

BETHEL 2020 BOND MEASURE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Information provided by Bethel School District

WILL THIS INCREASE MY TAXES?

NO. The Bethel bond measure will not increase your current tax rate. Old bonds are being paid off and the new bond will simply take their place. If the bond measure is approved, the school property tax rates will remain the same as they are right now, \$1.61 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation (\$322 on a home assessed at \$200,000. If the bond is not approved, the tax rate will drop in 2021 to 90 cents/\$1,000.

Why is Bethel School District seeking a Bond Measure?

The District's Facilities Assessment Report lists serious and immediate repairs and upgrades needed in our schools that the District is not able to address with general operating funds. Also, the current interest rates are at historically low levels. In addition, the state will grant the District an additional \$6 million if the bond is approved. If the bond is not approved, the \$6 million in grant funds will go to the next school district on the list that does pass its bond.

What is a Bond Measure and how is the money used?

A school bond measure is a voter-approved funding method that can only be used for constructing or improving school buildings, facilities and equipment, such as books and computers. Under state law, the revenue from bonds cannot be used for salaries.

Don't schools get their funding from the state?

Oregon's public schools receive operational funding from the state for staffing, but facility maintenance, repairs, upgrades and construction must come from each school district. The state will not pay for Bethel's textbook and building needs.

How much money will be raised and how will it be spent?

The Bethel School Board unanimously voted to seek a \$99.3 million bond to: Conduct basic repairs, including roofs, siding, and flooring; Provide updated textbooks and replace obsolete computers at every school; Install additional security measures at each school; Update heating and ventilation systems to save on utility costs; Covered outdoor play areas at each elementary and K-8 school. In addition, Bethel's oldest school – Cascade Middle School – has significant structural and mechanical deficiencies that cannot be affordably repaired, so Cascade will be completely replaced. And modern, appropriately sized Vocational Ed classroom space will be added to Willamette High School for hands-on learning programs, all with no tax rate increase.

How do I know that Bethel School District is spending money wisely?

- Bethel conducts annual financial audits and has been awarded the *Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting 24 years in a row*, recognizing the District for conducting its financial business with transparency and accuracy.
- The District has saved Bethel taxpayers more than \$4 million by refinancing its bonded debt three times in the last 9 years.
- In the last three voter-approved Bethel school bonds, Fairfield, Malabon, Meadow View, Prairie Mountain and Kalapuya Schools were built on-time and under-budget.

When is the vote?

Your ballot should arrive in the mail around October 15th and must be dropped in an [official ballot drop site](#) or be received at the Lane County Elections office by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, November 3rd.