

EXPERTS FAVOR HOLLY STREET SITE P. AND E. SITE A CLOSE SECOND

(Continued from page one.)

TABLE 1.

	Jackson	Lincoln	Roosevelt	Washington	Elementary	High	Total
Present attendance	257	431	333	520	1571	505	2070
Standard capacity	300	360	300	440	1400	325	1725
Maximum capacity	410	450	410	530	1800	350	2320
Amount overcrowded	None	71	30	80	171	180	351
Average increase enrollment	15	20	25	20	80	28	108
Increase last year	15	20	25	20	80	28	108
No. of years until standard capacity is reached	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. years until maximum capacity is reached	6	1	2	0	1	0	1

The Jackson school will reach maximum capacity in much less time than the six years indicated as the overflow from the Lincoln and Washington schools will be transferred to the Jackson school. No manner of shifting will prevent every elementary school being crowded to more than maximum capacity by the opening of school in 1926.

Third, the future growth of population.

We have based our estimates of future growth in school population in Medford on two sources of data: (1) the increase in attendance in the past five years, (2) the figures of the survey conducted by the Bell Telephone company experts.

The increase in school attendance for each of the past four years over the previous years has been as follows:

1921	91
1922	81
1923	80
1924	177
Average	108

The Bell Telephone company experts predict an increase in population of approximately 4000 people, or of 800 people a year. The ratio of school attendance to population in Oregon, is and has been in Medford approximately 1 to 4. This would indicate an average yearly increase in attendance of 200 school children, almost twice our estimates. It would seem that our estimates are, then, almost too conservative.

If our estimates of future growth are taken as correct in ten years, the district must provide for school children as follows:

Grades 1-6	1800
Grades 7-8	650
Grades 9-11-12	525

This will necessitate a new high school of at least 600 capacity in the immediate future, a junior high school of 800 capacity by 1935, and additional elementary school facilities for 600 new pupils, the equivalent of two such buildings as the Jackson or Roosevelt schools and for 500 more when the Washington school is sold or abandoned. Should the Bell Telephone figures be correct, in addition to the above, provision must be made for 1000 more pupils, or 20 additional rooms—the equivalent of three such schools as the Jackson school.

In advance of our recommendations, we wish to urge upon the people of Medford the importance and need of making immediate provisions for housing their schools. It is not a question of choice between average facilities and better. It is a question between adequate facilities and failure to provide sufficient housing of any quality. We do not know of a community in Oregon of the same size and with the same character of citizens of Medford where a high school is so poorly housed. The situation in the elementary schools will be no better in the course of two or three years.

We also wish to urge upon your people the necessity of economy in your buildings. What is needed is not pretentious, elegant buildings, but substantial buildings of large capacity, which will provide for your needs so that you will not be faced with the need of providing more buildings before your bonded indebtedness is reduced to a point where you can erect them. Your problem is not to beautify Medford as much as to provide a place adequate for a high grade of teaching. It is doubtful whether Medford building costs should exceed \$225 per senior high school pupil, \$275 per junior high school pupil, or \$225 per elementary school pupil. Satisfactory buildings are being built in Oregon for less.

Based on our conservative estimates of future growth the district will have to provide school housing at the rate of a building like the Jackson or Roosevelt building every three and one-half years to keep up, to say nothing of relieving the present congested condition. If the growth of last year continues or if the estimates of the Bell Telephone survey are correct, there will have to be built one such building every two years to house the new pupils alone.

Our committee wishes to recommend the following housing and building program:

(1) In 1925-26 a new high school building of approximately 600 capacity to be used for the time being for grades 9 to 12, and later as a senior high school (grades 10 to 12) said building to be the first unit of a combined junior and senior high school plant.

(2) When the high school evacuation of the old high school building should be used as a junior high school building housing grades 7 and 8 on a departmental plan. There will then be approximately 350 pupils in the 7th and 8th grades, using our estimates of future growth, this building will be reasonably adequate for these grades for about five years. When the high school is removed to its new building, alterations and repairs in the old building will be necessary and the building should be re-floored throughout at an estimated cost of \$7500.

(3) The relief afforded your elementary schools by placing the 7th and 8th grades in the old high school building will be temporary and will

be offset in three years by the increased population of your elementary schools. Within three years, probably during 1928, an 8-room unit of a new elementary school building, to become eventually a 16-room building, should be erected somewhere near the center of population of the district now served by the Washington school (estimated cost \$65,000). A site of not less than eight acres should be obtained for this school at once and the bond issue submitted early in the winter of 1927-28 so that the building may be occupied in the fall. By this time the high school will have reached its capacity. The 7th grade may be then housed in the elementary schools and the old high school building used for the 8th and 9th grades.

(4) In 1930, additions to the Roosevelt and Jackson schools should be made according to the needs and financial ability, probably four-room additions to each. The Jackson district boundaries should then be changed so as to draw less from the Washington and more from the Lincoln district. Estimated cost \$55,000.

(5) When the Washington school is sold or abandoned the second unit of the new elementary school should be built. Estimated cost in addition to sale of old Washington property, \$45,000.

(6) In 1935, or a year or so sooner if finances permit, a new junior high school to be built as the second unit of the junior-senior high school plant should be provided for, estimated capacity 800, cost \$225,000.

(7) While we can not help but admire the progressive spirit of those interested in the establishment of a junior college in Medford, it is our belief that:

1. The state of Oregon will not probably within the next generation establish state supported junior colleges.

2. Should it do so it will follow the example of California and establish them where normal schools already exist.

3. The first duty of Medford is to the elementary and secondary school pupils and that with the present need for school and water bonds, it will be extremely difficult to convince Medford tax payers that higher education is a local and not a state burden.

Miscellaneous Suggestions.

1.—We wish to recommend a six-year high school plant for the following reasons:

(a) The two high schools may make common use of the gymnasium, auditorium, shops and kitchens, and library books, thereby eliminating needless duplication of plant and equipment used only a portion of the time by either junior or senior high school alone and permitting the construction of one large auditorium and one large gymnasium.

(b) One very able and highly trained principal may be employed for less salary than two ordinary principals. Much of the routine work ordinarily carried on by principals could be performed by teachers as assistant principals under the direction of the principal whose time is not so expensive to the district.

(c) It will eliminate the waste of time of supervisors and teachers of special subjects, e. g., music, art, physical education, manual training, household arts, etc., which would otherwise result from traveling from building to building.

(d) One heating plant may serve the entire plant. One large plant will be of less expense to the district both for construction and operation.

(e) The break between the 8th and 9th, or the 9th and 10th grades which causes the elimination of pupils from school in large numbers will disappear. The school will be regarded and organized as a six-year secondary school with no particular gap.

2.—We wish to suggest to you that the tendency to establish a number of small elementary schools instead of fewer and larger ones is regarded by school experts as undesirable from an educational viewpoint and expensive from the viewpoint of finance—much for the same reasons advanced above.

(a) Because of the irregularity in enrollment from one grade to another some rooms in small elementary schools will have but 20 or 25 pupils or less, thus increasing the per pupil cost.

(b) Figures show that without exception that the smaller the school the greater the pupil cost.

(c) They are difficult to supervise.

(d) They involve a waste of time by teachers and supervisors in walking from building to building.

(e) Competent principals can be obtained only for the larger schools.

(f) Duplicate equipment of all sorts is required.

(g) Special classes or provisions for bright and slow pupils are very difficult in the small schools.

As a standard it is suggested that an elementary school serve a radius of 1 mile in every direction. Schools closer than this are uneconomical to build and operate and are less satisfactory from an educational viewpoint.

3.—We believe that for your fu-

ture buildings smaller rooms and more of them should be your policy.

Your present elementary school buildings many of the rooms are too large, 27x35 feet, and some as large as 27x36 feet. The standard elementary school room is approximately 23x30, seating 40 to 45 pupils and the standard high school room 21x28 feet or 23x25 feet, seating 30 to 35 pupils. The present elementary school rooms are approximately 25 feet square, too large in square feet of floor space.

4.—We suggest that in the future adequate provision for industrial, household arts, and laboratory units; for auditorium, gymnasium, library and office room should be insisted upon.

5.—Your present buildings are not fire proof. This is not in accordance with modern building practice or the high regard of Medford people for the safety of their children. Your modern buildings should be semi-fire-proof, fire-proofing halls, stairways and heating plant.

6.—Your new buildings should be constructed with better facilities for light and ventilation than your old ones. This we need not urge as no respectable architect will submit you plans in this day calling for windows distributed in two walls with wide mullions between them as found in your older buildings or without some plan for ventilation.

7.—We suggest that where finances permit that battleship linoleum or some other durable be laid on the floors of your halls, library room and stairways. Nothing will contribute more to an atmosphere of quiet and study.

8.—No new building should be constructed without adequate toilet facilities. Minimum standards are less than one seat and one urinal for every 35 boys and one seat for every 20 girls based on maximum capacity of building.

9.—No new building should be erected with doors swinging inward or without panic bolts on all major exits.

The Financial Condition of the Medford School District.

The financial condition of a school district is determined by the relation of its resources to its expenditures, or its ability to support its program. This involves the future program, as well as the present one. No school district knows its actual financial condition unless it knows its future commitments. Herein has been our failure in financing education in the past. Only the present has been considered.

What is the financial condition of the Medford school district? The following facts will give a fair conception of its condition:

1.—It has an assessed valuation of \$5,483,365.

2.—Its present tax rate is 20.9 mills for school purposes.

3.—The total tax rate on all property in the city for all purposes is 60.6 mills.

4.—The school district has \$68,000 bonded debt, which is being retired at the rate of \$15,000 per year.

5.—The maximum legal limit of issuing bonds is \$275,000 on the basis of the present assessed valuation. Having \$68,000 present bonded debt reduces that limit to \$207,000.

6.—The average yearly increase in assessed valuation for the five years has been \$125,358, which at a 20 mill rate returns \$2,507.16.

7.—The average yearly increase in the school budget for the last five years is \$3,180.81, leaving a difference between the return on the increased assessed valuation of approximately \$600.

8.—The present cost per pupil in the Medford schools is \$69.00.

9.—The average yearly increase in school enrollment is 103 pupils.

10.—This will increase the yearly budget approximately \$7542 for maintenance.

11.—The present tax levy is \$107.259.25.

12.—If the district should bond itself to its statutory limit by issuing 20 year serial bonds, its budget would be increased by \$10,350.00 for an annual payment of principal and \$10,350.00 for an annual payment of interest. This interest charge will decrease \$37,750 per year as the bonds are retired. These increases plus the one due to increase in enrollment will bring the budget up to \$135,411.45.

13.—This total will require a tax rate of 24.6 mills on the present assessed valuation, or it will require an assessed valuation of \$6750.00, or an increase of \$1,276,635. This is too large an increase to be made. The increase in the tax rate is the more practical plan. This increase in the tax rate can be made in Medford without any undue hardship or burden upon taxable property.

We believe that in its present financial condition as outlined above, Medford can adequately finance the program which we have outlined in the recommendations. A bond issue of \$155,000 will finance the new proposed high school of approximately 600 capacity. This will be the first unit of a 900 capacity building. This new high school will care for the increase in high school enrollment for four years, and will release the present high school building to be used for the 7th and 8th grades of the entire system. This, in turn, will relieve the congestion in the elementary schools for two years.

In two years, by retiring \$15,000 per year, and with a margin of \$12,000 on the present bonded limit, and with the present rate of increased assessed valuation (\$120,000 per year) the bonding limit will be raised to \$55,000, which will be sufficient to build the eight-room elementary school. When this is done, the 7th grade can then be retained in the elementary schools and the 8th grade in the old high school. This will relieve the new high school of approximately 200 of its students which will make it adequate to house its increasing enrollment for another six or eight years. In these eight years, by retiring the bonds outstanding and increasing the assessed valuation, the district will be in a position to finance the new proposed junior high school.

There is one caution to be observed. Careful business methods should be employed in financing Medford's school program, and strict, but wise economy should be practiced. The district's tax rate cannot be increased indefinitely. Every step in the future must be made wisely with a

full knowledge of the district's financial condition and what the program will mean in terms of commitments to the district.

Choice of a Site for a New High School.

Your committee was shown three sites which were being considered as possible locations for a new high school. They were what is called "P. and E. property" on the east side of Bear Creek; the north Holly street property on which the athletic field is now located, and the South Holly street property in the south end of the city. We carefully examined each of these suggested sites and considered them from every point of view and evaluated them on all the technical points to be considered in choosing a site for a school building. We considered such points as: accessibility, i. e., nearness to center of city and school population; the number and nature of avenues of approach; drainage and public utility accommodations; cost of site; beauty and possibilities of beautifying; site as related to the school organization, size of site; the shape and adaptability of the site; the nature of the district in each matter of freedom from noise, nearness to business and industrial centers; the nature of the soil and its adaptability to school ground purposes; etc.

Medford is fortunate in having so many available sites for its new high school. Many cities would consider themselves fortunate to have either one of Medford's three possible sites. From a technical point of view either of the three sites examined would be satisfactory for the location of a high school, but there are certain advantages to the various sites which we will point out. We believe the South Holly street property should not be considered for these reasons:

First—

(a) Too far from center of population now, and population is going away from it.

(b) Inaccessible from standpoint of avenues of approach.

(c) In site switching and warehouse district.

(d) Poorer surface drainage and a more difficult sewer and water problem.

(e) Nature of soil, bad for playground, athletics, rocky, bad for grass plots, sticky.

In considering the other two sites the North Holly street property has the following advantages over the P. and E. site:

Second—

(a) North Holly street property is nearer center of population, school and otherwise, and it appears that the center of population will move toward, rather than away from it.

(b) It is higher ground—probably better drainage and sewer facilities. The present sewers on Jackson and Main streets near the P. and E. property are already taxed to capacity.

(c) It has more and better avenues of approach. The approaches to the P. and E. site are few and likely to be congested.

(d) It is freer from main lines of traffic, such as the Pacific and Klamath highways.

(e) It is cheaper than the P. and E. property.

(f) The larger majority of children will not have to go through the business section of the city in order to reach it as would be the case with the P. and E. property.

The P. and E. site has the following advantages over the north Holly (a) It is a larger and more adequate site and will house both the junior and senior high schools for years to come.

(b) The small area included in the north Holly site west of Grape street constitutes a reasonable objection to that property.

(c) It is nearer the old high school. Should it prove necessary to use both buildings in connection with this fact would favor the P. and E. property. We are not inclined to believe that the use of both buildings in connection will be necessary for any length of time.

(d) It is more adaptable to school building program because of the irregular shape of the north Holly property.

(e) It is less likely to suffer from the noise of railway trains though we are not inclined to believe that the noise from the trains will be a significant inconvenience as in all probability no building will be constructed closer than Grape street.

In consideration of the advantages of each site we are convinced that the choice in Medford is dependent upon factors other than technical points of desirability of location. However, your committee chooses the North Holly street property for the site for the location of your new high school, since we consider that it has more and better points in its favor. We are convinced, however, that no bond issue will carry in Medford if it is connected with any of the three sites mentioned, because of the political situation. The sentiment is so evenly divided between the three sites and there are always enough who are opposed to a bond issue under any conditions to defeat it, no matter to which site it may be attached. In the interest of the schools of Medford and with a strong desire to see the next bond issue for a new high school carry at the polls, we propose the following recommendation: That the voters of Medford be requested to decide both the bond issue and the choice of a site by ballot, and that the bond issue be separated from the issue as to the site; that is, let the voters cast their ballots for or against the proposed bond issue irrespective of the site for the building, and at the same election let them also cast their ballots either for the North Holly street site or the P. and E. site and abide by the result.

HARL R. DOUGLAS,
HOMER P. RAINERY.

Program of Bonded Indebtedness to Finance Proposed Building Program.

The average annual increase in assessed valuation for the district for the past five years has been approximately \$120,000. That this has not been greater is without question due to the reaction after the inflation of values in an earlier period. This inflation has now been absorbed as a matter of fact assessed valuations, increase more rapidly than the population as wealth tends to concentrate in the city. The larger the city the larger assessed evaluation

per capita. Should the assessed valuation of the Medford school district increase only as rapidly as the population the average increase in evaluation based on our conservative estimates for growth in population would approximate \$275,000. In the estimates below an annual average increase in assessed valuation of \$200,000 is used which will in turn increase the ability to bond \$10,000 a year.

Present maximum of bonded indebtedness after June, 1925.....\$281,000

Present indebtedness as of June 1, 1925.....53,000

Bond issue of 1925, 29-year bonds.....185,000

Margin of possible indebtedness, 1925.....42,000

Reduction of indebtedness by 1928—

On present bonds.....45,000

On 1925 high school bonds.....31,000

Estimated increased ability to bond through increased assessed evaluation of district.....30,000

Margin of possible bonded indebtedness 1925.....242,000

Indebtedness, 1928.....143,550

Bond issue of 1928 (10-year bonds).....65,000

Remaining margin of possible bonded indebtedness.....\$4,050

Reduction of bonded indebtedness by 1930—

On present bonds (re-maturation).....8,000

On 1925 high school bonds.....20,700

On 1928 ele. school bonds.....13,000

Estimated increase in ability to bond through increased assessed evaluation.....20,000

Margin of possible bonded indebtedness after 1930.....145,750

Remaining margin of possible bonded indebtedness.....80,750

Reduction of bonded indebtedness by 1935—

On 1925 high school bonds.....46,250

On 1928 ele. school bonds.....32,500

On 1930 ele. school bonds.....32,500

Estimated increased ability to bond through increased assessed evaluation.....50,000

Margin of possible bonded indebtedness 1935.....242,000

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