

October 27, 2017

## In This Issue

Let the Fun Run Fun Begin!	2
Voting Time is Here: Nov. 7!	3
Rocket Eagle Scout Project	4
Yearbook Portrait Make-ups	4
Kids Voting	4
Chess Club	5
CMS Bond Info	8

## Coming Up

Mon, Oct 30	No School – Teacher Workday
Oct 31 - Nov 9	Boosterthon
Oct 11 - 18	Book Fair Preview
Thu, Nov 2	Spirit Night – Chick-fil-A
Fri, Nov 3	Rocket Art sent home
Mon, Nov 6	Coat drive/Loaves & Fishes collection begins
Tue, Nov 7	Kids Voting/Election Day
Wed, Nov 8	PTA Meeting, 8:30 AM, Rocket Cafe – ALL ARE WELCOME!
Thu, Nov 9	Boosterthon Fun Run Day
Fri, Nov 10	Veteran's Day – No School
Tue, Nov 14	Yearbook portrait make-ups
Wed, Nov 15	-Rocket Art orders due -Spirit Night – Nothing But Noodles
Thu, Nov. 16	Paideia Parent Seminar, 6:30 PM
Tue, Nov 21	Loaves & Fishes collection ends
Nov 22 - 24	Thanksgiving Break

Next Rocket Review on Fri, Nov 17  
 Deadline for submissions: Nov. 13 at 5 PM

## Contacts

Lee Sugg, PTA President  
[leersugg@gmail.com](mailto:leersugg@gmail.com)

Jen Taylor, Rocket Review Editor  
[ttaylor8@carolina.rr.com](mailto:ttaylor8@carolina.rr.com)

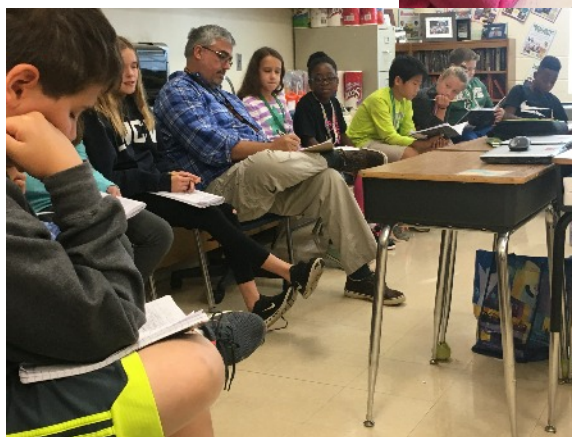
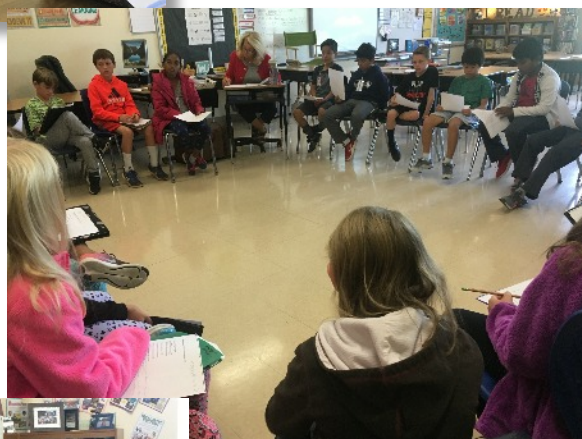
[How to Submit Rocket Review Content](#)

## School-Wide Seminar in October



Earlier this month the whole school engaged in seminar discussion on the poem "Wondrous World" by Preshant Kushawa. The text was selected for school-wide seminar by PSE staff members who attended the Paideia leadership institute in July, and chose it because of our school's focus on outdoor learning and the natural world, as well as the richness of ideas within the poem.

From kindergartners to fifth graders, every single PSE Rocket was a participant in conversations about wondering, questioning, learning and science. Thoughts and ideas that came out of the seminar were wide-ranging, and included thoughts about innocence and discovery, as well as scientific inquiry and imagination.



**It was a wonderful experience, and one that unifies us as a school community.**

## Community Seminar for Parents

Our Paideia focus, which includes seminar in every classroom, is a key element of a Providence Spring education and has been since the opening of the school. Our dedication to Paideia teaching strategies distinguishes Providence Spring from other schools, and it is the foundation of our literacy instruction in all curriculum areas. In order to help parents learn more about the education their children receive at Providence Spring, we have scheduled an evening event for parents, during which you will be introduced to our approach and experience a full Paideia Seminar.

**Mark your calendars now for the evening of November 16 at 6:30 PM, and stay tuned for details about the specifics, including how to RSVP.**

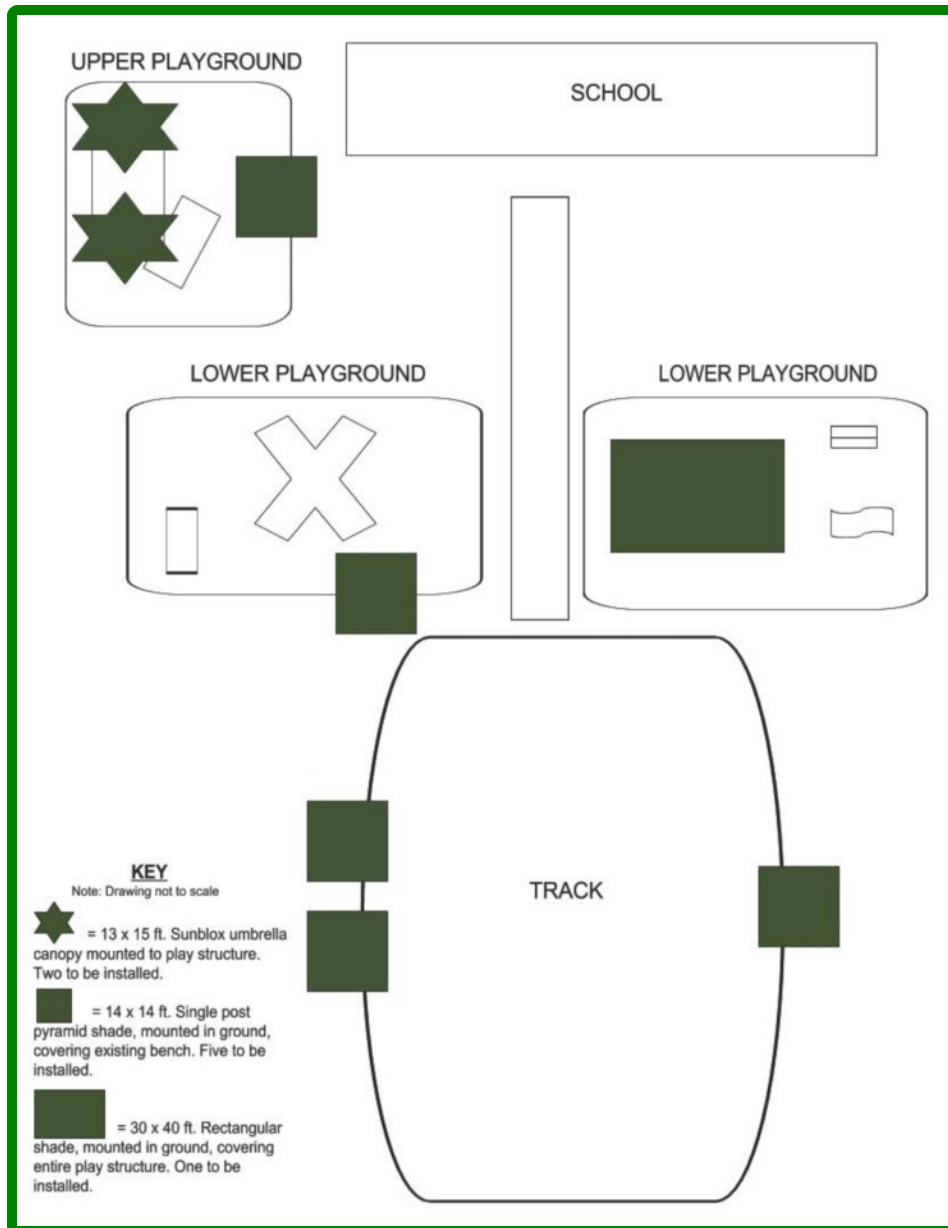
## Let the Fun Run Fun Begin!



Parents! This year's main fundraiser is the Providence Spring Elementary Fun Run! It's a 2-week program that kicks off with a Pep Rally on Tuesday, October 31st. Families will then gather pledges for every lap your student runs (30-35 laps), and we'll celebrate at the Fun Run on Thursday, November 9th. With our big goal of raising \$56,000 for sun shades on all our playgrounds and around the track, we asked the Fun Run experts at Boosterthon to power our Fun Run and make it more profitable, easier, and fun.

Students will also experience an amazing character theme, **CASTLE QUEST!** an English castle theme all about being brave and living with character. On their quest to regain Bravemore Castle, students will learn the "SIX VIRTUES of a TRUE HERO" from a cast of colorful characters.

You can help our school by reaching out to sponsors, and then putting their donations on FunRun.com. Also, all families are invited to come out and cheer on your student at the Fun Run! Thank you for your support! Let's give our kids a "COOLER RECESS"!!!



**Voting Time is Here: Nov. 7!**

## District 6 Candidate Profiles

by Molly Reid & Christine Runyan

Once every four years we are given the opportunity to elect our district Board of Education member, and that time is NOW. Six of the nine school board seats are up for election, and we are eligible to vote for the person representing our district. Providence Spring Elementary sits within District 6, and there are two individuals running to represent our district, Sean Strain and Allen Smith. The incumbent District 6 board member is not running for this seat again.



We approached the candidates and asked for responses to a questionnaire we hope will be helpful as you prepare to vote. Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with each of the candidates' views and opinions, and vote accordingly- the time for excellent leadership on the Board of Education has never been more important.

The Providence Spring PTA supports voting Yes on School Bonds. This is a critical need for our ever-growing school system, and taxes will not be raised.

Early voting has started and continues through November 5. Our two closest early voting locations are South County Regional Library, 5801 Rea Road, and Matthews Library, 230 Matthews Station Street. Weekday hours are 8-5 this week and 8-7 next week. Weekend hours are 10-1 on Saturday and 1-4 on Sunday, with the last day of voting being Saturday November 4. All voters are eligible to vote at any early voting location. A full list of times and locations can be found at the [Board of Elections website](#)

Local elections are often determined by a few votes. One recent local election was determined by thirteen (13!) votes. Please put it on your calendar, tie a ribbon to your finger, or do whatever you need to do to get out and VOTE!

*Question: Please give a short biography of yourself.*

**SEAN STRAIN:** I grew up in a military family and had the opportunity to experience various cultures as we moved across the U.S. and Europe. A product of various public school systems, I attended Virginia Tech and have been in business and systems consulting since graduating in 1993, which afforded further opportunities to live and work abroad. My wife, Shari, and I have four children that have attended/are attending PSE and we have enjoyed living in Charlotte, a place we have called home nearly 16 years. We love to travel and are heavily engaged in our community, to include our schools.

More info is available at <https://www.seanstrain.com/>

**ALLEN SMITH:** Allen Smith is a progressive dad, technologist, and former educator. In his professional career, Allen has previously taught middle school and high school students as an instructor for Duke TIP. He worked as an Information Systems Advisor for the Metro Nashville Police Department Crime Lab. He also worked for the YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, where he managed IT systems, supported the largest domestic violence shelter in the state, and served on the organization's Technology Committee. Currently, Allen works for a tech company called GitHub, where he helps teach people how to build software together. Allen has volunteered locally, state-wide, and in other parts of the country to help marginalized individuals by preparing meals, creating safety/hygiene kits, and offering free workshops on technology and coding. He also helped create the South Charlotte Neighbors group, which was formed to raise awareness about the plans to construct a private, for-profit gym on the property of Jay M. Robinson Middle School. More information about his background is available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/loranallensmith/>

*Question: Why are you running for school board?*

**SEAN STRAIN:** Having enjoyed the opportunity to serve on our School Leadership Team (policy board) at Crestdale Middle School for my third year, and having been increasingly involved in district policy discussions on Student Achievement and Student Assignment, I wanted to make sure that we had a voice on the Board that shared and would strongly represent our community perspectives and values. In February of this year I spoke to Shari and we decided that with my *(Continued on [page 6](#))*

## Kids Voting

Election Day 2017 is almost here, and once again Providence Spring students will have the chance to participate in the Kids Voting mock elections sponsored by Generation Nation. Generation Nation is an organization that uses programs tied to Common Core and other educational goals to connect the classroom with hands-on civics and leadership experiences to build civic literacy and develop young people as productive citizens and effective leaders.

Volunteers will be needed for short shifts on Election Day – Tuesday, Nov. 7 – to assist students as they cast their ballots via computers in the computer lab. Please be on the lookout for an email with SignUpGenius information if you'd like to help out.

Questions? Email Julia Heinzerling, [juliaheinzerling@gmail.com](mailto:juliaheinzerling@gmail.com)

## Rocket Eagle Scout Project

My name is Patrick Donnelly and I'm a PSE graduate and Boy Scout from Troop 164. A couple of weeks ago I completed my Eagle Scout Project at PSE.

The project was focused on enhancing the area at the outdoor track for future school activities and events. My project consisted of building a pergola, walkway and installing drainage pipe to help disburse rain water away from the pergola. I was able to complete this project with the guidance and support of many individuals from Troop 164.

In total, 19 scouts and 10 leaders completed 172 hours of work over two weekends to complete the project. This was a large project with many challenges. One of the benefits of choosing an ambitious project is the lessons you learn from it. The big life lessons I've learned during the course of this project are (1) planning and clear communication is vital (2) always plan that something will take longer than your first guess (3) keep up the momentum to stay ahead of deadlines.

In conclusion, this Eagle Project has helped prepare me for life and given me the opportunity to give back to my elementary school.

Once a Rocket, Always a Rocket  
**Patrick Donnelly**  
**BSA Eagle Scout Candidate,**  
**Troop 164**



## Yearbook Portrait Make-ups



Classic-Photo is coming back on Tuesday, Nov. 14, for those who missed their Fall/Yearbook portrait date. Please mark your calendars!

Contact your Yearbook Co-Chairs with any questions:  
Larissa Peach,  
[larissapeach@yahoo.com](mailto:larissapeach@yahoo.com)  
or Lessa Helfing,  
[lessa.tam@att.net](mailto:lessa.tam@att.net)





### What do you need to know about the PSE Chess Club?

Participants of the PSE Chess Club receive group instruction, attend lectures from chess experts, play games, and attend tournaments. Our team is affiliated with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Scholastic Chess Association (CMSCA). Students who participate must have a genuine interest in improving their game, and conduct themselves in a way that demonstrates both their continued curiosity about chess and their respect for their fellow teammates, the staff and our parent volunteers. Our goal is to have fun learning together!

### When will we meet?

Regular practice will run Thursdays, November 9 through May 3, 3-4pm. Pickup is by carpool at 4pm sharp.

### Who can participate?

Students in 1st to 5th Grade are welcome to apply. Priority will be given to 1st thru 4th graders. Tryouts are required as space is limited. Beginner, intermediate and advanced players are welcome. We will do our best to match students with similar abilities for maximum learning, challenge and fun! The club will attend two Saturday team tournaments (February 10 at West Charlotte High and April 28 at Olympic High, 8:30am-2pm.) Members must be available to play in at least one tournament. Cost is \$60 per person for the year, which includes team fees, instruction and a team t-shirt. Scholarships are available. Children whose parents agree to volunteer will be prioritized in the selection process.

### How do I sign-up?

All students who are interested need to complete and return this form to his/her teacher or the main office by Tuesday, October 31 and MUST ATTEND TRYOUTS on Thursday, November 2 in the Media Center after school from 3-4pm. Last year's returning members who have not already notified the chess club of their intent to play this school year should contact PSE Chess Club Coordinator, volunteer, Sara Bridges at sarabridges@carolina.rr.com.

APPLICATION (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY!)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Best Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Email(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian will volunteer for at least one Sat. tournament or two Thurs. practice sessions (CIRCLE) Yes No

I grant permission for the student above to participate and agree to be on time for car pool on Thursdays at 4pm.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Emergency Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Student Skill Level (please circle) Never played Know Basics Play Occasionally Play Frequently USCF Rated \_\_\_\_\_

### Why I Want to Join PSE Chess Club (to be completed by student):

---



---



---



(Continued from [page 3](#)) current involvement and engagement I may be the best person to step forward to run for the open position in District 6.

My father and father-in-law spent 52 years serving in the US Army between them. While I never served in this way, I am drawn to giving back to the community through public service and have decided the best way to do that at this time is to represent our district on the School Board.

**ALLEN SMITH:** I am running for school board because I believe our community is at an important crossroads where we will decide what type of school district we want to be for many years to come. A first-time candidate for public office, I am campaigning to bring more transparency to the board, to empower teachers by removing obstacles that prevent them from doing the incredible work they are all capable of, and to increase collaboration throughout government and the community by amplifying unheard voices that can help us find the right solutions to the big challenges we continue to face in our schools and our community.

*Question: What is your stance on student assignment? Can voters expect you to vote to prioritize choice and equity based school plans such as school pairings and controlled choice options, or more traditional neighborhood school configurations?*

**SEAN STRAIN:** I have been a strong proponent of neighborhood schools as a foundational element of our community, and along with a robust menu of options from which parents can choose for each child, neighborhood schools have shown to be the best way to educate our children. I have also worked hard to determine the biggest contributing factors to strong student, and school, performance to be able to assess the gaps that need to be addressed in lower-performing schools, and for our lower-performing students.

The CMS Mission is to “maximize achievement by every student in every school.” Despite doing thorough research as well as asking local and national education advocates for over 2 years, I have not been able to find *any* studies

that confirm school pairings and controlled choice options to be the *best* method of addressing challenges in these critical areas impacting our lower-performing students, let alone showing it to be the best method to execute on the Mission as stated for *all* students.

**ALLEN SMITH:** I have proposed a two-phased approach to student assignment. I believe in incremental change, but I also recognize there are systemic challenges that cannot be addressed with quick fixes.

In the short term, we should keep expanding school options such as magnets, taking care to ensure these programs are located in areas that optimize accessibility for students from as many socioeconomic groups as possible. This could mean using full and partial magnet conversions strategically in some areas to provide additional opportunities, but it also means being mindful of accessibility with future site selection for new programs. The short term plan also proposes providing additional resources, support, and advocacy for students who need it. In many cases, students face social hurdles that prevent them from learning about, applying to, and attending these school options. I believe we can help these students by allowing teachers and other support staff to step in to assist and advocate for a student who might otherwise be missing out on these opportunities. This allows the district to provide families with more choice about where their child goes to school while ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to benefit from these programs.

Long term, we need to have a strategy that allows our entire school system to be more responsive to external forces of change outside the board’s control. I have proposed that we give controlled choice the thoughtful consideration it deserves because it has the potential to be an impactful solution to a very complex set of interrelated challenges that include overcrowding, attracting and retaining the best teachers, and the overall opportunity gap in our community between kids from different socioeconomic backgrounds. It would also help give families more options and would turn student assignment from a sweeping mandate into a dialogue between the district and each family.

(Continued on [page 7](#))



*(Continued from page 6) Question: What do you see as the biggest issues facing District 6 and all of CMS?*

**SEAN STRAIN:** There are a number of issues or themes that have come up in discussions across the district, including but not limited to (and in no particular order):

- Overcrowding
- Practical availability of magnet options
- Stress/anxiety in our student population, particularly at the MS & HS levels
- Transportation, particularly to magnets
- Strong leaders in every school, every classroom
- Differentiated instruction, meeting every child where they are and challenging each academically

**ALLEN SMITH:** There are a lot of systemic, operational issues that folks often mention to me, such as overcrowding, equity, discipline, ensuring achievement for all students, attracting and retaining the best teachers — just to name a few. I think many of these issues stem from more foundational challenges that the board could work on addressing. One of the big ones I hear about in District 6 is the lack of trust between the community, the board of county commissioners, and the school board. Part of this could be due to a lack of transparency around board decisions. Improving collaboration between the school board, the city and town councils, local organizations, and the community could help address some of the interrelated challenges our community faces, such as the link between affordable housing, attracting teachers, and providing every student with an outstanding education. Finally, there has been a lot of misinformation and fear-based rhetoric that has driven the narrative around CMS over the past few years. I believe it's critical to work on amplifying unheard voices in our community. If we want to find impactful, sustainable solutions to the challenges in our community, we need their input and ideas.

*Question: What are your priorities for the district in the coming year?*

**SEAN STRAIN:** As a District 6 representative, I will have a responsibility for the education of each child who attends a school in District 6 or resides in District 6, as well as every educator and administrator that is working in our District 6 schools. I intend to continue my community/school outreach, where I meet with school leaders (CMS and parents) and listen to their perspective as I ask in the context

of educating our children “How can I help?” This will undoubtedly continue to develop the list above, all of which are priorities for my efforts.

I also plan to strengthen the relationships and collaboration with those bodies that fund and/or define policies for which CMS must comply, notably the NC General Assembly (NCGA) and Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners. In addition, I plan to work closely with other local/state governmental and non-governmental entities in order to reassess our policies and respective responsibilities to our citizens — both with respect to the specific scope of K-12 education and the “other services” we are currently asking our schools and educators to provide our young citizens. This discussion of responsibility — between governmental & non-governmental entities, and individuals — appears to be an area that is not being addressed sufficiently and was raised again by the well-funded, well-publicized study on Economic Mobility in Charlotte. It will be critical to leverage strong working relationships I have with elected officials in the NCGA, the Board of County Commissioners, the Charlotte Mayor & City Council and Pineville/Matthews/Mint Hill Mayors & Town Commissions, as well as with a number of leading non-profits in the county, to move this forward as the schools are not and cannot be the sole answer to economic mobility challenges — as some have suggested.

**ALLEN SMITH:** My big priorities are the foundational challenges I mentioned above. I believe working on improving collaboration, building trust, increasing transparency, and amplifying unheard voices will help us all work better together to address the specific issues that persist throughout our community.



# Invest today. Build tomorrow.

#cmsbond2017



## What's in the bond?

**20** Schools relieved of overcrowding

**17** New schools

**12** Renovations and additions made to some of the district's oldest schools



The bond would provide **1,250** new or renovated classrooms for more than **20,000** in the community. These classrooms would relieve overcrowding, expand access to some of our schools' most popular programs and create spaces worthy of teachers and students—all without increasing taxes.

*Creating more academic choices  
for children in the 21st century*





# 2017 Bond Projects

Invest today.  
Build tomorrow.  
#cmsbond2017

## **Why is Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools asking for a school bond in 2017?**

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will use the bond money to build new schools and provide renovations or additions to others. Our 10-year capital plan identifies more than \$2 billion in capital needs. The \$922 million would get us closer to meeting those needs. Bonds allow governments to borrow money at low interest rates to finance capital projects. Mecklenburg County would sell bonds to fund new school construction, repairs and renovations for CMS.

## **How will the school bonds benefit students?**

Seventy-eight percent of our schools are at or over capacity – they are housing more students than they were intended to hold. We also have 20,000 students in 1,100 mobiles. The bonds would pay for 17 new schools and would relieve overcrowding at 20 other schools. The bonds would help us repair and renovate older schools so that they can better provide the flexible learning space students need. The bonds would also reduce the number of students in mobiles at the 29 project sites.

## **If the school bonds are approved, will my taxes increase?**

The Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners has said no tax increase would be needed for the school bonds.

## **How many new schools will the bond add?**

The 2017 bond would provide capital funding to build 17 new schools, which includes replacing seven of our oldest schools. Adding these new schools would reduce overcrowding at 20 other schools. The bonds will also provide renovations or additions at 12 additional schools. Learning in the 21st century requires spaces that encourage collaboration, the use of technology and the freedom and flexibility to host multiple learning and teaching styles for staff and students. These bonds would help us provide 21st-century learning spaces and expand opportunities for students.

## **Mecklenburg County just gave CMS \$428.7 million. Why do you need more money from the county?**

CMS has two budgets—operating and capital. The \$428.7 million was the county’s contribution to the annual operating budget, which pays for the day-to-day expenses of running the district. The capital budget pays for the design and construction of new schools and the renovation and replacement of existing schools – and the \$922 million in bond money would go into the capital budget for the 29 proposed projects.

## **Do I have time to register to vote before Nov. 7?**

Same-day, in-person registration and voting can be done Oct. 19 through Nov. 4. To learn more, visit the Mecklenburg County Board of Elections website here.

Click each sponsor's logo to learn more.

## Platinum



*Everyone deserves great financial advice.*

## Gold



**STARR & DICKENS**  
ORTHODONTICS

## Silver



## Bronze



[Learn about becoming a PSE PTA Sponsor](#)