

Spring Hill USD 230 voters soon will weigh in on \$60 million school bond proposal

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SPRING HILL – Spring Hill USD 230 is proposing a \$60 million school bond to voters during a special mail-ballot election in May, and ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Wednesday, April 23.

The special mail ballot election is set for Tuesday, May 13, but all USD 230 registered voters in both Miami and Johnson counties should receive a ballot in the mail beginning April 23, according to the Johnson County Election Office.

Voters can return completed ballots to any of four drop box locations in Johnson County that will be open 24 hours a day starting April 23 until noon on election day May 13.

The drop boxes are located at the Johnson County Election Office, Spring Hill Library, Blue Valley Library and Gardner Library, according to the election office.

Spring Hill school board members, during a special meeting in January, unanimously agreed to move forward with the May 13 special election for the \$60 million school bond.

The proposed bond includes classroom additions at Spring Hill Elementary, Timber Sage Elementary and Prairie Creek Elementary for an estimated \$16 million.

Spring Hill High School would receive a new addition for career technical education (CTE) and an

expanded commons area for an estimated \$25 million.

New roofs would be installed at Spring Hill Elementary and Spring Hill Middle School for an estimated \$7 million, and HVAC improvements would be made at Spring Hill Elementary, Spring Hill Middle School and Spring Hill Early Learning Academy for an estimated \$12 million.

Spring Hill school board members and other USD 230 leaders have been discussing the need for a bond for the past year ever since reviewing growth and enrollment projections from RSP & Associates, a professional educational planning firm.

RSP completed an enrollment analysis in January 2024 that shows Spring Hill USD 230's enrollment is expected to jump more than 24 percent in the next five years.

The school district currently has about 4,000 students, but that is expected to rise to 4,875 by the 2028-29 school year and to more than 5,500 in the 2033-34 school year.

The analysis revealed the rapid growth could create capacity challenges at Timber Sage Elementary starting as early as the 2025-26 school year, as well as capacity challenges at Spring Hill High School starting as early as the 2027-28 school year, and Prairie Creek and Spring Hill elementary schools starting as early as the 2028-29 school year.

The school district has teamed up with architectural

firm DLR Group to plan out the projects and Newkirk Novak Construction Partners to serve as construction manager.

Greg Vahrenberg of Raymond James is serving as the school district's financial advisor, and he told school board members during their Jan. 29 meeting that the \$60 million bond would not increase the mill levy, which is the rate in which the district collects property taxes from its residents.

Vahrenberg said that is possible because the district is paying off previous bonds, and the growth in the district has increased its assessed

valuation and broadened the tax base.

Vahrenberg said Spring Hill USD 230 is the fastest growing school district in the state of Kansas based on the past three-year average.

Despite that growth, Vahrenberg said he was conservative in his financial estimates.

"We feel very confident that this will be a no-mill-levy increase," Vahrenberg said. "We take a lot of pride in our calculations."

Lynn Newkirk of Newkirk Novak and Josh Erhart of DLR Group attended the Jan. 29 meeting and answered questions from

school board members about the proposed projects.

Erhart said the commons expansion at the high school will add about 5,000 square feet, nearly doubling the existing area.


He also said the new CTE addition at the high school will be a 30,000-square-foot building, and the current CTE programs will be relocated to the new building, freeing up classroom space at the high school.

The CTE addition will be designed so it could be expanded in the future if additional programs are added, he said.

Newkirk said the

additions at the elementary schools would be about 5,500 square feet and would take about eight months to construct. That's after four or five months of design, which means if construction starts this summer, they could be complete by the following summer.

Spring Hill USD 230 voters have been supportive of the school district in the past. In 2016, they approved an \$82.4 million bond that was the largest in the school district's history, and in 2018, they passed a \$72 million bond that was the second largest in the district's history.




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OUR 94TH ANNUAL EVENT

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APRIL 19TH

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5 West Delaware Street, Paola

EVENT WILL START PROMPTLY AT 2:00 P.M.
For all children Pre-School thru 4th grade

Please bring a sack or basket to collect plastic eggs
(Turn in all eggs inside the legion building)

We will have a group of volunteers to assist with parking as well as directions on where the different age groups will hunt plastic eggs.

After parking you will be directed to the East Side of the Legion building for further instructions on the day's activities.

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**Any questions please call Mike at 913-731-8456
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