

## Mapleton Public School District New School FAQ

### **When is the next meeting related to the bond referendum to build a new school?**

**The next meeting is scheduled for March 7, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the COMMUNITY CENTER.** The gym at the school is occupied that evening so we'll meet in the Mapleton Community Center.

### **When and where is the bond referendum?**

**The bond referendum has been scheduled for March 29, 2016.** The State of ND has a school construction loan program that provides loan dollars at only 2% interest – way below anything we can obtain in the market. The program has an April 1 deadline to participate. We will have our application submitted by the day of the vote. The bond referendum vote will be held at the school gym like the previous one. The voting times will be from **11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.** on that date. Anyone who needs assistance to vote due to access to the facility can let us know in advance and we'll make accommodations. Absentee voters can contact the school district to have an absentee ballot mailed to them.

### **Where will the new school be located?**

Although the Mapleton School Board has not made any definite decisions, property was purchased by the school district east of the current school location, north of 1<sup>st</sup> Street, west of the Mapleton Park Board baseball field. If the voters approve the bond referendum, the Mapleton School Board will explore other available options to determine the best location for the school building. This property is located across the street, north of the new 100 house development in Mapleton.

### **What is the cost of the project?**

Public entities are restricted in how much debt they can incur based on property values of the area. The Mapleton Public School District has a debt limit of approximately \$3.6million with an option for voters to increase that amount to \$7.2 million. The initial estimates to build a new school range from \$7.08 million to \$9.11 million depending on the size of the building based on number of classrooms, gym size, and whether or not a community fitness facility is included. Since the bond referendum is capped at \$7.2 million, any amount above that will NOT have a tax impact to property owners.

### **Can you explain how financing will work?**

Public entities (cities, counties, school districts, etc.) typically need to sell general obligation bonds in the financial market to raise funds for different projects (buildings, streets, water projects). Those bonds are repaid primarily using property taxes. Depending on the size of the school, the Mapleton Public School District may need to access other sources of funding. Those sources could be a partnership with the City of Mapleton or could involve Revenue Bonds. Revenue bonds have NO direct tax impact on property owners since they are NOT repaid using property tax dollars. Additional info is available on the district and city websites.

### **Will the new building be energy efficient?**

The school will be designed to achieve superior energy performance meeting current building codes and taking full advantage of new energy efficiency opportunities. The current building codes include an energy code that requires new buildings to be built to meet those standards.

## **Why build a new building vs. renovate the existing building?**

The current school building is 92 years old. An analysis was conducted to upgrade the property to meet certain building and fire safety codes that would result in the Mapleton School District paying \$5.2 million dollars while not increasing classroom space. The heating, electrical, and mechanical systems of the current building are outlived their anticipated lifetime. The building has served the district well, but education standards and operations have changed significantly over the last century. The children in the Mapleton School District deserve to be educated in a building meeting current education standards.

## **What will the tax impact be for property owners located in the Mapleton School District?**

If approved by the voters, the bond referendum of \$7.2 million dollars will result in a tax increase on properties in the Mapleton School District. We are currently waiting for information from the ND Tax Commissioner's Office on the specific mill levy and tax impact. You can view what the previous referendum tax impact was on the Mapleton Public School District website on the #2 presentation. The tax impact for this referendum will be LESS than that amount, as the taxable valuation of the district has increased since the first referendum. We will post updated numbers as soon as they are available to us.

Two important points related to this question are the timing of the tax increase and how other properties impact the overall tax impact on individual properties. If the bond referendum is approved, the planning and building process will take 12 – 18 months. The initial tax impact will likely not occur until sometime in 2017. As new houses and businesses are built in the Mapleton School District, the tax impact on individual properties goes down. The Mayor and the City of Mapleton are actively recruiting new businesses to the community. The City of Mapleton has approved 150 new residential properties to be built in the next 3 – 5 years.

## **When will the tax impact occur?**

The tax impact of building a new school is typically spread out over 20 years, much like the mortgage of a residential property. The planning process involved in building a new school and the timing of the actual building project takes place over a 12 – 18 month period of time. The tax impact occurs as the revenue from the bonds is received and used to build the school. The Mapleton School District anticipates most of the revenue to be accessed in 2017.

## **From an educational standpoint, what will the new building offer to the students that the current building cannot?**

Over the last 10 – 20 years, education standards and process have changed significantly. The typical classrooms are larger and involve more hands on activities allowing students to do and be part of the learning process. The classrooms in a new building will be designed to allow for more active learning by students. In addition, media/library space will be larger allowing for more opportunities for the students to better achieve their full capacity. The notion that "it was good enough for me" simply misses the point that we have learned as a society that how we educate our students impact how they learn and their future potential.

## **What is the proposed square footage of the new building?**

Depending on the choices made the building will be in the 30,000 – 48,700 square foot range. The choices that need to be made include whether or not the district chooses to build a K – 5, K – 6, or K – 8 building, whether or not a high school gym is included, and whether or not a community fitness facility is included.

## **What is the grade range of the new facility?**

The Mapleton Public School District used to be a K – 12 facility. Sometime in the 1980s, the district reduced to an elementary facility and has operated that way since that time. The Mapleton Public School District is next to the fastest growing school district in the entire State of North Dakota (West Fargo). The impact of that location is being felt with all the building going on in Mapleton (150 new homes). The Mapleton Public School District anticipates an increase in enrollment over the next 3 – 10 years. As that increase occurs, the Mapleton Public School District believes an opportunity to return to a K – 12 facility is possible. However, a K – 12 facility is not being proposed. At this time, a formal decision on grade range has not been made. The building will be K – 5, K – 6, or K -8. A survey can be accessed and completed online at this address: <https://mapletonschool.typeform.com/to/xvEFaG>

What is critically important to understand is that every student enrolled in a public school generates approximately \$10,000 back to the school district. With the capacity of a new school building based on current enrollment numbers, the Mapleton Public School District could repay a significant amount of the debt of a new building from the increase in revenue.

## **Why should I support this project if I don't have kids in the schools?**

The health of a community depends greatly on the health of its school(s). This includes the community's economic health. Quality schools create demand for residential real estate, thereby supporting higher property values and the expansion of the tax base, which allows for a lower tax rate. Quality schools also help attract business and other forms of development. Most importantly they best prepare our children to live fulfilled, useful, and productive lives. Earlier generations of citizens provided the schools that benefited us, our children, and the current generation of students. The future of our society depends on the quality of education our students receive. With the current building being 92 years old, the Mapleton Public School District does not believe the school can be maintained for too many more years before significant system failures require the building to be closed.

## **What will happen with the current building?**

No official decision has been made. The Mapleton Public School District has had multiple discussions with different parties in the Fargo-Moorhead-West Fargo-Mapleton area. Discussions have included: removing the building and developing the land into housing; removing the classroom/office part of the building and maintaining the gym for community use; redeveloping the property into other purposes, including a childcare center option.

You may have other questions that have not been addressed here. Please feel free to contact any of the school board members, the district administration, or the district business manager to ask your questions. Additional information is available on the Mapleton Public School District website: [www.mapleton.k12.nd.us](http://www.mapleton.k12.nd.us) and/or the City of Mapleton website under the school section: <http://www.mapletonnd.com/> The Mapleton Public School District believes the time has come to build a new school in the community. We are looking to the voters to support the bond referendum to build a new school in Mapleton. The Mapleton Public School District is fully committed to continue to provide the top quality education this district has always provided. We frequently hear the students coming from our district are very well prepared when they enter Central Cass or West Fargo Schools.

## **Where can the community go to find information on the project?**

All current information about the new school building efforts can be found on the Mapleton Public School District's website: [www.mapleton.k12.nd.us](http://www.mapleton.k12.nd.us) and the City of Mapleton website under the school section: <http://www.mapletonnd.com/> In addition, voters can contact the school directly with questions.

Mapleton Public School District School Board