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September 3, 2020

Gregory-Portland Independent School District

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Gregory-Portland ISD Trustees call for \$107.7 Million School Bond with No Increase to Total Tax Rate

The Gregory-Portland ISD School Board called for a School Bond to appear in two propositions on the November 3rd ballot, with new facilities proposed including an Early Childhood Center and Ag Science Classrooms as well as funding for safety and security, new playgrounds at S.F. Austin and T.M. Clark Elementary Schools, and more. With the district's current financial situation, this bond requires no increase to the total tax rate. If approved by voters, the majority of the two bond propositions totaling \$107.7 Million would be funded by local industry.

“Based on our district's total assessed valuation from last school year, approximately 88 percent of our tax base is funded by local industry,” said Brigitte Clark, G-PISD's Chief Financial Officer. “When this data is applied to the bond total, it means industry would fund approximately 88 percent, or \$94.8 Million, and residents would fund 12 percent of the cost, or \$12.9 Million.”

The call for bond comes nearly one year after the district's Facilities Steering Committee began a series of meetings to review the district's long-range plan. The committee, comprised of community members, business leaders, parents, and teachers, reviewed district programs and planning options before recommending that the School Board call for a bond election.

“That recommendation came in early Spring, and originally the Board called for a May election,” said Board President Victor Hernandez, “but the situation we were facing due to COVID-19 changed those plans. Now, we are moving forward and asking voters to take the time to review the projects on both of these propositions, as well as the finance information we will be providing in the weeks to come, so they are well informed before going to the polls and making a decision.”

Superintendent Dr. Michelle Cavazos said that, in addition to new facilities and capital items for various student programs, Proposition A includes approximately \$36 Million in reimbursement resolution items. “These are projects that the Board decided to initially fund using Maintenance & Operations (M&O) revenue – the same dollars that are used to operate the school district and pay teachers and staff salaries each year. Including them on the bond list would allow the district, with voter approval, to access this amount in I&S dollars and reimburse the M&O, or operating, fund that is essentially used to ‘run’ the district.”

During the months of September and October, the district has scheduled to release the facts about the school bond via several methods conducive for communicating with constituents during the current public health situation. “We understand there are some challenges with outreach right now,” said Cavazos, “So, we will be asking our community to join us for town hall meetings online, in person with social distancing and face masks, via phone calls or emails, through postal mail, and by following our district social media pages on Facebook and Twitter as we begin releasing all of the facts about the bond and providing answers to their important questions.”

Cavazos said the district has already released information at www.g-pisd.org/bond, which includes a listing of projects for both bond propositions (A and B), as well as financial details regarding the bond, and information for constituents to register as a voter online, find out whether they are registered, and review voting information. Questions can also be directed to bond@g-pisd.org, or by calling G-PISD Administration at 361-777-1091.