

**Elementary Subcommittee**  
**Explanation of Recommended Actions for Proposed Bond Items**  
**December 10, 2009**

Our subcommittee's point-of-view is that the facilities of GCISD must be maintained in sound condition and the welfare of our students must be assured if our district is to continue providing the excellent education and services it offers to our students and the community.

Therefore, the items recommended by our subcommittee for a 2010 bond program emphasize the upkeep of our schools and facilities to ensure their effective operations, and improvements for the safety and well-being of our students.

Critically, there are needs at each of the elementary schools related to the basic upkeep of the buildings and grounds which cannot be ignored. For instance, there are roofs which need to be repaired, walls and windows to be sealed, drainage problems to be fixed, and equipment to be replaced (HVAC, kitchen, etc.). As evaluated by the District's facilities management team, many of these projects must be addressed within the next couple of years and there is not adequate reserve to fund these items from the operating budgets.

In general, these types of items fall into the "Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing" (MEP), "Roofing", and "Kitchen Equipment" categories, and by and large have been recommended by our subcommittee because it seems clear the only realistic approach to fund these capital items is through a bond issue.

In addition to the facilities upkeep and maintenance recommendations are those for improving upon the mechanical, electrical, and/or plumbing systems by installing upgrades which will make them more environmentally friendly and cost efficient. These include items such as installing upgraded fluorescent lighting and DDC control systems.

We are in support of these types of items because they will help the District meet its environmental efficiency obligations per state regulations and because we have been advised the cost of these improvements will largely be recouped in a reasonably short period from the energy savings created and will then save the District (and taxpayers!) money in the future.

The other most prominent category of recommendations are those related to the safety and well-being of the students. For instance:

- Covering external areas where the kids wait for buses or parents to pick them up to keep them sheltered from the elements
- Better securing entry areas to ensure visitors to the schools are monitored and directed
- Improving upon bathrooms and other facilities to ensure basic needs are met for all students, including those with particular challenges.

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There are other items which may not fit neatly into one of the broad categories described above but which are being recommended by the subcommittee because in our deliberations, we reached the conclusion they were critical enough to the effective operations, condition of facilities, and / or wellbeing of the students to justify being funded by a bond program in the coming 3-5 years.

In summary, of the approximately \$21.8 million in items recommended by the Elementary Subcommittee, 75% are categorized as “maintenance” or “efficiency” items; 19% are categorized as “functionality” or “health/safety”; and 5% are categorized as “instructional”.

The proposals on the list we reviewed for the elementary schools totaled about \$58.6 million. We are not recommending items which represent about 60% of this total cost because we do not believe they are warranted at this point in time (approximately \$37 million in items have been declined).

We regret not being able to endorse many of these items, but in consideration of the current economic conditions, and in recognition of the broader financial circumstances in the District, we do not believe these items should be covered by a bond program over the next few years. Many of them will assuredly need to be revisited in the coming years and potentially addressed as PTA-funded initiatives, future bond issues, or by other funding means.

Thematically, the projects we are not recommending are those which:

- Do not seem aligned with the projected growth rates of the district
- Appear primarily aesthetic in nature or would be “nice to have” improvements as contrasted with those we “have to have”
- Are worthwhile to improve upon a school’s ability to offer programs or serve the students, but we believe are not so mission-critical that they must be addressed in the next couple of years, or alternatively, could be addressed through another approach.