

**Hillsboro Community Unit School District 3 Bond Issue**  
**November 8, 2022 Election**  
**Answers to Commonly Asked Questions**

On November 8, residents of Hillsboro CUSD 3 will vote on a proposed bond issue. If approved by voters, the proposed project will replace the 102-year-old main building with a new building that will connect the existing Gym Building, Cafeteria Building, and Ag. Building, resulting in a single building with one central, controlled main entrance. There would be approximately 65,000 square feet of new construction.

***Q: What is the Hillsboro CUSD3 bond issue, and what will it provide?***

A: The Hillsboro Community School District No. 3 School Board is asking residents to vote on a proposed \$13 million zero-tax-rate-change bond issue on Nov. 8. If approved, the bond issue will fund the replacement of the aging main building at Hillsboro High School and connect a new building to the agricultural, cafeteria and gym buildings; improve the high school campus site; and make the high school safer by connecting all high school buildings and installing a single, secure main entrance. The Hillsboro CUSD 3 bond issue is a zero-tax-rate change bond issue and will not change the tax rate. Another \$10 million in funding from other available resources will be included.

Projects included in the proposal are identified needs for the district.

- New main high school connecting all high school buildings
- Indoor air and environmental quality
- Single, central entrance
- Improved science labs and other learning spaces
- New school will meet needs of students with disabilities
- Necessary modifications to HHS agricultural, cafeteria and gym buildings where needed for the attachment to the new building

***Q: Why does this oldest of our high school buildings need to be replaced?***

We all love our high school on the hill. The building is more than 100 years old and has served many generations of students. But the simple truth is that it can no longer be cost-effectively maintained or renovated to serve our current and future high school students. Further, today's best practices for safety and security necessitate connecting all of our high school buildings with a secured entrance and keeping students from going from one building to another in all weather conditions. We will still have our high school on the hill. But it will be a new building that connects to the three remaining buildings. We will improve the learning environment for all students in the most cost-effective manner possible.

***Q: How will a new high school connected to the other buildings improve security?***

A: School safety is a priority in our schools and a priority for our community. If approved by voters, Hillsboro CUSD3's zero-tax-rate-change bond issue will enable the district to make our high school campus more safe and secure for students and staff. Currently, Hillsboro High School consists of four different buildings with 18 entrances, making it impossible to implement best practices in school safety

and security. If approved, the bond issue would enable the district to construct a new main building on the hill, enclose and connect all four buildings and create a single, secure main entrance to better ensure the safety of our students and staff.

***Q: Will a new high school address the issues with energy costs and improve comfort levels in classrooms?***

A: Yes. Current facilities are not energy efficient and there is little ability to control heat, cooling, and ventilation. Whether hot or cold, or rain or snow, students now must repeatedly go outside during the school day to get from one building to another. Heating and cooling systems are outdated and many classrooms are often too hot or too cold for effective instruction. The bond issue will provide for new and renovated energy efficient HVAC, plumbing, electrical and other critical systems that will cut costs and provide a more comfortable environment.

***Q: Why replace the high school now?***

A: The safety, security, and functional shortcomings of the main building demand an immediate solution. We have the opportunity to create one main high school building that brings tradition together with progress to serve our community's students for generations to come without a tax rate increase. There are school districts all over the state and nation that wish they could make these kinds of needed improvements without increasing their tax rate. The district's fiscal status is the best it has been in 20 years. We also have access right now to an additional \$10 million dollars in funding for this project that was not previously available. A new main high school building on the hill will be connected to our existing buildings to improve safety and security, provide an improved learning environment, and protect the investment in our homes, without changing our property tax rate.

***Q: Why is the high school being replaced instead of renovated?***

A: Hillsboro High School is more than 100 years old, making it difficult and costly to maintain and repair. Our high school building is simply worn out and past the point where normal maintenance and repair addresses the needs. The building has numerous inadequacies: structural, mechanical, electrical, functional, safety and security, and accessibility for students with disabilities. Moreover, the building lacks facilities to support the learning needs of students and best prepare them for success in the workplace or higher education. The cost to maintain a school more than a century old continues to rise, and without a new building to replace it, the maintenance, repair and upkeep costs will continue to reduce the funds available to support student learning. Replacing a school that can't be cost-effectively renovated is financially prudent.

A complete renovation would displace students into expensive temporary mobile buildings for up to two school years. The funds needed to install and use these temporary buildings would be of no long-term benefit, and would be better used to construct new spaces to be used for generations to come. A new school is good for students' education, but in the long run, is also much more efficient to operate thus saving our District money. It is good financial and educational planning.

***Q: What are the critical needs identified at the high school?***

A: The main high school building has many identified issues that must be addressed. These include:

- Tuck pointing the exterior of the building and replacing some masonry components

- Moisture\Water leaks through the foundation on three sides of the building
- Windows need replaced
- Complete HVAC replacement
- Electrical upgrade (many rooms only have 2 outlets)
- Wood floor structures squeak and make noise for that room and the room below
- Fire escape stairs will need replaced and nearby windows eliminated per code
- Most rooms need complete cosmetic remodeling including flooring, ceiling, and walls
- Many doors and doorways need replaced
- Stairways do not meet current codes, not enclosed
- Plumbing infrastructure needs complete replacement
- Fire alarm system and communication system need replaced
- Entire building would have to have fire suppression sprinkler system installed
- The old gym inside the main building is unusable space
- Many portions of the building are not accessible for persons with mobility issues
- Building cannot be secured during the school day
- Remodeling this building will require us to bring the entire building up to date with current building codes

***Q: Does the proposed bond issue increase the bond and interest property tax levy?***

A: No. The proposed bond issue will not change the District's bond and interest property tax levy — it will remain the same and not increase. It is a zero-tax-rate-change bond proposal.

***Q: Why is this a zero-tax-rate-change proposal? How can this work be completed without raising the tax rate?***

A: The tax rate would not increase because our District has paid down previous bond debt and will be completely retiring one bond issue just as the new bond payments would begin. Also, we will be using two other funding sources: funds generated by the county sales tax for school facilities that passed a few years ago and Federal ESSER funds that the District must spend in the next few years. If approved, this proposal would not change the district's tax rate for debt retirement. Since the District has bonds that will expire in 2023 and 2028, the timing is ideal to take care of our schools without increasing the property tax levy.

If voters approve the referendum in November, it will allow the Board of Education to issue school building bonds that coincide with the retirement of existing debt, generating funding for capital improvements without increasing the bond and interest property tax levy. New school building bonds would replace expiring bonds and maintain the current bond and interest tax levy. It is important to understand that, for any given year, the amount of property taxes you pay to support our schools might change based on changes in the assessed valuation of your property. The tax rate for debt retirement will not change if voters approve our proposal.

***Q: The proposal on the Nov. 8 ballot is for a \$13 million bond issue. To complete the work, an additional \$10 million is needed. Where is the additional funding for the total project coming from?***

A: To fully fund the proposed \$23 million project, \$13 million will come from bonds supported by the property tax (if approved by voters, this rate will not change). The additional funds will be secured

from alternative sources and grants - \$2.5 million from Federal ESSER grant funds and \$7.5 million from bonds supported by sales tax.

***Q: Beyond improving our schools, how will the bond issue help the community?***

A: Public schools in our area go back for more than 150 years when a “free English school” was established in 1856. For many generations, providing high quality schools has been a source of pride for us. Schools are the backbone of our community. Improving our school building now will benefit many future generations of students and homeowners. An up-to-date high school will help us make sure that our graduates, now and well into the future, are well-prepared for success in the workplace or in higher education.

***Q: When is the election?***

A: Election Day is Tuesday, November 8, 2022. The HCUSD 3 bond issue requires a simple majority (50% + 1 to pass). EVERY SINGLE VOTE IS IMPORTANT. That's why it is crucial that you remember to vote on that day and remind all of your friends and family to do the same. If you are not registered to vote, Oct. 11 is the last day to register to vote before Grace Period Registration begins on Oct. 12.

***Q: Who is eligible to vote?***

A: All registered voters in the Hillsboro Community Unit School District 3 are eligible to vote in this election. Local residents may also request absentee ballots and find a complete list of election dates by contacting the Montgomery County Clerk's office or visiting their website for additional information at [www.montgomeryco.com/countyclerk/elections/elections.php](http://www.montgomeryco.com/countyclerk/elections/elections.php)

***Q: When does early voting begin?***

A: Early voting begins Sept. 29 by mail and also the first day for in-person early voting in the Early Voting Center located in the basement of the Historic Courthouse, Hillsboro, IL. For a complete list of voting dates and information about registering to vote visit the County Clerk's website. [www.montgomerycountylil.gov/countyclerk/pdf/GeneralElectionDates2022.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountylil.gov/countyclerk/pdf/GeneralElectionDates2022.pdf)

***Q: How will the proposal appear on the ballot?***

A: By law, the bond issue must appear on the ballot in the following form:

Shall the Board of Education of Hillsboro Community Unit School District Number 3, Montgomery and Bond Counties, Illinois, build and equip a school building; replace the High School Main Building; alter, repair and equip the High School Agricultural, Cafeteria and Gym Buildings to connect said buildings to the new school building and construct a single secure main entrance thereto; and improve the High School Campus site; and issue bonds of said School District to the amount of \$13,000,000 for the purpose of paying the costs thereof?

***Q: What is a bond issue?***

A: Simply put, a bond is much like a personal home loan, and is a way for government entities, such as school districts, to borrow money for large projects and repay them with future tax proceeds. An individual generally approaches a financial institution for a mortgage because they don't have the means to pay for their home with one large initial payment.

***Q: What happens if economic conditions change and prices for projects increase?***

A: Regardless of any change in the cost of the project, the district would not be able to issue a single dollar more than the \$13,000,000 approved by the voters. If the proposal is approved by the voters, the District will be diligent to protect the taxpayers' investment while completing the project with available funds.

***Q: Why should we do this work now and not wait until later?***

A: Just as homeowners must sometimes spend money to maintain their homes, the District must spend money to protect the investment that the community has made in its schools and neighborhoods. If approved, the bond issue will allow us to help protect the financial future of our District, continue to provide outstanding schools for our students, and allow HCUSD 3 to remain a source of pride in our community.

Investing in updated and improved buildings will benefit many future generations of students and homeowners. The facilities will be more efficient to operate thus saving our District money. It is good financial and educational planning.