

THE BOND BUYER

Idaho voters asked to approve \$288M of school bonds, tax levies

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Published

March 04, 2022, 2:19 p.m. EST

Idaho school districts will ask voters to approve \$288.4 million of bonds and tax levies during Tuesday's election to help districts deal with enrollment growth.

The state has experienced [rapid population growth](#) over the past several years that has transformed its metropolitan areas from small towns into fast-paced cities. The state's population has grown by 17.4% since the 2010 Census, when Idaho was the nation's fourth-fastest growing state and had a population of 1.6 million, according to a Pew Trusts report.

The requests come from 41 of Idaho's 115 districts in amounts ranging from a two-year, \$150,000 supplemental levy in the Mackay Joint School District to an \$80 million bond issue for a new middle school and other upgrades in the Jefferson County School District.

The total comes in slightly less than the nearly \$300 million sought in last March's election and is substantially less than the \$715 million of bonds and levies put to voters in 2017.

Four school districts are floating \$176.9 million of bond measures to fund construction of new schools or make improvements to existing schools.



Four school districts are floating \$176.9 million in bond measures to fund school construction to deal with the state's growing population. **AdobeStock**

Jefferson County School District in Rigby, in fast-growing southeastern Idaho, is seeking \$80 million for a slew of projects, including construction of a new middle school, a project to renovate Rigby Middle School into a career technical education center and a new gym.

Vallivue School District, located in Caldwell and Nampa, is seeking \$55 million for two new elementary schools; Madison School District is seeking \$25.5 million for a new elementary school and other upgrades and Boundary County School District is seeking \$16.4 million for a new elementary school.

Jefferson Superintendent Chad Martin assured voters in a [YouTube video](#) that approval of the bond measures would not result in an increase in the tax levy. The school district has seen enrollment grow from 4,093 during the 2005-06 school year to 6,661 in 2021-22.

School bond measures require two-thirds voter approval.

Another 37 school districts are asking for \$84.6 million of supplemental funding.

Four districts are asking for a total of \$26.9 million of increases through plant-facilities levies, which have a maximum term of 10 years and can be used for capital projects, but not new buildings. They require either 55%, 60% or two-thirds majority to pass, depending on the percent of district market value levied.