



# FAST FACTS

## Rapid City Area Schools Bond Referendum Informational Guide

### WHAT IS PROPOSED?

The Rapid City Area Schools Board of Education approved a General Obligation Bond election for February 25, 2020 in the amount of \$189.5 million.

The bond proposal is based on the recommendations of a Facilities Task Force as well as feedback from the greater community. If passed, the bond will be used to:

- Improve safety and security at school buildings throughout the district
- Replace or renovate aging and deteriorating facilities
- Increase capacity
- Modernize learning environments to best meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners

### WHAT IS THE PLAN?

The proposal includes three new elementary schools, safety and security renovations at four other elementary schools, the rebuild of South Middle School, major renovations at Stevens High School, and the conversion of Rapid City High School into an elementary school. The Rapid City High School program will be relocated and four of our oldest elementary schools, Robbinsdale, Canyon Lake, Horace Mann, and Wilson will close.

### WHY A BOND REFERENDUM?

A General Obligation Bond is the only funding mechanism that can be used to do large-scale facility improvements. The District's Capital Outlay fund does not generate enough revenue annually to do numerous facility projects, nor is that the intent of the fund.

It does mean there will be a property tax increase of 85 cents for every \$1,000 of valuation. On the average home in Rapid City, which is worth about \$250,000 – that's about \$17 per month or \$212 per year.

### WHY NOW?

- Schools have had to rethink safety and security due to school shootings and other safety and security concerns. Safe entrances, cameras, and other measures are a must. Many of our schools need safety and security upgrades.
- The average age of our buildings is 53 years old. Twelve of our 23 schools (more than half) were built between 1949 and 1963. Since many of our buildings were built in that same time frame, approximately 50 years ago, the time and cost associated with maintaining these facilities continues to increase.
- When many of our schools were constructed, there were far fewer students enrolled than there are today, and the standard classroom size was 500 to 600 square feet compared to today's average classroom size of 900 to 1,000 square feet. There are currently 19 annexes throughout our District used to house students at schools where there is no more space inside the building. In addition, roughly 22 special education classrooms have been added in the last ten years, decreasing the amount of general education classroom space. Currently, 11 of the District's 15 elementary schools are at or above capacity and enrollment is expected to increase.
- The demands of a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment look very different than the demands in the 1950s and 60s when most of our schools were built. Dedicated STEM space, computer labs, flexible learning spaces for collaboration and hands-on learning, and infrastructure to support ever-changing technology are standard in modern K-12 public schools.