



2017 Bond Questions/Responses

1. What is a school bond election?

A school bond election is when a school district asks voters for permission to sell bonds to fund capital projects, such as construction of new buildings, facility renovations and other improvements. If the election passes, the district can sell bonds to investors to fund the projects and pay the bonds back over time, with interest.

2. How many propositions are there?

One. The proposition contained in the order calling the bond election adopted by the Board of Trustees appears as follows:

SHALL THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (THE "BOARD") OF THE AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (THE "DISTRICT") BE AUTHORIZED TO ISSUE BONDS OF THE DISTRICT, IN ONE OR MORE SERIES OR INSTALLMENTS IN THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$1,050,984,000 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, ACQUISITION, REHABILITATION, RENOVATION, EXPANSION, IMPROVEMENT, MODERNIZATION AND EQUIPMENT OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN THE DISTRICT, INCLUDING (I) TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT, (II) SAFETY AND SECURITY SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT, (III) IMPROVEMENTS TO ADDRESS OVERCROWDING AND SAFETY CONCERNS, (IV) IMPROVEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, AND (V) REINVENTION PROGRAMS FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY LEARNING; THE PURCHASE OF THE NECESSARY SITES FOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS; AND THE PURCHASE OF NEW SCHOOL BUSES, WHICH BONDS SHALL MATURE, BEAR INTEREST AND BE ISSUED AND SOLD IN ACCORDANCE WITH LAW AT THE TIME OF ISSUANCE; AND SHALL THE BOARD BE AUTHORIZED TO LEVY, PLEDGE, ASSESS AND COLLECT, ANNUAL AD VALOREM TAXES ON ALL TAXABLE PROPERTY IN THE DISTRICT SUFFICIENT, WITHOUT LIMIT AS TO RATE OR AMOUNT, TO PAY THE PRINCIPAL OF AND INTEREST ON THE BONDS, AND THE COSTS OF ANY CREDIT AGREEMENTS (INCLUDING CREDIT AGREEMENTS EXECUTED OR AUTHORIZED IN ANTICIPATION OF, IN RELATION TO, OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE BONDS), ALL AS AUTHORIZED BY THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS OF THE STATE OF TEXAS AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA?



3. When is the election?

November 7, 2017

4. What is the total amount of the bond?

\$1,050,984,000

5. What kind of projects will be included in the 2017 bond?

In April, the Austin ISD Board of Trustees approved the Facility Master Plan (FMP), which identified about \$4 billion in facilities needs that currently exist across the district. Needs include modernizing, renovating the district's campuses and other facilities; building additional schools and other capital projects. From the FMP, trustees determined projects to be included in the bond. The projects:

- Include 16 new or modernized facilities,
- Address AISD's most essential needs first,
- Include opportunities to modernize facilities while we do these projects

The proposed projects include:

- **Technology System and Equipment**, which may include: student mobile computers, computer lab improvements, network upgrades, presentation systems and teacher laptops.
- **Safety and Security Systems and Equipment**, which may include:
 - security cameras and security systems;
 - updates to fire alarm systems;
 - network system improvements to update all network equipment throughout the district; and
 - cameras to cover special education areas at a family's request. (This is driven by Senate Bill 507 from the 2015 Texas Legislature.)
- **Improvements to Address Overcrowding and Safety Concerns***, which may include:
 - relief schools and school modernizations such as the proposed Southwest Kiker and Baranoff Relief Elementary school and Blazier Relief Elementary/Middle School; and
 - modernizations at Casis, Menchaca, Govalle, etc. (see board-approved Projects Summary Table for full list of modernized facilities).
 - *Contingency funds will be prioritized for overcrowding relief for the northwest, Blazier, Cowan and Baranoff communities.
- **Improvements for Students with Special Needs**, which may include:
 - rebuilding Rosedale School and
 - installation of security cameras in some special education classrooms.
- **Reinvention Programs for Twenty-First Century Learning**, which may include:
 - renovations to fine arts areas at Covington and Lamar middle schools and McCallum High

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- Career Launch at LBJ and Reagan early college high schools;
- LBJ ECHS Medical High School (Phases 1 & 2), including Career Launch (Phase 2) and medical program build-out (Phase 1) after LASA moves
- new Eastside Memorial Early College High School at original L.C. Anderson site;
- new Northeast Middle School; and
- two new elementary schools in the LBJ and Eastside vertical teams.

6. Which schools benefit from this proposed bond program?

All Austin ISD schools are expected to benefit from this bond program. The program includes districtwide projects, as well as technology and facility upgrades at most campuses. The bond includes new, modernized and re-envisioned 21st century learning spaces for 16 schools.

7. What has been the community engagement activities around these proposals?

Austin ISD realizes that community engagement and communication is a two-way street and that's the very reason we are here today and are listening.

Through an extensive two-year community engagement process, where we asked the community what their schools needed, Austin ISD approved a 20-25 year facility master plan (FMP) that will guide future projects. We know the Austin community expects the school district to be transparent and responsive. What people should know is that a very careful and deliberate – two-year – process involving 38 Facilities and Bond Planning Advisory Committee (FABPAC) meetings, more than 5,000 individual pieces inputs to date and 500 engagement opportunities. The priorities identified in the bond are designed to be prudent, responsible investments to enable 21st century learning for a new generation of students.

Bond planning is challenging and while there is infinite need and finite resources, we are trying our best to address urgent needs, balance population shifts and be responsive. Our FMP actually identified nearly \$4 billion in needed repairs and upgrades. We're asking voters for \$1.05 billion because it is within the district's ability to fund improvements in the FMP and repay the bonds without a tax rate increase.

8. When will construction begin on the projects? When will it end?

The construction timeline is different for each project. The online list includes some proposed projects that are noted as "fast track" projects. These are deemed the most critical and could potentially be in construction by fall 2018. Others could take longer depending on how long it takes to finalize plans, design, gather school input and plan around the school year to allow

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an optimal learning environment and safety for students.

9. I've heard AISD say this bond will not raise my property tax rate. How is that possible?

First and foremost, it's important to know that AISD won't be borrowing the total amount of the bond on Day 1. Instead, we have a borrow-and-repay-as-we-go financial model, much like a credit card. Approval of the bond is like increasing our credit limit, but it doesn't mean we'll be borrowing all the money right away. We'll borrow and pay off the debt as we go.

In addition to bond money, we're also leveraging the following resources to support this process:

- 2008 & 2013 available bond dollars
- Planned land and facility sales
- Campus mergers to balance population shifts

The school district has actually lowered the tax rate by 5 cents since the 2013 bond. We did this by paying off existing debts, refinancing for better rates and taking advantage of an expanding tax base. That said, the popularity of the Austin market has driven up home prices, so it masks the gains our trustees and school system have made on behalf of taxpayers. This bond will not increase the tax rate for our community based upon assumptions utilized by the District's staff. We've designed it to leverage a number of district assets in order to keep the bond in line with the district's ability to repay.

10. How much contingency funding is remaining in AISD's most recent bond funding from 2013? What is the plan to spend those remaining contingency funds?

AISD voters approved \$489.7 million. Approximately \$20 million in contingency funding remains unspent to date. Contingency funding represents money set aside to ensure sufficient funding exists to complete all of the 2013 bond projects. These are the available bond dollars referenced above in question 8 that have been determined to be available to support this 2017 bond process.

11. If we approve bond dollars for specific projects, are those projects allowed to change?

The projects shouldn't change, but the amounts allocated to each may vary.

12. How have shifting populations affected the district?

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Over the past few years, we've experienced a slight decline in enrollment. Experts like Ryan Robinson, the City of Austin demographer, tell us this has as much to do with affordability issues in Austin's central city as with anything. People are moving to the outer edges of the city to try and cope with Austin's overall rising market costs. That shows up in the fact that more than 10 of our schools at the edges of the district are overcrowded.

13. With enrollment declining, why would AISD need any new schools?

When comparing the district's 2016 enrollment to the 2015 enrollment, AISD saw a 0.50 percent decrease in the total number of students, but it's a complex picture. Many schools on the outer edges of our district are severely overcrowded, most notably in the northwest, southeast and southwest regions. Some families have moved to the outer edges of the district due to real estate affordability.

Additionally, most of the new schools are actually replacements, tear-downs and re-builds. With the average age of our facilities exceeding 40 years old, some are beginning to experience structural damage that can no longer be patched. Addressing structural needs now can help the district avoid spending more money on Band-Aid fixes in the future.

14. How was the list of projects and the amount of the bond determined?

The amount of the bond and the project list were determined through an extensive two-year community engagement process, where we asked the community what their schools need. We know the Austin community expects the school district to be transparent and responsive. What people should know is that a very careful and deliberate – two-year – process involving 38 Facilities and Bond Planning Advisory Committee meetings, more than 5,000 individual pieces inputs to date and 500 engagement opportunities. The priorities identified in the bond are designed to be prudent, responsible investments to enable 21st century learning for a new generation of students.

Our Facility Master Plan identified nearly \$4 billion in needed repairs and upgrades that currently exist in the district. We're asking voters for \$1.05 billion because it is within the district's ability to fund improvements on the FMP and repay the bonds without a tax rate increase.

In the FMP 52 of our schools have been assessed by experts as being in "Poor" or "Very Poor" condition. Another 26 have been categorized as being in "Unsatisfactory" or "Very Unsatisfactory" condition. One of our schools, Pease Elementary, is 141 years old.

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Today's students require 21st century learning environments where the traditional classroom is combined with online and digital resources in collaborative and self-paced experiences based on student's learning pace.

15. How extensive are the structural issues at T.A. Brown?

T.A. Brown's structural issues are well-documented. Safety is always our first priority, and we will not compromise that principle. Damage to foundation supports in the crawlspace below the school was found to be widespread and severe. Given the extent of the damage, the structural engineers who assessed the space determined that "there is concern that a portion of the floor framing could fail abruptly. This is a safety concern for all school occupants." The [detailed structural report from P.E. Structural Consultants Inc.](#) is available online at https://aecomconnect.com/AISD_FCA/Reports.Html.

16. Is this bond a response to the increased number of charter schools in the District?

No, this bond is an investment in AISD facilities and students. AISD's graduation rate in 2016 was higher than 90 percent. That's the highest it's ever been. Student success is the real standard we're all aiming for, and that goes for home, private, charter and public schools.

17. What's the bottom line, the one thing you want voters to know?

AISD needs to address facility deficiencies and is committed to creating 21st century learning spaces for our students. We can do so without a tax rate increase.

Specific FAQs for the LBJ, LASA, Eastside Memorial/IHS and Original Anderson Projects:

18. Can you explain more about the Eastside Memorial and LASA High School moves?

The proposal would move Eastside Memorial High School (EMHS/International High School (IHS) to the Original Anderson site and start an early college high school program plus partnerships with and near the conveniently located Austin Community College (ACC) Eastview Campus. This would prompt the Liberal Arts and Science Academy (LASA) to move to the Johnston Campus, allowing room for growth. Additionally, the bond proposes the creation of a health magnet program in collaboration with Seton Healthcare Family at the LBJ campus while continuing the early college high school model and career launch program

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19. What is an early college high school?

In an early college high school program at Austin ISD, students are not only preparing for college tomorrow, they are attending college today. The program offers students the opportunity to graduate with a diploma in one hand and an associate degree in the other—for free. Through an exciting and innovative partnership with Austin Community College, every student has the opportunity to enroll in college-level classes. In addition to earning college credit, students are preparing to compete in the workforce, while saving thousands of dollars in college costs.

20. What is the career launch program?

The Austin Independent School District, in collaboration with Austin Community College, Dell Technologies and Seton Healthcare, will offer two new programs for the 2017-2018 school year! Through a partnership with Dell, the Careers in Technology program will be located at Reagan Early College High School. Likewise, Seton Healthcare will support the Careers in Health Sciences program at LBJ Early College High School. Successful students in either Career Launch program will exit high school with the following: a diploma, complete with endorsements; an associate's degree in Computer Sciences or Health Sciences; applicable workplace experience; and a guaranteed interview for post-secondary employment with one of our industry partners!

21. What is the Liberal Arts Science Academy (LASA)?

The Liberal Arts and Science Academy (LASA) High School is a four-year comprehensive, public, urban, advanced academic magnet high school of 1,122 students. The class of 2017 numbers 251 students. The program recruits the most academically advanced students from public and private middle schools in Austin; as such, admission to LASA is competitive, based on test scores, previous accomplishments and teacher recommendations. The LBJ Science Academy, Austin's first magnet program, was created in 1985. The Liberal Arts Academy at Johnston High School opened in 1987. The two programs were merged in 2002 and became the Liberal Arts and Science Academy (LASA), housed on the Lyndon Baines Johnson High School campus. In 2007, the school board voted to make LASA its own high school. The two high schools, LASA and LBJ, are housed on the same campus and still share fine arts and athletics classes. They compete in UIL events as one school. LASA educates socially responsible leaders, problem solvers, and thinkers through a nationally recognized, rigorous, innovative, interdisciplinary curriculum.

22. What is the Health Science Magnet Program at LBJ?

The Health Science Magnet Program will provide students opportunities to explore and

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learn about the many facets of the health science field in collaboration with local teaching hospitals and other health institutions in Austin, Texas. The program design will prepare students for entrance into Tier 1 research university programs and medical schools. Students will have the opportunity to explore health related topics in their selected medical pathway, highlighted by a practicum in health science and a capstone research project. The program will allow students to survey and prepare for the different options in health careers including:

- Working in a medical laboratory;
- Patient Care Science;
- World Health Biomedical Engineering;
- Anatomy and Physiology; and
- Preceptorship.

23. When would LASA move into the EMHS/IHS facility at the Johnston Campus and when would EMHS/IHS move to the Original Anderson site?

Estimated construction timelines suggest breaking ground over a year from now and new sites would be projected to be ready for students by 2020-2021. Along the way, Austin ISD will meaningfully involve campus and surrounding communities around the design process and ensure feedback is considered and incorporated where appropriate. We will ensure the continuity of each school's programming will not be affected.

24. What would happen to the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) that is currently housed at the Original Anderson site?

The reconstituted and restructured ALC would be relocated to other district facilities and will continue to serve students in grades 6-12.

25. How is Austin ISD addressing important issues of equity and historical inequalities?

Austin ISD takes very seriously its vision and mission to prepare ALL students for college, career and life. The facility master plan (FMP) and bonds are only some tools out of many in an extensive toolbox that Austin ISD will use to confront the challenges of undoing systemic inequities and inequalities throughout our the district. Austin ISD is diligently working on reassessing its magnet program admissions process and reevaluating enrollment criteria in efforts to mitigate barriers to entry and increase diversity. Austin ISD leadership is very mindful to collaborate with other entities that are invested in making it less burdensome for families to live affordably in Austin.

26. What if my student is not interested in the medical field but attends the Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ) Early College High School (ECHS)?

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The proposed, new medical high school at the LBJ ECHS campus will be designed and integrated with the ECHS such that students would have the option to pursue a specialty career track. Core classes such as biology, anatomy and physiology, chemistry, etc. would be offered and taken by all students at the campus regardless of program. Students who attend the LBJ ECHS, Career Launch or the Health Science Magnet program would take courses together. Student rosters will consist of students from all three programs when the “crosswalks” align to ensure students will take classes together.

27. Why does Liberal Arts and Science Academy (LASA) need to grow?

The Liberal Arts and Science Academy has received national recognition. There is a demand for providing more seats for prospective students because we turn away over 150 qualified students every year. LASA needs to grow because Austin ISD realizes the importance of offering opportunities to more and diverse students across the district and the region.

28. How will Original Anderson’s history be preserved?

Austin ISD has engaged with stakeholders of the Original Anderson community around the best ways to respectfully honor the legacy of Original Anderson. Austin ISD has taken steps to ensure historical preservation through a designation in addition to including community space and museum/gallery area in a new Eastside Memorial High School (ESMHS)/International High School (HIS) campus that celebrates, memorializes and honors the Original Anderson community.