

Lovington School District #303 Annexation into Arthur School District #305

On December 6, 2010 the Regional Board of School Trustees held a public hearing to determine the feasibility of the proposed merger of Lovington and Arthur. Following the hearing of testimony, the Regional Board of Trustees voted to place the proposal before the voters of each school district on the April 5, 2011 election ballot. If approved by the voters of each school district, the Lovington School District will dissolve and be merged into the Arthur School District fifteen months later on July 1, 2012.

Under the proposal the current Lovington Grade School will be maintained in the current status as a Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth Grade. Arthur Grade School will maintain the current status of Pre-Kindergarten through Sixth Grades. Arthur Jr.-Sr. High School , which currently houses grades seven through twelve, will have more than enough space to add the high school students from Lovington. These changes will take place in the fall of 2012.

Benefits for students

- Additional courses in Agriculture, Family and Consumer sciences, Business and Industrial Technology
- Continuation and possible expansion of Dual-Credit courses.
- Access to district guidance counselor and nurse for everyone.
- Strong music and drama programs.
- Upper level foreign language and possible elementary foreign language.
- Master teacher in the math department.
- Expanded school newspaper and photography class.
- Strong library and art programs.
- Possible additions to other curricular and extra-curricular offerings.

Transitioning Lovington Students to Arthur

The districts will have one full year to develop smooth transition of all students, staff, and curriculum. The building principals will work collaboratively with their staffs to meet during professional development and other dates to align textbooks, instructional methods and materials covered to make sure all students are in the same place the first day of school. The districts will work together to have Lovington students shadow an Arthur student to help familiarize them with Arthur facilities. Both districts are already a part of the same regional office of education and use the same special education cooperative.

Building Utilization

Arthur Grade School (Pre K-6)-no perceived changes

Lovington Grade School (Pre K-8)-no perceived changes

High School students from Lovington and Arthur junior high students and high school students (7-12)-attend Arthur High School

District enrollment Pre-K through grade 12 will be 875 students.

Impact on Tax Rates

In Article 7 of the School Code under Annexation, the tax rate of the annexing district (Arthur) is extended to the district that is annexed (Lovington) with the exception of any balance in the Debt Service Fund. Currently Lovington is at \$5.22 without bonded debt (5.68 with bonded debt currently) while Arthur is at \$3.46. Not counting bonded debt that is a reduction of 1.76 per hundred dollar assessed value. That equates to about \$640 reduction on a \$100,000 home per year. If there were enough funds on hand to pay off the entire bonded debt early, it could reduce the rate another \$150 on the \$100,000 home. By combining the Equalized Assessed Evaluation of the two districts (Lovington \$27M, Arthur \$88M), any future increases will be spread over a larger value thereby making increases smaller for each individual property.

Lovington Bond Debt

In the committee of ten discussions, it was determined that Lovington could pay off the Bond debt with any remaining funds in the school accounts prior to the annexation. These funds are first committed to a set-aside amount to help fund the demolition of the high school if that should be necessary. Remaining available funds would go toward bond debt that has a projected 07/2012 balance of \$370,000. This bond debt was for the Jr. High addition on the grade school in 2000 and re-roofing the grade school along with a small section of roof repair on the high school in 2007. If funds are not sufficient to cover the debt balance, the remaining amount will remain on the Lovington tax bill until paid off (currently 2014 and 2015).

	Tax Rates	
	Before Annexation	After Annexation
Lovington	\$5.22	\$3.46
W/Bond	\$5.68	\$3.91
Arthur	\$3.46	\$3.46
Combined	\$3.46	\$3.46

School Board Representation

In the interim period between July 1 of 2012 and the next election in March of 2013 should an opening develop on the Arthur School Board, a member of the previous Lovington School Board would be appointed to fill the opening. It is the intention that all townships are represented in the newly combined district and a committee will be appointed after the annexation to develop an equitable plan for township representation for possible placement on the next general election. In the interim period until a method is developed, two Lovington Board members will be invited to serve as non-voting representatives of the Lovington community with the Arthur School Board.

Incentives from the State for the Reorganization

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
GSA Difference Incentive	133,973	133,973	133,973	133,973
Deficit Fund Balance Incentive	0	0	0	0
Salary Difference Incentive	197,370	197,370	197,370	197,370
\$4,000 per Certified Staff Incentive	0	304,000	0	0

Total Incentives equal \$1,629,372 subject to yearly adequate appropriations by the General Assembly.