

## **Dunlap district spreading wings**

By Chelsea Peck Chillicothe Times-Bulletin

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Dunlap, Ill. — Nov. 2 ballot to have school referendum

Enrollment in Dunlap schools has been increasing for some time, according to superintendent Dr. Jay Marino.

Due to the rise in students, Dunlap District 323 is seeking a referendum for voters to approve a new grade school Nov. 2.

The kindergarten-through-fifth-grade school would be located at Allen and Hickory Grove roads.

Marino explained the need for such a large step.

"It will relieve over-crowding. Right now we have teac being used, so if you want to work with kids you have a cart traveling instead of in their own rooms."

The overcrowding of Dunlap grade schools has also ca closest to them to another school, depending on wher

"In instances right now, we take kids with Peoria adding that grade and in that school. They might even be a to be bused to a whole other school," Marino explaine

With a new grade school, the district will be able to sh "breathing room," according to Marino.

The new school has been in the works for a couple year

A committee was put together of different community member Lisa Parker, among others, to discuss the des

"We met several times and came up with a design whi Dunlap school district," Parker said. "The building wi empowering our students to learn in a global society."

The district is asking for \$11.5 million from taxpayers

"We're only asking for just about half of that amount. it came to the voters, we thought it would be more matthe full amount," Marino said.

If the referendum is approved, work will not begin un

If it is not passed, the board will come back either in t

"What you do is you can come back to the voters and community can benefit from this," Marino said.

Until then, if enrollment continues to grow, the district

"You start adding portable classrooms, which isn't rea that too. It's not a preferable method of making space options are only patching up the problem.

Marino said the board is expecting the referendum to pass.

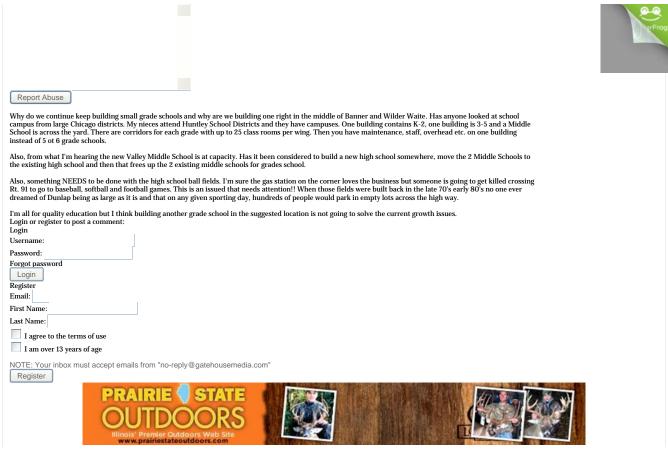
"We believe the need is here. When people hear about Dunlap what do you hear about? Growth and good test scores," he said. "We have a very strong support base from our parents. We think this is something parents who move into our district expect. They expect low class sizes. They expect high quality facilities, and this is an opportunity to bring that to them and deliver what we believe they expect."

The school board will hold meetings to explain the plan for the new building and the referendum.

These meetings are at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 4 at Dunlap High School, 6:30 p.m. Oct. 5 at Wilder-Waite Elementary School, 6:30 p.m. Oct. 14 at Dunlap Grade School, 6:30 p.m. Oct. 18 at Banner Elementary School, 7 p.m. Oct. 21 at Dunlap Middle School, 6:30 p.m. Oct. 26 at Dunlap Valley Middle School and 6:30 p.m. Oct. 27 at Ridgeview Elementary School.

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