



Background: Idaho Falls School District 91 is asking patrons to approve a bond to upgrade and modernize its high schools. The proposal is the culmination of more than three years of work by the Board of Trustees, administrators, teachers, parents and patrons.

What does the bond pay for? There are two questions on the bond.

Question 1 is for \$86.2 million and includes:

- \$55.8 million for a new Idaho Falls High School
- \$28.4 million for major renovations to Skyline High School
- \$2 million to start the conversion of the current IFHS campus into a Career-Technical Education Center.

Questions 2 is for \$13.3 million in amenities that include a district performing arts center at Skyline and an innovative mini events center space that could be used for arts performances, athletics and more.

Why update and modernize D91's high schools?

- Enhanced safety and security features
- Large, flexible spaces for today's instruction
- Common spaces for collaboration
- New and improved technology infrastructure

Why rebuild IFHS instead of renovate?

- No space to grow
- City owns Civic Auditorium, art and band rooms and north parking lot
- City has easement on practice field as a retention pond so we cannot build there
- Renovation costs were projected at \$47 million so building new is a better investment
- Current IFHS would become home to a new Career-Technical Education Center

What is the plan for the current IFHS campus?

- It would become a centralized campus for all D91's career-technical programs such as Pharmacy Tech, Emergency Medical Technician, Certified Nursing Assistant, Culinary Arts, Auto Tech and more.
- With additional space, we could offer more career-technical programs and more students could take those classes.
- Enrollment in some of these programs is currently capped because of space constraints.

If the current IFHS building isn't suitable for a high school, how can it accommodate a career-technical center?

- Instead of accommodating more than 1,200 students, the career-technical education center would have an enrollment of about 600 students with about 300 attending classes in the morning and about 300 attending classes in the afternoon.
- With fewer students, the building and its technology infrastructure would not be taxed as it is with more than 1,200 students.

- This is not a “technology” school as some have described it, but these are programs that allow students to earn the technical skills and certifications they need to get a job after high school.

Why build the new IFHS on 49th South?

- Available, affordable land in Idaho Falls High School’s growing attendance area
- With 55+ acres, there is lots of space to meet district’s future needs
- Idaho Falls is growing to the south
- Land is close to Taylorview Middle School, which could expand opportunities for middle school students

Why didn’t the district consider the land on Holmes near Home Depot?

The district spent more than a year talking to the owners of that property, but could not come to terms. In the end, the owners wanted \$6 million more than the land identified on 49th Street.

What will the district do about traffic on Holmes & 49th?

If the bond passes, the district will work with city officials to make whatever improvements are required on Holmes and 49th Street, which could include a traffic light at Holmes & 49th.

Do these plans consider future enrollment growth?

Yes. Skyline High School can accommodate about 1,400 students. It currently has an enrollment of 1,200 students. Idaho Falls High School currently has about 1230 students, and the new building could accommodate 1,350 with room to add up to 1,500 students. Compass Academy also has room for additional students and we could expand offerings at the new Career-Technical Education Center. In addition, a lot of our high school students are not on our campuses from 8:30 am to 3:40 pm everyday anymore. They are doing internships, taking college classes, enrolling in online classes and working. As a result, while we may have 1,200 students enrolled in a high school, we probably don’t have them all at the campus at given time.

What about the district’s other needs like a new elementary school south of town?

The district is always trying to balance its short-term and long-term facility needs. There has been a lot of growth south of Idaho Falls and the district expects to construct a new elementary school in the next three to five years. The district has acquired property on the corner of Holmes and 65th and already owns a piece of property on 65th near York. In addition, the district has acquired property north of Idaho Falls near Sage Lakes golf course in anticipation of future growth.

How will D91’s bond impact my taxes?

The district’s tax rate will not change whether the bond passes or not. An individual’s taxes could increase if the value of their property increases. Those values are set by the Bonneville County Assessor. The school district has no part in determining property values.

What is the district’s current tax rate?

The district’s current tax rate is \$424 per year on \$100,000 of taxable value. So, if your home, business or land is valued at \$100,000, you pay \$424 in school taxes. That money goes to:

- The district’s supplemental levy, which goes to salaries
- The district’s special plant facilities fund levy, which goes to capital expenses such as bus purchases, roof projects and other building maintenance and technology
- The district’s current bond, which was used to build the four new elementary schools, and any future bonds

Why does the ballot say the “average annual cost to the taxpayer on the proposed bond is a tax” of \$157 on question no. 1 and \$24 on question 2?

A new law passed by the Idaho Legislature now requires school districts to include that language on the ballot. However, that \$181 will be paid from the school taxes the district already collects from patrons and will be offset by existing levies that will expire or decline over the next two years. In addition, the formula used to calculate those numbers does not take growth in the district's tax base into account or the money the district receives from the state to offset the cost of bonds.

Is this a no-bid bond?

No. There is no such thing as a "no-bid" bond. Idaho law requires all public works projects be put out to bid. If the bond passes, all the construction work will be put out to bid.

Has the district already picked the contractor for the project?

No, but the district has selected its Construction Manager/General Contractor. When work on the high school redesign project began years ago, the district put out a request for proposals for both a design team and a construction manager/general contractor for the project. The Board of Trustees received proposals from a number of companies. They evaluated their credentials, made sure they had the proper licenses and then interviewed the top candidates. Bateman-Hall and Hummel Architects, with Alderson, Karst and Mitro, were selected to provide the professional services associated with the bond. If the bond passes, all the construction work will be put out to bid.

Why did the district go with a Construction Manager/General Contractor or CM/GC?

There are four methods used to construct public works projects like the ones being considered as part of the bond. The Idaho Division of Public Works recommends CM/GC for:

- Big, complicated projects
- Projects that encourage innovation
- Projects with a tight time frame
- Projects with a limited budget
- Owners wants to save money

The advantages of CM/GC include?

- Construction expertise is part of the design so the design team and construction manager are reviewing plans together and that means fewer expensive change orders.
- Owner can negotiate a guaranteed maximum price, which means no cost overruns on projects.
- Shifts risk from owner to the CM/GC.
- Potential to save time and money

Other questions? Send them to us.