

## **Voters approve Oregon City school bond to add security, upgrades to every school**

Oregon City voters spoke loud and clear, with an overwhelming majority approving a \$158 million school bond.

The bond will fund safety and security improvements, upgrades and updates to aging schools, added career/technical learning facilities, and relieve middle school overcrowding by rebuilding Gardiner and remodeling Ogden.

“We are grateful to the community for their vote of confidence in our schools,” said School Board Chair Connie Curteman. “Our children are the future of our community, and research is clear that students learn better when school facilities are improved.”

The bond funds will be matched by \$7.7 from the Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching Program, funds that will enable the district to complete additional updates and upgrades to school buildings.

Safety projects will impact every Oregon City school, ranging from secure school entries, security technology upgrades and school access controls to parking lot flow and safety improvements and increased play area security.

“Parents and community members absolutely understand today’s need for improvements in our schools,” said Eileen Creelman, leader of the Yes for Oregon City Schools campaign. “Our kids are the future of our community so I’m delighted voters support these safety improvements.”

The biggest investment will transform middle schools, which have been 140 percent over original capacity since 2013. Gardiner, built in 1954, will be rebuilt on the same site, eliminating 10 portable classrooms. Ogden, built in 1965, will be remodeled to expand common areas. Both schools will have upgraded security and expanded career-technical learning facilities.

All schools will receive upgrades to meet priorities at each site, from heating and ventilation improvements to energy-efficient lighting, updated plumbing, or new roofing.

“Whether or not you supported this bond measure, we are committed to earning your trust through transparency, fiscal responsibility, citizen involvement, and completing the projects approved,” said Superintendent Larry Didway. “This is phase two of a long-term plan to make Oregon City the best place to raise a family. It is my hope that through this process and ongoing work we can together raise the bar for accountability and support of our local schools.”

**Photos: Ogden rendering. Current Gardiner building**