

## **Dickinson ISD Board of Trustees calls for \$94.2 million bond referendum for November 3 general election**

Dickinson ISD will ask voters to consider a \$94.2 million bond referendum during the November 3 election. The Board of Trustees approved calling for the election at the August board action meeting.

The bond referendum was originally scheduled for May; however, due to COVID-19 precautions, May elections were postponed. At the August board action meeting, the Board of Trustees approved re-calling for the bond election to be held as part of the general election on Tuesday, November 3.

If the bond is approved, the district's tax rate will not increase. The growing housing population, appraisals and refinancing of existing debt all contribute to keeping the tax rate the same. In addition, the 2020 tax rate approved by the Board of Trustees in August reflects a more than 10-cent tax decrease from \$1.45 to \$1.344.

The district's Facility Task Force asked the Board of Trustees to call for the bond election in a formal presentation this past January. The Facility Task Force, which consists of 45 community leaders, parents, teachers, administrators and business owners from across Dickinson ISD, began meeting last 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.

"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, found at [www.dickinsonisd.org/bond](http://www.dickinsonisd.org/bond). Dickinson ISD will also be publishing a special issue of the district newsletter "Dialogue," which will be mailed to all addresses in Dickinson ISD around October 1. This newsletter will provide details about the bond referendum and the district's strategic planning process.