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Voters approve school bonds

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Sara Alvarado assists voter Shirley Young at the Military Heights Elementary School polling location during Tuesday's bond election. ([Daily Record/Mark Wilson](#))

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Both Roswell Independent School District bonds on Tuesday's ballot passed by a landslide.

Bond 1 for \$16 million, which will fund the district's master plan for renovating and updating aging buildings, passed by 72 percent. Bond 2, which will pay \$7 million to replace the heating and cooling system at Roswell High School and update science labs at Roswell and Goddard high schools, passed by 70 percent.

Director of Instructional Programs Brian Shea, who staked out the county clerk's office as the numbers rolled in, said he was pleased, but not surprised.

"I never like to guess, but we were confident," he said. "We hoped they would support us, and they have. They always have."

He admitted there had been some concerns that negative publicity surrounding the mold situation at Goddard High

School could dampen support, and was glad that it didn't seem to have an impact.

"We were just hoping the community would support the children, and they did," he added.

The school board was informed of the bond's victory during their board meeting on Tuesday night. Superintendent Mike Gottlieb took a break from the executive session to comment.

"We're real excited," he said. "We appreciate the voters, them coming out and voting and supporting the schools."

He said district officials knew they had to do a lot of outreach to convince people the bond was needed.

"We want to be very transparent, to show them how the money's spent," he added.

He believes that the vote will prove to businesses considering moving to Roswell that the community supports the school system.

County Clerk Rhoda Coakley was satisfied with the results as well.

"I think it's very happy to see this, because our community is very upbeat even in these hard economic times," she said.

She was less happy with the turnout, which, at around 2,300, was about 7.8 percent of the registered voters in Roswell. She said the last bond election in 2007 drew closer to 3,300 voters.

"It's just difficult to get people to come out and vote on one issue," she said. "People are busy."

She noted that early voting drew a large number of people, with almost 800 people casting their votes before last Friday.

Both bonds won handily at all nine polling stations. Voters at Military Heights Elementary School supported both bonds by the largest margin, with 87 percent voting for Bond 1 and 82 percent favoring Bond 2. Turnout was highest at Goddard High School, where more than 420 people cast their ballots, with 70 percent supporting Bond 1, and 66 percent in favor of Bond 2. The lowest turnout, around 60 voters, was at Nancy Lopez Elementary School, which also had the lowest support for Bond 2 at 64 percent, and the second-lowest support for Bond 1 at 65 percent. Opposition to Bond 1 was highest at Sunset Elementary, where 37 percent of voters were against it.