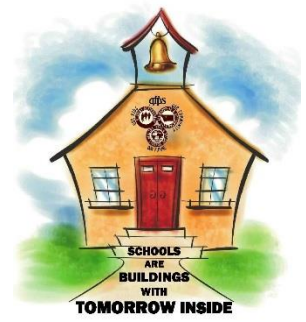


GFPS FACILITY PLAN

ASKED AND ANSWERED

Dates Modified:

4/12/16, 4/22/16, 4/26/16, 5/3/16, 5/19, 6/8, 6/16, 6/30



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1. How much will the bond levy cost me?

The increase in taxes for the entire \$98,858,785 proposed bond levy on a \$100,000 “market valued” home is estimated at approximately \$68.74/year or \$5.73/month for 20 years. Each property owner can calculate the amount for their own property by using the property tax calculator that can be found at this link: <http://gfps.k12.mt.us/content/school-bond-election-costs>. The link includes directions on how to use the calculator.

2. Houses in Great Falls don’t cost \$100,000. Why do you keep using that amount in your discussions? \$150,000 would be a better amount to use.

The District uses this figure to make it easier for people to understand and to estimate other home valuations. The \$100,000 value provides for an easy multiplier. For example, if you think your house’s market value is \$200,000, you can multiply the amount, for example \$5.73/month (see question #1) by 2, to get a quick estimate of \$11.46. If you think your house’s market value is \$150,000, you multiply it by 1.5 to get \$8.60. You can do that math in your head. If we put forth the amount for a \$150,000 value, it is not easy to do the math for other increments such as \$100,000, \$200,000, \$250,000, etc.

Additionally, Montana Codes Annotated requires that school districts utilize the \$100,000 and \$200,000 amount in levy language (MCA 15-10-425). The District has consistently used this figure in compliance. This consistent use allows levy costs to be compared over the years.

As we seek to inform the public, we just use the \$100,000 amount as it is easy to figure out the \$200,000 amount.

3. What are the costs of the individual components of the Plan?

Facility Plan Component Pricing			
(for a \$100,000 market valued home; double for \$200,000; multiply by 1.5 for \$150,000)			
	Total	Per Year	Per Month
K-12 Plan	\$ 98,858,785.00	\$ 68.74	\$ 5.73
High School Components:			
GFHS Infrastructure	\$ 20,758,754.00	\$ 14.95	\$ 1.25
GFHS Construction	\$ 16,568,574.00	\$ 11.93	\$ 0.99
CMR Infrastructure	\$ 4,364,844.00	\$ 3.14	\$ 0.26
CMR Construction	\$ 6,952,200.00	\$ 5.01	\$ 0.42
PGEC Infrastructure	\$ 3,352,560.00	\$ 2.41	\$ 0.20
Memorial Stadium	\$ 705,000.00	\$ 0.51	\$ 0.04
Phone System	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 0.18	\$ 0.02
Total	\$ 52,951,752.00	\$ 38.13	\$ 3.18
Elementary Components:			
K-8 Infrastructure	\$ 12,723,051.00	\$ 8.48	\$ 0.71
New Roosevelt	\$ 17,450,771.00	\$ 11.64	\$ 0.97
New Longfellow	\$ 15,233,211.00	\$ 10.16	\$ 0.85
Phone System	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 0.33	\$ 0.03
Total	\$ 45,907,033.00	\$ 30.61	\$ 2.55

4. Why not do this in stages...ask the public for money a little at a time?

There are two main reasons that the Board chose to do move forward with funding the Facility Plan all at once: interest rates and escalation of costs.

- Interest rates: Interest rates are at an all-time low. Increases in interest rates means the District will pay more to the money lenders and be able to put less into the projects. Taking advantage of low interest rates means the taxpayers get more actual work out of the money they approve.
- Escalation: Escalation is the increase in costs over time. As time goes on, materials, labor and other associated costs increase meaning that the same project will cost more in a few years than it does today. The District’s consultants helped the District look at this. Using industry standard computations, they were able to show us what the projects would cost in the future. For example, the replacement building for Longfellow is currently estimated at \$15,233,211. If the District waited until 2020 (just 4 years away), that same building would be estimated to cost \$22M.

There are also associated costs with running elections. The election costs are the same whether you ask for small amounts or large amounts of taxpayer investments, but each time the District asks, the District pays.

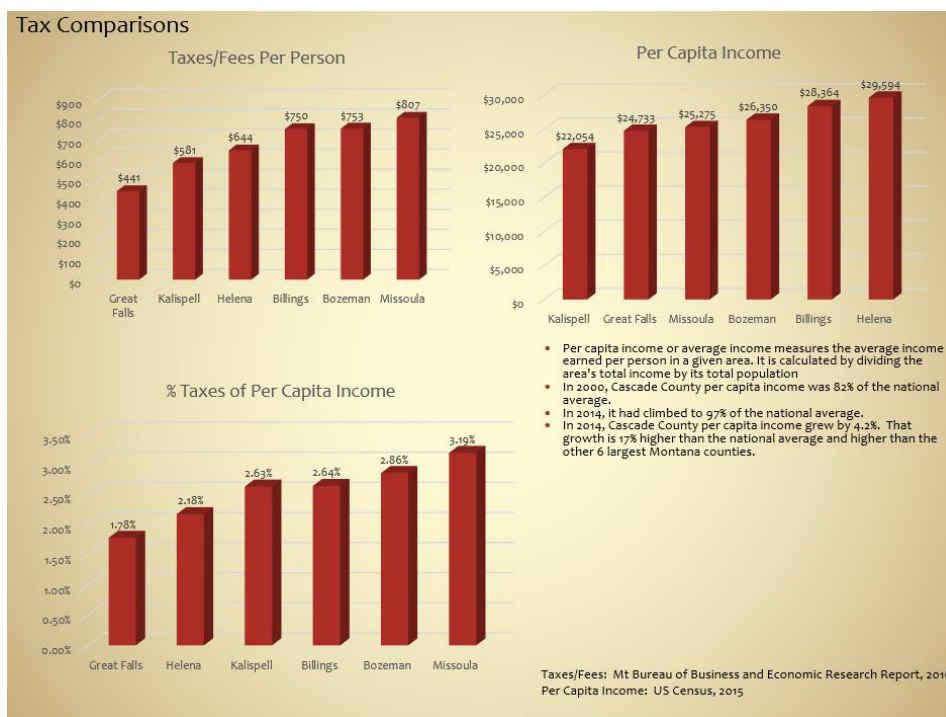
The costs outline above, in conjunction with “voter fatigue” (the District asking over and over again for more money), make it a better decision to ask for the entire investments in our schools at once.

5. I’m on a fixed and low income, but I know schools are important. How can I afford new taxes?

The District understands this dilemma that many community members face. This age old quandary was most likely present in the 1950’s, 1960’s and 1970’s when 18 schools were built by the Great Falls community. The community decided at that time to plan for the future of Great Falls. We thank those taxpayers of yesteryear for sacrificing the way they did. Luckily today, there is help for low income and elderly taxpayers. The Property Tax Relief Application and the Elderly Homeowner/Renter Credit Application are both available to those who qualify. The applications can be found here: <http://gfps.k12.mt.us/content/property-tax-relief-info>.

6. Why do we have to pay such high taxes in Great Falls?

Actually, in comparison to the other largest cities in Montana, Great Falls pays the least amount of taxes and fees. The following charts show the amount per person Great Falls citizens pay in taxes and fees. Fees are included because local governments use both, but to different extents as they provide services, so the only fair comparison is one that includes both types of revenue. Even when taking into account the second lowest per capita income in Montana, on a percentage basis of that income, Great Falls is still the lowest.



7. Why isn't the election the same time as the general election in November?

The Board discussed several different dates to run the bond election. See the pros and cons of each below:

May, 2016

- Pros:
 - The Board predicted there would already be a trustee election so could have done it together and pay for only one election.
 - The community is used to voting on school issues in May.
- Cons:
 - The time between Board approval (February 22) and the election (May 3 with ballots actually being mailed out on April 18) isn't long enough to fully engage the community. One and a half months isn't long enough to run a good informational campaign so the public understands what they are voting on.

May, 2017

- Pros:
 - The Board would likely already be holding a trustee election so could have done it together and pay for only one election.
 - The community is used to voting on school issues in May.
 - This would allow over a year to provide information to the public.
 - This time frame would allow for additional study of the facility issues and would allow for modifications to the plan.
- Cons:
 - The increasing costs of interest rates and escalation. See previous question.
 - The District has studied the issues for long enough. There is no need to wait even longer.

November, 2016

- Pros:
 - Would give eight months to provide information to the community.
 - Can take advantage of Back-to-School Nights, Open Houses, etc., to explain the projects.
 - ~~The District's portion of the election would cost approximately \$15,000 instead of the \$40,000 as a stand-alone election.~~

New news regarding the cost of including the GFPS bond levy with the November ballot: The Cascade County Election Office has increased the estimate of GFPS election costs if the bond levy was on the general election ballot in November. Associated election costs include:

- *By the word charges*
- *Computer programming charges*
- *And other election costs (hourly wages, etc.)*

In November, we would still have to pay by the word for the GFPS portion of the ballot, but we would also pay a share of the computer programming and a share of the election costs. The Cascade Elections Office feels that those costs are going to be large due to the extensive November ballot (i.e. up to 9 initiatives that could be included) making the share we pay larger than what was anticipated. The primary election cost \$130K so the general will be even more. Our share could be at \$40K or even more. Again, these are estimates based on several unknowns at this time.

- Large number of voters are likely to turn out so would only require a simple majority to pass.
- Cons:
 - Could get lost within the statewide and national elections.
 - It is predicted that there will be huge amounts of political mail and other advertising with the general election. This will drive up advertising costs if the District should choose to pay for advertising the facts of the levy.
 - Public sentiment could possibly be negative due to the tone of statewide and national elections.

October, 2016

- Pros:
 - Would give seven months to provide information to the community.
 - Can take advantage of Back-to-School Nights, Open Houses, etc., to explain the projects.
 - It is a very important issue that should stand on its own merit. It is too important to put with a bunch of other statewide and national issues.
 - The costs of advertising will be lower if not in the same cycle as the final push in November.
 - ~~Has more stringent voter turn-out requirements which is a reason to get the public involved and informed:~~
 - ~~If under 30% voter turnout, it automatically fails.~~
 - ~~If between 30% and 40% voter turnout, requires a 60% yes vote to pass.~~
 - ~~If over 40% voter turnout, requires a simple majority to pass.~~
 - *GFPS has received clarification that since it will be a mail ballot in October, it requires a simple majority of whatever the voter turnout is. GFPS continues its commitment to provide education to the entire community because a ballot will be sent to all registered voters. In the May trustee election, the voter turnout was 49% which exceeds the turnout necessary for a simple majority in a non-mail ballot as noted above. Given that the October ballot includes a tax increase, there is reason to predict an even higher turnout than the trustee election.*
- Cons:
 - ~~Has more stringent voter turn-out requirements...a pro and con.~~
 - The District would be required to pay the full election fee of approximately \$40,000.

8. Why was the election date changed from October 11, 2016 to October 4, 2016?

The District had been in communication with the Cascade County Elections Office very early on in the process. The October 11 date was mutually acceptable to both agencies. On June 15, the Cascade County Elections Office submitted the election timeline to the Secretary of State's Office. The State Office rejected the timeline for the October 11 date because this date caused an overlap with our election's late voter registration and the general election's regular voter registration. The state is not sure that their computer system "Montana Votes" can handle both processes at the same time.

This is the first time an overlap like this has occurred because it was just in the 2015 legislature that a new law was passed that mandated school elections to allow for late voter registration. Previous to that, there weren't late registrations so therefore no overlap. The state is working to update the computer system to handle the overlap. That will not be completed by October.

9. Are there any bonds coming off the tax roles that will give tax relief?

Yes, the Adult Detention Center (ADC) bonds are being paid off this tax cycle so they will not be on the November 2016 tax statements. The amount currently assessed for these bonds is 3.58 mills. The reduction in taxes will vary by property as the bond is mill based and not a flat fee. These mills for the ADC construction were created by a vote of the people. The bond has been paid off, so the taxes end.

10. How does a large community business improvement, such as the recent work at Calumet or the addition of a new Walmart, impact the school district budget and local taxpayers?

Taxable Valuation and the operational budgets for the school district are two separate and distinct items. An increase in a district's Taxable Valuation does not increase or decrease the school district budgets. New major businesses and/or business improvements, given that all other changes in the year remain the same, increase the district's Taxable Valuation. The Taxable Valuation of the district determines the value of the mill. When the mill value increases, less mills are needed to generate the same amount of money. Since the amount of the

school budget is a set amount, an increase in the Taxable Valuation will slightly reduce the burden on all other taxpayers.

11. What is the plan for Great Falls High School all about? How much will it cost?

(From Tribune articles on June 28, 2016 and July 5, 2016)

There are two parts to the GFHS plan: upgrading infrastructure and adding learning spaces.

INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

The proposed infrastructure upgrades are to the 194,591 square feet of space within the GFHS Main Campus which was built in 1931. Much of the infrastructure is 85 years old. Recent renovations include lighting and bathroom upgrades, but much of what is behind the walls is 85 years old.

The following Main Campus upgrades are included in the Facility Plan:

- Install a new mechanical, heating and ventilation system. This will improve energy efficiency and lessen the cost to heat the building for years to come.
- Replace electrical receptacles, circuits and breakers. This will address modern needs for electricity in classrooms.
- Replace pipes, sinks, toilets and water fountains.
- Replace windows. The Plan includes raising \$1,000,000 in private donations for windows. Several donations have already been made and used to install new windows.
- Remodel classrooms and upgrade technology infrastructure in conjunction with the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing upgrades as these will necessitate destruction to current walls. This will modernize classrooms and make them viable for a long time.
- Develop new parking areas to relieve pressure on neighborhood streets.

The GFHS infrastructure upgrade estimates total \$20,758,600 or \$106.68 per square foot. This includes associated costs such as design and contractor fees, geotechnical services, equipment purchases, labor costs, permits, interest, contingencies, etc. The property tax increase associated with the GFHS infrastructure project on a \$100,000 “market valued” home is estimated at \$14.95/year or \$1.25/month for 20 years.

LEARNING SPACE ADDITIONS

The first concept is construction of a two-story building between Main and South Campuses. For lack of a better term, we are calling the addition “the Hub.” It is NOT just a connector, corridor, or walkway. The Hub is a building that would include:

- An estimated eight classrooms for STEM. Moving these classrooms into the Hub frees up Main Campus space for the remodel/expansion of classroom space discussed last week.
- New dining and gathering spaces to keep students on campus during lunch. Today’s students enjoy casual gathering places. This space will create a more positive school climate and increase student safety.
- An obvious, attractive and accessible entrance with adjacent school offices to increase safety and security. This makes a single and efficient point of entrance for emergency responders. It also allows for handicap accessibility to the school, auditorium and fieldhouse. The existing offices would be remodeled into learning spaces.
- Indoor traffic flow and safety enhancements for the entire campus with less congested hallways, more adult supervision and no icy, outdoor surfaces for passing between classes. It enhances safety and security during lockdowns. Currently, there is vulnerability as students pass in the open air between the buildings.

The Hub would be constructed before the Main Campus revitalization begins. Once completed, students and staff would be temporarily located in the Hub classrooms on a rotating basis as revitalization happens. This eliminates the need for off-site locations and related expenses.

The second concept includes remodeling the existing Career and Technical Education (CTE) building and adding to it for a total CTE learning space of approximately 37,000SF. The current CTE building is too small to adequately provide for the classes in automotive technology, drafting, electronics, metal working/manufacturing, welding, and woodworking. These hands-on relevant courses, supported by local businesses as pathways to careers and postsecondary education/training, require special equipment and learning spaces.

The estimated costs of the GFHS addition of approximately 68,000SF and the CTE remodel of 14,000SF is \$16,568,600 or \$202/SF. This includes all associated costs and takes into account the historical designation. The property tax increase associated with just these GFHS concepts on a \$100,000 “market valued” home is estimated at \$11.93/year or \$.99/month for 20 years.

For additional details on GFHS, go to page 19-21 at this link: <http://bit.ly/28SoqEB>.

12. I don't like where the entrance is placed on the GFHS drawing. Are these plans set in stone?

No actual architectural designs have been drawn up. The drawings and pictures that are included in the Facility Action Plan (http://www.gfps.k12.mt.us/sites/default/files/Facility%20Plan%20Final_0.pdf) are for conceptual use only. It doesn't make sense for the District to spend money on expensive architectural drawings or renderings until after the election. With the passage of the bond levy, the District's consultants will begin the processes to secure the architects, designers, contractors, engineers, etc. This will be done through a Request for Proposal process for each of the various projects. Once the architects, designers, contractors, engineers, etc. are chosen, the final stages include the actual architectural design work. At that point, stakeholders will be able to provide input before the Board approves of the final products.

13. How is the District going to get the word out to the public about bond levy?

The District has a comprehensive communication plan. Some of the items include:

- Presentations at any and all service and other group meetings. If you would like to invite a speaker to a group you are involved in, please call 268-6001.
- A community meeting on June 15, 2016 at Longfellow Elementary at 6:00 pm. Another community meeting will be held in early September.
- An information booth at various community events throughout the summer and fall.
- The wide dissemination of pamphlets about the overall project and individually formatted pamphlets for each school.
- Bus tours. Several tours times and dates will be set up in late August where community members can come along to see the issues for themselves.
- A robust website with all of the details and related materials at: www.gfps.k12.mt.us/facilities.
- Press releases to media outlets who will hopefully run a series of stories about the projects.
- Letters and op ed articles in the Tribune.
- Etc.

14. I thought the Facility Planning was going to address enrollment and overcrowded classrooms?

For the last several years, GFPS and the community have held lots of conversations about enrollment. Of concern are the number of elementary classrooms where the number of students exceeds the accreditation standards for class size. During the 2016-2017 school year, that number is 60. During the development of the Preliminary Conceptual Facility Action Plan, there were several options discussed:

- Opening a 3rd middle school and moving 6th graders back into the middle schools
- Opening Skyline as a 16th elementary school and changing boundaries to ease the number of classrooms exceeding the standards
- Changing attendance boundaries throughout the district
- Adding classrooms on to several elementary schools
- Etc.

Each of these options had many pros and cons with the cost associated with each being major. (See question about Skyline for cost analysis). As the Facility Action Plan was finalized, it became obvious that the infrastructure needs were the priority. There are a couple of things in the plan that do address overcrowding:

- Additional classroom space at Mountain View as a storage space will be remodeled.
- Larger student capacities at the two new elementary schools. This will allow for additional classrooms for their current enrollments as well as for boundary adjustments that could alleviate overcrowding in adjacent schools.
- Additional classroom spaces at both CMR and GFHS are included.

The District will continue to monitor demographic information and to analyze enrollment data and trends. This study is included on the 2016-2017 Strategic Plan.

15. Will the passing of the bond help children achieve their potential? Why or why not?

The GFPS Facility Plan and the resources required to fulfill the Plan, the bond levy, mostly address the infrastructure needs of the community's buildings. Addressing the infrastructure needs ensures that students of today and tomorrow will have the opportunity to be educated in buildings that are modernized with efficient mechanical systems, roofs that don't leak, sound foundations that will last, and classrooms that are equipped with today's learning necessities.

For a whole host of reasons, having facilities that are functional, sound, physically comfortable, visually appealing, safe and secure help children, and I would add, communities, achieve their potential. I will note just five of those reasons:

1. There is a plethora of research that supports the notion that students learn better when they feel safe and secure in their schools. There are several safety upgrades in the Plan that will enhance security features and therefore enhance the learning climate.
2. Children learn best in environments that are properly heated (not too hot, not too cold); that don't have distractions (like leaking roofs, cracked walls, heaving floors); that are well lit and spacious; and that have modern amenities like technology. Much of the Plan is designed to improve the learning environment for our students which enhances student engagement which in turn enhances student learning.
3. With limited resources, GFPS has to balance funds for operational expenses like utilities (heat, lights, water, etc.) and maintenance (cleaning, etc.), with funds for academic programs and instruction. Many of the components of the Facility Plan will allow the District to realize efficiencies on the operations side of the budget which will make more resources available for academic programs and instruction. Additional resources available for academic programs and instruction lead to increased student achievement.
4. For the first time in recent history, GFPS is having difficulty in filling our teaching positions. This is due to many contemporary factors. GFPS does not want to exacerbate this recruitment problem by not modernizing our school buildings. New teachers do not want to teach in buildings that are not properly

heated, that have leaking roofs, cracked walls, and heaving floors, that are crowded, and that lack modern technology. In order to ensure continued educational excellence, we need to recruit excellent teachers. That need, and therefore student learning, could be compromised by poor learning environments.

5. Strong school districts and robust communities go hand-in-hand; each relies on the other for success. When a community supports its schools, student achievement increases. Strong student achievement is necessary for economic development. Strong economic development ensures adequate local resources for the schools. Adequate local resources ensures comprehensive educational programs. Comprehensive educational programs drive student achievement. Therefore, the commitment of our community, as demonstrated by paying for modern and comfortable schools, impacts student achievement.

16. Why are the poorest schools getting new buildings?

This question is referring to the replacement of Roosevelt and Longfellow Elementary Schools. The decision to replace these two buildings had nothing to do with the socioeconomic status of the students who attend them. The decision was made after comparing the costs to update and repair, versus the costs to replace. In both cases, it was deemed cost prohibitive to repair instead of replace. In regards to Roosevelt, its 88 years of age has made it past its viability as a modern educational facility. In the case of Longfellow, this 64 years old building suffers not only from age, but also from serious structural deficiencies. This school will soon not be a viable educational facility.

17. Why are you replacing buildings just because they are old? Places like Harvard have old buildings that are still used.

This question is referring to the replacement of Roosevelt and Longfellow Elementary Schools. In regards to Roosevelt, the location of the building was the biggest factor when making the decision to build a new school to replace Roosevelt. Roosevelt is surrounded by 3 one-way streets and because of the placement of the building on the lot, there is very limited parking. This forces students and parents to cross very busy one-ways. Crossing guards are utilized, but motorists are often passing by at 30+mph. The location has been a safety concern for many years. That, coupled with the age of Roosevelt, prompted the decision to replace Roosevelt at a different location. The Lowell site was selected. See [this question](#) regarding the decision to not remodel Lowell. The District does think that it is a good idea to repurpose Roosevelt for another use. See [this question](#) for more information about that.

The decision to replace Longfellow was made after careful comparisons were made in regards to the costs of updating and repairing Longfellow, versus the costs to replace. The 64-year old Longfellow suffers not only from age, but also from serious structural deficiencies. This school will soon not be a viable educational facility. Due to the extensive foundation and structural problems at Longfellow, it was deemed cost prohibitive to repair instead of replace. That decision was confirmed by the consultant that were hired to determine the viability, feasibility and reasonability of the Facility Plan. The taxpayer dollar will be better spent in replacing the building.

The District cannot speak to the various ways Harvard has preserved its buildings, however there are probably multimillion dollar endowments and gifts that have supported its preservation efforts. If there are community members that would like to make such a donation, the GFPS Foundation is prepared to accept it.

18. What is the District going to do with Roosevelt Elementary School if it is no longer a school?

As noted on the 13th slide on the Facility Plan Powerpoint that can be found here: http://gfps.k12.mt.us/sites/default/files/Community%20Powerpoint%203_0.pdf, the District's intention is to sell or repurpose Roosevelt after it is used to house the Longfellow students while that new school is built. The Roosevelt building would make for great condos as it is on a major thoroughfare and close to a grocery store and pharmacy. The District has done something similar in the past with the other non-functioning schools: Franklin, Emerson, Largent, Washington, Collins, for examples.

19. Was taking Skyline off the table just a "cop out" to get under \$100M?

This question refers to one of the later versions of the Preliminary Conceptual Facility Action Plan that included opening Skyline as a 16th elementary school. This was put on the table last summer when the decision was made to not open a 3rd middle school. Opening Skyline was thought to maybe help with enrollment increases on the west side of Great Falls. The plan called for:

- Updating Skyline to a modern elementary school facility.
- Expanding Skyline from 19 to 25 classrooms (Functional capacity from 335 to 440).
- Relocating the GFPS preschool programming to the west wing of Paris Gibson Education Center.
- Ending leases with Headstart, the MSU Extension Service, and the Parent Participation Preschool.

The costs associated with these actions were estimated at:

• Remodel and additions	\$5,500,000
• Elementary School Staffing (\$1M for each of 4 years)	\$4,000,000
TOTAL	\$9,500,000

When enrollment decreased in the fall and it became apparent that it would be difficult to find \$1M+ in the general budget forever after the four years of transitional costs that could be paid for from a Building Reserve Levy, it seemed prudent to remove this item from the plan. Other reasons to remove it included:

- The estimates of the remodel/addition costs were over 1/3 of what a new school costs. IF enrollment continues to increase on that side of town, it might be smarter to build a new school on the vacant acreage the District owns north of Skyline.
- Skyline is a good sight for the preschool. Its layout is conducive to the collaborative nature of preschool.
- If the dip in enrollment was an anomaly and enrollment truly grows on that part of town in the future, we can bring this back before the community.

The decision to remove this \$9.5 million project from the plan coincidentally dropped the total below \$100M.

20. Why is the high school getting more than K-8?

The total amount for the high school project is: \$52,951,752. The total amount for the K-8 projects is \$45,907,033. This difference is because the needs at the high school are greater and more expensive.

- GFHS needs significant work due to its age of 85 years. Many community members told the District they were not interested in building a new high school and repurposing GFHS, so that is why the decision was made to upgrade GFHS.
- Remodeling and upgrading electricity, water and mechanical systems in a 318,200 sq. ft. building (GFHS) is more expensive than the work to be done in the smaller elementary buildings.
- The infrastructure work at CMR, because of its size (301,673 sq. ft.), is also significant.

Nearly 50% of all Great Falls students will attend one of the high schools at some point making the high school buildings worthy of significant investments. Also, the two high schools are used almost 24/7 and they are used extensively by a variety of community groups for a variety of reasons. It makes sense to address the extensive and expensive needs of our high schools. A case could have been made to actually ask for additional money for ALL levels due to the vast needs in every building, but the Board felt that this was the biggest investment they could ask for at this time.

21. Why is GFHS getting more than CMR?

The projects costs for GFHS total \$37,327,148. The project costs for CMR total \$11,317,044 for a difference of \$26M. The difference is due to the needs which is driven for the most part by the difference in the ages of the buildings. The 34 years additional years of age of GFHS requires additional resources to modernize. It should also be noted that both schools benefit from the \$1.2M (\$705,000 from the bond) to be spent at Memorial Stadium.

22. Why don't we have students do fundraisers to pay for the projects?

GFPS students already take an active role in fundraising within the district. The District has several student-led businesses that create entrepreneurial projects where they learn all of the ins and outs of running a small business. You can find out about them here: <http://gfpsweb.weebly.com/student-businesses.html>. The money that is earned by these students is put back into the student-led business so it can continue into the future so future students can have the same learning opportunity. It doesn't seem appropriate to use this money to buy boilers and fix foundations.

Additionally, GFPS students do lots of fundraising. If you add up all the fundraisers students do selling popcorn, cookie dough, etc., it is significant, and it funds a variety of different things for the schools. For example, at a recent Board meeting, the Board accepted a \$10,000 donation from a PTA to purchase laptop computers. It is hard to imagine asking kids to do MORE fundraising, selling of items, etc. and then tell them the money is going to be spent on fixing roofs. It would take students a long time to raise \$98.8M via the selling of cookie dough and magazines.

The District feels that the ADULTS in the community, not the kids, have the responsibility to maintain schools.

23. Why doesn't the District have a maintenance budget to fix these things?

GFPS sets aside money each year within the General Fund Budget for maintenance. For the 2015-2016 school year, \$1,961,494 was budgeted for plant maintenance services. This does not include any budget associated with the custodial staff that does light maintenance on a daily basis. Keeping in mind that any money that is budgeted for maintenance is not money being spent directly on instruction, the District often has to make reductions in maintenance budgets to provide educational opportunity for students. With that being said, the District receives compliments all the time regarding the care and maintenance of our buildings. The Facility Plan addresses those items that are too expensive and extensive to be paid for out of the general fund.

24. Why is the District spending money on preschool when it could be spending that money on the buildings?

GFPS is committed to providing preschool education to its youngest citizens in order to close the opportunity gap and to prepare ALL children for a successful kindergarten and beyond educational experience. With that being said, federal dollars comprise the bulk of the money used to fund the preschool and these dollars cannot instead be used for facility infrastructure expenditures. The notable exceptions are two. The custodian's salary is paid out of the general fund and the librarian's salary is paid by the GFPS Foundation. Originally, federal stimulus money was used to start the preschool program at Skyline.

GFPS and all school districts are mandated to provide preschool education to children with disabilities ages 3-5. Federal and state special education money is used to provide these services at Skyline. GFPS also uses federal Title I money that must be spent on educational opportunity for children living in poverty. Lastly, GFPS is the recipient of the federal Preschool Expansion Grant (\$480,000 in 2016-2017) which will be used to enhance and expand preschool opportunities to low income children in Great Falls. Special Education, Title I and the Preschool Development Grant monies pay all teachers, the coordinator, and the paras, buy all supplies, and account for all travel and operational costs incurred.

25. Why don't we pass a bond and spend the money on educational programs?

Given that GFPS has not had a bond election since 1998, it is no wonder there is confusion about the parameters of bond levy money. Montana Code Annotated (MCA) sets forth very specific requirements for money raised via bond levies. MCA makes it very clear that bond levy proceeds can only be used for capital spending projects like the building of new schools and the repair of existing schools. Bond proceeds cannot be used for staffing, supplies and other types of general education expenditures. It is not possible, for example, to use bond proceeds to expand music or art programs. The very specific bond levy laws start here:

<http://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/20/9/20-9-402.htm>. Click on "Next Section" at the top. MCA 20-9-402 through MCA 20-9-446 governs bonding.

26. Why not just remodel Lowell as it was once an elementary school?

The former Lowell Elementary School located at 3117 5th Avenue North, was first built in 1906. In 1938 and after only 32 years, that building was razed due to its poor physical condition and the current Lowell building was finished in 1939 making it 77 years old. It was closed as an elementary school in 1979 and was later repurposed into a space for the Buildings and Grounds Department. Classrooms have been converted into a plumbing shop, paint booth, paint shop, electric shop, carpenter shop and storage. These conversions did very little to modernize the infrastructure of those rooms. Moreover, there were only 10 classrooms when it was an elementary school making it only able to serve around 220 students.

It would be very expensive to remodel 77-year old rooms that have not been used as true classrooms for 37 years. Additionally and in order to provide enough capacity for Roosevelt and future students, a major addition would need to be included. These two factors together make it cost prohibitive to just remodel Lowell. In order to ensure that the new school would be relevant as an educational building for at least 50 more years, the building of a new school with 21st century amenities makes sense.

27. I didn't get a ballot for the Trustee or primary election? How can I make sure I can vote in the bond election?

If you didn't receive a ballot for the trustee election that was held in May or for the June primary election, it means that you are either not registered to vote or that you are considered an inactive voter. Inactive voters are those whose ballots were undeliverable (over 1200 were returned in the trustee election) or you didn't vote in the last general election. To register or to become active again, you must fill out a registration application form. Contact the Cascade County Elections Office at 454-6803 for more information.