

Edwardsville District 7 School Renovations Possible if Bond Referendum Passes

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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EDWARDSVILLE - [Edwardsville Community Unit School District 7](#) held an informational meeting at Lincoln Middle School on Feb. 16, during which they discussed the possible upgrades that could be made to District 7 schools if the zero-tax-rate-change bond referendum on the ballot for the April 4 election passes.

In January, the Board of Education voted unanimously to put a \$100 million zero-tax-rate change bond referendum on the ballot this spring. If it passes, District 7 would be able to issue \$100 million in bonds for safety and security upgrades, critical maintenance, and more, including but not limited to:

- Double-entry doors for improved safety and security at seven schools, which would bring double-entry to all 13 District 7 schools
- Renovation and reconstruction of the 1925 Lincoln Middle School building
- Remediation of asbestos and construction of a new wing of classrooms at Hamel Elementary School
- Safe and accessible playgrounds at all primary and intermediate schools
- Media centers at Columbus Elementary School, Woodland Elementary School, and Edwardsville High School

Mary Ann Mitchell, coordinator of public relations and communications for District 7, said these projects are based on the input and priorities of community members.

“This is all community-driven,” she said. “If you go back to the fall, we had a group put together called [ENGAGE District 7](#), and the bond proposal’s really based on recommendations from the community about what they thought was important for our district.

“When you look at those priorities, the #1 was safety and security, so that’s where the secure double-entry at all District 7 schools come in. That’s how we’re going to prioritize our projects as well, starting with the double-entry doors and then Lincoln, and then we also have some asbestos at Hamel that we need to get rid of.”

Mitchell said the meeting was attended by about 50 community members, who went on tours of Lincoln Middle School to see the aging condition of the Lincoln Middle School building first-hand.

“The main problem is there’s a broken sewer underneath the gymnasium,” Mitchell said. “There are locker rooms that don’t work, there are windows, doorways, flooring, and lighting that all need to be redone in there.”

If the bond referendum passes, not only would these repairs be able to be made, Mitchell said a new gymnasium would be constructed, the current gym/theater area would be redone, and upgrades would be made to make the middle school more handicap-accessible.

The exact wording of the referendum question will appear on the ballot as follows:

“Shall the Board of Education of Edwardsville Community Unit School District Number 7, Madison County, Illinois, improve the sites of, build and equip additions to and alter, repair, and equip school buildings, including constructing security improvements and secured entryways, and issue bonds of said School District to the amount of \$100,000,000 for the purpose of paying the costs thereof?”

The referendum will be on the ballot for the April 4, 2023 election. Early voting is already underway as of February 23.

More information about the bond referendum and additional upgrades for even more schools is available on the [District 7 website](#).