

BondFAQs

Over the next several months the district will address questions posed through the most recent survey. If you have a question that is not being addressed, please let the district know.

September 2022



How come the district did not ask for a bond to replace the elementary school since it's the oldest building in the district?

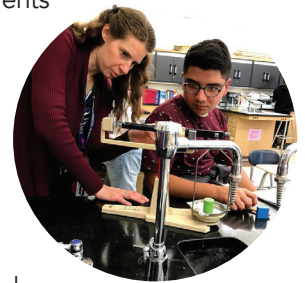
While it is true that Gervais Elementary School is the oldest building in the district, according to the facilities assessment conducted by an independent third party, the building still has life left in it! Remodeling the entire building would have cost more than \$12 million, replacing the building would cost \$65.5 million but for \$3 million the district would have been able to address many of the most immediate needs of the building including new heating and ventilation systems, security systems, window and roof replacement, creating student spaces such as a covered playground and remodeled bathrooms. The motto for this building was "Warm, Safe and Dry." While not an ideal solution, spending \$3 million on Gervais Elementary school would have met the needs of that building for the next 15 years and left money from the bond to address the most pressing issues at the middle and high schools.



the school district asks voters to approve another bond for the same amount which keeps the amount a property tax owner pays constant and maybe even less if there are more property tax owners in the district. If the bond had passed, the district would have come approached voters in 20 years to consider another bond.

How did this list of projects get identified? These projects are not what I would spend money on.

The Pre-Bond Planning committee, comprised of staff, parents, business partners and other community members surveyed current students, staff and parents to identify the greatest needs knowing the district voters would not be able to afford to address everything at once. The projects proposed would have had the greatest impact on creating educational spaces that were warm, safe, dry and provided equal opportunities for all learners. It will be impossible for everyone to agree on each project so asking the people who work in the buildings every day and students who go to school every day, provided important direction for the proposed projects.



Why do you need an outdoor play structure at the elementary school, can't you just use the gym?

The State of Oregon requires mandatory instruction and time for physical education, and they do not allow the district to count "recess time" which means the gym is used every hour of the day for PE classes. Currently, there is no additional space for students to play outside during recess when it's raining.



If we pass this bond now, the district is just going to come back and ask us for more money later?

The Gervais School District is one of only two districts along the I-5 corridor and in the Willamette Valley with no general obligation bond and the district has not had a bond in more than 30 years. This is not best practice because it does not provide any type of dedicated building funds which is why Gervais is now in this situation. Most school districts in the state have continuous bonds which ensures sufficient money available to update and remodel buildings. The normal practice includes that as a bond is getting ready to expire,

Why doesn't the district use the money they already get to pay for these projects?

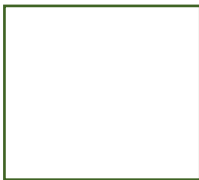
The Gervais School District, like all other districts in the state, receive money for each student who attends school. These funds are enough to pay for staffing, curriculum materials, extracurricular opportunities, and general maintenance. The district spends about 80% of funds, as do most districts, on personnel. This does not leave much money in the general fund to pay for large upgrades and remodels. This is why other districts ask voters for bonds.

The district also pursues every grant opportunity available. The district had to turn back the \$4 million grant from the state because the bond did not pass. The district for the grant again should the school board decide to go for another bond.



gervais.k12.or.us

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A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Gervais School District Community Members,



As the 2022-23 school year is about to begin, the district is coming out of a very successful summer school where almost half of our elementary aged students participated and we were able to bring in 6th and 9th grades for a "jump start" experience before school actually begins.

I am happy to share the district is fully staffed and ready to serve students. Not only is enrollment up but we have more students than ever looking to participate in extracurricular activities. As we get further into the school year, I would encourage you to visit the district's website and look at what each school has planned (www.gervais.k12.or.us).

As many of you know, the district presented a general obligation bond to the voters during the May 2022 election. While the bond was narrowly defeated, the school board is committed to continuing the important work of providing updated and functional facilities to ensure staff and students have a work environment that is conducive to learning.

Over the next few months, the district will have several opportunities for community engagement and feedback. If you would like to participate as a Pre-Bond Planning Committee Member or would just like to share your thoughts and concerns, please reach out to me at 503-792-3803 or email me at dandy_stevens@gervais.k12.or.us.

In June and July, the district sent out a preliminary survey asking stakeholders about the bond. Many of the questions were based on the information sent out to voters prior to the election. We asked these questions to determine if the information was helpful as voters were making their decisions. This is important to know so we can identify areas where the information was helpful, where it was unclear, and whether misinformation may have influenced voters.

In response to what we learned, the district will be sharing answers to FAQs, and we will also publish these on the website. I would encourage you to keep this information as the board may decide in May of 2023 to put another bond measure on the ballot for consideration and this information will help guide voters in making informed decisions.

Sincerely,

Dandy Stevens
Superintendent