

# BOND 2023

## DICKINSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



**ELECTION: MAY 6, 2023**

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### *What is a bond?*

Just as homeowners borrow money in the form of a mortgage to finance the purchase of a home, a school district borrows money in bonds to finance the construction of new schools and other capital projects. Both are repaid over time. A school district must seek approval from voters in the form of a bond election to issue bonds. Bond funds can be used for the construction, acquisition, and equipping of school facilities, purchasing school buses, purchasing sites for school buildings, and the acquisition or updating of technology equipment. Bond funds cannot be used for salaries, utilities, or other maintenance and operational expenses.

#### *We just had a bond election in 2020. Why are we having another one?*

Dickinson ISD is identified as a fast-growth school district, and it is ranked 15th on the Houston New Home Ranking Report. A bond in 2023 is the next step in the long-range plan to manage the annual district growth of 3.3%. Growth is evident across the district, and six portable buildings (12 classrooms) were added for the 2022-2023 school year. Portable buildings will be added at Lobit Middle School in summer 2023.

#### *What is the status of Bond 2020 projects?*

Approved by voters to prepare for growth and focus on security, Bond 2020 is funding the construction of our third junior high located in the southern portion of the district at 11611 Central Park Blvd. When it opens, all three junior high campuses will house grades 6-8. To make room at elementary schools for the required full-day PreK, fourth grade will transition and join fifth grade at the three existing middle school campuses.

Security improvements to the front entrances at all campuses have been completed. At Hughes Road Elementary, the drainage improvements, addition of the parking area behind the school, and expansion of the front driveway has been completed. The expansion and renovations at the Transportation Center, Technology Department, and Agricultural Facility has started, and the projected date for completion of these projects is September 2023. The final Bond 2020 project to complete is the resurfacing of the track at McAdams Junior High. This will be scheduled as a summer project.

#### *Did Dickinson ISD solicit input from local citizens for this new bond proposition?*

Yes! Volunteers were requested, and a Facility Task Force composed of over 50 DISD parents, grandparents, business and community members, educators, and students spent three months reviewing and analyzing demographic reports, growth and enrollment projections, educational programs, district finances, and district needs. Everyone on the Facility Task Force had the opportunity to actively participate and provide input.

After studying information, visiting other districts, and exploring options, the Facility Task Force unanimously recommended the board call a bond election to focus on continued growth in the district and school safety. The bond will have one proposition that includes a new PreK-5 educational facility, a Career Technical Education Center at Dickinson High School, and additional security upgrades throughout the district.

#### *How can bond money be used?*

The district can only use bond funds for the purposes described in the bond proposition. Should there be a cost savings from the projects, the Board of Trustees must hold an open public meeting to vote on the use of those funds for any additional capital improvements.

#### *How much will the Bond cost, and how did the district come up with this number?*

The \$120,000,000 bond proposition includes a 1,400-student capacity educational facility for PreK-5th grade, a Career Technical Education addition and CTE upgrades at Dickinson High School, and district-wide safety and security enhancements. The district has worked with architects, engineers, our financial advisor, and other districts who are currently involved with construction projects. Through these conversations, the estimated price for construction and project costs were determined.

#### *Where will the proposed PreK-5 educational facility be built?*

In December 2020, DISD purchased a 30-acre site for a future school in the Lago Mar development. PreK-fifth grade students who currently live south of Hughes Road and attend the Lobit Education Village as well as some students at Hughes Road Elementary will be zoned to the new school. This will make room for the growth that is occurring on the west side of the district near Lobit Education Village and Calder Road Elementary.



### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

*Why wasn't a second high school included in the Bond 2023 proposition?*

*In education, the industry standard is that a school is considered over capacity when it is at 120%. The reason for that overage is that to justify opening a new campus with full staff and full operations, you must have enough students to populate the new school and not be running two schools at half-capacity. Another reason a second high school was not recommended is the cost per square foot. Currently, the average construction cost per square foot to build a comprehensive high school is \$354.00, plus an additional 15%-20% for design, furnishings, and equipment. Even with a tax increase, the amount of money needed to build a second high school far exceeds the bond capacity of DISD.*

*The committee moved forward with the recommendation to add a comprehensive Career Technical Education Center at DHS after examining options and visiting two other districts. A Career Technical Education Center will expand CTE opportunities for DISD students, and it will free up regular classrooms and science lab classrooms currently used for Career Technical Education instruction. This plan will make room for students at DHS. Also included with this plan is a comprehensive traffic study at DHS to improve the efficiency of traffic flow during student drop off/pick up.*

*What is the size of districts with more than one high school?*

*DISD surveyed school districts in Region IV and provided below is a chart showing the size of districts and the number of high schools in the districts who responded to the survey.*

Surrounding districts and total enrollments.

District	Size of District (square miles)	Total Enrollment	High School Campuses
Alvin ISD	252	29,241	4
Brazosport ISD	200	11,600	2
Clear Creek ISD	110	40,575	5
Cleveland ISD	143	11,612	1
Conroe ISD	348	71,000	6
Cypress Fairbanks ISD	186	118,155	12
Dickinson ISD	61	12,215	1
Friendswood ISD	14	6,100	1
Hitchcock ISD	69	1,850	1
Katy ISD	181	93,000	9
Klein ISD	88	54,000	5
Santa Fe ISD	72	4,384	1
Texas City ISD (including La Marque)	78	7,873	2
Tomball ISD	83	21,430	2
Waller ISD	328	8,958	1

*How is the district's tax rate configured?*

*A school district's tax rate has two components: Maintenance and Operations tax (M&O) and Interest and Sinking tax (I&S). The M&O rate is used to operate the school district. It includes salaries, utilities, repairs, supplies, fuel, etc. The I&S rate is used to pay off school district bonds. Bond sales only affect the I&S rate. DISD's current tax rate is \$1.294, which is \$.018 lower than last year's rate of \$1.312.*

*What is going to be the tax rate impact on district taxpayers?*

*There is no increase in the overall tax rate anticipated with the proposed \$120,000,000 bond proposition. DISD has the capacity to issue this additional debt without a tax rate increase because of expected property value growth and the fact that existing debt is continuously monitored, refinanced, and paid off early.*

*Financial projections show that with the passage of Bond 2023, the I&S tax rate for DISD taxpayers will remain at \$0.44.*

*What will be the tax rate increase on senior citizens in the district?*

*There is no impact on homeowners over the age of 65. School district taxes on resident homesteads may be frozen in the year the taxpayer turns 65 years of age and will not increase because of a school district bond election.*

# BOND 2023

## DICKINSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**What will be the fiscal impact to a DISD homeowner if the bond passes?**

The amount of school district tax that is paid by a homeowner is dependent on the appraised value of the home, which is determined by the County Appraisal District. No increase to the Dickinson ISD I&S tax rate is anticipated with the proposed \$120,000,000 bond proposition. However, homeowners who received a higher appraised value from the County Appraisal District will see an increase in their school taxes.

**Why does the ballot say, "This is a property tax increase.?"**  
State law requires that all school district bond referendum ballots be printed with "THIS IS A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE" even when the district is not anticipating an increase to the I&S tax rate. As a result, district voters will see this language on the ballot even though there will be no increase to the I&S tax rate by the district.

**How many years will the additional tax burden last?**  
It is a 30-year commitment. However, the District will take advantage of refinancing opportunities and will always be looking for ways to reduce the taxpayer burden.

**What about rising property values?**  
DISD does not determine property values. State law requires County Appraisal Districts to appraise properties at least 95% percent of market value.

**Upon approval of the bond package, is the entire amount issued all at once?**  
No. The district will issue bonds to cover costs of projects only at the time they are needed. Each must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

**Were other projects considered in addition to the projects that were recommended?**  
Yes. The Facility Task Force reviewed projects for accommodating growth, safety and security, facility improvements, aging facilities, athletics, and fine arts. The total cost of all projects reviewed exceeded \$300,000,000. District growth and safety were the top priorities, and the Facility Task Force recommended projects that were within the bonding capacity of DISD and would not increase the I&S tax rate.

**What will happen if the Bond doesn't pass?**

The current growth needs of the district will not go away. The work of the Facility Task Force aligns with the DISD Strategic Plan and the need to provide educational facilities to meet the objectives and goals of Dickinson ISD and the needs of students. If the Bond does not pass in May, the Board will review the proposal and try again soon. In the meantime, district and campus administrators will develop plans to address facility needs as enrollment requires. Additional portable classrooms will be purchased and installed at campuses.

**Who is eligible to vote in the May 6 bond election?**

Any registered voter who resides within the Dickinson ISD boundaries is eligible to vote.

**Is there a deadline to register?**

The deadline for voter registration is Thursday, April 6, 2023. If you are not registered to vote by this deadline, then you are not eligible to vote in the May 6 election.

**What if I want to vote with a mail-in ballot? How do I obtain one?**

You may request a mail-in ballot by contacting the Galveston County Elections Clerk. The last day to apply for ballot by mail is Tuesday, April 25, 2023.

**When is early voting?**

For the May 6 election, early voting will begin on Monday, April 24, 2023 and it will end on Tuesday, May 2, 2023.

**Will voters have an opportunity to receive information and to ask questions about the bond before the election?**

Yes. DISD will be scheduling several informational meetings for the public. We want everyone to know what is being proposed and to have the opportunity to ask questions. If you belong to a community organization, club or church and want to receive information about the bond at a meeting, please contact Tammy Dowdy at [tdowdy@dickinsonisd.org](mailto:tdowdy@dickinsonisd.org) so a presentation can be scheduled.

**If I have questions concerning the bond, who should I contact?**

Please send questions about the bond to Tammy Dowdy. Her email address is [tdowdy@dickinsonisd.org](mailto:tdowdy@dickinsonisd.org) or you can click on the Just Ask button located on the district website.

