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## NEWS

### 20-year, \$271 million bond in works for SKSD

By Elisha Meyer Port Orchard Independent • January 28, 2023 1:30 am



32 years have passed since the last successful bond measure was approved by South Kitsap voters for its school district.

District leadership is looking to end that lengthy losing streak as it begins campaigning for a 20-year, roughly \$271 million bond measure that would pay for the rebuilding and remodeling of select schools, including the high school.

Property owners paid \$2.86 per \$1,000 in assessed value between an educational programs and operations levy and a capital levy, which expired at the close of 2022. The rate would return to \$2.86 beginning in 2024 with the passing of the new bond, which would tax property owners approximately \$1 per \$1,000 valuation.

Superintendent Tim Winter and public information officer Amy Miller presented information on the bond to the Chamber of Commerce Jan. 12.

Winter said the district needs to change the public's mentality on its schools. "A lot of times, people drive by our schools, and they make judgments by what they see on the outside on what's happening on the inside," he said. "I don't think that's fair. We have some amazing things happening."

The bond, which is expected to appear on the November 2023 ballot, comes at a time of economic distress as residents are paying more for nearly all everyday costs, specifically in the housing market. The inflated prices were a contributing factor in the failure of the South Kitsap Fire and Rescue levy in the previous election, which concerns SKSD leadership.

Winter said with the last election in mind, the district needs to be "as transparent and as clear as possible as we move forward and let people make a choice based on the facts that they have."

As of the last update provided by the bond steering committee Jan. 4, the bond looks to focus on five main projects. Slated for replacement are South Colby Elementary (\$50.7 million), Olalla Elementary (\$48.3 million) and Cedar Heights Middle School (\$86.3 million). Miller said the elementary schools are located in tight-knit communities where there is not a lot of meeting space available, and these new schools would offer that needed space. An early learning center would also be added at both of the elementary schools.

While not being replaced, the bond would also produce \$38.3 million for renovations to the "south wing" of South Kitsap High School, where a lot of Career and Technical Education classrooms are located. "While we have great CTE programming and opportunities for kids, the actual physical facility is lacking in supporting those," Miller said.

Winter spoke briefly about district-owned property off Old Clifton Road, saying that future buildings on the property were yet to be determined, but a second high school has not been ruled out. South Kitsap residents voted against a 25-year, \$184.7 million measure that would have funded another high school in 2018.

"I want to be clear. We're not saying no on a second high school," Winter said, "but again, we can't just leave South Kitsap High School to be."

Finally, \$26 million would fund Explorer Academy and Discovery High School's move into a two-story building on the Madrona Heights campus. \$24.3 million is to be set aside for other miscellaneous improvements to schools.

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