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## Littleton ESD Bond Election Q & A

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What is a Bond?

### **A loan for property to be owned by the taxpayers**

The simplest way to think of a bond is like a mortgage. Bonds can only be used for real property that will be useful for years and years, much like a home. Bond funds are not used for supplies or salaries. One difference between a home mortgage and a government bond sale is the number of 'notes' being held. Most homes will have one or two mortgage notes. Government bonds are sold in specific values over specific time periods. We do that to keep tax rates from going up dramatically. Anyone can buy the certificates for short or long terms and different interest rates. The taxes raised are shared by everybody and go to pay the note and the interest when it comes due.

What is a Bond question election?

### **The District Board needs voter approval**

On April 13, 2021, the Governing Board of the District passed and adopted a resolution calling a special bond election to authorize the issuance and sale of not to exceed \$15,000,000 of general obligation bonds and related matters. For the sale to take effect, a majority of District voters have to give approval of the sale. If they don't, then the District can't do those projects.

Why is it ALL MAIL-IN?

### **The County said so**

Maricopa County runs the elections for the school districts within its boundaries. Everything has to run through them and they determined that this will be an ALL MAIL-IN ballot election. Voters need to be sure to mail ballots well ahead of November or take the ballot to one of the County designated drop-off locations.

What is it for?

### **Completion of a new school, student safety, energy efficiency**

The proceeds of the sale of the Bonds will provide money for completing a new school, building or renovating school buildings, supplying school buildings technology, improving school grounds, increased student safety, energy efficiency, and providing for other general capital expenses or for liquidating any indebtedness already incurred for such purposes including for the purposes described herein under the subheading "List of Proposed Capital Improvements" and for paying all legal, financial, engineering, architectural, project management and administration and other necessary costs.

What does it cost?

**That depends on your property value**

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The accountants estimate that *“the Bonds would require an estimated average annual secondary tax rate increase of \$0.2892 per \$100 of assessed valuation over the life of the Bonds,”* or an average of **less than \$3 a month** on the average home in the District.

Why do we need it?

**We’re getting more students**

The District enrollment continues to grow and there are about **5700 students** in seven schools to start this school year. Avondale city planners show 384 new homes permits to date in 2021 and we anticipate over 1,000 for the 2021 calendar year. This means the district needs to consider space for the increased number of students as well as providing those students with the technology to support the one-to-one devices.

**Material Costs**

The cost of labor and materials have increased dramatically since the District began planning for a new school site in 2017. The District will need additional funds to complete the new school to the standards of other schools in the district.

Isn’t the State supposed to pay for new schools?

**It’s too little too late**

The State's minimum school facility standards and related funding are not sufficient to build or renovate schools to adequately support all of the educational and extra-curricular programs the Littleton Elementary School District provides its students. This bond will meet school and district facility needs that the State is not prepared to fund.

Students FIRST legislation, passed in 1998, transferred the primary responsibility for funding construction of schools to the State of Arizona. The District has built five schools with Students FIRST funding but had to add to the minimum facilities to accommodate school programs. Since the GREAT RECESSION, the legislature has not appropriated these amounts of funds and the State does not anticipate helping the District with any facilities until Fiscal Year 2025.

There is a chance that the Arizona School Facilities Board might pay for some of the new school sometime in the future, and that would save the taxpayers a lot.

What if voters do not pass the question?

**Schools will get crowded**

Littleton Schools provide great learning environments and an array of choices for families. We have been able to maintain some of the lowest class-sizes in the west valley which builds stronger relationships between our teachers and our families. We want to keep our schooling options in our community, owned by our community and governed by our community – not to have for profit charter operations to move in and skim off taxpayer money by selecting easy to educate children from our community. To take responsibility for the families moving into our community we need to add facilities.

When growth out-paced facilities in the past it meant higher class sizes, teachers teaching off of rolling carts like gypsies, and sometimes holding two classes in the same room.