

MPS remaining active with bond projects

By Jacob Sturm
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Mustang Public Schools bond funding is about to be put to action.

Following the MPS bond election on Feb. 14, Mustang Public Schools has been hard at work preparing for the Elementary No. 9 project through the collecting and selling of bonds. MPS, according to Mustang Superintendent Charles Bradley, completed the process of selling the bonds in June of 2023, meaning the school district has only had the ability to access the funding since the date the bonds were sold.

"For this particular bond issue, in what we're trying to accomplish with the buildings, is that we did not have land secured," Bradley said.

"In fact, we were needing the bond funds to purchase the land. So, we had identified a piece of property, but it had fallen through. And we identified a second piece of property, and we have a closing date set for Sept. 15."

So, how does this matter to the district bond plans?

Since nothing can start before the school district buys the land, the district had no reason to sell the bonds and let interest accrue without having a way to use it.

"We were being better stewards of the community's money by making sure we secured the land, secured a closing date which is Sept. 15 and then on that day the bond funds become available," Bradley said.

Between the bond election and the land purchase,

MPS didn't sit idle. Bradley said even if the bonds were sold earlier, and the money was in the bank and ready to be spent, there would still be a period of time where architects and construction management would need to plan and revise plans for the building.

"That would have happened even if we had the money in the bank and had the land," Bradley said. "So, it just worked out that we're not paying interest while that is going on. So, they've been really busy. And so, when the bonds sell and we close on the land, that we're talking just a couple of months before we start turning dirt on the site because we're pretty much there with our drawings."

To start that dirt work, Bradley estimated about

75-80% of the completion documents would be needed before the dirt work can be given the green light to start without the concerns of major changes to the plans happening. The remain percentage of the documents would be the technical elements that aren't foundational.

"We're far enough along, and have enough time to where we've got all of that planning and prep work done," Bradley said.

Elementary No. 9 would need to be completed by the start of 2025-26, and is anticipated to be an 18-month build. That's due to the more than a yearlong delay for air conditioners and windows for the building.

Other elements of the bond that are in the process include a safety corridor at Mustang

Elementary and the softball hitting facility.

The safety corridor drawings are completed, and the groundwork is done. Bradley did not know an exact time line for the project, but said he would be surprised if it took the remainder of the year, with the caveat of what they find when walls are knocked down.

Bradley also was complimentary toward Timberlake Construction, the construction management company tasked with reinventing the high school in the past.

"They built a new high school on the existing high school, and we never missed a day of school," Bradley said. "They were really good about meeting with the principals

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