

Suggested Press Release

USD 332 BOND TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES

Voters in Kingman County USD No. 332 (Cunningham-West Kingman County Schools) will go to the polls on Tuesday, April 5th to decide if now is the right time to make a significant investment in facilities in Cunningham with a bond issue.

The special election requests the authority to issue no more than \$13.245 million in general obligation bonds to construct additions and make renovations to district attendance centers in Cunningham.

The original high school structure is more than 100 years old. Learning and teaching have certainly changed dramatically since this building was designed and constructed. With its age and much hard use for many decades, it is in need of replacement. The District has certainly received its money's worth from this building. Limited classroom space requires some teachers to share rooms. Mechanical, electrical and other systems wear out with decades of use and can be inefficient to operate and maintain.

Science and FACS (Family & Consumer Science) classrooms are very outdated and inadequate for these important parts of the curriculum. The library is located in the basement and is also considered substandard. Restrooms and other support areas need updating and renovation.

Another challenge is the shop building which is separated from the main buildings, causing safety issues when students go outside to access the building. With agriculture being the core of the local economy, these programs are important for many of the District's students. Besides being a distance from the main building, the current shop building for Ag education, metals and woods, is considered inadequately small for these educational programs as well as for projects and storage. A dedicated space within the main school building would be a major upgrade to these vocational programs and safety of the students.

The safety and security of our students and staff must be a priority. Existing storm shelter areas in the buildings are considered poor and are not accessible. The basement location of a storm shelter area has windows that could shatter in a violent storm and no restroom facilities. Improvements to building entrances would improve security.

The USD 332 Elementary School is considered structurally sound but needs some renovation and upgrades to interiors for an improved educational environment. The existing Gymnasium is also considered structurally sound, but the lobby area, concessions, HVAC system and restrooms need improvement.

USD 332 has no existing bonded indebtedness. Interest rates in the bond market are near historically low levels making the cost of repayment more affordable. The bond issue is estimated to require a mill levy 9.9 mills—added taxes on a \$75,000 home of \$7.12 per month.

USD 332 has the very lowest total mill rate of all school districts in the area. With bond approval, the estimated total mill rate will still be in the bottom 5 of some 39 area districts. A volunteer KIDS (Keep Improving District Schools) Committee has been meeting and are planning Informational meetings in March to educate voters about challenges, proposed solutions, and the bond cost. They also are preparing informational flyers and a brochure to be mailed to help patrons to understand the proposal. The goal of the KIDS Committee is that every voter in USD 332 has enough information to make an informed vote on this question. Voter registration books for this Election will close on March 15th. If you would like to join the KIDS Committee in their efforts, please contact Superintendent Robert Reed at the District office.