



Hillsboro Referendum FAQs

What are the current challenges?

- Both elementary and high school lack learning spaces to accommodate today's learning curriculum.
- Many areas do not comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations (classrooms, restrooms, entrances, locker rooms, library, CTE space, and special education areas).
- Most high school classrooms undersized and outdated
- The boiler system at the high school is past its life expectancy.
- Both the elementary and high schools lack adequate, secure, and controlled entrances.
- The original 1894 area at the high school is in poor condition, floods, and needs a complete renovation/replacement.
- The drop-off/pick-up area at the elementary needs to be reconfigured to better separate buses and improve pedestrian safety

What are the proposed projects in this referendum?

- Boiler replacement in HS (Can be reused in New HS)
- Minimal Renovations at HS
- HVAC upgrades at Elementary
- Secure Entrances at ES & HS
- New drop off/pick up lane for elementary.
- Building new specialized spaces on district land adjacent to the elementary school
- AG Education, FACS, Music

What has taken place leading up to this referendum?

In Spring 2022, Hillsboro Public Schools and local consultants conducted a District-wide assessment of all facilities.

In 2022, a community committee made up of 16 parents, staff, District leadership, and community members at large took part in design workshops to help the District with the future planning of Hillsboro Public Schools.

On March 28th, 2023, a successful debt limit increase vote took place allowing the district to raise the debt limit from 5% to 10%

In Spring 2023 a District-wide survey was completed to gather valuable feedback to assist the District in planning for the future and to consider building solutions that meet District needs and are financially responsible.

The survey determined that 72% of respondents support a school-building project. The survey also showed that for a project to have community support the proposed project cost would need to be reduced.

On July 26, the Hillsboro School Board requested a total referendum amount of \$12 Million.

Was the community survey scientific?

The survey utilized a convenience sample that included over 330 household responses. A convenience sample was used so all community members who wanted to participate in the survey were able to. The survey was done by a third-party company. Results were determined with a +/- 5.50% margin of error.

Is school enrollment growing?

Currently we have 487 K-12 students enrolled in the district. We are down from 500 students from last year. We had large graduating class last year paired with a small incoming kindergarten class this fall. Enrollment is projected to remain stable with an increase when the housing development west of the interstate takes off.

How much would the proposed projects cost?

\$12 million

What is the tax impact?

The estimated tax impact on a residential value of \$100,000 is \$167.43 annually.

How do I find my true and full value or taxable value?

Please see the example tax statement for help finding the true and full value and/or taxable value on your tax statement.

When will the tax impact be reflected in my taxes?

The tax impact would be effective January 1, 2024. If the project is approved, you will receive your first tax statement reflecting the change in the Fall of 2024.

How many years will it take to pay back the bonds?

School referendum bonds are typically financed for 20 years. The amount listed would be the tax impact in the first year. We cannot guarantee that the tax base will increase, but if the District continues to grow, it will cause the fixed tax burden of the referendum to be spread between more property owners, which would lower the tax impact for individuals.

Once the bonds are paid off, does the levy drop off?

Yes, the levied mills will drop off and the debt will be retired, meaning it will no longer be owed.

Why not renovate the high school?

Modernizing electrical and mechanical systems is expensive without improving the school's ability to deliver education. Old age and numerous additions have created vast accessibility and code compliance issues that are not remedied inexpensively. The cost to renovate the building is 75% of the cost to build new.

Why not add new building on current site in back parking lot?

Current site is land locked and becoming full. The District committed to purchasing the land to the south due to land constraints – and to eventually have all the schools & sports complexes on one campus. If did build a separate building on that back side of the site, then the old school still needs major upgrades in the future – or demolition and rebuild a new school. If demolished and rebuilt, where do the HS kids go while the old building is being demolished and rebuilt? And if new HS is built on the new site, then we have the same problem- 3 class spaces on one property and the new HS on another property.

Where would the new building be located?

The new building would be located south of the elementary school on the land the school purchased.

Would the District incur a cost to relocate any students during the construction process?

No, students and staff would remain in the existing building while the new building is constructed.

When would the next phase start?

That is limited only by the debt limit of the district and the appetite for the voters to fund it. When the next set of building bonds drops off would be the easiest ask, as the increase can be offset by the expiring debt. You

could always start planning for the next phase right away and see if there is a logical next step that is smaller than building a whole new high school. The larger issue is the tax impact. As the survey found, we didn't have support even at the \$14M amount. Perhaps once the project is done, there could be an increased desire to move forward with the next phase and that could increase support.

What if we didn't replace the boiler at the HS?

We could not do that, but once it dies there would be a much more urgent and costly replacement required during the winter. It will be much less disruptive, and the cost will benefit from the economies of scale of doing the replacement with another project. We can salvage the boiler itself in 10-15 years if so desired. But if the school were to try to sell the building, having a functional boiler would make it much more attractive.

Who is allowed to vote?

Residents who live within the school district may vote.

When and where can I vote?

Voting will take place on Tuesday, September 26th 7:00 am-7:00pm at the Hillsboro High School Library.

Is it possible to cast an absentee ballot?

Yes, absentee ballots are available through the business manager's office. Please contact Vicky Grothman

Who can I contact to ask questions?

Please call Supt. Paula Suda (701) 636-4360 if you have questions.