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Cherry Creek Issues 4A and 4B: School bond measure and mill levy

School district projecting shortfall if mill levy doesn't pass



Kathryn Scott, Special to The Denver Post

Principal Teolyn Bourbonnie, right, greets one of the two 5th-graders who arrived to school by bus. Teachers and staff greet students in the 5th-grade-class at Walnut Hills Elementary School in the Cherry Creek School District in Centennial on Aug. 17, 2020.



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Ballot measure 4A seeks to invest \$35 million in personnel across Cherry Creek School District, specifically enabling the district to recruit and retain teachers, add personnel to keep class sizes small, and add mental health professionals and nurses. The measure would be funded by an increase in property taxes. If approved, the district estimates property taxes will increase by \$1.65 per \$100,000 of home value.

The case for: Cherry Creek School District estimates it will experience a \$60 million budget shortfall over the next two years. This mill levy will ensure schools can provide safe and supportive classrooms, a nurse in every school, mental health supports, and the technology tools necessary to learn, proponents say.

The case against: No comments were filed against the measure.

Ballot question: "In order to make more general fund revenues available for teacher compensation, maintaining class sizes, maintaining and adding mental health professionals and nurses to support students, and providing for the security and safety of student and staff, shall Cherry Creek School District No. 5 taxes be increased up to \$35 million in tax collection year 2021, with such amount being adjusted annually thereafter by the percentage change in inflation, by levying a property tax at a rate sufficient to generate such amount; pursuant to Section 22-54-108.7, C.R.S., shall such additional revenues be utilized for ongoing cash funding for capital construction, new instructional technology, existing technology upgrades, and maintenance needs of the district; and shall the district be authorized to collect, retain and spend all revenues of the district as a voter approved revenue change and an exception to the limits that would otherwise apply under Article X, Section 20 of the Colorado Constitution or any other law?"

Ballot measure 4B seeks to fund improvement projects across the district, including construction of a mental health/day treatment center to support students, enhanced safety and security systems across the district, high school renovations and a possible new elementary school in southeast Aurora. Total improvements will cost \$150 million. If approved, the district expects it will not raise property taxes based on current and forecasted property values.

The case for: Proponents say this bond will support students by constructing a mental health day facility and upgrading every district high school to create innovative environments that support learning. About \$5 million would go to an expansion of the Cherry Creek Innovation that includes more programming options, new pathways for in-demand careers, and expanding nursing and mental health certification programs.



The case against: No comments were filed against the measure.

Ballot question: "Without imposing any new tax, shall Cherry Creek School District No. 5 debt be increased \$150 million, with a maximum total repayment cost of not more than \$293 million for the purposes of: constructing a mental health day treatment facility to support mental health needs of students; acquiring technology to support remote/online learning for all student including lower income students; providing safety improvements at school buildings, including deadbolt locks and cameras; acquiring, constructing, repairing, renovating and equipping school buildings and other school facilities to manage student growth; and providing other district capital improvements; and shall the taxes authorized at the district's bond elections in 2003, 2008, 2012, and 2016 be extended and authorized to be used to pay the debt authorized at this election in addition to the debt authorized at such previous elections; and shall the mill levy be increased in any year, without limitation of the rate but only in an amount sufficient to pay the principal of, premium, if any, and interest on such debt or any refunding debt (or create a reserve for such payment); and may such debt be evidenced by the issuance of general obligation bonds or other multiple fiscal year obligations to be sold in one series or more, for a price above or below the principal amount thereof, on terms and conditions, and with such maturities as permitted by law and as the district may determine?"

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