

**LEE'S SUMMIT
R-7 SCHOOLS**
Learning for Life

LSR7 2020 BOND ISSUE FAQ

*The Lee's Summit R-7 Board of Education is placing a \$224 million **no tax rate increase** bond issue on the April 7, 2020 ballot.*

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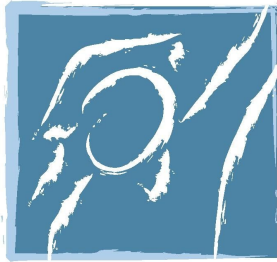
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FINANCING

What is a no tax rate increase bond issue?

A school bond issue is a financing tool used by districts to pay for capital projects, such as new buildings, renovations or land purchases. In a bond issue, districts ask voters if they can issue bonds to borrow money to cover the costs of these capital projects, and pay them back with property tax revenue.

In a no tax rate increase bond issue, like Lee's Summit's April 2020 bond issue, districts ask voters to hold the tax rate at the same rate in order to fund future facility needs. The district will ask voters on the April 7, 2020 ballot to keep the debt service tax rate at \$1.07 in order to fund renovations and additions at multiple school buildings, a new middle school and several other projects.

How can school bond issue funds be used?

By law, bond funds are restricted to capital improvements. Money in a voter-approved bond issue may only be used for the designated projects within the bond issue. That means that staffing costs, program funding, classroom supplies and other district needs cannot be covered by a bond issue — those needs are covered by the district's operating budget. It also means that money included in a bond issue cannot be used to make up for losses in state and local funding.

What type of majority is required for approval of the bond issue?

Voter approval of the no tax rate increase bond issue requires a four-sevenths majority or 57.14 percent.



How long has it been since voters considered a Lee's Summit R-7 bond issue?

The last Lee's Summit R-7 bond issue was approved in 2015 to fund the construction of the Missouri Innovation Campus as well as facility improvements at all schools. This was also a no tax rate increase bond issue.

If approved by voters, how long would it take to pay off these bonds?

When the bond issue is sold, the exact term will be determined. Currently, we are planning on about 20 years to pay off this issue.

If LSR7 tax rates aren't increasing, why have my property taxes gone up?

Jackson County determines property tax assessments based on home values. Because school tax rates are tied to county-conducted property tax assessments, the dollars a citizen pays in school taxes can go up when a home value increases even when the district's tax rates decrease or stay the same.

If the bond issue is not approved, would taxpayers see an immediate decline in their property taxes?

No. Only after all current bonds are repaid and the district does not issue new bonds upon voter approval would the debt service tax rate would then change and go to zero. Regardless of whether the bond issue passes or fails, the debt service tax rate will remain \$1.07 after this election and have no impact on property taxes. Because this no tax rate bond issue represents an extension of the current debt service tax rate (which has stayed at \$1.07 per \$100 assessed valuation since 1999) and earlier this year the district lowered its operating tax rate by \$0.55, any increase in taxes a voter might see after this election would be related to increases in property tax assessments.

PROJECTS

What are the components of the \$224 million no tax rate increase bond package?

The components of the proposed no tax rate increase bond issues are as follows:

Additional safety and security upgrades at all LSR7 schools

This item includes surveillance cameras, an upgraded access control system and a new hard keying system for all LSR7 schools, as well as uniform playground fencing. Approximate cost: \$3 million.

Construction of a new approximately 1,200-student middle school

The district's fourth middle school, part of a district plan to move sixth grade to middle school, will be located on land currently owned by the district and located near SE Bailey Road and SE Ranson Road in southeastern Lee's Summit. If the bond is approved, sixth-graders will transition from the elementary schools into middle schools renovated to serve sixth through eighth grades starting in 2022-23. Approximate cost: \$72 million.

Renovations and additions at Lee's Summit High School

This item would provide additions and renovations to the high school's western exterior as well as a new southern facade facing Highway 50. It would construct a new central "spine," including a centralized library, to connect buildings on this sprawling campus, which is roughly 380,000 square feet. The improvements are also designed to provide parity between the district's original high school and the two more recently constructed schools. This item also includes:

- More than 60,000 square feet of new construction
- Light to heavy interior renovations for instructional and public spaces
- New innovative learning spaces
- Mechanical, electrical, roofing and sewer upgrades

Approximate cost: \$80 million.

Renovations at the district's existing three middle schools

This item will help LSR7's three existing middle schools support sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade in the future. This transition was recommended by team of LSR7 staff, parents, students and community members last year following a comprehensive study. The team's recommendation focused on additional learning and engagement opportunities for sixth-graders including elective and exploratory courses as well as co-curricular activities. With the transition to middle-school programming, educators will provide these young adolescents with more social-emotional support during this crucial development stage as well as enhanced academic opportunities. Moving sixth-graders will also give elementary schools additional capacity for anticipated enrollment growth and expanded programming. Approximate cost: \$25 million.

Pleasant Lea Middle School, **\$11.8 million**, (New entry, interior renovations, music and art addition)

Bernard Campbell Middle School, **\$8.2 million** (Music addition/minor interior renovation)

Summit Lakes Middle School, **\$5 million** (Music addition/minor interior renovation)

Expansion and renovation of Mason Elementary School

This item includes an addition and interior renovations, including a new entryway, at Mason Elementary. Mason Elementary's original section was built in 1942, and the school is under-sized when compared to the district's elementary standard. It is already over capacity, and enrollment is projected to continue to grow. Approximate cost: \$16 million.

A second LSR7 early education center

This item would renovate the north side of Prairie View Elementary, the district's largest elementary school, into a second early education center. This item would allow the district to serve LSR7's youngest learners, particularly those who are on a waiting list for Great Beginnings Early Education Center, and provide a centralized home for satellite early education programs.

Approximate cost: \$9 million.

Activity/athletic facility renovations at all three high schools

This item includes stadium upgrades, including bleacher expansion, entry improvements and pressbox expansions, at all three high schools. It also provides for track resurfacing and turf replacement for all three high schools. Turf replacement and track resurfacing are maintenance items to support all who use these facilities. The track and turf are at the end of a 10-year life cycle. Stadium improvements at all three schools would address access and entry points as well as crowd control. This item also includes a baseball/softball complex for LSHS in order to provide parity with other high school facilities. LSHS baseball and softball teams currently practice and play their games off-site at Legacy Park. The school's new baseball/softball complex would be located at the fourth middle school. Approximate cost: \$19 million.

Why did the district recommend the sixth grade to middle school transition?

- We know our school district population is projected to grow by 1,500 students in the next 10 years. The transition to middle school not only creates new learning opportunities for sixth graders, it provides capacity at the elementary level.
- The middle school transition will give sixth graders opportunities to engage in more electives and an advanced curriculum tailored to their needs. It would also allow educators to give sixth graders more attention and support during a crucial developmental stage.
- Without sixth grade in the elementary schools, there will be flexibility around lunch schedules which will allow kindergarten to eat later in the day, as well as more resources for all grade levels at our elementary schools.
- Additional space also creates opportunities for specialized programs such as art, music, physical education and special education, as well as space for collaboration, STEM activities and project-based learning at the elementary level.
- The middle school transition recommendation stemmed from a middle school design process action team formed during Phase II of the CFMP process. That team was made up of teachers, support staff, counselors, administrators, parents and community members.

Will the middle school transition prompt boundary changes?

Yes. Since we will have four middle schools instead of three we will have to adjust boundaries at the middle school level before the 2022-23 year. We do not anticipate any changes to the current high school boundaries. Plans call for the school district to follow its previous boundary study processes with opportunities for engagement and feedback from parents and community members. As always, school staff will work closely with students and families to ensure a smooth transition for students moving to a new school.

Has staffing, curriculum and structure been determined for the new middle school model?

These important conversations have already started, and they will continue to occur over the next couple of years leading to a sixth grade transition. A process will be developed to transition sixth grade

(and potentially other) teachers from elementary to middle school. This may include a sixth grade teacher who wants to move to middle school but could also include other elementary staff who would like to make this transition. It is important to note that this would not involve an overall reduction in staff, so no elementary teachers would lose their jobs. Please know that these important decisions are in no way finalized and will continue collaboratively if the bond issue is approved.

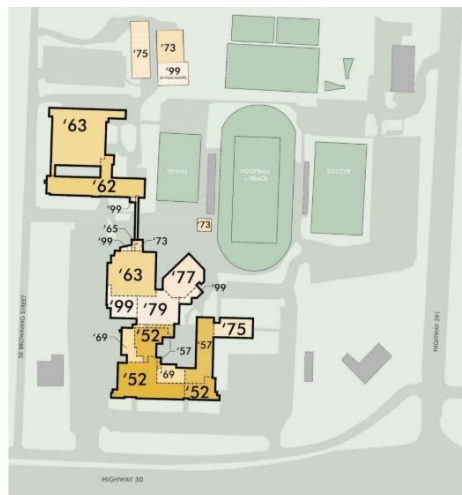
Why is the district focusing on Mason Elementary in this issue?

The reason that the Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan team prioritized the Mason Elementary School project is due to growth in the northeast quadrant of the District that requires additional classroom space. While renovating buildings to meet future-ready needs of students is our goal, accommodating building capacity needs is also a top priority. Mason Elementary is currently at 110% capacity with significant growth anticipated. The district plans to prioritize other school sites, including its oldest elementary schools, in future bond issues.

What else do Lee’s Summit High School plans include?

Lee’s Summit High School was constructed in 1952, and a portion of the school building facing Highway 50 has outdated and aging infrastructure. This includes a wood roof structure, and unreinforced block walls that have cracked over time. District plans call for a new southern facade as well as additions and renovations to the school’s western exterior, including its western entrance.

Lee’s Summit High School, the district’s original high school, is a sprawling campus made up several buildings constructed in various decades that need to be better connected. (Image below reflects the current LSHS campus.) This item includes new construction to connect buildings, a centralized library, and light to heavy interior renovations touching most of Lee’s Summit High School’s instructional and public spaces. The Lee’s Summit High bond component also includes new flexible-learning and collaboration spaces. Plans call for more than 60,000 additional square feet in new construction. Strategic renovations and additions would make the building overall more safe, particularly for kids who have had to walk outside to get to class on time.



Why isn't the district covering turf replacement, track resurfacing and stadium improvements with its capital outlay fund?

Covering turf replacement, track resurfacing and stadium improvements with bond funds allows the district to cover other school building needs with its capital outlay fund. Earlier this year, the district collected a needs list from principals and hopes to address many of these requests with its capital outlay fund. These maintenance and improvement items at three high schools are a significant expense and would restrict the amount of money available for necessary projects at schools throughout the district if covered by the capital outlay fund.

Who would benefit from the turf replacement, track resurfacing and stadium improvements?

The turf replacement and track resurfacing are intended to address maintenance. Turf and track must be replaced roughly every 10 years and LSR7 last provided new turf and track surfacing in in 2010. The upgrades would address safety for students, athletes, marching band members, physical education classes, summer camps and members of the public that use these facilities. The stadium improvements include expanded entry ways and upgraded seating that would impact access and crowd control for all visitors to LSR7 stadiums.

Where would the second early education center be located at Prairie View Elementary?

The district is not planning to construct a new early education center. Rather, it plans to renovate the north side of Prairie View Elementary School to accommodate a second early education center. Prairie View Elementary is the district's largest elementary school and will have additional capacity for an early education center after the sixth grade transition.

How much has safety been prioritized in this bond issue?

From additions that would address mobility issues at Lee's Summit High School to a Mason Elementary addition that would allow the elementary school to eliminate mobile classrooms to athletic/activity improvements to make tracks, turf and stadiums safer for the community, safety components are an essential part of this bond package. The \$3 million safety and security item addresses upgrades in four **additional** areas: surveillance cameras, upgraded access control, new keying and uniform playground fencing.

How do I find more information about the bond issue?

Please visit the district's bond issue webpage at www.lsr7.org/bond or call the district's Public Relations Department at (816) 986-1014. You may also submit questions to the district's [contact us webpage](#). If your organization would like to schedule a presentation about the bond issue, you may also contact the Public Relations Department at (816) 986-1014 or email ariel.andrew@lsr7.net.

BOND BACKGROUND & FUTURE IMPACTS

How did we get here?

The district has spent the past year having important conversations with school leaders, teachers, support staff, students, parents and community members about how to best serve all LSR7 students and the 1,500 kids projected to join our district in the next decade. Those conversations started in Fall 2018 when the district formed a Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan (CFMP) committee to examine how to meet the district's future capacity needs and provide the school spaces future students and staff need to thrive.

- *Phase 1* started in Fall 2018 and focused on **capacity** — how LSR7 prepares for enrollment growth. The district hosted 11 engagement events and conducted three community surveys that led to boundary changes approved in December 2018.
- *Phase 2* started in Spring 2019 and focused on **instruction** — what do future-ready learning environments look like and what do educators need to meet future students' developmental needs? This phase included nine action teams, including a **middle school design process group** tasked with studying the impact of moving sixth grade to middle school.
- In August 2019, the Board of Education approved three priorities for the 2019-20 school year, including: *Ensure equitable access to future ready learning environments by further engaging stakeholders in the continued implementation of the Comprehensive Facility Master Plan by identifying preK-12 facility projects in anticipation of an April 2020 "no tax increase" bond issue.*
- On Sept. 24, after several public presentations and a parent engagement night, the Board of Education approved preliminary plans to move sixth grade to middle school. This fall, the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC), a group of 70 community members, staff members and parents, examined the CFMP work and ultimately decided to recommend construction projects the district should immediately prioritize.
- The CAC presented a \$224 million no tax rate increase bond package on Dec. 19 at the Board of Education's regular monthly meeting.
- The Board of Education approved that recommended package on Jan. 23 by a unanimous 7-0 vote.

What about projects that I don't see on the list?

While the middle school transition is a significant recommendation to come from the district's CFMP process, not every project identified by the district as a "tier one" priority, particularly the renovation of our oldest elementary schools, would be covered in this bond issue.

These schools will be prioritized in a future R-7 bond issue. The district has also shared plans to renovate and upgrade LSR7's remaining schools to future-ready standards in the future.

As part of the information-gathering stage of the bond process, the district also surveyed principals about facility and infrastructure needs in their schools this year. The district's capital outlay fund, as well as future interest earnings from the bond, will be able to cover some of these needs.

What happens if the bond election does not pass?

If the bond election is not successful, funds for these projects will not be available.

If approved, how would a \$224 million bond issue affect LSR7's future bonding capacity?

While the potential \$224 million no tax rate increase bond package is a significant amount, it leaves the district with bonding capacity for future projects. That means that LSR7 could continue to utilize bond issues to build projects, like the renovations for our oldest elementary schools not included in our current bond issue, without raising the debt service tax rate in the future. Assuming that growth in Lee's Summit continues, the district anticipates that it can issue bond issues every five years without changing the tax rate. The district's bonding capacity — even after a \$224 million bond would be potentially approved — is due in part because of projected growth. And it's also because the district has been a good financial steward, and refinanced outstanding bonds in the past to reduce interest payments.

How does the district plan on paying for the additional costs of the sixth grade transition, such as staffing?

The district plans to strategically budget for any additional staff needs in the years leading up to the 2022-23 school year. These important conversations about our staffing needs have already started, and will continue if the proposed bond issue is approved by voters.

Based on current projections, does the district anticipate an operating levy increase?

Because growth is currently projected to increase in Lee's Summit, the **district does not** anticipate at this time that we will need an operating levy increase. In fact, because of the Hancock Amendment, a part of the Missouri Constitution that controls the amount of money a district receives from increases in property tax assessments, the district lowered its operating tax rate this year by \$0.55 last fall. That's one of the largest rollbacks (and one of several) the district has approved in recent years.

ELECTION DAY AND VOTING

When is the election?

The April 2020 school and municipal election will be Tuesday, April 7, with polls open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Lee's Summit R-7 School District is covered by three election jurisdictions including Jackson County, Cass County and Kansas City.

What is the deadline to register to vote in the April 7 election? How can I register to vote (or update my registration)?

To vote on April 7, you must be registered by March 11. You must also update your registration if you have changed your name or address, again by March 11. Individuals may register to vote at any city hall, public library or license bureau as well as the election board offices. More information about voter

registration is available by selecting the webpage for your election board or by contacting them via telephone.

- [Jackson County Election Board](#), (816) 325-4600
- [Cass County Election Board](#), (816) 380-8102
- [Kansas City Election Board](#), (816) 842-4820

How do I vote absentee?

Applications for absentee voting are available from your election board with some boards offering absentee ballot applications online and others requesting that you make your request by mail. Please check with your election board to determine how to request your ballot. Once you receive and fill out a ballot, it must be notarized before you mail it back to the election board in order for it to be counted. Requests for an absentee ballot must be received in the election board offices by 5 p.m. March 25 for the April 7 election. Voters may also vote absentee at their election board office in person until 5 p.m. April 6.