



Monroe Public Schools – News Release

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For immediate release

MPS BOARD MOVES FORWARD WITH BOND ISSUE PLANS

Citing plans for capital projects to improve aging facilities and enhance school security, leaders at Monroe Public Schools are moving forward with the next steps to place a bond issue request on the May 5th ballot.

The Monroe Public Schools Board of Education has authorized Superintendent Dr. Julie Everly to submit the application for preliminary qualification of bonds by the State Treasurer. The action comes after more than two years of facility studies, committee meetings, community surveys, and Board work session discussions.

“We have had a team of people assessing our facilities over a number of years, and we have arrived at a time in the age of our buildings that we believe it is imperative that we give the community the opportunity to update them,” Dr. Everly said.

The request is focused on urgent facility needs and school safety. Funds from the bond issue would address critical facility repairs and upgrades, including boiler replacements, HVAC, and restrooms, and would provide secure vestibule entrances and new mass notification fire alarm and PA systems in every school.

“Projects were only included if they ranked as high priorities,” Dr. Everly emphasized, “both on facility assessments and on community surveys.”

Board President Bob Nichols said the issue is of paramount importance to the district. “We have old buildings, and we don’t know when our boilers are going to break down,” he stressed. “We need to be proactive and make upgrades to our facilities now.”

The average age of the district’s buildings is 63 years. Monroe Middle School was constructed in 1928 and is approaching the century mark. The “newest” building in the district – Monroe High School – is 45 years old. The other district buildings were built between 1949 and 1961.

“I was born in 1976. Our newest building was built in 1975,” Board member Heather Boone stated. “Every day I wake up with aches and pains, so I think the buildings may need a little bit of help.”

When the projects are completed, the district anticipates cost savings of more than \$300,000 annually from energy savings and reduced operational costs. Over a period of 30 years, consultants project the savings to reach \$10.7 million.

President Nichols expressed his excitement about the energy savings. “Over \$300,000 savings per year!” he marveled. “How much better are we going to be able to educate our students with that influx of money?”

The cost savings reflect a conservative estimate, district leaders stressed, based on savings from new HVAC equipment, energy-efficient lighting, occupancy sensors, etc. What hasn’t been quantified is how much more MPS would have to spend in the future if the improvements and equipment upgrades are not made.

“As our equipment continues to age, we would expect maintenance and operational costs to increase,” Dr. Everly explained. “The calculations don’t include the cost to the district if a building would have to close or delay should equipment fail.”

Jerry Oley, Executive Director of Facilities, said the bond package would enable the district to implement a long-range plan for Monroe Public Schools’ buildings and assure the district’s schools and other facilities are safe, secure, and functional.

“We believe this is a necessary and very reasonable bond proposal,” Oley stated. “We’re not asking for brand new buildings. We’re asking to maintain what we have.”

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