



School Board Work Session Minutes

January 8, 2026, 5PM
55 Academy St, Lebanon, OR 97355

Present:

Nichole Piland, Board Chair

Melissa Baurer, Board Vice Chair

Lorlee Engler, Member

Mike Martin, Member

Clyde Rood, Member

Jennifer Meckley, Superintendent

William Lewis, Chief Operations Officer

Steven Prososki, Finance Director

1. WELCOME

Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/@lcsdboardmeetingstream6568/streams>

1.1. The meeting was called to order at 5:01 PM by Board Chair, Nichole Piland.

Kyle Lair, Leader of Assist Education Services, introduces himself and his Communications Lead, Carol Fenstermacher, who will share results from recent community polling, which took place following a School Board charge to assess district facilities. Kyle prefaces that he will make a recommendation to the Board following the presentation, and will ask for feedback.

2. NOVEMBER SURVEY RESULTS

Kyle begins by sharing that the district is up against some unique and difficult challenges, ones that are not supported by the district's operating budget. He refers to the impressive work of the Facility Advisory Committee, and the three packages that were presented to the Board.

Kyle shares data in regards to the recent community polling, which encompasses survey results from 400 respondents, taken in November, revealing a 38% support for a \$169 million bond package. He explained the survey methodology, noting that respondents are asked at three different points whether they would vote in support of the measure, allowing them to more accurately gauge overall levels of support. Kyle adds that in order to pass a bond, they expect to see polling results come in at 50-60%, as almost always an entire community will not be in support. He explained that while the community generally agrees with the district's proposed priorities, current economic conditions and concerns about financial stability are limiting voters' willingness to support the measure at this time. He noted that the polling results indicate the district is not yet positioned for a successful May 2026 election.

Kyle suggests alternative options that the Board may consider, consisting of deepening community engagement and awareness, adjusting or scaling the recommendation, prioritizing only critical health, safety, and operations, or to identify an alternative long-term pathway.

3. RECOMMENDATION FOR BOARD ACTION

Kyle recommends that the Board establishes a clear long-range bond goal aligned with the 2030 bond expiration window and formally document a timeline for when the district intends to pursue a bond measure, ensuring that planning and community engagement remain consistent and intentional between now and 2030. As well as deepen community engagement and communication efforts to increase public awareness of current facility conditions. A structured outreach plan with clear, consistent messaging and defined activities should be implemented to educate voters about the proposed bond package, oversight measures, and how projects will address safety priorities and critical repairs. To maintain momentum and institutional knowledge, the Facility Advisory Committee should reconvene on a quarterly basis to review options, advise on project priorities, and explore alternative funding strategies. Finally, the Board should continue regular polling, at least annually, and monitor key metric thresholds to determine the appropriate timing for placing a bond measure on the ballot. When polling results demonstrate 56% or greater support for the proposed bond measure, the Board should move forward with placing the bond on the ballot.

4. GROUP DISCUSSION - Q & A

The Board expressed concern about current perceptions and emphasized the need to more clearly show the community the true condition of district facilities. There was acknowledgment that delaying a bond will likely increase future costs, as needed repairs and improvements continue to escalate over time. A Board member also suggested stepping back to more clearly define the district's priorities and scope of work, noting some confusion about what is being proposed, as well as some concerns about the concept of a mega elementary school.

Four of the five Board members expressed support for advancing a bond measure.

Kyle highlights the opportunity the Board has to positively influence and strengthen the bond effort, noting that while there appears to be a general level of support, additional communication and strategic work are still needed.

Jennifer expresses appreciation for the Board's acknowledgment and support and asks whether members have specific recommendations, including whether the Facility Advisory Committee should continue. Nichole affirmed the importance of keeping the committee in place.

William emphasizes the urgency of the situation, a point Jennifer echoed by underscoring the time-sensitive nature of the work ahead.

Nichole also inquires about comparable situations and lessons learned elsewhere. Kyle referenced his experience in Oregon City, explaining that successful efforts require operating with the mindset of preparing for the next election cycle at all times.

Melissa recommends developing a clear roadmap moving forward, including scheduling additional work sessions, refining options, and leveraging Kyle's support to guide the process.

5. ADJOURNMENT at 6:00 PM.

Signed:*Nichole M. Filand*.....
(Board Chair)

Date: *2/19/26*

Signed:*Jennifer Meckley*.....
(Superintendent)

Date: *2/19/26*

ATTENDEE SIGN-IN

[illegible]



Pursuing Excellence

LEBANON

Community Schools

The School Board Charge

Bring together a committee of community, staff, School Board members, architects, engineers, financial experts, and any other resources needed to assess, plan, and develop recommendations for effective facilities.

When completed these recommendations will be presented to the School Board for review.

- **Parameters of Committee:** The district will apply for grants to help update current facilities assessment reports, planning documents, updated funding options and any other administrative needs. Any other miscellaneous needs of the committee will be funded through the Facilities' budget.
- **Committee Timeline:** 12 months



Where We Started

- Community-Led Process Guided by the Facilities Committee
- Comprehensive Assessment of All District Facilities
- Aging Buildings Present Significant Challenges
- Enrollment Growth Will Increase Capacity Pressure
- State Funding Does Not Cover School Construction Costs
- Three Facility Investment Packages Evaluated

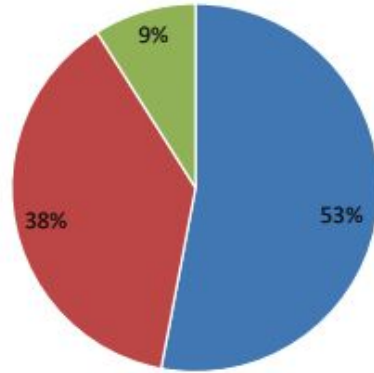
Where We Stand

November Survey

- A survey of 400 likely voters in the Lebanon School District was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers.
- A voter file sample was used and the poll universe was diminished to reflect a likely May 2026 electorate.
- Interviews were conducted November 3-5, 2025.
- The margin of error for the sample as a whole is plus or minus 4.9 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.
- Throughout this report we refer to “younger” and “older” voters. Younger voters are under age 50 and older voters are age 50 and up.
- This presentation also references data from a survey of n=400 likely November 2025 voters in the district conducted January 23-26, 2025.

November Survey

Voters have shifted, becoming more optimistic about the trajectory of the area



■ Right direction
■ Wrong track
■ DK/NA

January 2025

Right direction 47%
Wrong track 48%
DK/NA 5%

Bond Vote Amongst:	Yes	No	Yes Margin
Those who believe the area is headed in the right direction	41%	37%	+4
Those who believe the area is off on the wrong track	31%	58%	-27

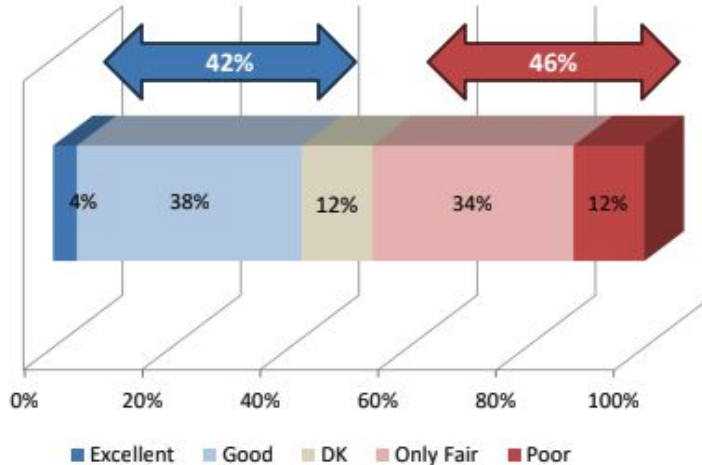
Generally speaking, do you think things in the Lebanon area are headed in the right direction or are they pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

November Survey

The number classifying their personal financial situation as “good” is down seven-points with the same percentage moving into the “poor” category



This negative movement is a detriment to support for the bond, with voters' personal financial situation correlating strongly to willingness to vote “yes.”



January 2025

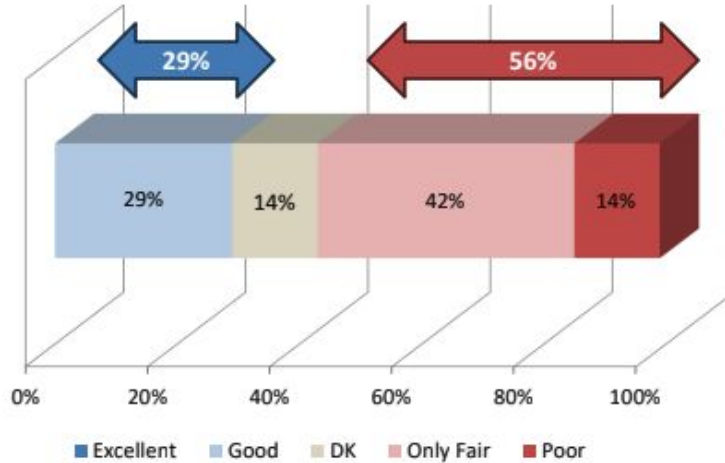
Excellent	4%
Good	45%
Only fair	36%
Poor	5%
DK/NA	10%

Bond Vote Amongst:	Yes	No	Yes Margin
Those who rate their HH finances as net “positive”	45%	27%	+18
Those who rate their HH finances as net “negative”	29%	61%	-32

Changing gears really quickly, how would you rate your household's financial situation today?

November Survey

Awareness of facility challenges has increased slightly over the past year



January 2025

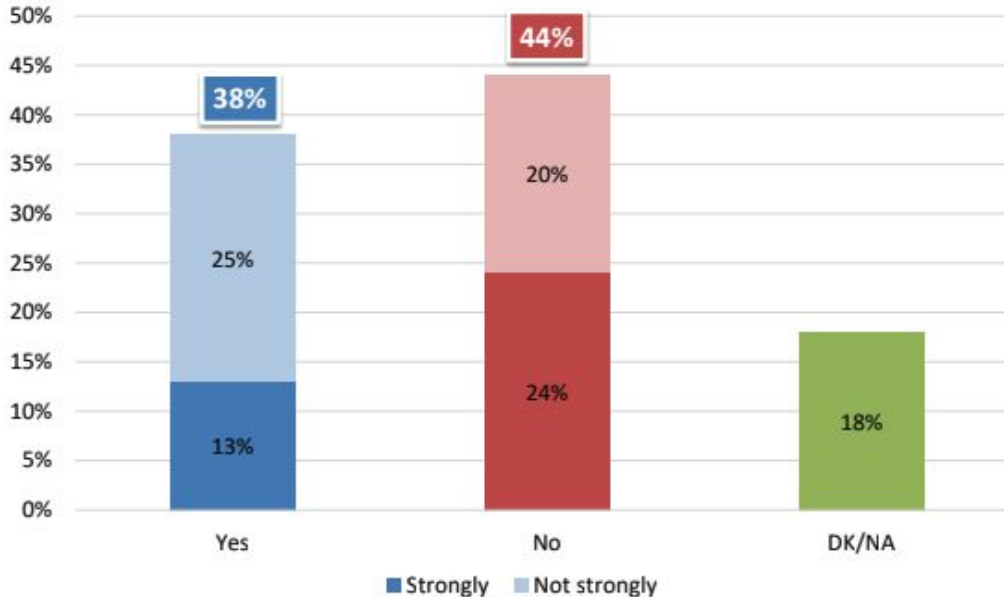
Excellent	4%
Good	12%
Only fair	38%
Poor	11%
DK/NA	34%

Bond Vote Amongst:	Yes	No	Yes Margin
Those who rate school condition as net "positive"	11%	85%	-74
Those who rate school condition as net "negative"	52%	28%	+24
Those who are unable to rate school condition	40%	21%	+19

Do you think the Lebanon School District's school buildings are in excellent physical condition, good condition, fair condition, or are they in poor physical condition?

November Survey

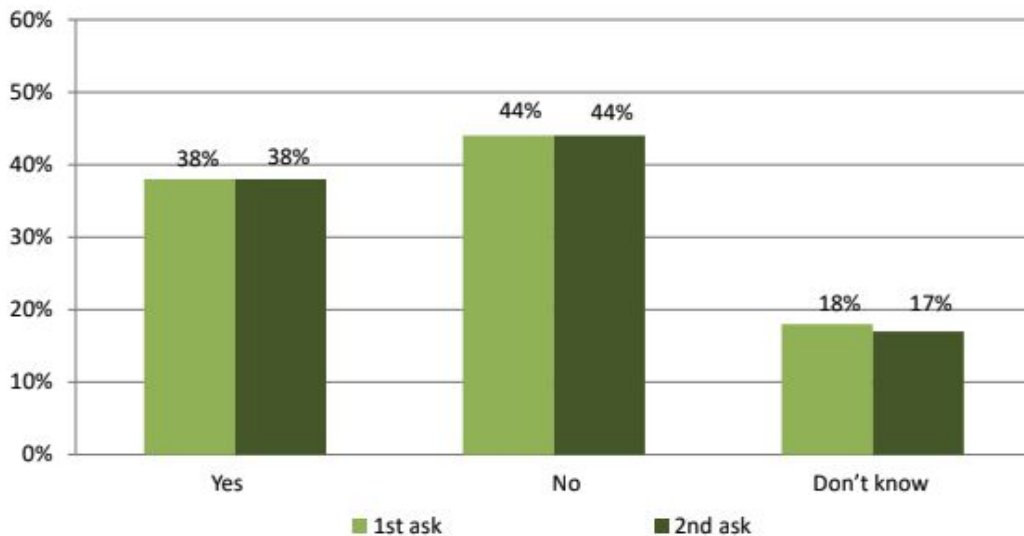
Opposition outpaces support based on ballot language, both overall and when looking at the intensity of feeling



The Lebanon School District may place a bond measure on the May 2026 ballot which would read: "Bonds to repair or improve school facilities and learning spaces. Shall District address critical repair work for school facilities and learning spaces; issue \$169 million dollars bonds; citizen oversight and audits required." Having heard this, if the election were held today, would you vote "yes" or "no" on this bond measure?

November Survey

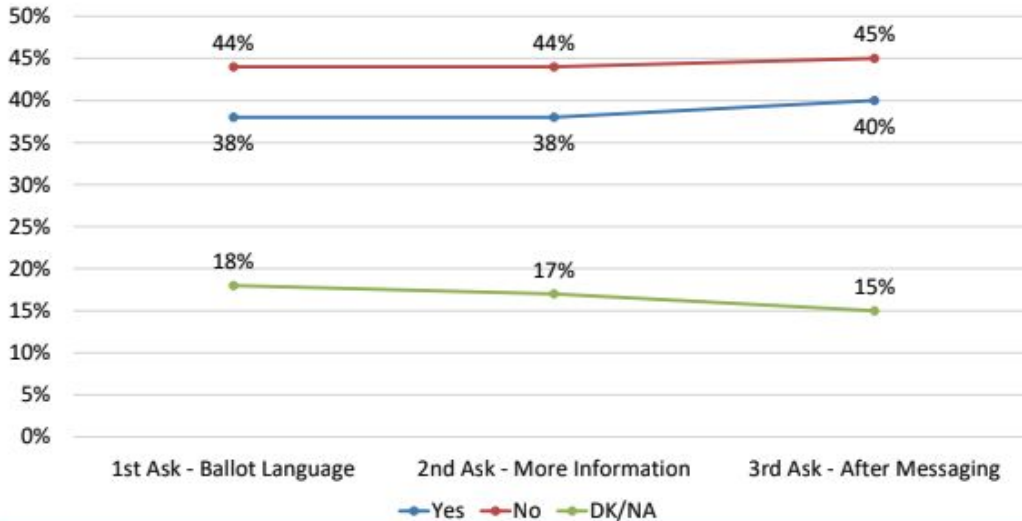
There's no movement outside of the margin of error once voters learn more about what the bond will fund and the cost to voters



Knowing this, if the election were held today, would you vote "yes" or "no" on this potential bond measure?

November Survey

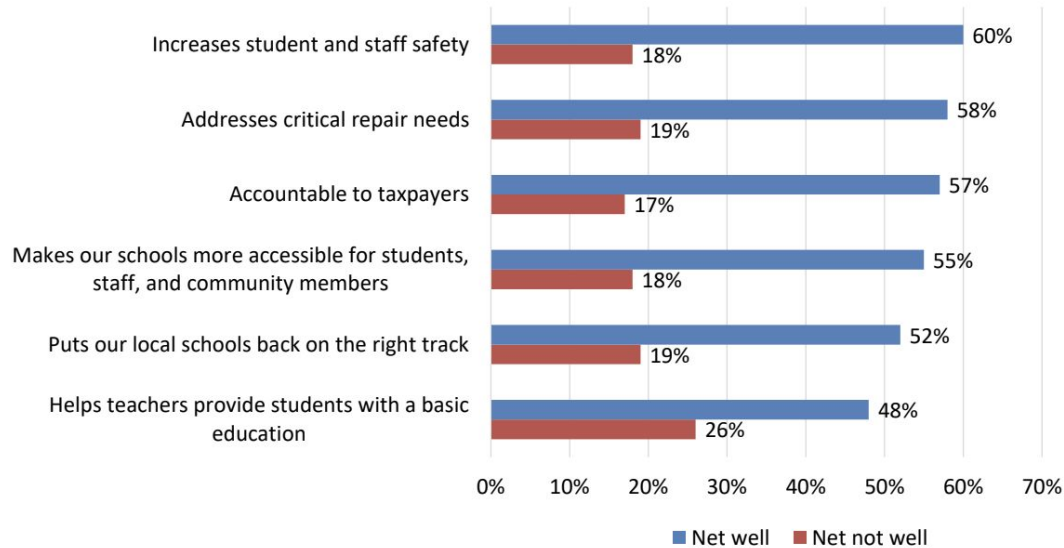
Even after a very unbalanced message exercise, voters remain locked in



Sometimes over the course of a survey people change their mind. Let me ask you again: the Lebanon School District may place a bond measure on the May 2026 ballot which would read: "Bonds to repair or improve school facilities and learning spaces. Shall District address critical repair work for school facilities and learning spaces; issue \$169 million dollars bonds; citizen oversight and audits required." Having heard this, if the election were held today, would you vote "yes" or "no" on this bond measure

November Survey

Pluralities agree with every positive characterization of the bond – with safety, critical repairs, and accountability resonating the most



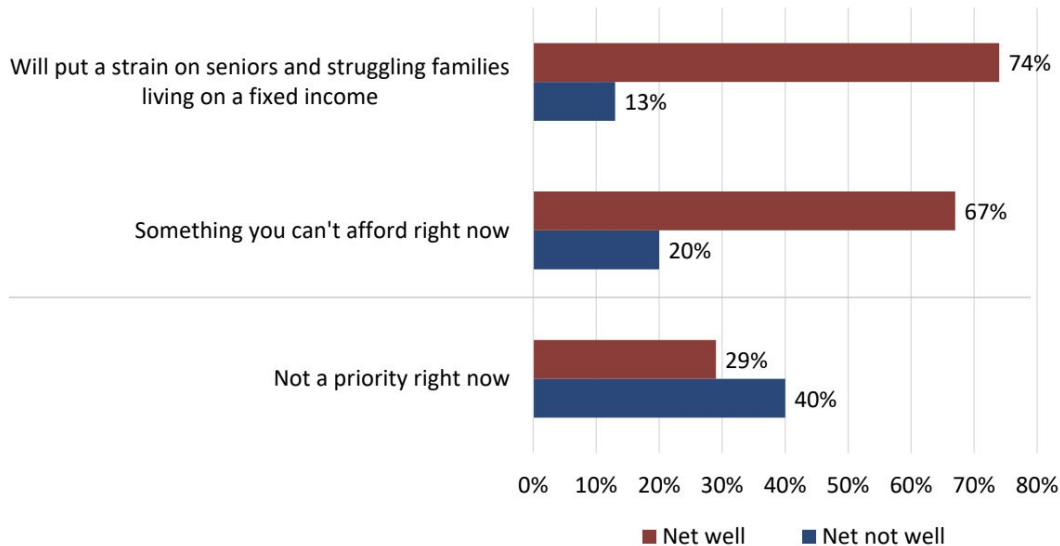
I'm going to read you a list of phrases that people use to describe general obligation bond measures. After each, please tell me whether you think it describes the potential bond measure for the Lebanon School District, very well, pretty well, not too well, or not well at all.

November Survey

Cost is the primary barrier for voters



As shown in other parts of this dataset: it's not that voters dislike the projects outlined or feel they are unnecessary, it's more that they are unwilling to raise their own taxes to pay for them.



I'm going to read you a list of phrases that people use to describe general obligation bond measures. After each, please tell me whether you think it describes the potential bond measure for the Lebanon School District, very well, pretty well, not too well, or not well at all.

November Survey

Atmospherics are challenging. While voters' perception of their area is growing more optimistic, their personal finances are moving the opposite direction, creating a drag on support for the bond.

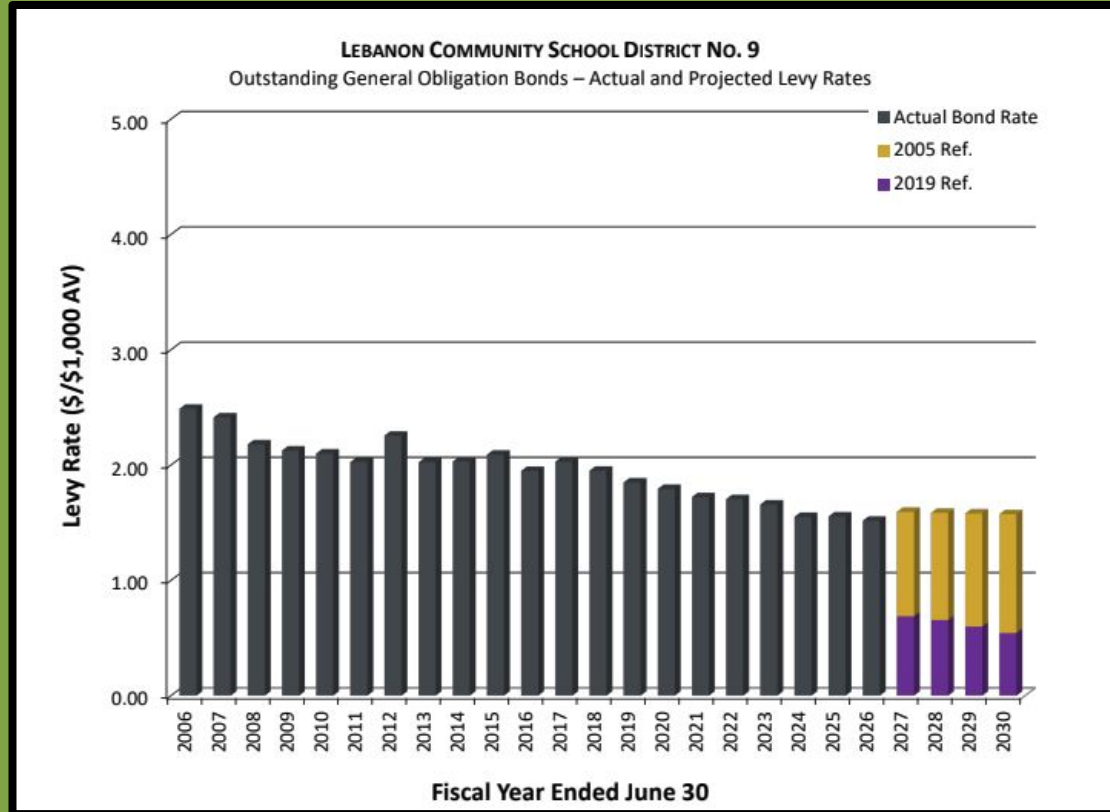
The \$169 million bond itself starts out in a very challenging position. Opposition outpaces support and the intensity of feeling leans against the bond. Key subgroups like women are currently heavily opposed to the bond and both current district parents and independents/non-partisans are heavily undecided.

The strongest messages talk about the urgency around the repairs needed and how these repairs will allow students to learn in warm, safe, and dry in their schools for years to come. Fiscal responsibility messages that highlight the bond development process and the cost savings created by bond projects are also quite effective.

After messaging, voters agree that the bond projects are necessary and will benefit students in a variety of ways but are simultaneously incredibly concerned with the cost to voters. Neither more information nor the message exercise moves voters outside of the margin of error.

Moving voter opinion will likely require a long-term commitment to educating and engaging the community, in combination with changes to the broader economic climate.

Bond Expires 2030



Board Direction Needed: Which Option Should We Implement Next?

Option 1: Deepen Community Engagement & Awareness

Increase direct outreach—tours, listening sessions, staff/community forums, targeted communication—to build understanding of facility conditions and strengthen trust before returning with a refined proposal.

Option 2: Adjust or Scale the Recommendation

Ask the district and committee to refine the proposed package—scope, phasing, or cost—so it better aligns with what the community may be willing to support in the near term.

Option 3: Prioritize Only Critical Health, Safety & Operations

Direct the district to develop a plan that focuses solely on the most urgent failing systems while postponing larger capital investments until voter readiness improves.

Option 4: Identify an Alternative Long-Term Pathway

Explore different strategies such as phased replacements, partnerships, supplemental revenue options, or a longer planning timeline if the Board believes the current direction requires major adjustment.

Recommendation for Board Action

Board Action #1: Establish Long-Range Bond Goal

Recommended Action

Direct the District to plan for a future general obligation bond, with the goal of placing a measure on the ballot no later than 2030, aligned with the expiration of the current bond.

Last Elections: November 2029 or May 2030

Purpose

- Provides a clear planning horizon

Board Action #2: Deepen Community Engagement (Option One)

Recommended Action

Direct staff to proceed with Option 1: Deepen Community Engagement and Awareness as the next phase of work.

Purpose

- Build understanding of facility conditions and needs
- Increase transparency around costs, scope, and priorities
- Strengthen trust and readiness before advancing a bond proposal

Board Action #3: Implement Structured Outreach Plan

Recommended Action

Direct the District to develop and implement a comprehensive outreach, communication, and community engagement plan.

Plan Should Include

- Clear messaging on safety, critical repairs, and accountability
- Community listening sessions and stakeholder outreach
- Ongoing feedback loops to test understanding and concerns

Board Action #4: Reconvene Facilities Committee Quarterly

Recommended Action

Direct the District to reconvene the Facilities Committee quarterly.

Committee Role

- Review community engagement outcomes
- Examine polling and public feedback
- Monitor readiness and recommend scope adjustments
- Advise the Board as conditions evolve

Board Action #5: Establish Benchmarks for Bond Readiness

Recommended Action

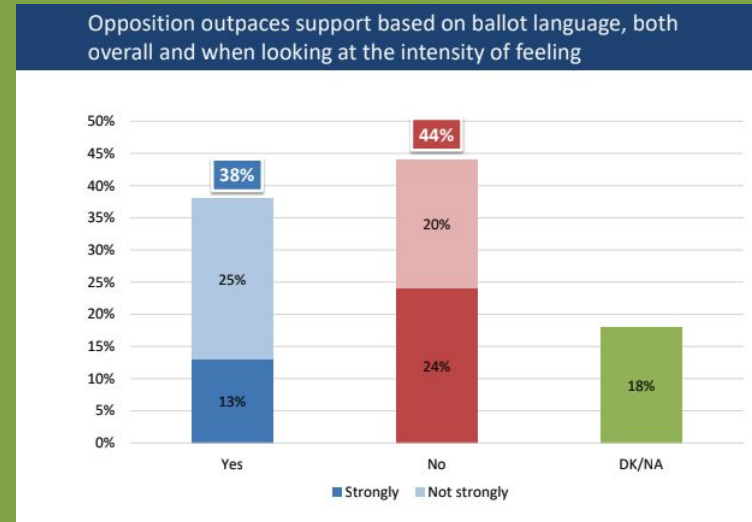
Authorize professional polling at least annually and adopt clear thresholds for advancing a bond measure.

Decision Benchmarks

- $\geq 50\%$ first-ask support: Board considers bond proposal
- $\geq 56\%$ first-ask support: Board advances bond to ballot
- $\geq 40\%$ desired intensity of support
- $\leq 25\%$ desired intensity of opposition

Purpose

- Align timing with demonstrated community support



Questions, Clarifications & Wonderings