan would receive 85% or more voter approval.

9. As stated in our Plan, the current bond election has nothing to offer with better school buildings or better schools. This school district will get better buildings than this bond issue proposes for much less money very soon, if the voters vote NO. If the voters vote yes, then Houston and Dallas' individuals and companies will receive hundreds of millions of dollars (over $340 million including interest if the bond is extended to 40 years and interest is 5%) paid by MISD taxpayers. That is what this election is about. Vote yes if you want to pay Houston and Dallas hundreds of millions of dollars, Vote NO if you would rather your students, teachers, neighbors, friends, local businesses, streets, roads, etc. benefit here in Marshall. In six months a bond proposal could be brought to the voters that would receive overwhelming voter support for one-half to two-thirds as much money that would provide better, state of the art facilities instead of the proposed over-priced schools. We could be the envy of the state if you vote NO now.

Do it for the kids. Do it for the teachers.

We Can Do Better!