



BVSD board to vote on bond language - Initiative asks voters to decide on \$296.8M tax increase

**Camera Staff Writer Amy Bounds
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IF YOU GO

WHAT Boulder Valley school board votes on tax increase ballot language

WHEN 6:30 p.m. today

WHERE Education Center, 6500 East Arapahoe, Boulder

The push to get voters to open their wallets to modernize Boulder Valley's schools is about to start. The Boulder Valley school board is scheduled to vote at its meeting tonight on the ballot language for a \$296.8 million property tax increase to repair and renovate schools, allowing the campaign to officially start.

If voters approve, it would be the largest bond issue in Boulder Valley's history.

Members of the Capital Improvement Planning Committee, which spent almost two years documenting needs at schools, said continued cuts to the district's maintenance budget and aging buildings have led to schools that are in bad shape.

"It's shocking that our children have to go to school in buildings that are not appropriate," said Sally Martin, who is managing the citizens' pro-tax campaign - Building for Our Future - with Capital Improvement Planning Committee member Elisabeth Patterson. "Over the years, we have focused on excellence in our educational level. Now, we need to focus on the facilities."

Among the citizens behind Building for Our Future is Boulder Internet entrepreneur Jared Polis.

No organized opposition has yet formed.

Boulder Valley plans to raise the money by selling bonds in three increments over five years, with landowners paying back the debt over 25 years through property taxes. District officials project the total repayment cost of the bonds is \$629.5 million.

School district officials estimate that tax increase would cost the average homeowner, with a home valued at \$330,000, \$44 a year in 2007. By 2012, once all the bonds are sold, it's expected to cost the average homeowner about \$100 a year.

For each \$100,000 of a home's assessed value, the tax increase would cost about \$13 a year in 2007 and about \$30 in 2012.

Boulder Valley's proposal allocates most of the \$296.8 million to upgrades for program reasons, such as a new music room, and maintenance projects, such as replacing a roof. About \$200 million would go to program upgrades and about \$60 million to maintenance.

Another \$22 million would go to technology improvements, while \$10 million would pay for playground and athletic field improvements.

The plan also includes demolishing 82-year-old Casey Middle School and rebuilding it on its current central Boulder site.

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