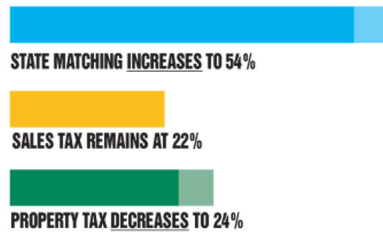


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document.getElementById('elastomer16135').style.display = get_style16135(); }
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- L&T staff report

With only four days to go before the bond election, and advance voting already taking place for more than a week, a change in the state formula for bond matching announced today will lower the request from property taxes should the bond be successful.

According to the Kansas State Department of Education, USD No. 480 will receive 54 percent support from the state rather than 49 percent. That means the property tax request to fund 29 percent of the project dropped to 24 percent.

Using a home of \$100,000 as a guide, the original request for \$9.49 per month will decrease to \$7.57 per month, a 20-percent decrease in the amount needed to fund the bond proposal.

The new numbers were well received at central office.

“It will cost even less than I even thought,” superintendent Paul Larkin said. “It makes me very proud and fortunate of where we are at with our financing. It will be even less of a burden to the

property owners.”

The district has been discussing the bond with the public, as has the Citizens for Responsible Growth, and sharing that 71 percent of the project would be funded by the state and sales tax with 29 percent from the property owners.

While the new numbers are considered estimates until June, the numbers rarely change.

With the new data, 76 percent of the project will be funded by sources other than property tax.

“Overall, I felt like we had good support,” Larkin said. “This is even better for them. Less is better in this case.”

The project will still provide five new schools, renovate Cottonwood and Sunflower to become K-5 facilities, and upgrade Liberal High School to allow West Middle School’s building to become an annex. The cost remains the same at \$127.8 million.

But the property tax, originally set to fund 29 percent of the total now drops to \$30.6 million or about \$6 million less than before the state aid increased.

“We always knew this was a possibility but we had to provide the most conservative estimates to the public,” Citizens for Responsible Growth said in a release. “This shows that we can upgrade our school system in a responsible way for even less of a burden on our property owners. We believed 29 percent was a great deal, and now it is 24 percent. But we only get the 76 percent support from the state and sales tax if we approve the bond and the sales tax. While voting yes, yes is an even better deal for taxpayers, a no vote still results in 100 percent of the burden to fix overcrowding falling on property owners.”

The vote will take place from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Seward County Activity Center. Free coffee and cookies will be provided to those with an ‘I Voted’ sticker. The City buses will

also be providing fare free rides that day, and the Activity Center will be a stop so transportation is available.

Advance voting will also take place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday and 8 a.m. to noon Monday at the Seward County Administration Building.

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