WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FOR THE DISTRICT?

Significant health, safety, and programming concerns remain in the four schools that were not improved by our successful 2018 bond. At CCHS specifically, State and independent architecture and engineering assessments have identified over $22M of items due for replacement in the next five years. Most of the needs occur in the oldest portions of the building constructed in 1961. In the original classroom wing, significant ongoing structural movement is damaging utility lines and interior finishes. The movement is actively being monitored and assessed by structural engineers and needs to be resolved before further damage takes place. Most of the building systems in the classroom wing are original to the building, undersized, and in need of replacement including HVAC, electrical, roofing, and sanitary lines.

Further, and for all of our buildings, having updated school facilities is of utmost importance in fostering a conducive and effective learning environment. These modernized spaces equip students with the necessary tools to thrive academically and creatively. State-of-the-art classrooms encourage student engagement and active learning. Additionally, up-to-date facilities accommodate diverse learning styles and enhance the overall educational experience. They also attract skilled educators and contribute to the overall reputation of the district. Furthermore, safe and well-maintained infrastructure promotes the physical well-being of students and staff. Investing in updated school facilities reflects a commitment to quality education and empowers the next generation to reach their full potential. These funds will help us to reach all of these goals for many years to come.

AWARDED $23 MILLION GRANT

In May of 2023, the BUILDING EXCELLENT SCHOOLS TODAY (BEST) Board awarded Cañon City Schools with a $23,022,300 grant that our community will only receive if we are able to generate/match $12,950,043. If we do not reach this goal the funding will be lost. This is an amazing return on investment. Consider the fact that the $35,972,343 Cañon City High School project will actually only cost the taxpayers of Cañon City $12,950,043, which is 36% of what the same renovation would otherwise cost.

IMPROVE HEALTH, SAFETY, & PROGRAMMING CONCERNS

As most people know, school funding in the state of Colorado doesn’t allow districts to create large savings accounts for the construction or renovation of facilities. That said, and especially with the receipt of the BEST Grant opportunity for the CCHS project, now is the optimum time to tackle these needs.

VOTER APPROVAL WITHOUT A TAX INCREASE

The District received community support for their 2003 bond election that provided funding for the construction of Harrison School. The last payment on the bonds for that election will be in 2024. This will allow the District to issue the new bonds and still stay under the total amount of $3.85 million they collected for debt service last year. With the BEST grant of $23 million, all of this can be accomplished with a likely DECREASE in the tax levy that district taxpayers will see.

Ballot Question 4A
AN OVERVIEW

www.canoncityschools.org
101 N. 14th St.
Canon City, CO 81212
HOW WILL STUDENTS BENEFIT?
Support of the ballot question will directly benefit students at four of our eight schools: Cañon Exploratory School (CES), Cañon City High School (CCHS), Lincoln School of Science & Technology (LSST), and McKinley Elementary.

- At CCHS, the bond (coupled with the BEST Grant dollars) will tackle our greatest health and safety issue by replacing the 1961 “Quad” portion of the building. The construction of a new classroom wing will replace the structurally deficient 1961 classroom wing, library, and student services center. Considering the fact that almost all high school-aged students in Cañon City attend CCHS, this improvement will impact huge numbers of students.

- At CES, the bond will support the remodeling of classroom learning communities that will better support innovative teaching and learning practices while also increasing flexibility for personalized learning.

- At both LSST and McKinley, the bond will alleviate the structural challenge that is most pressing for both buildings; a compressed schedule created by a singular space that currently serves as a gymnasium, cafeteria, and auditorium. “Gymacafeteriums”, as these spaces are playfully called, obviously create real struggles for scheduling student learning opportunities. Our plan to construct new gym additions for both buildings will create healthier eating and physical education spaces for students. Additionally, they will allow for more flexibility in daily instructional scheduling and allow for greater community access.

WHY HASN'T THE DISTRICT ALREADY PROVIDED THESE RENOVATIONS?
Cañon City Schools has been very methodical about facility improvements, maintenance of the schools, and financial stewardship. It is imperative that we keep our schools entirely competitive with other districts regionally and nationally. This is one reason why we pursue outside gifts and grants whenever possible to enhance our operations.

For example, earlier this year we strategically took advantage of a state program that has enabled our district to significantly reduce our energy bill / operating costs while simultaneously addressing nearly $4M in needed improvements to our aging school buildings. As a result of this program, from a utilities standpoint, we will be one of the most cost-efficient school districts in the state of Colorado. By spending less on utilities, we can focus more funding on the classroom.

We chose to pursue this program as it allowed us to make critical upgrades to our buildings without a tax increase, and without further exhausting our general fund. These two things were (and are) very important to us, as we strive to be great stewards of taxpayer dollars, and want to focus our limited general fund monies on what matters, providing the best possible opportunities at Cañon City Schools. Beyond the state program I've just mentioned, our administrative team has tirelessly pursued many funding opportunities over the years in an effort to give Cañon City Schools a chance to keep up. I'm very proud to share that this hard work has allowed us to secure nearly 100 grants in the past 5 years alone. While this supplemental funding is terrific, grant funding is often extremely rigid in how it can be used, and even if it weren't, we don't secure nearly enough to grant funding to address the major building issues that need to be handled.

HOW DO WE KNOW THIS PLAN WON'T CHANGE?
Ballot Question 4A clearly outlines where these dollars must be invested and the ballot question does not allow the district to collect more than $3.85M annually. Every fiscal year the district must report expenditures to the public. These expenditures are readily available on our district website.

WHAT IF THE EFFORT FAILS?
48 school districts competed for a total of roughly $100 million dollars through the BEST program this spring. The total amount requested was in excess of $500,000,000. Your school district, Cañon City Schools, was one of only 17 districts that received a grant opportunity, and there was only one gift larger than ours. If, however, we are unable to match the BEST Grant request through this ballot question, the district will not receive any of those funds. Rather, they will be reallocated to other districts’ projects. The needs of the district will still be the same, however. The CCHS health and safety issues will still be there, the schedules will still be compressed at McKinley and LSST, and CES will still be in need of a modernization effort that offers them instructional flexibility. The only difference is that we will not have the BEST funds to support our cause.