



Latta Schools Educational Foundation
205 King Street
Latta, SC 29565
843.752.7101 (843.752.2081 fax)

Dear Friend of the Latta Schools :

Request

We respectfully request your consideration of a named gift opportunity to the Latta Schools Educational Foundation. We are asking that your gift be designated to support the renovation of the 1954 Latta High School Gymnasium into a state-of-the-art auditorium. Your support in this need further enhances the positive relationship you have with the Latta Schools. In consideration of a named gift opportunity donation, the Latta School District would consider a naming opportunity for you or a person of your choice. (The Named-Gift Brochure is included and provides a wide variety of opportunities for your consideration.) ***Please be aware that the Latta School District Educational Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 organization and your contribution is 100% tax deductible.***

The Need

The Latta School District has enjoyed a place of esteem in the Latta community for more than a century. Many of its graduates have achieved success in a variety of fields. The word most often associated with the Latta School District is the word "excellence." It is the fervent hope of the Latta School District's Educational Foundation that Latta's schools will have the resources to continue its tradition of excellence for generations to come. Declining state and local revenues in recent years have made it increasingly difficult for rural school districts to offer the types of facilities and programming that have made the Latta School District a shining star among its peers. Four areas of critical need have been identified by district leaders as having a priority for keeping Latta's schools on the cutting edge. These areas are the construction of an auditorium, a few safety projects, a programming endowment, and a scholarship endowment. Funding for these projects (totaling about \$4.14 million) will be the main focus of the capital campaign that the educational foundation has decided to conduct in the first half of 2012.

Although exemplary fiscal stewardship through the years has placed the Latta School District in a position to fund a portion of what it needs to stay on the forefront, adequate funding in each of the critical need areas mentioned above will ensure that the district has the resources to continue giving its students the opportunity to make an impact on the future.

- **Auditorium**

Latta High School lost its auditorium to fire in 1970. This venue had for decades been the center of Latta's cultural life. Concerts, plays, recitals, and various other performances were held there. In the years since the fire, the school and the Latta community have had to hold performances and events at venues that were often unsuitable for the purpose. Compromises were always necessary. A generous gift of \$800,000 from Fred and Bonnie Ellis has made a state-of-the art performance auditorium in Latta a reality. Construction has already begun on the \$2.5 million renovation that will include the auditorium, an auditorium plaza, lighting and sound systems, and other performing arts equipment and technology. It is the foundation's goal to raise the capital for the auditorium's completion entirely from private sources.

- **Other Construction Projects**

In addition to the auditorium, the district has several other construction project needs. These projects are focused on student safety and total about \$637,000. They include a new entrance area to Latta High School, a new bus loop, and parking lot resurfacing. A new entrance at Latta High School will enhance student safety since all students and visitors will enter and exit the high school through this area. The high school office and its services will be moved to the area. High school personnel will easily be able to separate visitors and others from instructional activities. Since the façade of the new entrance will rise above the rest of the building, the aesthetics of the high school will also be enhanced by this addition. A new bus loop will keep students and buses isolated from other traffic and will ensure the safety of our students at the middle and high school. Resurfacing projects will also add to student safety and will give our parking areas a much needed face lift.

- **Programming Endowment**

Income from a programming endowment will provide a stable base of financial support for programming needs. With declines in state and local revenue, it has become necessary for the district to look to other sources of funding for program initiatives. Many of the programming extras that set the Latta School District apart have withered in the latest round of budget cuts. Included among the many unique programming initiatives that the Latta School District now offers that could be endangered by shrinking revenues are a full-time agricultural program with a strong FFA component, a full business department, a wide range of art programs (that include band, chorus, dance, drama, video production, and visual arts), Army JROTC, Montessori, International Baccalaureate, and college dual credit. The Foundation hopes initially to fund this endowment at the \$500,000 level.

- **Scholarship Endowment**

Income from a scholarship endowment will ensure an adequate supply of scholarship funds to help Latta students meet the needs of funding college. Scholarship funding encourages high school students to aspire to higher education and alleviates the financial obstacles that so many students face today. In addition, income from this endowment could help fund faculty and staff scholarships for educational opportunities that improve their capabilities. The Foundation hopes to raise an additional \$500,000 for this endowment. The existing scholarship endowment currently totals only \$130,000.

Meeting the Need

In order to address these critical needs, the Latta School District Administration, school board members, and the members of the Latta Schools Educational Foundation, have examined the availability of resources from traditional sources. Funding from the State of South Carolina has been in decline for nearly five years. Local funding has also declined as the County Board of Education made a change in the way school districts in Dillon County are funded. This change resulted in a loss of \$300,000 annually to the Latta School District.

Although many school districts throughout the state have experienced financial difficulties in recent and past years, the Latta School District has a history of exceptional stewardship. In fact, when many other districts were furloughing teachers, Latta had the fiscal wherewithal to forego this draconian measure that hurts both employees and students.

Alternative avenues for addressing existing needs of the Latta School District have been studied. The district is currently trying to increase its grant activity in order to maximize funding from federal and state programs as well as private foundations.

After due consideration, the district's administration, board members, and foundation have come to the conclusion that the best alternative is to approach the private sector to obtain needed funds for construction projects, scholarships, and programming.

Purpose of the Gift

Private funds make it possible to provide programs and services that public funds fail to support adequately. Changing demands and increased expectations necessitate seeking additional resources. Your support of the Latta Schools Educational Foundation's capital campaign will allow the district to achieve one of its four critical objectives as it continues to serve the community:

1. To secure private funding for the district's new auditorium.
2. To secure private funding for several construction projects that will enhance student safety in the district.
3. To establish an endowment for programming.
4. To establish an endowment for scholarships.

Recognition of the Donors

We request permission to recognize Progress Energy or a person(s) of your choosing in the following manner:

1. Provide appropriate recognition in a special location in the district designated the "Wall of Honor" that would describe the purpose of the endowment or outright gift.
2. Announce the gift in appropriate newspapers and other media.

3. Announce your gift as additional progress is made toward campaign objectives.
4. Invite you as a donor to major campaign-related special events and activities.
5. Name a portion of our facilities in honor of your company or a person of your choosing.

We recognize that donors often feel anonymity is important for various reasons. However, allowing us the privilege of recognizing you in the above manner will encourage others to consider following your generous example.

Status of the Capital Campaign

The Latta School District's capital campaign started with the creation of the Latta Schools Educational Foundation and a \$800,000 gift from Fred and Bonnie Ellis for the renovation of the 1954 Latta High School Gymnasium into an auditorium.

An executive campaign committee, consisting of district personnel, board members, foundation members, and community members has been created to manage the capital campaign. The executive committee will be selecting a fundraising committee of about 30-40 members who will carry out the campaign. Individuals, corporations and other organizations will be solicited for donations. A campaign kickoff event will be held in early 2012.

Conclusion

The Latta School District has fulfilled its purpose in an outstanding manner. In fact, it has been an educational and athletic leader among its peers for the past century. The School Board, the foundation, and district administrators and employees want to see the district remain as a successful centerpiece of Latta and the surrounding area. We hope you share our feelings. Your sincere and thoughtful consideration of our request is gratefully appreciated.

Sincerely,