



**FAQ's**  
(Frequently Asked Questions)  
**Bond Referendum – November 3, 2015**

**1. Was there any community input on the bond referendum, or did the school district come up with this on its own?**

The bond referendum is in response to needs determined by a process that began with the implementation of the Delano Public Schools 5-Year Strategic Plan in the summer of 2013. This plan is made up of four major components: Technology, Curriculum, Professional Development and Facilities. In 2014, Delano Public Schools developed a comprehensive facility plan for the district campus that maximized the pre-kindergarten through adult learning environment and supported co-curricular opportunities. After this plan was developed, a Facilities Committee was established in the fall of 2014. This diverse committee, which was made up of parents, community members, business members and staff, met a total of six times (totaling over 450 hours), toured all district buildings, and presented a recommendation to the Delano School Board in December 2014. The district then completed demographic and feasibility studies to assess district growth and potential support from district community members, culminating on June 22, 2015 with the Delano School Board approving to facilitate a bond referendum in the fall of 2015.

**2. What is Needed and Why?**

After reviewing all pertinent data and information, the following were the key reasons **WHY** we are facilitating a bond referendum:

- Improved Safety & Security
- Increase Space Capacity for Learning
- Extending Facility Life Span
- Enhancing Opportunities for Students and Community

What **NEEDS** are being addressed?

- Construction of a new intermediate school to accommodate a relocation of grades 4-6 to relieve enrollment capacity issues in all school buildings.
- Significant renovations to the existing middle school and high school to accommodate programming and make needed infrastructure improvements.
- Minor renovations to the existing elementary school.
- Maintenance renovations at the Community Education building.
- Technology infrastructure improvements.
- ADA (American Disabilities Act) improvements to all buildings.
- Improvements to district physical education and athletic facilities.
- A new Performing Arts Center at the high school.

### 3. When will the projects be completed?

New Intermediate School

- Procurement - late summer 2016
- Completion – winter 2017

Elementary & Community Education Improvements

- Summer 2016 and summer 2017 work scopes

High School/Middle School Additions & Renovations

- Early package for select work scopes 2016
- Major procurement – late summer 2016
- Interior renovations – summer 2016 and summer 2017

Question #1 Additions

- Fall 2017 completion

Question #2 Additions – Winter 2017

- Spring 2018 completion

### 4. Who will benefit?

**EVERYONE!** – students, families, community members, etc. We are asking voters to approve \$65 million dollars in school funding. For this amount of money, EVERY BUILDING will be improved, enhanced, secured, along with district physical education/athletic facilities. **Who will benefit?**

- All Early Childhood, Pre-K, and Elementary School Families
- All Middle School Families
- All High School Families
- All Special Education Families
- All Teachers and Staff
- All Delano Public School District Community Members

### 5. Where can I find more information on the bond referendum?

The district website, <http://www.delano.k12.mn.us/>, has the most accurate and up-to-date information. You can also email [referendum@delanoschools.org](mailto:referendum@delanoschools.org) or call 763.972.3365, ext. 2111. If you have a group of people and would like Superintendent Matt Schoen to explain the bond referendum in detail, you can also schedule a presentation for your group by calling 763.972.3365, ext. 2111.

### 6. How is a bond referendum different from an operating levy?

A **bond referendum** asks voters to support using bond money for the purpose of building projects. An **operating levy** asks voters to support additional funds to finance learning by hiring teachers, utility bill costs, purchasing learning materials required to run our schools, etc. While both require voter support, the two different funding sources can only be used for the required intent and are completely separate from one another.

### 7. What will happen if the bond referendum fails?

This plan is the direct outcome of months of effort and development. As such, there is no plan B ready to be implemented. If the referendum fails, the district will need to go into planning again to determine the next course of action. What we can say is this:

- The needs won't go away. Physical conditions will continue to age, or in some cases deteriorate and the district will need to find some way to address those issues.
- The time to address these issues is now. The costs will only increase with time. If the district chooses to go back to the community to ask for support on the same issue again, the costs will almost certainly be higher.

**8. What is the review process for this work – does the Minnesota Department of Education get involved?**

The district provided the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) with all of the required documentation for the proposed improvements and referendum in the form of a "Review & Comment". The MDE reviewed all the submitted information and approved the project as being both fiscally sound and educationally appropriate. For more information on the "Review & Comment" it is on the district website under Referendum 2015.

**9. I am hearing that there are already plans finished for the school improvements. Is that true?**

No, there are no plans yet. However, parameters have been determined to establish a budget for the facility needs. This includes square footage for additions, number of rooms, quality of building systems, etc., as defined by planning efforts and committees.

**10. What will the intermediate school look like? Can I see a picture of it?**

The intermediate school has not been designed yet, so there is no picture of it. Just as it was important to involve the many users during the planning efforts, it is equally important that many people be involved in the design of the projects. Once the referendum is successful, Design Planning Groups will be established including community members, teachers, staff, and even students to work with the architects in developing the design of the school to make sure it reflects the values of the community.

**11. I am hearing the district is asking for "fancy" features. Is this going to be a Taj Mahal?**

No, the intermediate school will not be a palace. The district was responsible in establishing the quality levels for construction of school buildings including materials, mechanical and electrical systems and finishes. The cost estimates are based on these parameters, and the buildings will use these criteria as a guideline for design. The buildings will reflect current educational needs and quality of materials to meet the needs of our community without being "over designed".

**12. Why does the district have to resurface two of the athletic fields with multi-purpose synthetic turf? Is synthetic surf safe?**

Delano Public Schools and the community have outgrown the current activities/athletic field space because of the addition of extra-curricular offerings, youth team expansion and community-wide use. From April to October school teams and community groups compete for available space. Resurfacing two of our current fields with synthetic turf will increase the time these fields can be utilized for practices and games and will help the district avoid having to purchase additional land to house more field space. Resurfacing two fields with multi-purpose synthetic turf will also increase available space by eliminating field shutdowns due to overuse and wear/tear. In addition, it will save the district money overtime by eliminating the need to water, fertilize and mow.

In 2004, the NCAA conducted a study comparing injury rates between natural and synthetic turf. The injury rate during practice was 4.4% on natural turf (grass), and 3.5% on synthetic turf. An analysis by FIFA's Medical Assessment and Research Centre of the incidence and severity of injuries sustained on grass and synthetic turf during two FIFA U-17 World Championships. According to FIFA, "The research showed that there was very little difference in the incidence, nature and causes of injuries observed during games played on artificial turf

compared with those played on grass.” Made with resilient materials for safety, synthetic turf sports fields provide a uniform and consistent playing surface. *This information was taken from the Synthetic Turf Council’s website at [www.SyntheticTurfCouncil.org](http://www.SyntheticTurfCouncil.org).*

### **13. Why do we need a new Performing Arts Center?**

A new performing arts center is needed strictly due to capacity needs. We have a wonderful, newly renovated auditorium that was originally designed to house the entire student population of the high school or middle school. Currently, we can barely house two grades from each school in the auditorium at one time. We have to facilitate our middle school concerts in shifts due to the lack of space. A new performing arts center will seat approximately 800 students to meet the capacity needs of our fine arts programs and all school assemblies. In addition, our community will be able to host events with the appropriate seating capacity as well.

### **14. Will the community, staff, students, and others have input in the planning/design process after the vote?**

Absolutely! Approval of the facilities plan by voters on November 3 will authorize the detailed planning and design process to begin. The design process will involve interested staff and community to provide critical input related to specific needs within each space and within the facility as a whole.

### **15. Why didn’t the district take care of the buildings in the first place so we wouldn’t need to spend this much to fix them?**

The district’s yearly deferred maintenance budget is only a fraction of the cost of some of these major needs. While the district staff does a fantastic job of keeping the buildings operational and looking great, the size and scope of long term maintenance projects (i.e. a roof replacement), regularly exceeds that amount and over time this adds to the backlog of projects to complete. Currently, the only way to pay for large maintenance projects like these is to ask voters to support a bond referendum to complete these projects.

### **16. I own a \$225,000 home. What would be my increase in taxes?**

- For Question #1 it would be \$329 per year or \$27.42 per month.
- For Question #2 it would be \$153 per year or \$12.75 per month.
- Combination for Questions #1 & #2 it would be \$482 per year, or \$40.17 per month.

You can find the tax for your property on the district website. [Click here](#) for the Tax Calculator and additional tax impact and tax credit information.

### **17. What is the existing operating levy I am hearing about?**

In the fall of 2007, the school district facilitated a referendum that included a levy to operate a new building proposed to be built, the buying of land adjacent to our school campus, and a bond to build a 4-6 school building. The bond to build the new building did not pass, but the levy question to operate the new building did pass. The school board has never authorized that levy due to the fact that the 4-6 school building was never built. If Question 1 passes, which includes the construction of a new 4-6 intermediate school, the school board will authorize to levy funds that were previously approved in 2007 to operate the new building. The tax impact of this levy can be found under the Tax Calculator tab on the district website.

### **18. How does open enrollment affect the bond referendum? It doesn’t!**

In reviewing our capacity studies and determining our facility needs, the district did not look at open enrolled students, but rather all resident per pupil units. Resident pupil units are all students that live in our district

whether they attend our schools or open enroll to other schools outside of the district. Delano Public Schools does accept a number of open enrolled students from other districts. Per Minnesota Statute, we are required to facilitate an open enrollment process each school year. Delano Public Schools allows the minimal amount of open enrolled students, which equates to approximately 1% of the student population each year.

**19. How accurate are the cost estimates that were developed?**

Detailed cost estimates have been developed for each component of the proposed referendum with the assistance of consultants to the district. Estimates were based on costs developed from local and regional cost indices and market conditions, as well as current bid histories for work of comparable scope and size. The costs are considered to be “total project costs” and are inclusive of construction costs, as well as necessary project-related costs such as design fees, permit and plan review fees, furniture and equipment, etc. A contingency factor has also been included in the current project cost estimates.

**20. Why do other districts have higher/lower tax impacts for similar priced projects?**

The tax impact is based on so many different items that a fair comparison cannot be made between districts. The tax impact is dependent on the structure of the bonds, other capital bonds already in place (or expiring), total tax capacity and state equalization aid.

**21. Will there be an opportunity for the public to ask questions and hear information about the bond referendum?**

Yes, there will be community meetings. As these are scheduled, the district will provide additional information regarding dates and times for you to hear more about the project firsthand. The district will also be out and about at many public gatherings. If you have a group that would like information, please contact the district office at 763.972.3365, ext. 2111, to schedule an informational presentation.

**22. If I can't make it to a public meeting, but I still have questions, who can I contact?**

You can email [referendum@delanoschools.org](mailto:referendum@delanoschools.org) with questions. We will attempt to provide answers to every question received. If you don't have access to email, feel free to call the district office to speak with someone about the referendum at 763.972.3365, ext. 2111.

**23. Where can I get an absentee ballot?**

You can either contact the district office or visit the “Voting Information” section on our website that contains resources to assist you with Referendum 2015. Absentee ballot voting for the Special Election begins Friday, September 18, 2015.

**24. How can I get involved with helping the referendum pass?**

The district can only provide information about the referendum and the process that led to it. A separate independent citizen committee may be formed to promote the referendum and communicate why they believe it is important for the district.