


2015 SCHOOL BOND ELECTION



WILLIS

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a school bond election?

School districts must ask voters for permission to sell bonds to investors to raise money for capital projects including new construction, renovation or other improvements. Voters give the district permission to take out a loan to build and renovate and pay that loan back over an extended period of time. Bonds cannot be used for salaries or operating costs such as utility bills, supplies, building maintenance, fuel, and insurance.

How are my schools funded?

There are essentially two tax rates that are paid by Willis ISD property owners that comprise the local share of district funds.



The Maintenance and Operations (M&O) Tax Rate pays for day-to-day operational expenses such as salaries, employee benefits, supplies, transportation, fuel, insurance, maintenance, and utilities. No money is borrowed to cover these OPERATING FUNDS.

The Interest and Sinking (I&S) Tax Rate is based on the outstanding debt of the district. Debt is incurred when a district borrows money in the form of bonds in the same way a homeowner borrows money to finance the purchase of a home. It pays for design, construction, expansion and renovation of schools. These CAPITAL (BOND) FUNDS can also be used for large expenditures such as the purchase of school buses or technology.

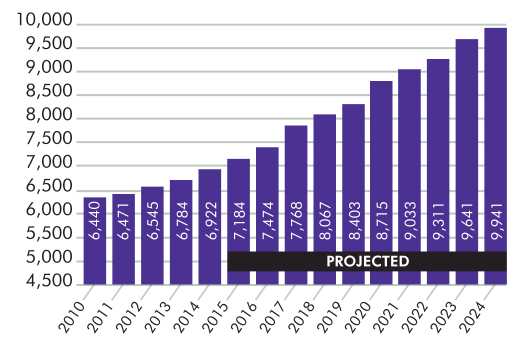
CAPITAL FUNDS and OPERATING FUNDS are separated intentionally to meet different needs as described above. By law, the two must be kept in separate accounts and they are audited to ensure compliance.

Why did Willis ISD call for a November 3, 2015 bond election?

Operating a school district effectively requires periodic assessment of facility conditions and space availability for students and programs. Willis ISD enrollment has grown by 21 percent since the last bond election in 2006, from 5,700 students to 6,900 in 2014. The district's demographer has projected continued growth over the next decade, including as many as 1,200 new students over the next three years.

As of the seventh day of class in 2015, enrollment stood at 7,114 students. This number represents an increase of 283 students over the same day last year and 268 students higher than the last day of the 2014-2015 school year.

This bond election was called by the Willis ISD Board of Trustees to address enrollment growth and limited space availability for career and technical programs. Its purpose is also to provide funding for a variety of facility improvements across the district.



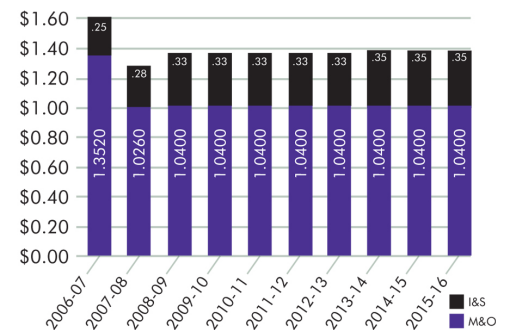
How did the District determine what to include in this bond program?

A group of more than 35 citizens, including staff, parents, and community members, analyzed the district's needs. With assistance from Willis ISD's leadership, its architect Stantec, and financial advisor First Southwest, the committee reviewed the conditions of current facilities, enrollment growth projections, funding options, construction costs, tax impacts on homeowners, and a variety of possible scenarios. The goal was to recommend a cost-effective plan for enhancing facility and programmatic growth focused on the future success of the students and community of Willis ISD.

How would this election affect my taxes?

Approval of the bond election would lead to an increase on the interest and sinking (I&S) portion of the tax rate of no more than 6.75 cents (\$.0675), or \$5.63 per month on a home with a taxable value of \$100,000. (NOTE: there is an exemption from this increase for senior citizens). A homeowner with a home valued at \$50,000 would see a tax rate increase of no more than \$2.82 a month.

If the bond election passes, the tax impact should be an incremental increase over a period of two to three years. Bonds will not be sold until funding is needed for the project.



What if I am a senior citizen, 65 years or older?

Your taxes will not increase as a result of this bond election. The school tax rate and the amount paid are frozen when a taxpayer turns 65 years old. The rate is frozen as long as you live in the home and do not make major improvements that change its value.

To request this exemption contact the Montgomery Central Appraisal District at 936-756-0571. (San Jacinto County Appraisal District 936-653-1450).

Download your Over-65 Exemption form at:

<http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/taxforms/50-114.pdf>.



What will be on the ballot November 3rd?

The Willis ISD Board of Trustees voted unanimously to call a \$109.5 million bond election asking voters to consider a proposition that, if approved, would provide funding for the following projects:

CAREER & TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION CENTER

\$39.4 million

Willis High School offers numerous CTE programs but has outgrown its current facilities as a result of enrollment growth and increased demand for those programs. There are classes which quickly reach capacity and students who are not able to take the desired course. The new CTE Center would have a 500 student capacity and provide space for expansion of existing programs as well as new CTE programs such as Automotive, Cosmetology, and Culinary Arts.

NEW 1000 SEAT AUDITORIUM AT WILLIS HIGH SCHOOL

\$12.7 million

Willis High School does not currently have an auditorium and students have to travel to Lucas Middle School to use an auditorium facility. Therefore, fine arts students are not able to practice performance related skills on any regular basis. An on-site auditorium will facilitate more effective teaching and allow for hands-on application of technical skills not currently available. Seating at Lucas Auditorium accommodates 800 and is frequently overcrowded during district programs and performances. A second auditorium will also ease scheduling issues among district campuses.

BRABHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPANSION

\$5.2 million

Brabham Middle School will be at or over capacity by 2016 and the total enrollment of middle school students will exceed the total capacity of both middle schools in the district by 2017. Classroom and other additions would increase capacity by 250 students. A track & tennis courts would also be added to make Brabham facilities equitable to Lynn Lucas Middle School, eliminating the need for busing.

DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS AT 4 CAMPUSES

\$1.6 million

Improvements would extend the Parent Pickup/Drop-off lanes at Meador, Turner and Cannan Elementary Schools as well as Brabham Middle School in order to provide safer and additional stacking space on the school properties.

WILLIS HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATIONS

\$5.1 million

Willis High School will be at or over capacity by 2018. The new CTE Center will free up space and allow renovations of existing CTE spaces to accommodate more core classrooms and expansion of space for other growing programs which will increase the student capacity in the main building at WHS.

NEW AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE CENTER

\$5.5 million

Willis ISD is the only district in the area that has no agricultural facility for student use. Willis High School has an active agriculture program but participation is currently limited to students who have the resources to care for an animal. Having the ability to house animals on-site would increase opportunities for student participation as well as enhance programs including the Vet Tech classes.

NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAMPUS

\$26.8 million

The district's demographics report indicates that Meador and Turner Elementary Schools will be at or over capacity by 2016 and the total enrollment of elementary school students will exceed the total capacity of all five elementary schools in the district by 2018.

FIELD TURF AT YATES STADIUM

\$1.3 million

Installing synthetic turf at Yates will reduce maintenance and operations costs and allow almost immediate use after inclement weather for athletics, band, and drill teams. Turf remains a consistent playing surface throughout the season and school year.

LAND ACQUISITION

\$8.9 million

Long-term planning in a growing school district requires acquisition of future school sites to ensure availability of appropriate locations at the most cost effective price.

BOND PROGRAM CONTINGENCY

\$3.0 million

Every bond plan includes contingency funds to protect taxpayers against unforeseen conditions such as project complications and spikes in materials and labor costs. The budgets for each of the above mentioned projects account for 9% inflation annually as construction often begins a year or more after a bond plan is developed.



When would these projects be completed?

If the bond election passes, the planning and implementation process will begin immediately with analysis on enrollment and other data. Anticipated completion dates include:

● New Elementary School Campus	FALL 2018 or 2019
● Career & Technology Education Center	FALL 2018
● Brabham Middle School Expansion	FALL 2017
● Willis High School Renovations	FALL 2018
● New Auditorium at WHS	FALL 2018
● New Agricultural Science Center	FALL 2018
● Drive Improvements at 4 Campuses	FALL 2016 or FALL 2017
● Field Turf at Yates Stadium	FALL 2016 or FALL 2017

I want to vote but am not registered. Where can I register?

Willis ISD encourages all residents to become active voters. The deadline to register and be eligible to vote in the November 3, 2015 election is October 5, 2015. This can be either the postmark date or the date the application is received in the office of the voter registrar. Stop by your local post office and pick up a registration card or register online at <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqvr.shtml>.





What do I need to bring with me to vote?

You are not required to bring your voter registration card to vote. Registered voters may vote with a valid Texas driver's license or other approved photo identification. For more information go online to <http://www.votetexas.gov/faq/>

Where and when can I vote?

For Montgomery County Residents:

Early Voting Dates and Times

October 19-24, M-S, 8:00am – 5:00pm

October 26-28, M-W, 8:00am – 5:00pm

October 29-30, Th-F, 7:00am – 7:00pm

Early Voting Locations

(Voters may choose any of these locations during early voting.)

- North Montgomery County Community Center
- Lone Star Community Center
- East County Courthouse Annex
- South County Community Building
- Lee G. Alworth Building
- Magnolia Community Building

For San Jacinto County Residents:

Early Voting Dates and Times

October 19-30, M-F, 8:00am – 4:30pm

Early Voting Locations

- San Jacinto County Elections Administration,
51 East Pine Ave, Coldspring, TX 77331

ELECTION DAY VOTING

Tuesday, November 3, 2015 7:00AM – 7:00PM

