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Meetings attempt to show  
both sides of Provo school [| Print |](#)  
bond

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**ANNA CHANG-YEN - Daily Herald**

A pair of meetings illustrated both sides of the argument over a \$35 million bond and \$1.5 million leeway the Provo City School district will ask voters to approve on Tuesday.

At Timpanogos Elementary School, Board of Education members gathered business and community leaders to show their support for the initiatives that would help build an elementary school and rebuilt another, and pay for remodeling across the district. In the Oak Hills neighborhood, residents gathered at a home to share their frustrations about the plan.

Board of Education member Richard Sheffield told those at the news conference that investing in schools is essential for Provo's future. "Our community's future depends in large part upon the successful education of our children -- on providing skills, knowledge and a thirst for development and learning that lasts a lifetime."

Business and chamber of commerce officials also said they stand behind the plan. "Let's have vision and courage," said El Azteca restaurant owner Eugene Revuelta. "It's not too much money for us to pay as business owners or homeowners to build a future for our children."

Dixon neighborhood chairwoman Judy Kelsch said she fears the neighborhood is in danger if Timpanogos Elementary is not rebuilt. More families are moving in, and those families won't stay if the school is not rebuilt on the site, she said. "We lived five blocks away, and our children would run to school every day and run home every day, and they loved knowing that this was their school, right here where we lived, and you can't get that if they're bused someplace."

Away from the board members and business leaders, residents discussed their concerns with each other.

At a meeting he organized in his neighborhood, Dean Sanpei questioned the need for the leeway and said the bond should be scaled back. The leeway would increase taxes permanently, and a new elementary in the Lakeview neighborhood would create excess capacity on Provo's west side, he said.

The board has not said what would happen to \$400,000 earmarked in the leeway for the operations of Lakeview Elementary if it had to close Grandview Elementary to open the Lakeview school, Sanpei said.

Board member Sandy Packard has made it clear that a school closure would be an option

if growth in the Lakeview area doesn't materialize.

Sanpei said he also was worried about the cost of interest charges on the \$35 million, which he said could trump the principal that has to be repaid on the bonds if the district is charged an interest rate of 6.5 percent. That would amount to \$44 million interest on top of the \$35 million principal over 20 years, he said.

Mike Jerman, vice president of the Utah Taxpayers Association, also attended the meeting and said the association expressed concerns about the leeway in a mailer to Provo residents this week because of its permanency and because the district's enrollment is projected to shrink. The association also objects to the district holding the vote during a primary election, when few voters show up.

Betty Pettit, who hosted the meeting, said all of Provo's homeowners and business owners would pay for the wishes of a few if the bonding is approved. "If a small majority pass legislation, we're bound to indebtedness, and the people up here on the hill will pay the majority of the cost."

Sanpei said the Board of Education has tried to equate a vote against the bond and leeway as a vote against public education. "That makes it sound as if you all and myself aren't supporting education, and we are." He pointed out that more than 60 percent of the property tax paid by Provo homeowners goes to the district. "We are all supporting public education to a large degree already."

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