Brandon-Evansville Public School

Building Bond

Upcoming Election

Wednesday,
August 30, 2017
On May 15, the Brandon-Evansville Public School Board of Education unanimously passed a resolution calling for a building bond referendum election on August 30, 2017. The ballot question is whether or not to authorize Brandon-Evansville School to issue up to $38,750,000 in bonds to fund the construction of a new Pre-K-12 school. This project would include the replacement of both existing buildings in Brandon and Evansville with a new facility for all students in Brandon. These items were identified through multiple meetings with District Administration and Board Work sessions.

**WHAT:**

On Wednesday, August 30, 2017, Brandon-Evansville School District will have a special election to ask voters if they will pass or fail a school bond referendum.

A “referendum” is a vote on a question placed before the electorate. The Brandon-Evansville School District is placing a ballot question referendum in front of voters on August 30, asking them to approve or reject school bonds to construct an all-new Pre-K – 12th grade school in Brandon.

A school bond referendum is for renovating, constructing and equipping school buildings. Like a loan on a car or mortgage on a house, the bonds need to be repaid over time plus interest. These bonds are repaid through property taxes of properties within the Brandon-Evansville school district.

In order to pass, the question must receive 50 percent plus one of the votes.

**WHEN & WHERE:**

**Wednesday, August 30, 2017**

7:00 AM – 8:00 PM

**Brandon School Lobby**
This combined polling place serves the City of Brandon, the City of Millerville, and Brandon, Ida, Leaf Valley, Millerville, Moe, and Leaf Mountain Townships.

**Evansville Community Center Lobby**
This combined polling place serves the City of Evansville, and Evansville, Lund, Urness, Elk Lake, Erdahl, Pelican Lake, and Eagle Lake Townships.
WHY:

Why ask for bonds?

In December 2014 the District 2908 Facility Task Force met over several months to assess the current building configurations of the two campuses and to discuss the needs of the District going into the future. The task force meetings were facilitated by RA Morton & Associates and Wendel Architects. Based on their information from 2014, repairing these issues could cost the school anywhere from $18 - $21 million, after waiting 3 years and quite a few variables, this has now been estimated at $28 million. Included in this cost was an estimate to demolish the 1917 Evansville school building, there was not a discussion of renovating that portion of the building.

The Minnesota Department of Education advisory memorandum dated April 7, 2017 stated, “The least advisable course of action for Brandon-Evansville to take would be to make school facilities improvements at the Evansville site and continue with a two site model.” The information from the task force and under the advisory of the Minnesota Department of Education, led school leaders to consider investing money into a new building instead of repairing one building. School board members felt replacement of the school was the most fiscally responsible solution.

What issues are facing the current schools?

The Brandon Campus was originally built in 1957, with additions in 1970, 1975, 1980 and 2001. The Evansville Campus was originally built in 1917, with additions is 1939, 1952, 1970.

Despite annual maintenance, as the buildings age expensive repairs have piled up. Beyond repairs, there are other areas of inadequacies as the needs of education have changed, such as recommendation for classroom size and building security. As stated in the advisory memorandum from April 7, “In a proposed renovation project, a school district is expected to bring the facility up to current codes and address educational deficiencies as well.”

- **Security: No Secure Entrances**
  Safety and security is incredibly complex and relates to many items in this list.

  Limiting and regulating entrances reduces opportunities for crime and allows for more efficient screening of persons entering the school building. This has been a problem in the past with restraining orders or non-custodial parents having the ability to enter and wander the building.
■ **Exterior Doors Unmonitored**

At the Brandon Campus there are 12 exterior doors and at the Evansville Campus there are 19 exterior doors which makes supervision difficult. There is no alarm system in place at either Campus to alert staff if a door is open or unsecured.

■ **Hallway Safety**

The design of the hallways leaves many areas outside of view of supervising staff for students.

■ **Security Camera’s**

The Evansville campus does not have any video cameras which makes detecting and deterring negative behaviors and crimes difficult.

The current security camera system in Brandon needs updated, due to technology upgrades.

■ **Intercom Systems**

The intercom system in Evansville is not functioning properly and causes a communication breakdown during a safety threat or weather alert.

■ **Street Crossings**

Students in Brandon must cross either Third Street or Hayes Ave in order to get picked up.

■ **Parking**

There is only a small parking lot in Brandon, which fits approximately 25 vehicles. A parking lot is included in the referendum.

■ **ADA (Handicap) accessibility**

From braille room labels to door knobs and doorways, much of the schools are not ADA compliant. A remodel or renovation would require the buildings to be updated to current building codes.

The interior classrooms at the Evansville campus are not handicap accessible without needing to go outdoors. This includes interior access to the large and small gymnasium, art room, ag room and music room.

■ **Sprinkler System**

Currently there are no sprinkler systems in the Brandon building and only a limited sprinkler system in the Evansville Building, increasing loss, if there were to be a fire. Any remodel or renovation would require installing sprinkler systems throughout the school building.
Heating and Ventilation

The HVAC systems are all original from the build year in each section and they are no longer efficient and beyond their life cycle. All are operated manually which has led to difficulties keeping the indoor air fresh. Evenly heating the building has also been problematic, making some rooms very warm while others are very cold. Because of these fluctuations, students have been allowed to wear jackets in class. Allowing students to wear jackets pose a security risk.

Asbestos

Asbestos was once a common building material. Materials containing asbestos become dangerous when it releases asbestos fibers into the air. If the fibers are breathed in, they can cause lung damage and increase cancer risk. If the fibers can be released by no more than hand pressure, it is considered “friable.”

Lakes Country Service Cooperative routinely inspects the schools to make sure asbestos within the school remains in a safe condition.

Is it safe? Many parents are uncomfortable with any asbestos near their child. However, if the asbestos is continually monitored and maintained to prevent it from being friable, it is not considered harmful.

Boiler System

In the Brandon building the current fuel oil boiler is from 1980; the electric boiler was purchased used, installed, and refurbished in 1992. There is a new boiler in the 1970’s addition of the building in Evansville. The boiler that heats the rest of the building is aged and needs to be replaced. If the new boiler room were to be plumbed into the older portion of the building the last estimate was $800,000.

Room Space and Size

Early learning has become a priority of the governor and legislature increasing programs across the state. As a result of this priority and the quality of programs provided by the district, preschool and early childhood programs are becoming more and more popular and we need more space to accommodate the growing demand from families.

For high school students, the changing availability of online and interactive television courses, necessitate additional resource and independent study rooms.
Consolidating Teachers & Staff

Some of the benefits of a consolidated building and staff are:

- Ease of communication between teachers, staff, parents, community and students with one campus. Parents will only need to stop in one building to visit with a teacher or administration.
- Increase consistency of programming, rules, routines, schedules.
- Facilitating collaboration with teachers and administration.
- Reduce teacher and staff time spent driving between campuses during their prep time.

For additional information, visit the district website

www.b-e.k12.mn.us

or contact a member of the Brandon-Evansville School Board

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Questions? Email Warren Schmidt - schmiw424@gmail.com
THE BOND REFERENDUM WILL:

Address Critical Deferred Maintenance and Physical Facility Needs
  ➢ Building Mechanical and electrical infra-structure improvements
  ➢ Building exterior issues such as roofs, doors, windows
  ➢ Interior improvements such as flooring, wall systems, ceilings and doors

Improve Safety, Security and Accessibility
  ➢ Dedicated secure entrances and visitor check-ins into office
  ➢ Improvements to onsite traffic flow, student drop-off/pick-up and pedestrian safety
  ➢ Direct student access to play fields – no crossing traffic
  ➢ Administrative monitor of main entry
  ➢ Building interior and exterior directional signage
  ➢ American Disabilities Act upgrades to bathrooms and spaces throughout the building

Enhance Educational Spaces and Learning Environments
  ➢ Modernization of science lab, music, art, family and consumer science and other areas to meet current needs
  ➢ Separation of noisy and quiet building functions
  ➢ Expand Early Childhood Programming space

Increased Academic and Activity Opportunities
  ➢ Increased space for athletic practices and events
  ➢ Separate performance area for arts and music events
  ➢ Create space for independent study and resource rooms.
  ➢ Consolidate teachers and staff for collaborating, consistency, and communication
HOW MUCH?

How much will the referendum cost vs. repairing and renovating?

The bond referendum to build a new Brandon-Evansville school is $38.75 million. Estimates to repair and renovate the buildings was $28 million. According to the Advisory Letter from the Minnesota Department of Education, it states the "least advisable course of action for Brandon-Evansville to take would be to make school facilities improvements at the Evansville site and continue with a two site model." On May 3rd the School Board approved a new building with the square footage set at 115,736.

What rooms and space will be in the new building?

- (6) Preschool / Early Childhood
- (3) Kindergarten
- (12) 1st - 5th Classrooms
- (6) 6th - 12th Classrooms
- Ag / Health Classroom
- Business / Computer Lab
- Art / FACS Lab
- (2) Science / Food Labs
- (2) Music Rooms
- IT Shop / Lab
- Computer / Design Lab
- Media Center
- (2) Full Gyms
- Stage
- Cafeteria / Kitchen
- Offices
- Staff Spaces
- Full Support Spaces
- Daycare

CAPACITY: 600 Students
115,736 Square Feet

What is the description of the proposed School Construction Project Cost?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Construction</td>
<td>$27,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Improvements</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo Existing Schools</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Field Upgrades</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture, Fixtures &amp; Equipment</td>
<td>$2,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fees/Testing/Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contingency</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond Issuance Cost</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$38,750,000</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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New Construction Cost = $238 per square foot

Will community members, staff, students and others have input in the planning and design process after the vote?

Absolutely. Approval of the bond referendum by voters on Wednesday, August 30, 2017 will authorize the detailed planning and design process to begin.
What is the possible layout?

Why is there space for a Daycare?

After meeting with area businesses it was determined that a space for a day care facility is needed. The intentions would be to lease the space for daycare use. This daycare would be licensed and managed by a separate entity. This design and planning will be authorized by an approval of the bond referendum by voters on Wednesday, August 30, 2017.

What will happen with the current buildings?

There has not been any formal discussion on the future of the Brandon or Evansville sites. That will be discussed if the referendum passes. There is $1,000,000 designated to demolish both buildings if an alternate use for the buildings is not found. It is anticipated that the School Board would like to retain use of the baseball fields and gymnasium, with the cooperation of the City of Evansville.
How much will this cost individual property owners?

The cost per property varies. First, you must determine what your property type and estimated market value of the property is. This will appear on the “Notice of Valuation and Classification” sent out by your county assessor. Then you can compare that data to the tax impact chart for an approximate tax impact. Baird financial has prepared a tax calculator and it is posted on the Brandon-Evansville School website (www.b-e.k12.mn.us).

Note to owners of Agricultural property:

A School Building Bond Agricultural Credit was passed by the Legislature as part of the Tax Bill on 5/26/2017 to provide tax relief on agricultural property for school district debt service. A summary of the impact of the legislation, is as follows:

- Provides a credit equal to 40% of the taxes attributable to school district debt service for all agricultural property, except for the house, garage, and one acre of land on agricultural homestead property. For example, if the estimated market value of your property is $1,000,000, with the house, garage and one acre valued at $100,000, the referendum would increase your property taxes by about $1,500 per year and the credit would offset about $500 of the increase, resulting in a net increase of $1,000.
- Credit amount would be directly deducted from property taxes owed.
• Credit applies to debt service levies for existing and future school building bonds and non-voter approved bonds
• An amount sufficient to make payments for the program would be annually appropriated from the state general fund
• The law is effective beginning with property taxes payable in 2018

Specific information that may affect some property owners’ situations is included below:

**Minnesota Property Tax Refund.**
If your adjusted gross income is less than approximately $107,930, you may qualify for the Homestead Credit Refund (also known as the “Circuit Breaker” refund). This program, which has existed since the 1970s, is intended to reduce tax burdens for homeowners with relatively low incomes and relatively high property tax burdens. Some important facts about this program are summarized below.

• Applies only to the taxes attributable to the house, garage, and one acre on agricultural homestead property
• Available to all owners of residential homestead and agricultural homestead property with incomes of less than $107,930
• Refund is on a sliding scale, based on your income and your total property tax burden
• The maximum refund is $2,640
• To determine eligibility and refund amounts, complete Minnesota tax form M1PR (available online at www.taxes.state.mn.us).

If you qualify for this program, you may receive an additional refund of up to 80% of the amount of the property tax increase caused by the proposed referendum. For example, if the referendum increases your property taxes by $100 per year, your refund may cover up to $80 of this increase.

**Special Property Tax Refund**
If your total property taxes increase by more than 12 percent and more than $100 from one year to the next, you may qualify for a state refund equal to a portion of the increase. **There is no income limit for this refund.** To determine eligibility and refund amounts complete Minnesota tax form M1PR (available online at www.taxes.state.mn.us).

**Deductibility of Property Taxes for State and Federal Income Taxes**
If you itemize deductions for federal income taxes, you may deduct all property taxes paid. Therefore, any increase in property taxes resulting from the proposed referendum will reduce your income tax liability. The reduction in income taxes may be as much as 42 percent of the increase in property taxes, depending on your total income and other credits and deductions.

**Senior Citizen Property Tax Deferral**
If you are 65 years or older and have a household income of $60,000 or less, you may be eligible to defer a portion of the property taxes on your home, through the Senior Citizen Property Tax Deferral Program. Some basic facts about this program are summarized below.

• It limits the maximum amount of property tax you pay to 3 percent of your total household income, and
• It provides predictability; the amount of tax you pay will not change for as long as you participate in this program.

For more information go to: [http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/propertytax/](http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/propertytax/). Under the General Information heading, click on Fact Sheets and then click on Senior Citizen Property Tax Deferral.
HOW TO VOTE

The election will be held on Wednesday, August 30, 2017 at two polling locations within your precinct:
Precinct 1 – Brandon School lobby, 206 West Third St, Brandon, MN  56315
Precinct 2 – Evansville Community Center Lobby, 123 2nd Ave, Evansville, MN  56326

If you will be unable to vote in person on August 30th please exercise your right to vote by completing an absentee ballot application and returning it to the Evansville School Office, PO Box 40, Evansville, MN  56326. Application forms are available at either Brandon or Evansville campus and on the website: www.b-e.k12.mn.us.