

THE COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REVIEW
AND COMMENT ON THE SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROPOSAL OF
STAPLES-MOTLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT, ISD #2170-01

A review and comment must be provided on a school district construction project proposal before the district conducts a referendum, solicits bids, or issues bonds for the project. A project proposal has been submitted for review and comment according to requirements set forth in Minnesota Statutes, Section 123B.71, subdivisions 9 and 10, and Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.72. The district provides the following information:

- The geographic area and population to be served:
 - preschool through grade 12 student enrollment for the past five years, and
 - student enrollment projections for the next five years.
- A list of existing school facilities:
 - by year constructed,
 - their uses, and
 - an assessment of the extent to which alternate facilities are available within school district boundaries and in adjacent school districts.
- A list of specific deficiencies of the facility:
 - demonstrating the need for a new or renovated facility to be provided,
 - the process used to determine the deficiencies,
 - a list of those deficiencies that will and will not be addressed by the proposed projects,
 - a list of specific benefits that the new or renovated facility will provide to students, teachers, and community users served by the facility.
- A description of the project, including:
 - specifications of site and outdoor space acreage,
 - square footage allocations for classrooms, laboratories and support spaces,
 - estimated expenditures for major portions of the project,
 - estimated changes in facility operating costs, and
 - dates the project will begin and be completed.
- A specification of the source of project financing, including:
 - applicable statutory citations,
 - the scheduled date for a bond issue or school board action,
 - a schedule of payments, including debt service equalization aid, and
 - the effect of a bond issue on local property taxes by property class and valuation.
- Documentation obligating the school district and contractors to comply with the following items:
 - Minnesota Statutes, Section 471.345 governing municipal contracts,
 - sustainable design,
 - school facility commissioning under Minnesota Statutes, Section 123B.72, certifying the plans and designs for heating, ventilating, air conditioning and air filtration for an extensively renovated or new facility meet or exceed current code standards, including ASHRAE air filtration Standard 52.1,
 - American National Standards Institute (ANSI) acoustical performance criteria, design requirements and guidelines for schools on maximum background noise levels and reverberation times,
 - state fire code,
 - chapter 326B governing building codes, and
 - consultation with affected government units about the impact of the project on utilities, roads, sewers, sidewalks, retention ponds, school bus and automobile traffic, access to mass transit and safe access for pedestrians and cyclists.

Description of Proposed School Construction Project

Staples-Motley School District, Independent School District #2170-01, is proposing a single question bond referendum on April 14, 2026, to finance renovations and building additions to their existing elementary school, middle/high school and outdoor athletic facilities.

The largest project components focus on renovations to the middle/high school, including classrooms areas, restrooms, locker rooms and the auditorium. Other proposed upgrades at the middle/high school include a CTE space addition, secure entrance/administrative space addition, building envelope upgrades and site improvements. Proposed upgrades at the elementary school include a classroom addition and restroom renovations. Proposed outdoor athletic facility upgrades include: track replacement, football field upgrades, new bleachers, press box and scoreboard, along with a concession stand with restrooms.

The proposed projects are estimated to cost \$42,886,249 and would be scheduled for completion in the 2027-2029 calendar years. Cost estimates by location/project component are as follows:

Middle/High School		Elementary School	
Additions:		Classroom Addition	\$3,044,000
CTE Space / Classrooms	\$4,587,800	Restroom Renovations	\$880,000
Secure Entrance / Admin Offices	\$528,000	FF&E / Technology	\$832,000
	\$5,115,800	Fees, Permits & Testing	\$1,112,454
Renovations:		Contingencies	\$525,816
Locker Room Area	\$895,900		\$6,394,270
Restrooms	\$1,540,000	Outdoor Athletic Facility Upgrades	
Classrooms	\$7,879,539	Track Replacement	\$1,100,000
Auditorium Area	\$1,000,000	Football Field Upgrades	\$800,000
	\$11,315,439	Bleachers/Pressbox/Scoreboard	\$838,000
Other Projects:		Concession Stand / Restrooms	\$634,000
Building Envelope Improvements	\$2,109,922	Fees, Permits & Testing	\$823,397
Site Improvements	\$260,000	Contingencies	\$451,848
FF&E / Technology	\$1,864,148		\$4,647,245
Fees, Permits & Testing	\$4,950,736		
Contingencies	\$2,353,591		
	\$11,538,397	Total Project Costs	\$42,886,249
Other Costs (Both Buildings):			
Capitalized Interest	\$3,234,583		
Bond Issuance	\$640,515		
	\$3,875,098		

The school district is projecting a slight increase in enrollment over the next few years but is losing a large number of resident students to neighboring school district via open enrollment. In the 2024-2025 school year, 28 students open enrolled into the school district and 475 students open enrolled out of the district: a net loss of 447 students. With an existing K-12 enrollment of around 900 students, the open enrollment loss is significant.

If the bond referendum is successful and bonds are sold, the debt service on the bonds will be eligible for debt service equalization under Minnesota Statutes, Section 123B.53, subdivision 3, if the bond schedule is approved. The amount of debt service equalization aid, if any, the district receives is determined annually and dependent upon property wealth, student population, and other statutory requirements.

Review and Comment Statement

Based on the department’s analysis of the school district’s required documentation and other pertinent information from sources of the Minnesota Department of Education, the Commissioner of Education provides a positive review and comment.

Additional Information is Available

Persons desiring additional information regarding this proposal should contact the school district superintendent’s office.

Willie L. Jett II, Commissioner

January 13, 2026