

All Schools Included in Proposition U

A \$65 Million Zero Tax Rate Increase Bond Issue

On Jan. 18, the Board of Education for The School District of University City approved placing Proposition U (Prop U), a zero tax rate increase bond issue, on the Tuesday, April 2, 2024, ballot.

If approved by voters, Prop U would raise \$65 million for critical repairs and renovations to buildings and grounds as well as indoor/outdoor learning spaces districtwide.

Chief of Staff Joe Miller tells us, “The zero in front of our bond issue language means that Prop U will not raise the tax rate. It would, however, allow the District the flexibility to sell bonds over time and raise \$65 million that would cover repairs directly benefiting our students, staff and community.” He added, “It’s a bit like paying off your car and you now need to replace it. You budgeted for and are paying the same amount each month, but are now driving a newer, safer, more modern vehicle.”

Superintendent Sharonica L. Hardin-Bartley, Ph.D., PHR, said the measure is in line with Learning Reimagined and Strategy Priority 5 – Resources. “Learning Reimagined is an over-arching vision that helps us to keep our focus on our students and community. Managing our resources is one way to ensure our students receive the best school experience we can offer.”

Bond issues are used by school districts to raise funds for large-ticket (capital improvement) items that exceed the bounds of the general revenue fund. However, the District’s last bond issue was more than a decade ago and, Miller says, that was by design. “In 11 years’ time, many school districts would have proposed two or three more campaigns. We took a different approach in holding off on the request for funding for as long as we could. That allowed time for additional research and community collaboration.”

Last year, the District held a series of Community Engagement sessions to collect ideas, suggestions and concerns from the school teams and greater community. Miller said, “We learned a lot in those meetings, including that an overwhelming 80 percent of participants felt improvements were needed to increase the overall quality of the school experience. We are gaining momentum on a number of fronts, and we want to keep good things coming to students, staff and community.”

Olu Mitchom, executive director of Operations, has managed the research and built the tentative project list that was presented to the Board. He said, “We engaged engineering and construction partners to conduct in-depth facilities studies over three years, ranking project need by levels and prioritizing the most important. We spent time whittling those numbers down from \$120 million, to \$88 million, then to the Board-approved \$65 million request.” Mitchom said that if approved, funds would be applied strategically to upgrades in academic programming, safety, infrastructure and athletics.

Miller added, “If approved, Prop U funds will help us complete all priority one projects. This will lead to significant improvements that our students, staff and community will see and experience.”



Safety = 13.2%
Security measures planned for all schools.



Infrastructure = 19.3%
Repair and renovate crumbling facades, rooftops, asphalt parking lots, etc.



Athletics = 17.6%
Field improvements at BWMS and a multipurpose field at UCHS would serve students and the community.



Academic Programing = 49.9%
Repair and rebuilding of areas deemed critical in facilities studies, reimagine indoor/outdoor classroom spaces.

Proposed Projects by Category	
Building	Academic Programming \$30,974,277 = 49.9%
BCJ	Outdoor Learning
BCJ	New Playground
BWMS	Sustainable Classroom
BWMS	Dance Studio
BWMS	Theater
FP	Gym/HVAC
FP	Outdoor Learning
JGEC	Multipurpose Room
JP	Outdoor Learning
JP	New Playground
PER	Outdoor Learning
PER	New Playground
UCHS	Auditorium Repairs
UCHS	Auditorium/Equipment
UCHS	Sustainability
UCHS	West Wing

Building	Safety \$8,450,024 = 13.2%
All	Premise Identification
All	Outdoor Public Address
BWMS	Secure Track Area
BWMS	SRO Office
JGEC, All Elementary	Secure Entry
JGEC, UCHS, All Elementary	Video Cameras

Building	Infrastructure \$14,276,828 = 19.3%
BWMS	Broken Center Panels
BWMS	Hallways
BWMS	Restrooms
FP	Data Network Closets
JGEC, FP, JP, BWMS, UCHS	Roof Repair/Replace
JGEC	Hot Water Pump
JG, JP, PER, BWMS, UCHS	Parking Lots
JP	Flooring
JP	Data Network
UCHS	Main Office
UCHS	Guidance Office
UCHS	Lighting Management

Building	Athletics \$11,298,171 = 17.6%
BWMS	Field
UCHS	Soccer Field
UCHS	Multipurpose Field (Football, Soccer, Track, Field Hockey)
UCHS	Locker Room

For more information, please visit www.ucityschools.org/PropU