

I once heard a teacher say, “Show me your checkbook, and I’ll show you your priorities.” Voters in Iron County have an important opportunity this November to show that students are a priority by voting in favor of Iron County School District’s bond proposition. I can think of over 9,500 reasons to vote in favor of this proposal—each one with a name and a desk in an Iron County school. Beside the students, here are a few additional reasons why I will be voting in favor of this bond:

It’s needed. As a community, we can agree that the safety of our students is our number one priority. Because most of our schools were built in the last century, they require modification to accommodate basic security protocols. Securing schools is at the top of the bond project list. Some buildings only require new doors, while others need office remodeling and video surveillance. The end result will be schools that are better prepared to protect our children. In addition to making security updates that are long overdue, the district is planning to address crowding by adding a music wing to both middle schools. This will benefit thriving music programs and free up badly needed classroom space. Other urgent needs are replacement buildings for two aging elementary schools. These two schools have served our district for well over sixty years, and the cost to continue patching them up is enormous.

It’s fiscally responsible. Issuing bonds is a low interest way for school districts to raise money for building projects. Without bonds, the district has to pay for projects out of the general fund which drains money away from teachers and teaching resources. This has a direct, negative impact on the education of our children. Over the last year, the school district has performed a comprehensive review of facilities and prioritized the most critical projects. None of these projects are frivolous. The district is striving to provide children with an environment that is conducive to learning.

It’s time. It’s long past time to make security upgrades to our schools. Now is the ideal time to make it happen. The district will be retiring old bonds over the next few years which means that issuing new bonds now will keep the tax rate steady. It’s true that if old bonds are retired and no new ones are issued, taxes will go down, but when new bonds are finally issued, taxes will go back up resulting in taxpayer “whiplash.” The district plans to issue these new bonds gradually over the ten year period, meaning that the average homeowner will only see an increase of about \$16 per year followed by a gradual decrease. Think of it—for the price of a pizza our children can have a safer, more functional learning environment.

Iron County has proven time and time again that children are our highest priority. Let’s continue to show that by voting yes on the bond.

Michelle Lambert
Iron County School Board Member