

Kerrey, high school students meet

KERREY from page 1

Lincoln Public Schools has increased almost 25 percent since 1983.

But for Kerrey, increasing enrollment is a good thing.

"I can guarantee to you," Kerrey told the students, "that eight out of 10 counties in Nebraska have the opposite problem. This is good news, this is a sign of growth."

But the \$100 million price tag

might not bring smiles to the faces of voters across the city.

Winston said the levy would cost property owners 8.33 cents per \$100 in property value every year. A \$100,000 home would cost owners about \$83 in additional property taxes at tax time.

And the tax would affect all Lincolniters, including those whose children attend private schools and people who don't have school-aged children.

Sarah Nun, a senior at Lincoln Christian High School, gave her public school peers a description of the joys of small classes. Nun said small class sizes, among other things, allowed her to develop good relationships with her teachers.

"I've gotten to know them. I can't tell you how much they have been mentors to me," Nun said. "If I have 30 students in a class, that's my biggest class."

Kerrey asked Nun if she supported the bond issue. Nun said she did.

None of the students at Saturday's meeting will be around to benefit if the bond issue passes and the new schools are built.

Kerrey said the strong showing from public and private schools despite this fact was encouraging.

"I came away very impressed with the students, with the attendance of public and private schools."

Voters to decide whether to build new high schools

BY JAKE BLEED
Senior staff writer

Lincoln voters will decide Oct. 5 whether to approve a \$100 million bond to construct two new high schools in Lincoln.

If the bond passes, the new high schools would be Lincoln's first in 30 years.

The bond initiative is the result of a May 1998 Lincoln Public School Board decision to keep the population of each of the city's high schools at about 1,500 students, said LPS administrative assistant Dennis Van Horn.

All four public high schools currently house more than 1,500 students. Lincoln and Southeast high schools both have more than 2,100 students, Northeast High School 2,062 and East High School 1,544.

The decision to keep schools limited to 1,500 students came on the recommendation of the Community Council, a branch of the LPS board, Van Horn said.

Community Council member Roger Larsen said 800 to 1,200 students was ideal but not economically practical.

"(1,500 students per school) was sort of a compromise between what would be ideal for the educators and what would be ideal for the taxpayers," Larsen said.

If the bond issue passes, the new schools would be built at North 33rd Street and Folkways Boulevard in northwest Lincoln and 14th Street and Pine Lake Road in southwest Lincoln, Van Horn said.

Both schools would house 1,500 students, bringing enrollment at Lincoln's four high schools down to about 1,500, even

"It affects schools throughout the school district, on all levels."

KEN WINSTON

Yes! On Schools campaign manager

after ninth graders begin attending Lincoln High School and Southeast High School.

Northeast and East high schools currently enroll grades nine through 12.

Yes! On Schools is a local organization campaigning in support of the bond.

Campaign manager Ken Winston said the expansion of Lincoln and Southeast high schools to include ninth graders would spread the impact of the new schools throughout Lincoln.

"It affects schools throughout the school district, on all levels," Winston said.

Junior high schools losing ninth grade students would in turn pick up sixth grade students from surrounding elementary schools, Winston said. Twenty-three elementary schools would lose a class of students if the bond issue passes, Winston said.

The \$100 million bond would be added to property tax within the city, City Council member Colleen Seng said.

The school board estimates a property owner would pay 8.33 cents per \$100 value on the property. The owner of a \$100,000 home would pay about \$83 a year in additional property taxes.

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