

## **Bonds to Improve Health, Safety, and Learning; Modernize, Repair Schools**

**QUESTION:** Shall Portland Public Schools repair, modernize schools; increase health, safety; by issuing bonds estimated to maintain current tax rate? If the bonds are approved, they will be payable from taxes on property or property ownership that are not subject to the limits of [sections 11 and 11b, Article XI of the Oregon Constitution](#).

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** This measure authorizes up to \$1.83 billion in principal amount of general obligation bonds for facilities and education investments. Bonds may be issued in one or more series, each series maturing in 30 years or less.

If approved, this bond will continue to cost a homeowner whose residence is within the Portland Public Schools District (District) [an estimated \\$2.50 for every \\$1,000 of assessed value](#). This amount is the same as homeowners were paying for the previous bond. This measure is not expected to increase tax rates above the level targeted by the 2017 bond, assuming a property's assessed value remains unchanged. Actual rates may differ based on interest rates and changes in assessed value.

*Note: Assessed value (AV) is the value used to collect property tax. It is shown on the [property tax statement](#). It is NOT the same as real market value (RMV), which is the market price of the home.*

### **PROBABLE RESULTS OF A YES VOTE**

If approved, this measure will provide finances for the District to make facilities improvements and update curriculum. It will allow Portland Public Schools (PPS) to continue to prioritize schools in need of large-scale repairs and replacements to address safety hazards and to fix failing infrastructure. This money will finance new updated curriculum, technology, and security systems.

### **PROBABLE RESULTS OF A NO VOTE**

If this measure fails, the District will not be provided the funds requested to make updates and improvements from bonds. No additional taxes will be assessed.

### **BACKGROUND**

This measure is a [capital bond measure referred to voters within the Portland Schools District by the Portland Public Schools Board of Education](#) (Board).

[In 2012, 2017, and 2020, voters in the Portland Public Schools District approved capital bonds to fund improvements](#) for many of Portland Public Schools' aging buildings. Since

2012, bond measures have enabled the modernization of eight District schools and have addressed some infrastructure needs at every school in the District. In addition, modernization design plans are in progress for Jefferson, Ida B. Wells, and Cleveland High Schools.

## **THE PROPOSAL**

If approved, this measure will enable the District to address further concerns for building safety and health across the District. In addition, this will allow PPS to update the curriculum and technological equipment needed to prepare our youth for the modern world. It will fund repairs, modernization, and much-needed safety upgrades, making schools across the District safer and more efficient. In addition, it will enable schools to update and improve classroom curriculum materials and technology, increasing learning opportunities for all students. Specific improvements include:

- Repair of aging elementary and middle schools in need of new roofs, improved heating and cooling systems, and miscellaneous building repairs.
- Seismic and security upgrades, including protective fencing and security cameras.
- Renovation or repair of aging high schools, including Jefferson, Cleveland, and Ida B. Wells.
- Upgrades of athletic and high school theatre facilities.
- Creation of athletic hub facilities at Jackson Middle School and Marshall High School campus.
- Replace or provide student tablets and laptops to afford equitable access to classroom learning.
- Updating District and classroom technology.
- Providing comprehensive, culturally relevant, and current curriculum materials to enhance learning for all students.

The Board was scheduled to consider in later April [redesign and cost reduction options as part of a comprehensive plan update](#).

[Oversight would be provided by an independent group of community members](#) who will review quarterly reports and audits. [This group will provide accountability to the public as to how the bond dollars are being spent until completion of all projects](#).

## **SUPPORTERS SAY**

- Portland public schools are aging. Many schools in the District have deteriorating infrastructure, such as leaking roofs and insufficient heating and cooling, as well as outdated security systems.

- PPS schools need updated curriculum materials. The schools lack the modern technological equipment needed to provide adequate and fair instruction for computer labs and classroom student tablets.
- The amount of the bond allows improvements in several schools across the district in a fair manner. A lesser amount would be unfair to the schools and communities not funded.

### **OPPONENTS SAY**

- Portland State University's Population Research Center projects that if all the high schools on the list are renovated as proposed, there will be excess capacity.
- Projects should be related to enrollment. The expansion of high school capacity proposed in this bond measure is financially irresponsible. It does not match enrollment projections.
- According to the Cascade Policy Institute, the District has had access to \$180 million in state and previous bond funds since 2020 which have not yet been spent as planned. This money could be redirected to pursue the proposed improvements and rebuilding goals instead of passing a new bond measure.

## RESOURCES

<https://multco.us/info/ballot-measure-26-259-portland-school-district-1j>

[https://multco.us/file/measure\\_26-259\\_argument\\_favor\\_vp.pdf/download](https://multco.us/file/measure_26-259_argument_favor_vp.pdf/download)

[https://multco.us/file/measure\\_26-259\\_argument\\_opposition\\_vp.pdf/download](https://multco.us/file/measure_26-259_argument_opposition_vp.pdf/download) (for Cascade Policy Institute opposition references, see p. 10 of 12 opposition pages, the reference to the \$120M in 2022 in state funds for Tubman relo, and \$60M from 2020 bond for Center for Black Student Excellence)

[https://lwvpdx.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/LWV-Mult-English\\_Email-Proof.pdf](https://lwvpdx.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/LWV-Mult-English_Email-Proof.pdf)