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## **Gregory-Portland Independent School District**

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# **Gregory-Portland ISD Trustees call for \$242 Million School Bond with No Increase to the Total Tax Rate**

The Gregory-Portland ISD School Board called for a School Bond to appear in three propositions on the November 8<sup>th</sup> ballot this year including new facilities, renovations, and other items totaling \$242,590,926 Million with no increase to the total tax rate. Superintendent Dr. Michelle Cavazos said the district is able to present this opportunity for voter consideration because of G-PISD's "unique" financial position.

"Substantial, rapid industrial growth is impacting our tax base, and allowing us to consider school bonds with no increase to total tax rate for this period of time in our district," said Cavazos. "Local industry currently funds 89 percent of our tax base – that's 89 cents per every tax dollar being paid by corporations and businesses operating here in G-PISD." Cavazos said the remaining 11 cents per dollar, or 11 percent of the tax base, is covered by residential contributions.

Some of those residents recently served on a Bond Stakeholder Committee, and recommended that the school board consider this bond election with projects including a Visual and Performing Arts Center for district and community use with a new G-P High School Band Hall, a replacement campus for T.M. Clark Elementary School, cafeteria renovations at S.F. Austin Elementary School, experiential learning upgrades at all elementary campuses, new baseball and softball fields, and more.

Community members Megan Axelsen, Jeanine Peoples, and John Sutton presented the committee recommendations to the board on June 13, 2022. "Each member of the committee selected which projects they were passionate about," said Sutton, "and the diversity of the group was very good – we had parents from every school and various backgrounds, different (activity) groups represented including band, theatre, fine arts, and others. It was a collaborative effort." Sutton also said the committee reviewed financial information, which included the district's tax rate history, credit ratings, and current bond capacity.

"The school board could have chosen to present a school bond to the community of up to \$333 Million without an increase to the total tax rate," said Dr. Ismael Gonzalez III, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance. "That is the highest threshold, or 100 percent, of the district's current bond capacity with today's financial position. The board decided, instead, to propose a bond of \$242 Million which is closer to 50 percent of current bond capacity."

School Board President Tim Flinn said the district also completed a comprehensive master facility plan throughout the 2021-22 school year, which included a thorough review of existing facilities. "We had an outside firm come and review the condition of all of our schools, buildings, and grounds," said Flinn. "It was eye-opening for us because this firm works with school districts all across the state and nation. So we were able to see how we compared to other districts. This master plan was thoroughly reviewed before we thought about whether to ask for voter consideration of this bond election." Flinn said the master plan was also reviewed by community members before it was presented to the board in February, and that the board included those findings among the reasons for deciding to vote unanimously (7-0) in favor of calling a school bond election.

Cavazos said the district will be releasing information and holding community meetings to share facts about this bond election in the months ahead, and said an overview of bond propositions and voting information is posted on the district website. "You'll also find a link to the Bond Stakeholder Committee web page with videos of their recommendation to the board and from meetings," Cavazos said. "G-PISD's Master Facility Plan is listed as well, and contact information. Community informational meetings will be scheduled and held beginning in August, where we will provide information about every project listed on the ballot. We will continue to be fully transparent, and encourage anyone who has questions or wants to share their feedback to please reach out to us."

*Information is available online at [www.g-pisd.org/bond](http://www.g-pisd.org/bond), and questions can be directed to G-PISD Administration at [bond@g-pisd.org](mailto:bond@g-pisd.org) or by calling 361-777-1091. ##*