

## School District bond issue helps raise funds for construction expenses

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COLUMBIA — On April 3, Columbia residents will vote on two proposals that would help aid the school district's budget and fund future projects.

The Columbia School Board wants to raise funds through a bond issue and tax levy increase. It voted at its [Jan. 9 meeting](#) to put them on the ballot.

Here's what you need to know about the bond issue. You can also [find information about the tax levy here.](#)

### What's a bond issue?

Passing a bond issue is a way for a school district to get more money for construction expenses. This April, the district is asking voters to approve a \$50 million bond issue.

Funds from the bond issue can only be used on new construction, renovation of existing facilities and technology over a certain cost.

Voters approved a [\\$120 million bond issue in April 2010](#), which followed a [\\$60 million bond issue approved in 2007](#). The funds were used for building improvements, air conditioning installation, the construction Battle High School and building new gyms at Hickman and Rock Bridge high schools.

### What is the debt service levy?

When the district sells a bond issue, it essentially is asking to borrow money. The debt service levy is the way the district pays back its debt.

The proposed bond issue would raise the debt service levy by 12 cents, up to 92 cents per \$100 of assessed value of real and personal property.

District spokeswoman Michelle Baumstark said the tax increases would affect commercial and residential property owners within district boundaries, but the taxes would be felt differently because business-owners and homeowners are taxed at different rates.

Linda Quinley, the district's chief financial officer, said homes are taxed based on assessed value, which is

19 percent of the home's actual value. Businesses are also taxed based on assessed value, but the rate is 32 percent of the property's value.

## **What happens if the bond issue passes?**

[At the earliest, the money would be used in November 2014.](#)

In January, the Missouriian reported that the proposed \$50 million bond issue would pay for a new elementary school, an early child learning center, technology infrastructure improvements and upgrades and improvements to current buildings, including the district's bus parking area.

[According to Columbia Public Schools](#), the proposal will require 57 percent of voter approval to pass.

## **Specifics on [how the funds would be used](#):**

### **Construction:**

- Elementary school (about 85,000 square feet; 650 students; includes purchase of land): **\$20 million**
- Early childhood learning center (40,000 square feet; 22 classrooms; eliminate about 10 trailers): **\$8 million**
- Transportation facility environmental compliance improvements: **\$5 million**

### **School upgrades:**

- Rock Bridge High School roof replacement; replacing mortar in the exterior bricks at Field School, Douglass and Hickman high schools, Jefferson Junior High School and West Boulevard Elementary School; Gentry and Smithton middle schools foundation repairs; Hickman parking lot expansion and existing parking lot overlay; Oakland Junior High School entryway concrete replacement/ADA ramp, and other school improvements: **\$3.45 million**
- Displacement of 12 trailers at Shepard Boulevard Elementary School: **\$5 million**
- Displacement of 6 trailers and transition of preschoolers to early childhood learning center at West Boulevard: **\$4 million**
- Lange Middle School kitchen expansion: **\$2.2 million**
- Shepard Boulevard and West Boulevard fire sprinkler system upgrades: **\$350,000**

### **Technology**

- Wireless network infrastructure expansion; replacement of network switches, servers and storage area networks: **\$2 million**

## **How would this affect taxes already being paid?**

The bond issue, which includes the debt service levy, and tax levy increase are separate ballot issues.

However, if both pass, it would result in a 52-cent tax increase.

According to Columbia Public Schools, this means that if a person owns a home with an assessed value of \$150,000, that person would pay \$148.20 more annually, or \$12.35 monthly.

### **What's next?**

The bond issue will be put up to a public vote on April 3.

In April 2014, the school board plans to put another \$50 million bond issue to vote, along with an 8-cent debt service levy increase. As described in [a previous Missourian article](#), there will be separate \$40 million bond issue proposals in 2016, 2018 and 2020.

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### **What else would you like to know?**

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