

# Capital Funding

*Promises made, promises kept*



Washoe County School District  
Every Child, By Name And Face, To Graduation™

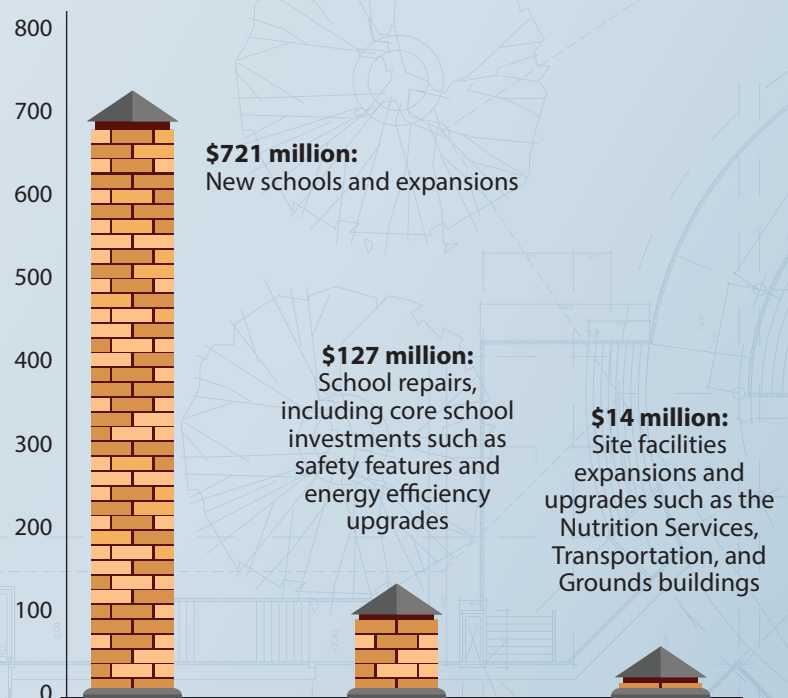


**Overview:** Thanks to the voters in 2016 who passed a ballot initiative to increase the local sales tax by .54%, funding for new schools and repairs to older schools has increased. Since 2016, the District has been able to fund major repairs and core school investments – such as roofs, HVAC systems, the installation of safety features, and energy efficiency upgrades – at many of our older schools. Three new schools have opened, two more are slated to open for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year, and more are scheduled down the road.

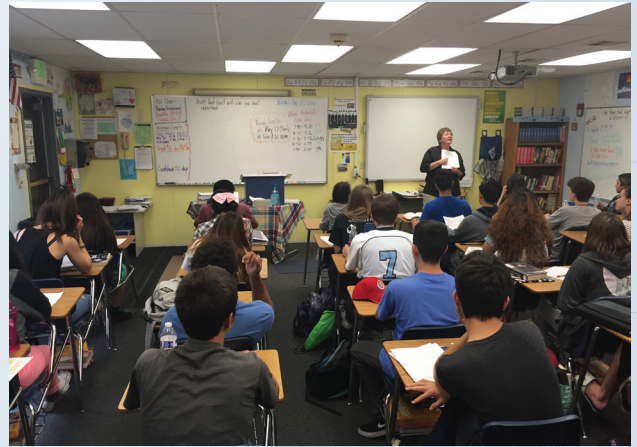
**Where the money comes from and how long it lasts:** The money to build new schools and repair our older schools comes from two main funding sources: (1) a special sales tax in Washoe County and (2) a portion of property taxes collected in Washoe County. The first of these sources resulted from approval by Washoe County voters in 2016 for a sales tax increase for school construction; this generates approximately \$48 million per year and will never expire. The second source derives from the property tax rate of \$0.3885 per \$100 of assessed valuation for school debt in Washoe County. This generates approximately \$60 million per year.

**How the money is spent:** All projects for new buildings and major repairs are discussed in open public meetings. First, projects are taken to the Capital Funding Protection Committee – a volunteer advisory group that makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees about the scope and budget for projects. The Board of Trustees determines whether to grant final approval to spend money towards these projects. These projects can be paid either with available cash from the above two sources or by long-term debt issued by the District, which is then paid from the two funding sources. The District's ability to issue long-term debt from the property tax funding expires in 2025, unless renewed by Washoe County voters or the State of Nevada.

**Total Committed:** WCSD has committed more than \$800 million in capital projects since voters approved the ballot initiative in 2016. In total, WCSD is expecting to invest \$1 billion toward new schools, repairs, and expansions by 2025.



**Reduced Overcrowding:** Prior to the ballot initiative, WCSD experienced severe overcrowding. Schools often had to improvise for space, utilizing not only portable classrooms but makeshift classrooms in common areas, and a handful of our elementary schools were forced to temporarily go on multi-track year round calendars. Since opening three new schools in 2019, overcrowding has eased at schools across the District. In 2016, 28 schools were over maximum capacity, but in the 2018-2019 school year, the number has decreased. With two more schools scheduled to open in August 2020, the number of schools over capacity will continue to decrease. Building these new schools is also allowing the District to draw new zoning boundaries that vertically align schools, so that students will attend elementary school, middle school, and high school with the same peer group. In the future, new schools will be built based on growth projections. The District works closely with the cities of Reno and Sparks, Washoe County, the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency, and local developers to forecast future enrollment, and thanks to our increased capital funding, we will be able to build new schools as they are needed.



**Updated Safety Features:** The additional capital funding has enabled the district to upgrade current schools to ensure that students are learning in a safe environment. All elementary schools and middle schools have been upgraded with a “single point of entry” system, so all visitors to the buildings must enter through the main office and check in with school staff. Additionally, every classroom door at every school has been upgraded with lock systems accessible from inside the classroom. New schools are being built with all of these safety features.



**Energy Efficiency Upgrades:** As part of the District’s core school investments, all schools are receiving energy efficiency upgrades. These facility improvements not only improve the learning environment, but also decrease energy and water consumption, and save money in the long term. By the summer of 2020, all schools will have upgraded LED lighting systems, which will provide a 19% reduction in energy costs. This, combined with water conservation upgrades and other ongoing projects, will save the District \$2.3 million each year in operational costs, as well as 13.6 Kilowatts of energy and 86 million gallons of water annually. Each of the new schools is built to comply with the most recent energy standards, and include energy efficient lighting and HVAC systems, as well as ground source heat pumps.



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