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Petition Circulating for November Referendum in SFCSD

SUMNER, IA — Community members in the Sumner-Fredericksburg Community School District are circulating a petition requesting that the School Board place a general obligation bond referendum on the ballot for November 4, 2025.

To advance the measure, the petition must be signed by at least 208 eligible voters, which is equivalent to 25% of those who voted in the most recent board election. The petition is available to be signed at the district office at 802 W. 6th St. in Sumner. There will also be expanded locations to sign the petition in the Sumner-Fredericksburg community in the weeks ahead. As these locations come about, they will be communicated to the public through various media outlets.

“The petition process provides the residents in our communities the opportunity to decide whether a bond question should appear on the ballot in November,” said Superintendent Ryan Cunningham. “We are extremely grateful for all the members of our community who have put in the hard work to find the best recommendation on a path forward. The path recommended involved compromise, and was discerned to represent the majority will of the community. This petition provides the next step on our path to use GO Bond and SAVE Revenue Bonds together to create efficiencies in spending and help each taxpayer dollar spent stretch to maximum capacity and impact for our students.”

Once the required number of signatures has been collected, the petition can be submitted to the board to consider official action on the request.

The petition language reads as follows:

TO THE PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SUMNER-FREDERICKSBURG COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, IN THE COUNTIES OF BREMER, CHICKASAW, AND FAYETTE, STATE OF IOWA:

We, the undersigned, are eligible electors, reside within the School District and petition the Board of Directors of the School District to call a special election to submit to the voters of the School District the following proposition the purpose of which cannot be accomplished within the limit of one and one-quarter percent of the assessed value of the taxable property within the School District:

Shall the Board of Directors of the Sumner-Fredericksburg Community School District in the Counties of Bremer, Chickasaw, and Fayette, State of Iowa, be authorized to contract indebtedness and issue General Obligation Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$16,250,000, together with proceeds of School Infrastructure Sales, Services, and Use Tax Revenue Bonds, to construct, build, furnish, and equip additions to the High School and Middle School buildings and to remodel, repair, and improve those existing buildings,

including HVAC, playground, parking, and site improvements, and for demolition of Durant Elementary?

If approved by the board, the November referendum would ask voters to authorize up to \$16.25 million in bonds. These funds would support a plan allowing SFCSD to transition to two attendance centers, with a presence in both Sumner and Fredericksburg, to better serve current enrollment.

The proposal calls for demolishing Durant Elementary and vacating Fredericksburg Elementary as an attendance center. The district would upgrade the middle and high school campuses to handle the transition, including major improvements to heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems. Currently, a small percentage of SFCSD's educational spaces have air conditioning.

Under the plan, students in prekindergarten through 2nd grade would remain in each community. Grades 3-4 would attend school in Sumner, grades 5-8 in Fredericksburg, and high school students would remain in Sumner.

The district would also use a portion of the bond revenue to expand technical education programs at the high school, offering more training and resources for students exploring future careers in the skilled trades.

"The two-building plan will greatly improve the learning environment for our students in line with today's expectations of air conditioning while eliminating many inefficiencies," said Cunningham. "These projects would produce financial savings that can be reinvested in programming."

The district will be hosting multiple community meetings in both Fredericksburg and Sumner once the petition is approved. In addition, comprehensive information will also be shared on the project that will be shared through our media outlets to ensure every voter has the information they need to be informed as they prepare to cast their vote.

Bond referendums in Iowa require voter approval of at least 60 percent to pass.

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