

City of *Chelsea*

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...it's all about family!

Statement Regarding District School Tax

I was first elected to the Office of Mayor of Chelsea in November of 2016. One of my major priorities at the time was that I help find a way to fund some meaningful improvements to the facilities at the Middle School and the High School.

In 2017, I went and met with Dr. Randy Fuller, Superintendent of Shelby County Schools, and Mr. Jay Peoples. My meeting was to request that he help and allow me to start a grassroots effort in the Chelsea School District to do a District Tax initiative to raise the funds for new or at least greatly improved facilities. He told me in the meeting that he appreciated and understood the need for this but that his term would be ending soon and that he was going to retire. He told me that I needed to wait and meet with the new Superintendent that would be elected to discuss this.

Fast forward to later in 2018. I met with Dr. Lewis Brooks and the Assistant Superintendent, David Calhoun, and the CFO of the SCBOE along with Scott Weygand and Tiffany Bittner. At this meeting we asked Dr. Brooks what his plan was for facility improvements at Chelsea High School and Middle School. We also ask if a District Tax option would truly be available and I offered to champion the effort to get the tax passed for the district. They told us that at that time, they were working on a long-term Capital Plan and that Chelsea would be a focal point of the plan and with that, the District Tax may not be needed. He also said this Capital Plan would be released in a few months. This didn't happen for several months but was finally released. When it was released, a wing was added to our High School and a much-needed facelift of the Middle School was approved. Good, but not near good enough.

In the most recent Capital Plan that was released, Oak Mountain High School got a multimillion-dollar Fine Arts Center, which was greatly needed, and Chelsea High School got an expansion to the parking lot. Again, not nearly enough.

The fact is, up and until the point that we announced our Feasibility Study, the idea of a District Tax had been tabled indefinitely. Now, since the favorable findings of the Feasibility Study, Dr. Brooks is willing to look again in to the District Tax and "stand beside us" as we work toward it but he has made it plain, as recent as just one month ago in a meeting with he and Mr. Calhoun and Chris Grace and myself, that he cannot lead the effort. It will have to be a "grassroots" effort by citizens of Chelsea and the surrounding areas to take it to the Shelby County Delegation of the Alabama House of Representatives to get the referendum approved for a vote. He also told us in that same meeting that the rezoning of the Hwy 41 and Highland Lakes and Dunning Valley students was just a

thought that was being discussed but still a long way from coming to fruition. Information regarding the possible rezoning was released to the parents just a few days later.

As you can see, I have made a diligent effort for a District Tax well before ever looking at the possibility of forming our own system. We've made every attempt possible to find a way to work with Shelby County School administration. Unfortunately, the delays over the last 5 years have cost our students and community greatly. It is now time for us to move forward and be able to better enhance the destiny of our schools and our students.