



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

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### **Gregory-Portland ISD Trustees call for \$176 Million School Bond with No Increase to the Total Tax Rate**

During a special called meeting today, the Gregory-Portland ISD School Board called for a single-proposition \$176 million school bond to appear on the May 6<sup>th</sup> ballot. The bond proposal will be offered with no increase to the existing total tax rate at a time in G-P history when currently 90 percent of school bonds are funded by tax contributions from local industry. Given this information regarding total tax contributions for bonds, should voters approve of this proposal, industry would cover \$158 million of the total cost for this bond and residential contributions would total \$18 million.

Among the 12 projects listed in this bond proposal are: a rebuild of T.M. Clark Elementary School; Cafeteria renovations at S.F. Austin Elementary and G-P High School, with a Culinary Program expansion; Fine Arts Facility upgrades at G-P High School including a new Band Hall; and Hands-On Learning Experiences at four elementary schools to align with the curriculum model being developed for the district's new Early Childhood Center.

Board President Tim Flinn said this bond was recommended and approved by the board with consideration for the outcome of a failed election in November 2022. "The voters who came to the polls did not approve three propositions in November, and we want them to know that we heard them then and we hear them now," he said.

"Two of those three propositions nearly passed, so we knew we had work to do to fully understand the desires of our community. Our board has spent the last few months since November visiting with residents, reviewing our district's Facility Master Plan, and we even conducted a community-wide survey. That process resulted in this decision today, with some projects being completely removed from the bond project list. We encourage anyone in our community who may have further questions to reach out to us and plan to make an informed decision for the upcoming bond election."

Superintendent Dr. Michelle Cavazos said the projects that are not listed in this bond proposal include the Multi-Purpose Center and Fieldhouse, and the Visual and Performing Arts Center. "The reason these two projects were not recommended for consideration in this bond package is because both were lower priorities in our master plan than other projects. With regard to the Multi-Purpose Center and Fieldhouse that was the single item in Proposition B last November, those who voted clearly indicated by the results that they did not want to fund the project with bond dollars. The Visual and Performing Arts Center, on the other hand, was Proposition C and included a new band hall at G-P High School. That proposition nearly passed in November, and we realize it is a greater priority for our community."

Cavazos said that the fine arts expansion in the new, approved bond proposal for May does include a new band hall – yet not a stand-alone Visual and Performing Arts Center. "The band hall, and addressing fine arts expansion for programs at our high school, is part of the opportunity currently offered for voter consideration. To be clear, this does not mean we will never have a Visual and Performing Arts Center. It just means that now is not the time, and perhaps this is not the method to consider for this project going forward. Our community voted against a \$242 million bond package. The new bond proposal comes with a lower price tag – it is \$66 Million less than the previous bond, with two major projects no longer on the ballot."

Because the district spent a year and a half developing the project list for Bond 2022 with support from a community-led Facility Master Plan Committee and also a Bond Stakeholder Committee, Cavazos said that work contributed to the recommendation for Bond 2023. "All projects have been vetted by these committees, and reviewed by our board and team with great attention to detail and our current financial situation. We will continue to be transparent and forthcoming with information for our community, and encourage all to be informed and actively participate in this process by casting a vote in the upcoming election."

***For more information, and a full Bond 2023 project list, please visit [g-pisd.org/bond](http://g-pisd.org/bond) or call G-PISD Communications at 361-777-1091 ext. 1045. ##***