

Dickinson ISD will ask voters to consider a \$94.2 million bond referendum during the May 2nd election. The Board of Trustees approved calling for the election at the February 3rd board action meeting after hearing a presentation by the district's Facility Task Force at their January 21st board workshop.

The Facility Task Force, which consists of 45 community leaders, parents, teachers, administrators and business owners from across Dickinson ISD, began meeting in November with district administration and PBK Architects. The committee reviewed demographic projections, various scenarios to address identified district needs, financial capacity, and priority needs at multiple campuses and district facilities. These discussions were used to reach consensus on the recommended bond projects.

"The committee of community members discussed several variables that are impacting our education system in Dickinson, especially recent legislative changes and historical and projected growth to our community. After analyzing several options, the committee unanimously voted to request a bond election to better prepare for our future," said Nakia Welch, Facility Task Force member and parent of two Dickinson ISD students.

The Facility Task Force recommended the following projects to the Board of Trustees to accommodate the growing student enrollment and the recently approved legislation requiring districts to develop a plan to implement full-day pre-kindergarten for qualifying students.

- Construction of a 1,200-student junior high school - \$73.7 million
- Additions and renovations at the district's Transportation Center - \$11.6 million
- Additions and renovations to the district's Technology Center - \$1.5 million
- Additions and renovations to the district's Agricultural Center - \$3.2 million
- Replacement of the running track at McAdams Junior High - \$300,000
- Parking lot replacement/expansion and drainage work at Hughes Road Elementary - \$2 million
- Security improvements district-wide to campus vestibules - \$1.5 million
- Interior safety upgrades at the Lobit Education Village and Kranz Junior High - \$400,000

The Facility Task Force considered different scenarios, and the option the group believes will work best for future growth and allow the district to develop a plan to implement full-day pre-kindergarten is to build a third junior high school and realign the grade configurations at the elementary, middle school and junior high levels. If the bond is approved, the district will realign the grade levels when the new junior high opens to have grades Pre-K to grade 3 in elementary school, grades 4-5 in middle school and grades 6-8 in junior high.

The additions and renovations at the Transportation Center, Technology Center, and Agriculture Center are related to student enrollment growth. The cinder running track at McAdams Junior High would be replaced with asphalt similar to the track at Kranz Junior High. The parking lot at Hughes Road Elementary has major subsidence and drainage issues. Parking lot flooding is a major concern at this campus.

Security improvements are recommended for all campus vestibules. Front entrances would be renovated so that visitors do not directly enter the school's front office. Instead, they would check-in with a receptionist at a secure transaction window before entering the main school building. In addition, ballistic window film would be added to all front entrance areas. Lobit Education Village and

Kranz Junior High have large classroom windows on all interior walls. Safety upgrades at these campuses would provide manual operated opaque window shades for all interior classroom windows.

If the bond is approved, it is estimated to raise the tax rate by 2 cents, which equals \$3.33 per month or \$40 per year on the average taxable value of a \$200,000 home. Taxes on the homestead residence of taxpayers age 65 or older will not have their taxes increased, providing there is not an improvement in the residence that increases the taxable value. The “tax-freeze” for citizens age 65 and older is in compliance with Section 11.26 of the Texas Property Tax Code.

“Dickinson ISD is a fast-growing district, and we are committed to providing high quality experiences in safe and secure learning environments for our students. Because of the support of Dickinson ISD residents, five bond referendums since 1999 were all very successful, and we have been able to accommodate our growing enrollment and facility needs. Our anticipated enrollment in 2022 exceeds 12,500 students. The 2020 Facility Task Force developed a recommendation that is fiscally sound, aligns with our district’s mission and goals, and it will prepare DISD for future growth as well as provide us with space needs to meet the recent legislative requirement for full-day pre-kindergarten,” said Carla Voelkel, DISD Superintendent.

A special Bond 2020 section has been added to the Dickinson ISD website, and the website can be found at www.dickinsonisd.org/bond. It will receive updates over the next few months, so please refer to it for additional information. Dickinson ISD will also be publishing a special issue of the district newsletter, “Dialogue,” which will be mailed to all addresses in Dickinson ISD in late March. This newsletter will provide details about the bond referendum and the district’s strategic planning process. Superintendent Carla Voelkel will also be giving numerous community presentations in March and April to inform the community about the bond referendum.