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Local News



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UCS bond passes by 21 votes

By DEANNA ROSE
Source Staff Writer

A small majority of voters approved a \$112.5 million bond issue for Utica Community Schools on May 5, in what some say appeared to be a slightly higher turnout than usual for a school election in the district.



Voters in Sterling Heights, Shelby Township and Utica, along with small portions of those in Macomb Township, Washington Township and Ray Township, filled in their ballots in favor of the bond, 9,126 to 9,105 - a difference of 21 votes.

From left, Shelby Township residents Jean and Bob Stockel talk to election inspector Mike Tarpey, while election inspector Delores Wisniewski prepares for their next step in signing up to vote in the Utica Community Schools election at Wiley Elementary School on May 5.
Source photo by Deanna Rose

"I think, given the circumstances of the economy, I think it's a real win for the students of Utica Community Schools," UCS Director of School Community Relations Hildy Corbett said. "People in Macomb County and here in Utica Community Schools support education and believe in the power of education."

Utica resident Tom Kulpa went in to cast his ballot at Flickinger Elementary School.

"I know a lot of people think if they don't have children, they don't need to vote - but you're voting for the future," Kulpa said. "I always vote for (the school bonds) because I know it helps."

Delores Wisniewski, an election inspector at Precinct No. 2 at Wiley Elementary School, said she was a bit surprised by the number of voters who turned out to vote in the school election.



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"It shows people are really interested," Wisniewski said. "We were taking bets on how many voters we'd have. We thought it would be 50 by noon, but it was about 75."

Corbett also agreed, saying she believed the 18,504 total votes cast was a higher turnout than previous school elections.

"I think that was the result of people understanding the importance of public education and wanting to voice their opinion," Corbett said.

Two of the largest communities within the UCS district, Shelby Township and Sterling Heights, had differing ideas as a whole about passing the bond. Of the six communities located in the UCS boundaries, two voted against the bond and the rest marked their ballots in favor of it.

Residents in Shelby Township voted to turn down the bond by nearly 800 votes, with a final tally of 4,556 "yes" votes to 3,787 "no" votes. In Sterling Heights, almost 200 more residents said "yes" to the bond. The final vote count there had 3,834 votes in support of the bond and 3,637 oppose it.

Macomb Township voters approved the bond by 584 votes, 1,145 to 561, and Washington Township residents passed the bond by 76 votes, 147 to 71. The bond also passed in Ray Township, 3 to 1.

Officials have said the passage of the bond won't increase what the district already levies for its debt, which is planned to remain at or below 3.5 mills. Plans for the bond money include providing for additional classroom technology, building and equipment renovations and replacements, improvements to make facilities equal in schools and bus replacements.

In school board races in UCS and Warren Consolidated Schools, the incumbents won all the open seats. The WCS race had two open seats and three candidates. Rajnish Chandrasekhar lost to current board members Brian White and Susan Kattula. In UCS, incumbents Carol Klenow and Robert Ross ran unopposed to fill two seats.

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