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Voters Defeat Proposed School Bond

Voters in the Baker School District defeated a proposed $48 million school construction bond Tuesday, sending district officials back to the drawing board on how to address critical concerns about facilities.

The measure would have funded a new elementary school grades 1-6 and remodeled Brooklyn Elementary into a birth to kindergarten center. All schools would have received safety and security upgrades. It also would have paid for renovating Baker High School to accommodate seventh and eighth graders, allowing them to take more vocational classes and advanced coursework.

District voters haven’t approved a school construction bond since 1948.

While the loss was disappointing, Superintendent Mark Witty said the district’s urgent facilities needs remain unresolved. He will review results with the Baker School Board of Directors to determine next steps.

“Our elementary schools and middle school are still overcrowded,” said Witty. “Our buildings still have safety and efficiency issues. We will need to re-evaluate and figure out how to address these issues.”

Witty expressed gratitude to all of the volunteers who participated in the bond campaign. The “Yes For Kids” Political Action Committee, chaired by Kim Mosier, undertook a variety of activities this fall to share information and advocate for the bond.
About Baker School District 5J

Nationally recognized Baker School District 5J (BSD) in Baker City, OR, is the largest of three rural school districts in Baker County, serving 1,700 students and employing over 235 educators and staff. District elementary schools include Brooklyn Primary School, Haines Elementary, Keating Elementary School, and South Baker Intermediate. Baker Middle School and two high schools, Baker High School and Eagle Cap Innovative High School, are also part of BSD. Additionally, BSD sponsors two charter schools, Baker Web Academy and Baker Early College, each offering teacher-supported online education. BSD provides next generation education for the future of Eastern Oregonians and launched Baker Technical Institute (BTI), a career and technical program that partners with regional employers and industry experts to provide an innovative education in hands-on fields. BSD believes strong schools are the foundation of strong and vibrant communities and is committed to prepare students to become successful life-long learner.

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The Baker 5J schools exist to be the center of community vitality eliminating the barriers for gratifying individual educational experiences in order to have capable contributing citizens with character.