

Lewisville ISD Council of PTAs

VOTER GUIDE

LISD Bond Referendum 2017

About this Voter Guide

Lewisville ISD Council of PTAs is presenting this Voter Guide to serve as a resource for voters to evaluate the LISD bond referendum. Voters will be asked to vote for or against the issuance of \$737,550,000 in bonds by Lewisville Independent School District for district building and equipment needs, falling within the following categories: Existing facilities, new facilities, technology, career and technical education, athletics, fine arts, and safety and security. The election will be held May 6, with early voting from April 24 - May 2. Visit www.votedenton.com/ for more information about the election.

We invited the following groups to complete this questionnaire:

- Lewisville ISD, which can educate and inform but cannot advocate for or against the bond;
- Lewisville C.A.R.E.S. (Citizens Acting for Responsible Education Spending), a political action committee that opposes the bond; and
- Vote Yes Lewisville ISD PAC, a political action committee that supports the bond.

Lewisville ISD declined to participate. Amanda Brim, executive director of communications, provided the following statement:

While we appreciate the offer to complete the questionnaire for the Lewisville ISD Council of PTAs Voter Guide, we must respectfully decline as it would require the district to take a position of support or opposition to the bond referendum. Our role during this election cycle is strictly limited to providing factual information to voters to assist them in their decision making process. We are thrilled to see citizens throughout our community becoming passionate over the future of our schools and look forward to seeing a strong turnout during early voting and on election day. For information on the upcoming bond referendum please visit our website at www.lewisvilleisdbonds.com.

We asked each of the groups to share their positions on the provided topics regarding the bond referendum. Responses by Lewisville C.A.R.E.S. PAC and Vote Yes Lewisville ISD PAC follow.

Your group's name/website/other contact info

Lewisville C.A.R.E.S. (Citizens Acting for Responsible Education Spending)

<http://lewisvillecares.org/>

LewisvilleCares@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/CARESLewisville>

Vote Yes Lewisville ISD PAC

voteyeslewisvilleisd.com

Brief summary of why you oppose/support the bond

Lewisville C.A.R.E.S.

Lewisville CARES began in February 2017 when a group of concerned citizens banded together with a shared interest to defeat the May 2017 Lewisville ISD Bond Package. Believing the bond is full of unnecessary projects and concerned about the proposed tear down of two neighborhood schools, College Street and Hedrick Elementary, these citizens want to communicate to voters the negative impact of passing the bond.

Vote Yes Lewisville ISD

The most important thing we can do for our community is focus on having schools of excellence. We believe that managing our fast growth areas as well as investing in our classrooms and successful programs such as our career and technology centers and award winning extra curricular activities is the best way to maintain our academic excellence.

Note: The groups were asked to explain their positions on the following topics regarding the bond.

The Facilities Advisory Committee Process

Lewisville C.A.R.E.S.

LISD spent \$30,000 on a facilitator whose job was to make sure the FAC approved bond items. Members were told to approach items at a 30,000 foot level without worrying about details. Other than leaving off a few priority 2 and 3 items, and one priority 1, Hedrick ES, no items or dollar amounts were changed. Members expressed frustration at how quickly the decision process moved, as well as the inability to make changes after voting was done. Members who disagreed with the bond were reluctant to veto the entire bond due to their belief that several items were necessary.

Vote Yes Lewisville ISD

The 2017 Lewisville ISD bond referendum was developed by a volunteer citizens committee commissioned by the Board of Trustees. For four months, the committee comprised of 80 teachers, parents, grandparents, financial advisors and business leaders analyzed the district's financial data, growth patterns and technology needs for Lewisville ISD. To be as open and transparent as possible, the committee made sure that every citizen who wanted to offer their input was given the opportunity to do so.

Lewisville ISD Financials/Tax Rate

Lewisville C.A.R.E.S.

Tax payers continue to pay more in school taxes due to increased property values. Over the past 10 years, debt per student has increased to \$22,104. According to the Texas State Comptroller, as of August 31, 2014, LISD had the ninth largest bond debt in the state of Texas at \$1.1 billion. If this bond is approved, LISD will continue its history of stacking debt upon debt. Bond debt has increased by 55% while student population has only increased by 12%.

Vote Yes Lewisville ISD

The tax impact of the bond package will be less than \$16 per month on the average priced home. Homeowners 65 years of age and older will see no tax increase due to the senior homestead exemption. The district will finance projects with shorter 20-year bonds to save millions of dollars in interest.

Lewisville ISD has won numerous awards for transparency and fiscal responsibility and can be trusted to protect taxpayers and wisely manage its spending.

Existing Facilities — \$249.1 million

Elementary schools – 20 year renovations; High schools – 20 year renovations; Life cycle building component replacements; The Colony High School entry reconfiguration; LISDOLA option A; Renovations for possible academies; Expansion of existing Chester Boyd Ag Barn

Lewisville C.A.R.E.S.

We agree that existing facilities should be maintained. We see no reason why the district can't utilize some of the \$330 million they currently hold in reserve from the Maintenance & Operation budget category for maintenance and renovations.

We cannot agree that \$6.4 million should be approved for "possible academies" without specific details on where these academies will be housed, how they will affect current students in these facilities, what kind of academies will be established, how will the district continue to fund the academies in the long term, and what purpose will these academies serve?

We can't agree the expansion of the Chester Boyd Ag Barn without knowing the long term costs to tax payers.

Vote Yes Lewisville ISD

The bond package will provide basic improvements and long overdue upgrades for roofing, electrical, heating and cooling. We believe that these repairs and renovations should be taken care of by the district so that the principals and teachers can focus less on school maintenance issues and instead focus on running their schools and teaching students. There are several other changes that are proposed to bring schools up to standards or to ensure that schools can continue serving our students while meeting Lewisville ISD's standards. This includes adapting existing schools to become academies that would focus on STEAM, arts or other subjects.

New Facilities — \$205.7 million

New Josey Lane Elementary School; New College Street Elementary School on Mill Street;
New Hedrick Middle School; Hebron HS multi-purpose facility;
The Colony High School multi-purpose facility

Lewisville C.A.R.E.S.

Lewisville CARES supports new facilities that are essential to supporting new growth, such as the new Josey Lane Elementary. We do not support tearing down neighborhood schools, such as College Street, and building the new school right next door to Central Elementary. College Street families have yet to be informed about the plan to tear down the school and bus the students over 2 miles to the new Mill St location. Many are concerned that property values will decrease with the loss of their neighborhood school. We believe that the construction of multipurpose facilities at The Colony High School and Hebron High School is just a band-aid for schools that are aging and deserve more extensive renovation to bring them up to par with newer LISD schools.

Vote Yes Lewisville ISD

Our thriving community is growing, especially in certain areas of the district, and there are more families moving to our community every year. We need new elementary and middle schools to accommodate these families and to keep our academic standards high by avoiding overcrowding at our existing schools.

New Facilities — (continued)

The proposed Hedrick Middle School would be built on its current site but with an expanded footprint. To provide the additional space, the adjacent Hedrick Elementary School would be closed and those students rezoned to surrounding schools.

Lewisville C.A.R.E.S.

The Hedrick issue is a complex one. While we support building a new Hedrick Middle school, we reject the tearing down of yet another neighborhood school and dispersing the community to schools as yet unnamed by LISD. The FAC was given two options regarding Hedrick schools. One option included rebuilding both schools on the current footprint. Community members have suggested options that would allow for both schools to be rebuilt on the current site, or sites near the current location. In fact, LISD currently owns 27 undeveloped acres adjacent to Vickery ES that is even larger than the footprint both Hedricks currently sit on, and would be more than sufficient to house a middle school that meets the district's current "standard". We are concerned that, despite repeated requests by our group, the district refuses to provide documentation showing what current construction standards actually are.

Vote Yes Lewisville ISD

One part of the bond package involves Hedrick elementary and Hedrick middle school, which sit side by side. The middle school is over-crowded, outdated, and in need of repair. After extensive research, the committee recommended rebuilding the middle school. The rebuild would expand the campus to accommodate student growth and bring it up to the standards of newer schools.

To make room for a new and better middle school, the aging elementary school will be retired and its students placed in newer, more modern nearby schools close to their neighborhood. This change won't happen for 2 – 3 years and when it does, it will be done with the input of the parents of the impacted students.

The students will continue receiving the same first-class education they enjoy at Hedrick elementary. How can we be sure? Because every single one of our elementary schools offers the same exemplary educational opportunities and services. For those who rely on special services at Hedrick elementary, they'll have access to the same high-quality, special services at their new school. And, once they've completed elementary school they'll reap the benefits of a new middle school.

Technology — \$99.1 million

Student and staff access - current level of student access; Network and infrastructure

Lewisville C.A.R.E.S.

\$99.1 million is the standard amount that LISD has been paying for technology since the 2008 bond when the district rolled out 1:X. LISD has stated that the technology portion of the bond must be paid off within 5 years due to the fact that technology depreciates at a rapid pace and quickly becomes obsolete. We are now stuck in an infinite loop where we are always trying to keep pace with the newest technology available.

Vote Yes Lewisville ISD

Just as classrooms are changing, the technology needed to teach in those classrooms and the technology needed to run a school district is changing. We are investing in networks that will link our district in innovating ways and ensure that our students have the access to the technology that they will need in order to prepare them for college and the 21st century workforce. We are also supportive of these measures because our board has wisely decided to only use short-term bonds for technology purchases to ensure that our district stays on sure financial footing.

Career & Technical Education — \$71.5 million

New Career & Technology Center; Expansion of existing Career Center East

Lewisville C.A.R.E.S.

Both Dale Jackson and CCE provide valuable services to our students who may not attend college. We agree that it's time for Dale Jackson to be rebuilt. However, CCE is only 7 years old and we cannot support \$11.8 million for the expansion of a practically new school. Overbuilding now could leave LISD with under-utilized building space in the future.

Vote Yes Lewisville ISD

Our Career and Technology Centers have been a huge success for our district. We are graduating more students who are ready for college or already certified for a thriving career than ever. They have proven so popular that we cannot keep up with the demand. The waiting list for these programs is more than 600 students long. We want to make sure that students in every part of our district have the opportunity to take advantage of these programs, equipping them for life after high school, no matter their interests.

Athletics — \$45.1 million

Lewisville HS athletic ancillary buildings; The Colony HS softball field;
Press box replacements; Hebron HS new indoor athletic center;
Life cycle athletics items; Hebron HS practice field

Lewisville C.A.R.E.S.

We believe there is too much focus on athletics in LISD. We oppose \$6 million for additional wrestling rooms in schools that already have these rooms. We oppose \$6 million for Press Box replacements to which no child will ever have access. We support life cycle replacements for existing sports facilities, however, we are concerned about LISD's request for \$1.5 million to repair shoddy workmanship on the Hebron HS practice field. Taxpayers should not have to carry the burden of paying for LISD's mistake.

Vote Yes Lewisville ISD

Our athletics programs are among the best in Texas and we have the trophies to prove it! We have more students interested in athletics and more athletic choices than ever before. Some of our high schools are in need of additional facilities or updated facilities to manage the demand for our programs. We want our students to be competitive and for every student who desires to participate to reap the benefits of our athletic activities. Each school and each school's programs were studied by our committee to make the best recommendation to the bond package for improvements ensure that all our schools could continue to offer the top notch programs for which we are known.

Fine Arts — \$38.2 million

High school music additions/renovations; Middle school music additions/renovations;
Black Box Theater additions; Life cycle fine arts items

Lewisville C.A.R.E.S.

Once again, we support life cycle replacements for fine arts items, as well as middle school music additions and renovations. While it would be nice for every high school to have a black box theater, we don't support spending \$10.3 million to achieve parity in aging schools. These schools will likely undergo more extensive renovations in the future.

Vote Yes Lewisville ISD

With our various band programs racking up accolades as well as successful theatre programs at all of our high schools, the demand for these programs has been higher than ever. We believe that we should encourage and invest in the fine arts interests of our students in Lewisville ISD and ensure that each high school has the space and equipment to continue to grow their programs.

Safety and Security — \$28.8 million

Life cycle safety & security items; Expansion of district wide security cameras; Re-design campus entrances & install ballistic protection; Communication & network access completion

Lewisville C.A.R.E.S.

LISD is asking for \$13.8 million so that they can add ballistic protection to every school's entrance. Meanwhile, we have students sitting in portables with nothing more than a lock on the door to protect them from intruders. Most of these portables are in plain sight to passersby. Additionally, no other school entrances would receive ballistic protection. We agree that in today's unstable environment, protecting our students is more important than ever. However, we would like to see all students protected, especially those in unsafe portables due to overcrowding.

Vote Yes Lewisville ISD

Lewisville ISD wants to be proactive when it comes to the safety and security of our schools and students. More cameras and monitoring capabilities will be installed across the district, while some older schools will have their entrances revamped to new safety standards. There will also be enhancements and upgrades made to the communication systems that allow schools to run their safety and check in software.

Closing statement

Lewisville C.A.R.E.S.

Vote NO on this bond so the district and school board can come back with a bond proposal we can all support. While several worthwhile projects are included in this bond proposal, the negative impact this bond will have on our community schools and district as a whole far outweighs the benefits. Send a message to our school board that they need to come back with a bond proposal more tailored to the needs of EVERY student in our district.

Vote Yes Lewisville ISD

Our district is thriving, and its success is a huge part of why our communities continue to grow. People come to Lewisville ISD to raise their families and take part in one of the best school districts in Texas. We applaud our school board for starting the process to keep up with growth in numbers as well as changing classroom needs. We are confident in the process that was used to reach this bond, and lucky that our administration and school board have a history of transparency and excellence of which our whole community can be proud. Keeping our schools up to date and in proper condition for learning should be a high priority in our district so that our educators and students can focus on learning. Based on the time and thought that was put into this no-frills bond package, we believe it is a great step for our community and will ensure that our district stays one of the best in Texas. That is why we are voting Yes!

Lewisville ISD Council of PTAs would like to thank Lewisville C.A.R.E.S. and Vote Yes Lewisville ISD for their participation in this project.

For more information about the May 6 election, including sample ballots, early voting information, polling places and more, visit <http://www.votedenton.com/>

For information from Lewisville ISD about the bond, visit <http://lewisvilleisdbonds.com/>

For more information from Lewisville C.A.R.E.S., visit <http://www.lewisvillecares.org/>

For more information from Vote Yes Lewisville ISD, visit <http://www.voteyeslewisvilleisd.com/>

For more information about LISD Council of PTAs, visit <http://lisdpta.org/>