

# Board: D86 referendum a compromise plan

Voters will be asked April 2 to approve \$139.8 million plan to repair, improve schools

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For the third time in two years, voters in Hinsdale High School District 86 will be asked to approve a bond referendum to pay for repairs and improvements at Hinsdale Central and Hinsdale South high schools.

The April 2 question asks for \$139.8 million, down from the \$166 million proposal voters rejected in November. The list of projects (see sidebar) is similar, with a notable difference at Central.

The Central pool will be rebuilt at a new location in its current size (six lanes by 25 yards) at a cost of \$17 million. The November referendum included a new eight-lane, 40-yard pool at Central with a price tag of \$24 million. Plans to convert the current pool space for wrestling and gymnastics, and then to convert those gyms, have been scrapped from the plan,

reducing the cost by another \$11.2 million.

The six-lane pool at South, which would have been rebuilt in its current location at a length of 40 yards, will be rebuilt at 25 yards, for a savings of almost \$7.8 million.

The \$139.8 million is not the first amount the board approved for the April ballot. In December, board members agreed to ask voters to approve a \$129 million bond issue. At a special meeting Jan. 12, the board decided to increase the amount by roughly \$10 million, with half paying for Central's pool to be built at a new location, which allows for expansion in the future, and half for improvements to South's auditorium.

"I think this is one of the most critical decisions for the community, and I think we're all going to need to compromise," board member Nancy

Pollak said at that meeting. In talking to different community members, she said she had heard a variety of opposing views and a variety of motives assigned to the board.

"I'm convinced there is nothing we can present to the community that will make everybody happy," she continued before proposing adding \$5 million to the referendum for each school.

Of the \$139.8 million, 57 percent is earmarked for projects at Central and 43 percent is earmarked for projects at South, Pollak noted.

If approved, the owner of a \$1 million home will pay an estimated \$576 a year more in property taxes. The bonds would be issued in stages and repaid over 21 years.

Residents can determine their own projected increase by using the tax calculator on the District 86 website at d86.hinsdale86.org > April 2019 referendum. The website also includes debt service and bond payment information, an FAQ section and videos.

Facilities have been an ongoing topic of discussion in the district since December 2014, when the board voted to update its 2011 master facilities plan. About two years later, in January 2017, the board voted to put a \$76

million referendum on the April 4 ballot. That measure failed by a margin of almost 3-1.

Up until recently the board had not presented an alternative plan of how the district would pay for needed infrastructure, life safety and security repairs. A Dec. 17 board vote identified \$3.6 million in budget cuts that will be made, starting in 2019-20, to pay for about \$42 million of projects over the next six years. The cuts include the elimination of several sports — including football and swimming — and activities for a savings of almost \$1.2 million. Other large savings come from raising the average district class size to 25 students (\$1.67 million), trimming administrative and education support staff (\$817,000) and reducing transportation (\$337,000).

"The community has an opportunity to tell us what they want April 2," Superintendent Bruce Law said Tuesday. "If a reduced version of District 86 is what they want, then we can do that, but we've always had higher ambitions for our students."

## Tour the schools

District 86 is offering nine referendum project tours in February and March for interested residents. Here are the dates and times.

### Hinsdale Central

- 6 p.m. Friday, Feb. 15 (prior to boys basketball game)
- 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20 (prior to spring play)
- 9 a.m. Friday, March 1 (prior to South tour at 10 a.m.)
- 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 19 (prior to orchestra concert)
- 9 a.m. Wednesday, March 27

### Hinsdale South

- 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19 (prior to board meeting)
- 10 a.m. Friday, March 1 (following Central tour at 9 a.m.)
- 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 20 (prior to Pops Concert)
- noon Friday, March 22

## Referendum projects

The \$139.8 million referendum would pay for a variety of projects at Hinsdale Central and Hinsdale South high schools. For a detailed list and more information on the referendum, visit d86.hinsdale86.org > April 2019 referendum.

### Security & safety

Central — \$3 million  
South — \$2.7 million  
Total — \$5.7 million

### Accessibility

Central — \$2.7 million  
South — \$2.7 million  
Total — \$5.4 million

### STEM focus

Central — \$2.1 million  
South — \$6.6 million  
Total — \$8.7 million

### Infrastructure

Central — \$20 million  
South — \$14.4 million  
Total — \$34.4 million

### Special ed/student services

Central — \$15.3 million  
South — \$8.9 million  
Total — \$24.2 million

### Cafeteria

Central — \$4.5 million  
South — \$3.4 million  
Total — \$7.9 million

### Library

Central — \$1.7 million  
South — \$4.5 million  
Total — \$6.2 million

### Renovation/new construction

Central — \$3.9 million  
South — \$1.2 million  
Total — \$5.1 million

### Pool

Central — \$17 million  
South — \$7.3 million  
Total — \$24.3 million

### Fine & performing arts

Central — \$9.8 million  
South — \$8.1 million  
Total — \$17.9 million

### Grand total

Central — \$79.9 million  
South — \$59.8 million  
Total — \$139.8 million

## Online coverage

To give voters access to information published before the April 2017 and November 2018 referendums, The Hinsdalean has posted the following articles on its website under the Decision 2018: D86 referendum link.

### Recent coverage

- New D86 referendum total: \$139 million — Jan. 17
- D86 referendum will be \$130 million — Jan. 10
- D86 OK's \$130 million April referendum — Dec. 20
- Fall 2018 election
  - Few financial options if voters say no - Oct. 25
  - Potential cuts identified in the event referendum fails - Oct. 25
  - STEM, student services on project list - Oct. 18
  - Referendum would fix outdated pools - Oct. 11
  - Referendum would address accessibility - Oct. 4
  - Life-safety work an ongoing D86 matter - Sept. 27
  - D86 referendum shaped by many factors - Sept. 20
  - D86, residents working to get word out - Sept. 6
  - D86 board to ask voters for \$166 million - Aug. 9
  - Spring 2017 election
    - D86 facility plans in public's hands — Feb. 9
    - D86 board might look at moving students — Feb. 16
  - Referendum will address 'critical needs' at Central — March 9
  - South library, pool, cafeteria slated for work — March 16

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