

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BOND #31

Why are bond referendums necessary?

The vast majority of the District's funds are used to pay for salaries, utilities, educational programs, curriculum and other recurring operating costs. It is necessary to pass bond issues to address our aging facilities by either building new schools or extensively renovating existing facilities. With school bonds, technology, transportation and security needs may also be addressed. Without issuing bonds, it would be extremely difficult for public schools to make significant improvements in any of these areas.

Who developed the plans for this bond initiative?

In June 2008, Dr. Sherry Labyer organized a 40 member long-range planning committee to study facilities along with Ron Bailey of PBK Architects. Mr. Bailey led the **20/20 Vision Committee** through multiple sessions studying student demographics, condition of facilities, along with district priorities and goals. The committee was comprised of parents, community members, educators and administrators and was supported by our bond advisor, Stephen McDonald.

Will this bond issue raise my taxes?

Approving the bond issue will raise taxes from 25 mills to approximately 35 mills on ad valorem taxes. A homeowner with a home valued at \$100,000 and paying approximately \$1,000/year in property taxes would see a rise in taxes of \$8.34/month or approximately \$101/year. Districts our size maintains their bonding capacity at 35 mills in order to make progress and keep their district's initiatives competitive and moving forward.

Why does this bond initiative focus on elementary schools and high school?

Our elementary schools were built in the 1950's or before, and Duncan High School was built in the early 1960's. All of these buildings have aging infrastructure that makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to keep up with technology, safety and maintenance needs. The electrical and plumbing infrastructures are outdated and in frequent need of repair. In addition, our schools were built with flat roofs, which pose roofing problems, and the overall efficiency of the aging buildings is lacking.

Where do you plan to put the united elementary campuses and what is the grade configuration?

The Duncan School Board of Education has entered in to an option to purchase 42.5 acres pending bond approval. The land is located west on Elk Avenue on the southeast corner before you enter the bypass. Elk Avenue is now a four lane road lane and easily accessed. The grade configuration will include three separate elementary schools with a Kindergarten-first grade combination, second and third grade combination and fourth and fifth grade combination.

Why not tear down the existing elementary schools and rebuild at that same site?

The existing elementary schools are land-locked. School buses cannot get completely around the schools, causing issues that impede the flow of traffic for parents as well as buses. There are only two schools that are accessible around a city block, Irving and Emerson Elementary. Emerson is proposed for the early childhood center.

Why build the elementary campuses on one site?

There are many reasons to build the elementary campuses on one site: 1) a secure learning environment; 2) state of the art facilities for all students; 3) competitive instructional environment; 4) efficiency with staffing, utilities, food service, transportation and administrative overhead; 5) and most valuable of all, shared instructional resources and teacher collaboration.

Why not build a brand new high school and do something else with the current campus?

The location of Duncan High School is very desirable because it is in the center of the city and easily accessible. Also, the proximity of the extracurricular facilities is a factor in the location of the high school. To rebuild Duncan High School with the gymnasium, auditorium and all of the extracurricular sports facilities would be beyond the bonding capacity of Duncan Public Schools.

Why is some of the bond issue being dedicated to our extracurricular/athletic facilities?

Construction on the stadium began in 1938, with the first football game played in 1941. The baseball park was built around the same time. While the district has made cosmetic improvements to these facilities, the infrastructure is old and inefficient. This bond includes plans to upgrade the Duncan High School gymnasiums to meet the needs of existing and future students.

What percentage of the vote is necessary to pass the bond initiative?

By state law, this bond requires a 60% approval from the voters.

How can I be sure that the bond proceeds will be spent as presented?

State law requires that the District identify with particularity the purposes and project for which at least 70% of the proceeds will be spent. State law also requires that at least 85% of the monies allocated to a particular project be spent on the project unless the project can be completed for a lesser amount of money.

What happens if the bond initiative does not pass?

The Duncan School Board of Education will reconsider how to deal with aging facilities, overcrowded elementary classrooms, aging infrastructure and deficiencies in educational technology.

Is the bond issue and the “City of Champions” campaign two separate efforts?

YES, the bond issue will go to the vote of the people and The City of Champions campaign is a group of private citizens raising money to improve extracurricular facilities in Duncan Schools. Please keep in mind that these citizens are property owners and have opted to go above and beyond the 10% increase in their ad valorem taxes to give generously to a separate campaign. However, all improvements made to extracurricular facilities will require approval by the Duncan School Board of Education. Project priorities will be established by critical need vs. want. For example: An indoor training facility was identified by the “City of Champions” as a want, however, it is not at the top of the critical needs list.

Who can vote and when is the vote?

The bond referendum will take place on **Tuesday, April 6, 2010**. Anyone living within Duncan Public School District may vote, including patrons with or without children. Voting takes place at regular polling places between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. In person absentee voting is available at The Stephens County Courthouse on the Friday and Monday before the actual election date from 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Where can I get additional information about the bond initiative?

Anyone wanting additional information about the 2010 bond initiative may contact Dr. Sherry Labyer @ 580-255-0686, ext. 104 or sherry.labyer@duncanps.org or Mrs. Glenda Cobb @ 580-255-0686, ext. 102 or glenda.cobb@duncanps.org.