

4J Bond Review Committee Report

Winter 2016

Bond Measure Funds Eugene School Improvements

Eugene School District 4J is fortunate to have a community that values providing high-quality public education to our students. In May 2013, local voters resoundingly passed a \$170 million school bond measure to provide better learning facilities and materials for every 4J school and student.

The bond measure is providing funding to replace four old school buildings, improve classroom technology in every school, update instructional materials, upgrade school security, repair schools, and more. For the median homeowner in Eugene, the cost is about \$42 per year.

Better Schools for Today's Students

The bond measure is helping Eugene 4J provide a high-quality education for every student and prepare our children for the challenging world ahead.

- Teaching and learning today is highly interactive, connected and collaborative, requiring larger classrooms and flexible learning spaces as students work individually and in small and large groups throughout the day.
- Modern technology helps students access information, apply concepts, and use simulations as they expand their knowledge and practice new skills.
- New curriculum materials help our students meet new and more challenging academic standards.
- Security improvements across the district are making our schools safer.
- Education dollars are better focused on the classroom by replacing outdated buildings that are costly to maintain. New school buildings will be durable, energy efficient and less expensive to operate.

Bond Measure Investments and Progress to Date

New school buildings

Four of the district's oldest school buildings are being replaced. The new buildings at the same sites will serve our children and our community well for decades to come. Design committees for each school visited new school buildings around Oregon before starting their work with local and regional architect teams. Community meetings allowed the teams to share design options and get neighborhood input as the new school designs evolved. Sustainable building concepts that conserve energy and maximize the wise use of resources are incorporated into every new school building.

Howard Elementary School: The new Howard school building is entering the final construction phases. It is on schedule to be completed in spring 2016 and open in fall 2016. The new two-story building has ample classrooms and common spaces inside, with room for enrollment growth, and is designed to support Howard's intensive use of technology in classroom learning. Outside, there are outdoor learning spaces for instructional activities, play areas and athletic fields.

River Road/El Camino del Río Elementary School: The vision for a modern new learning environment for the River Road/El Camino del Río dual English/Spanish immersion school is emerging as the building design nears completion. Initial work at the site will be completed this fall and building construction will then begin. The new school building will open in 2017, providing a 21st century learning environment for teachers and their students, who learn to read, write and speak in both English and Spanish.

Roosevelt Middle School: The new Roosevelt building is taking shape after several months of construction work. With a central open-air courtyard, inside commons and classroom clusters, the design promotes a sense of community. Science labs, a library/media center, two gyms and a theatre area complement the classroom clusters and encourage students to explore new interests. Students move into the new building in fall 2016. The Eugene Family YMCA will then purchase and develop the northeast portion of the property.

Arts & Technology Academy at Jefferson Middle School site: The Arts & Technology Academy offers an exciting and innovative new instructional program that integrates science, technology, engineering, math and the arts. This curriculum is the prime element in the design and layout of the building. With a large project room and interactive classroom located at the core of the school, the building is designed to encourage group and project-based learning. While classrooms and most other areas will be new, some of the old building will be retained and remodeled. Construction will begin in spring 2016 with the first phase of the new building targeted for completion in 2017.

Modern technology

New classroom technology is arriving at every school. Bond funds are providing classroom computers and digital devices as well as improving technology infrastructure. Before the bond-funded technology refresh began, more than 40 percent of 4J schools' student computers were too old to run current software. As a result of the bond measure, more than 6,000 of the oldest computers in our schools have been replaced so far.

Updated classroom materials

New, bond-funded instructional materials are supporting learning at every grade level. All schools have new math textbooks or other math materials funded by bonds. Elementary schools also have new instructional materials to help students develop their writing skills. Over the next two years, updated science curriculum and instructional materials will be purchased for all grade levels in kindergarten through eighth grade, and core science subjects at the high school level. High school science laboratory equipment will be upgraded to current industry and research standards.

Safer buildings

Safety and security upgrades at schools across the district will include better entry security, video surveillance and security fencing where it is lacking.

Improvements at other schools

At Gilham Elementary School, older areas of the building will be renovated and space added. If additional funds are identified, a second phase will add classrooms and exterior walkways will be enclosed for safety. A master plan for the school building, completed in April 2015, identified the need for these improvements to better serve students.

Kelly Middle School's old gravel track and turf field have been replaced with all-weather synthetic surfaces. Now these athletic facilities can be used year-round. The City of Eugene shared the cost of the Kelly track and field improvements and has been a partner in improving other school athletic facilities as well.

Other building improvements across the district will include replacing roofs, flooring and worn-out fixtures; upgrading inefficient building systems; and making other repairs.

See the [bond expenditure report](#) for a more detailed listing of projects and expenditures.

Committee Findings

The 4J Bond Review Committee was appointed by the school board to review the expenditure of bond funds and report whether bond funds are being spent wisely and whether projects are being completed within the promised scope and budget. Committee members have expertise in the areas of financial management, architecture or large construction projects and include representatives from the 4J Budget Committee. This is the committee's first report.

- ✓ **The district is using bond funds carefully, responsibly and efficiently.** The district is using bond funds carefully, responsibly and efficiently. The district has made sensible choices and maintained the quality of the new school buildings while controlling the costs of the construction projects.
- ✓ **Building projects are progressing on schedule, on budget and on scope.** The district is bringing the building projects in on time and on budget while maintaining the project vision. It should continue to focus on long-term durability and performance, as these school buildings are expected to serve our community for 50–75 years.
- ✓ **Sustainability is a priority.** The committee supports the school board's decision to incorporate modern sustainable building concepts into the new school designs but not to pursue LEED certification due to the certification cost. Public funds are better spent on actual building improvements that maximize the wise use of resources and benefit our children, rather than on a certification process.
- ✓ **Improving the learning environment,** building a sense of community among students, and keeping students safe have been top priorities for the district in making decisions about projects and spending bond dollars. New school designs and school improvements are student-centered and support contemporary teaching and learning.
- ✓ **Bond funds are benefiting every school and every student in the district.** The funds are also helping to address the critical board goals and district priorities focused on improving equity and inclusion. In particular, bond funds are being used to upgrade instructional materials, technology and facilities to make them more accessible for students with special needs.
- ✓ **Community input has been actively sought and carefully considered** during the planning and design of all major projects. Project design teams have included multiple stakeholders to ensure the building improvements are well thought-out from various perspectives.
- ✓ **The district has prioritized quality over speed,** while maintaining an aggressive schedule.

4J Bond Review Committee Members
