

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Arlington Public Schools Board of Directors approves running bond proposal in February

ARLINGTON- During its meeting on Dec. 10, the Arlington Public Schools Board of Directors approved running a bond proposal in February 2019. The requested amount has been decreased from \$107.5 million to \$96 million. Based on the district's Facilities Advisory Committee recommendation, the new bond proposal would focus on improving safety and security at all schools, build an improved Post Middle School on the same site as the current building, and add eight classrooms to a crowded Arlington High School. The total local schools tax rate from bond approval would be one-third less than the tax rate paid in 2018.

Over the course of 2018, Arlington Public Schools surveyed community members and conducted public meetings that showed the Arlington community places a high priority on school safety and security. The surveys also showed community members were concerned about property taxes. In addition to the rebuild of Post Middle School and added classrooms at Arlington High School, the revised bond proposal funds improved classroom door locks, security vestibules at entrances, and security cameras at all Arlington schools at a lower tax rate than 2018.

The February and November 2018 bond proposals, both of which received majority approval by voters but did not reach the 60 percent supermajority approval required, included improvements to athletic facilities, the district's transportation center and drainage for elementary playfields. These projects have been removed from the February 2019 bond proposal to reduce the requested amount. The district will still be eligible for state matching funds of \$11.5 million dollars and may use these funds to pay for projects removed from the bond.

"The feedback we received indicated that there were some factors that worked against the passage of the bond, including uncertainty about taxes, school funding and certain projects," said Superintendent Dr. Chrys Sweeting. "The needs presented in the February and November bond package still exist."

"Construction costs continue to escalate," said Brian Lewis, Executive Director of Operations. "Any effective improvement of the current Post Middle School would

trigger code compliance requirements for seismic, energy and other building codes. Remodeling Post would be a waste of money. Building a new Post is the most efficient use of public funds and provides the longest lasting, safest school building with better classrooms. The longer we wait to address these building needs, the more it will cost in the long run.”

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Parents and community members discuss school safety during a recent safety forum. School safety projects are included in a bond proposal that will be included on the February 2019 ballot.