

Board places school bond on ballot

July 16, 2017

The Oregon City School Board unanimously voted to place a bond issue before voters in November 2018.

The school board crafted its proposal after reviewing a 950-page independent facilities review and weighing recommendations of 30 [?] community leaders who served on the district's bond planning task force last fall. The final proposal was written with public input and comments from at 10 public meetings on the draft plan last winter.

If approved by voters, the bond would bring safety and security updates to 12 schools. This includes building secure entries at every school site, and installing or upgrading emergency, security, and camera systems.

The bond would also address current and future school overcrowding. It would replace Gardiner Middle School [built in 1954], renovate Ogden Middle School [built in 1965] and reduce portable classrooms. Both middle schools were built to serve 500 to 600 students, but now each serves 850 to 900 children.

In addition, it would fund updates to 11 schools built between 1938 and 1975, providing energy efficiencies, heating, cooling, air conditioning, plumbing, and roofing. It would also expand career-technical learning facilities and classroom learning spaces across the district.

"We are grateful to our community for their involvement and thoughtful input on this proposal," said Superintendent Larry Didway. "Our proposal was designed to serve the priorities of Oregon City residents."

The bond rate for the \$158 million measure would be \$1.24 per thousand dollars of a home's assessed value. That amount is ten cents more than homeowners paid last year, an added cost of about \$2.50 per month for the owner of a home assessed at \$300,000.

Superintendent Larry Didway will ensure accountability through a long-term citizens oversight committee chosen by the school board to track project implementation.

Voters approved the district's previous bond in 2000 to build Oregon City High School. The 20-year bond was paid off five years early, saving taxpayers \$_____.