

Editorial | posted: 3/21/2017 1:00 AM

Endorsement: Yes on Antioch Elementary District 34 building improvements.

Daily Herald Editorial Board

Depending on where they live, students in Antioch Elementary District 34 could attend a school barely 15 years old, with modern facilities, a dedicated gymnasium, areas to work collaboratively and outdoor learning spaces. Or they could attend a school built during the Eisenhower administration that lacks any of those contemporary amenities. District leaders think that leads to unequal opportunities for all students. They hope voters will agree April 4 by backing an \$18.8 million bond issue to fund facility improvements primarily at two older schools.

Reserves would fund another \$6.8 million of upgrades.

Superintendent Jay Marino says the goal is to provide a "standard of equity" at the district's four elementary schools -- providing essentially similar facilities for all K-5 students.

"We don't want the quality of school to depend on the neighborhood in which you live," Marino says.

Key to officials' hopes is that the referendum -- the district's first since 1999 -- will not raise taxes. Because the district is about to make its final payment on older debt, the proposed bond issue would pick up where that leaves off, meaning no change -- or perhaps a slight decrease -- in property tax bills. If the measure fails, a typical property's tax bill will fall about \$168. Such a reduction may be appealing, but the district's proposal is reasonable, necessary and well-timed to minimize the impact on taxpayers. We endorse the measure.

