Newport School Board Votes Unanimously to Place Reduced-Rate Replacement Educational Levy and Newport High School Renovation Bond on February, 2026 Ballot

At their November 18 meeting, the Newport School Board voted unanimously to place the renewal of the district's Educational Programs and Operations (EP & O) Levy and a Newport High School renovation bond on the February 10, 2026 ballot.

The EP & O levy, which requires renewal by Newport voters every three years, pays for essential educational programming the community has supported at the ballot box for over 40 years. The levy provides for the continuation of core academic and operational funding the state's basic education model does not address, or fails to adequately fund. The renewed three-year levy will ensure the same level of access and educational opportunities Newport students and families have experienced for many years. The reduced-rate replacement levy will allow the district to continue to provide:

- smaller class sizes at the elementary level
- school nursing and additional counseling support
- athletics and activities
- the gifted program
- school resource officer and additional campus safety enhancements
- access to STEAM(science-technology-engineering-arts-math) and industry-preparing career and technical education opportunities
- alternative education programming
- activity bussing
- classroom technology

The expiring 3-year levy, last approved in 2023 was approved at an estimated $1.50/$1,000. The Newport School Board, sensitive to tax rates, chose to reduce the replacement levy rate to an estimated $1.45/$1,000 over the three-year levy term.

The Board also chose to place a $46.3M bond to preserve and renovate the 45-year-old Newport High School. This decision came after nearly two years of extensive facility analysis and deep community engagement that included independent facility assessments and a 30-member Facility Advisory Committee. While the committee was proposing a more comprehensive bond measure that would have addressed additional district-wide facility needs, a recent community-wide survey revealed that the Newport community prioritized keeping bond rates as low as possible and recommended focusing resources and attention on the high school renovation project. Over 80% of community, parent and staff respondents on the survey prioritized the proposed improvements at Newport HS over other improvements such as athletic fields and lighting.

"Our community, staff and parents have asked us to scale back the bond and focus our efforts on taking care of our near half-century old high school," states Board Chair April Owen. "That's exactly what we have done - and this sensible and pragmatic approach will ensure our high school will continue to proudly serve the next generation of students."

If approved by voters, the bond would qualify for an estimated $17.7M in state assistance, significantly offsetting the cost of the high school improvements for local taxpayers. As a result, the bond rate is estimated not to exceed $1.89/$1,000 with a standard term of 23 years or less.

If approved, the bond would address the following priority improvements at the 45-year old campus:

Recommended Improvements:

- Replace aged HVAC units with energy efficient systems
- Replace failing roof
- Improve safety and security
- Renovate and improve the original library, commons, stage and band areas
- Upgrades to career and technical spaces to increase hands-on learning and industry preparation
- Renovate instructional classrooms
- Modernize science labs
- Improve gym with new acoustic panels, ceiling and renovate original locker rooms
- Enlarge student health, career guidance and office support spaces
- Construct an auxiliary gym to address student and community demand
- Improve parking lot, ADA pathways, and specific outdoor amenities

For more information, please visit our website our contact (509) 447-3167.