



BVSD bond issue passes Money will be used to repair, modernize district's schools

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Boulder Valley's dream of modernized schools appeared destined to come true Wednesday as Boulder County finished counting its votes.

The school district's \$296.8 million property tax increase for school repairs and renovations — the largest in district history — maintained its early lead, commanding 58 percent of the vote. The measure won in both Boulder and Broomfield counties, failing only in a small portion of Gilpin County.

"Many buildings were in a shameful condition," said Jared Polis, a Boulder entrepreneur who helped lead the citizen campaign. "This will be a whole new set of opportunities for the district."

The money will pay for upgrades and renovations that include replacing boilers, adding classrooms, repairing roofs and upgrading science labs. The plan includes projects for every school, although the oldest schools will receive the most upgrades.

The biggest project calls for demolishing and rebuilding central Boulder's 1920s-era Casey Middle School for \$31 million.

Casey will become a state-of-the-art school that meets strict energy-efficiency standards. District officials said they're committed to keeping Casey students together during rebuilding and to sticking to the original plan for a middle school at the existing site.

"We're really glad that the community realized that the need outweighed the politics," said Casey and Boulder High parent Donna Werner. "It's a happy day for schools."

Also celebrating are members of the district's Capital Improvement Planning Committee, which spent almost two years documenting needs at schools before recommending a tax increase.

The committee's chairman, Kent Crawford, said he's proud he was part of the process that led to an election night victory — and gratified that it wasn't a close race.

"This is a big step in the right direction," he said. "The passage of this bond will allow us to enhance Boulder Valley's status as the pre-eminent district in the state."

Next steps include finalizing the details for an oversight committee to monitor spending, establishing a construction management team to develop a construction schedule, and issuing the bonds.

Boulder Valley will raise the \$296.8 million 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 will be \$629.5 million.

Boulder Valley's victory followed a trend statewide. Of the 13 other school districts with capital construction increases on the ballot, 12 passed and one still was pending.

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