

# Voters approve \$31 million school bond

by Ron Georg  
contributing writer

By a wide margin, voters on Tuesday approved a \$31 million school bond that will enable the Grand County School District to replace two crumbling schools and construct a new vocational education center. The final unofficial tally for the June 24 bond was 993 votes in favor of the bond and 548 against. But even before the final tally was in, board of education member Jim Webster seemed buoyed by the community's support.

"This is a very exciting time," Webster said, at about 8:15 Tuesday evening, standing in the Grand County Clerk's office. County clerk Diana Carroll was still upstairs, sealed up in a room reserved for election results, counting the votes. The numbers wouldn't be in for about an hour, but Webster was looking further ahead.

"We've got a draft copy of our schedule ready," Webster said, offering a quick outline of the process. He said the district will create a request for proposal for an architecture and engineering firm to design the building, they'll work with the firm and the community to come up with an

acceptable plan, they'll send out another RFP for a contractor, and work will begin.

By August of 2010, in time for the start of the school year, the district will have a new kindergarten through sixth grade elementary school and a new vocational center at the high school. The Grand County Middle School will get some renovations, and the current vocational center, which is adjacent to the middle school, will become part of that facility.

Red Rock Elementary School and Helen M. Knight Intermediate School will be closed, Webster said. The new elementary will be built behind HMK, which will allow both Red Rock and HMK to remain in operation through construction. The district has no immediate plans for the Red Rock property, though the question of how to utilize the property has come up in a variety of contexts from higher education to affordable housing for teachers.

While the district has already distributed drawings of the potential new facilities, those are just concepts created by MHTN Architects, the Salt Lake firm which prepared the district's facilities assessment last year. The concepts do indicate the board's intended direction, and MHTN partners have assured the

district they provide a good gauge of what is possible with \$31 million.

The configuration of the facilities, as well as some design features, will likely find their way into the design RFP, which is the first opportunity for the district to define what the new buildings will look like. "We really want to design an RFP which will get a firm which can design a building that is sustainable and safe, among other criteria," Webster said. "There is also excellent, current research on how kids learn, and we want them to be able to utilize that. These types of design elements will come together in the RFP process."

Webster said the district also plans to maintain the public involvement that has been a hallmark of the bond election. "We already have community members that are interested in various aspects of the design, people with expertise in areas including sustainability, technology, and safety," he said. "We'll get some focus groups together to help us decide on some design features."

**Published June 26, 2008**