

The Weekly Comet

From Dr. Tom Meyer, Superintendent of the Bellevue Community School District

Upcoming Events, Early Dismissals, and "No School" Days

- March 7 - Bellevue CSD Special Election for Bellevue Elementary School - Polls open from 7 AM - 8 PM
- March 8 & 9 - Parent/Teacher Conferences; 2-Hour Early Dismissal
- March 10 - No School
- March 22 - 2-Hour Early Dismissal for Students - Teacher Professional Learning
- April 7-11 - No School for Students - Spring Break; Teacher Professional Learning on April 11
- April 26 - 2-Hour Early Dismissal for Students - Teacher Professional Learning
- May 27 - Bellevue HS Graduation - 4:00

Believe In The Blue! Believe In Bellevue!

Bellevue CSD Referendum Information

The referendum vote for a new 3-5 Bellevue Elementary building is coming soon. The vote is on March 7, 2023 from 7AM-8PM at the Bellevue Community Center, but people can also vote now at the Jackson County Auditor's Office Monday through Friday from 8:30AM - 4:30PM.

For further information, check out the following website connected to the district website: <http://www.bellevue.k12.ia.us/bondlandingpage>

Why is the vote needed for the referendum?

Public school district funding is a complicated issue. Districts receive some state funding, but the majority of property tax collected by residents of the district supplements state funding to pay for day-to-day operations, including teacher and staff salaries and benefits, educational and instructional materials, and operational costs of the district. While generally it is considered wise to save money for a rainy day – or in this case a large expense – school districts are not legally allowed to stockpile large savings accounts. As a protection for taxpayers, they are encouraged by law to operate in such a way that they spend all that they bring in each year. The general fund, where state funding and property tax funds are allocated, is like a checking account for day-to-day expenses.

The district does have access to two other funding streams. PPEL funds can be used for small-scale ground and building projects. The state also created the 1-cent sales tax (SAVE) funding mechanism for schools to use for smaller capital projects on an annual basis. While it is common practice for districts to leverage some of these funds to supplement bond funding for major projects, as Bellevue plans to do to reduce property tax impact for phase 1 and 2, it is not prudent to exhaust these funds on such projects. The district needs to ensure there are still funds available for unforeseen repairs like replacing/repairing roofs or purchasing new buses.

That is why districts turn to general obligation bonds to fund larger scale new or improved facility projects. Through a special election, voters of a district give their approval for the district to levy additional property taxes that will go directly to paying back the bond. The additional taxes cannot be used for anything other than paying down debt.

Student Learning



Bellevue High School students participating in the River Valley Conference Speech at Cascade (left); 2nd grade students using their problem-solving skills to combat erosion in a hands-on activity in Mrs. Decker's room (right).

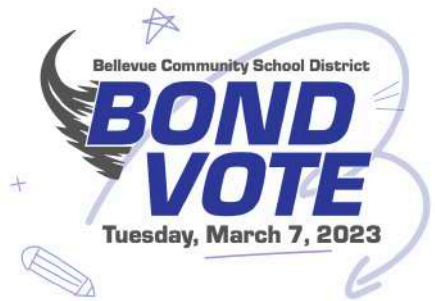


Bellevue FFA

Bellevue High School hosted the NE sub-district FFA contest where 13 chapters including our own participated in 11 leadership development events. Some results for Bellevue FFA members included the following:

- Ag Broadcasting: Tate Giesemann, gold advancing to districts
- Ag Sales: Taylor Deppe, gold alternate to districts
- Chapter Program: Delaney Dunne, Hope Griebel, and Gabby Hingtgen, gold advancing to districts
- Conduct of Meetings: Bel Sieverding, Bella Leibfried, Lily Fondell, Grace Recker, Gracyn Wagner, Lexi Felderman, and Kenzingten Scheckel, silver advancing to districts
- Creed Speaking: Carter Michels, bronze placing
- Job Interview: Tyler Wolfe, bronze placing
- Manual Quiz: Tate Giesemann, gold advancing to districts
- Public Speaking: Rynne Dunn, silver placing
- Extemporaneous Speaking: Adalynne Leach, silver alternate to districts
- Welding: Hunter Merrick, silver placing
- Welding: Teylor Schumacher, bronze placing

A few members of the group are pictured below:



Bellevue's 175-year-old elementary school is **out of space and time**. In order to provide equitable educational spaces for Bellevue's youngest learners, the Bellevue Community School District is asking voters to approve a \$13.1 million general obligation bond during a special election on **March 7, 2023**.



WHAT'S DIFFERENT THIS TIME?

Following the last two bond votes, the district and community-based committee went back to the drawing board to come up with a plan that responded to community concerns. The final plan is a phased approach that costs less (despite current inflation) and will impact property taxes less.

+ Phased Approach

Phase 1 (Bond Referendum)

- PK-2 stays in the existing elementary school
- 3-5 move to a new building at the middle/high school site

Phase 2 (District-Funded)

- Renovations and improvements to the high school's fine arts and CTE spaces
- Other facility projects to address space needs based on enrollment, including a potential addition to the 3-5 building for PK-2

+ Lower project cost

- \$13.1 million compared to \$16 million (2018) and \$14.5 million (2019)

+ Less property tax impact

- \$2.70 per \$1,000 of property tax valuation compared to \$4.05 (2018) and \$3.75 (2019)
- The project cost will be supplemented by PPEL and SAVE funds which will not raise property taxes additionally.

