

# Citizen committee recommends scaled-down bond package

## Calls for \$7.5 million bond measure to be repaid over 10 years

A significantly scaled-down bond package calling for a \$7.5 million bond measure to ease overcrowding and address safety concerns was recommended to the Baker School Board Oct. 21 by an 11-member citizen advisory committee.

“This recommendation was based on feedback received through community input,” said Superintendent Mark Witty. “What we consistently heard from community members was that the bond needed to be smaller and shorter term and that the district should look at remodeling existing spaces instead of new construction. The committee really listened to that feedback, and that’s reflected in their recommendation.”

The School Board is scheduled to discuss the recommendation and hear public comments at their November 21 meeting.

### 10-year bond

The recommended bond measure would be repaid over a 10-year time period, costing taxpayers approximately 66 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value. That would amount to \$71.49 per year (less than \$6 per month) for the owner of

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- Mark Witty, superintendent

a home assessed at \$108,320, which is the median price of a home in Baker County.

The committee strongly considered a five-year term due to the amount of interest, but felt it was important to keep the cost as low as possible for senior citizens and lower-income residents.

### Other sources of funding

Bond dollars would be combined with a \$4 million state matching grant (OS-CIM) and \$5 million from Baker School District for a total investment of \$16.5 million. The district’s contribution would consist of \$3 million from Student Success Act funds and \$2 million

## Key components of recommendation:

### Baker High School: Grades 7-12

- Safety and security upgrades, including secure entry addition
- Dedicated commons area for Grades 7-8
- Modernize existing locker rooms
- Grades 7-8 locker room addition
- Remodel science classrooms for Grades 7-8 use

### Helen M. Stack: Grades 5-6

- Safety and security upgrades, including secure entry and reconfigured parent/student drop-off area
- Refresh historic character of building with new windows, historic entry and exterior upgrades
- 7,000 SF addition for multi-purpose room (serving as cafeteria/kitchen) and locker rooms

### South Baker: Grades 3-4

- Safety and security upgrades, including secure entry
- New staff parking lot to increase parking and accessibility for parents

### Brooklyn Primary: Grades K-2

- Safety and security upgrades, including secure entry
- Restroom addition

### North Baker

- Safety and security upgrades

### Haines Elementary

- Safety and security upgrades

### Keating Elementary

- Safety and security upgrades

from capital project funds.

Committee members are hopeful the pared-down request will be more palatable to voters than the \$48 million bond request that voters rejected in November 2018.

That measure addressed a wider range of facilities needs identified by the district’s Long Range Facilities Planning Committee. However, the advisory group said their recommended bond package focuses on the dis-

trict’s most critical facilities needs, which are capacity and safety and security.

The citizen committee was formed last summer to consider various options for a new bond proposal.

Members are Martin Arritola, Jess Blatchford, Travis Cook, Stacy DeLong, Riley Hall, Coby Mastrude, Bob McKim, Lynette Perry, Wes Price, Angela Robb and Dana Simonski.

The committee met three

times in September and October. As part of their process, members reviewed post-bond feedback collected by the district through surveys and meetings with various community groups.

Witty said their recommendation reflects the concerns and comments community members expressed about cost and scope of work.

“We really appreciate the time and work of these committee members,” Witty said.