

EPISD presses for bond support

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By Gustavo Reveles Acosta

El Paso Independent School District officials met with Downtown business leaders on Wednesday seeking their support for the \$230 million bond election that will go out to the voters on May 12.

School board President Lisa Colquitt-Muñoz talked to a small group of members from the Central Business Association and outlined the district's plan to meet the needs of the 10,000 new students the district expects to have over the next four years.

We've talked about accountability, but we also discussed how well thought-out this bond is," Colquitt-Muñoz said. "The need for this money is urgent."

The district says Fort Bliss' growth is part of the Base Realignment and Closure Process means they have to construct new schools and make additions to existing campuses.

The bond would add schools throughout the district and build a new West Side middle school as well as a new Northeast high school.

If approved, the bond would add a maximum of 7.5 cents to the current tax rate. That would add \$75 to the annual school-tax bill on a home with a taxable value of \$100,000.

Mike Breitinger, the executive director of the business association, said hosting the meeting was important because some of his members had concerns about how much the bond would cost them.

"Our members are business owners and property taxpayers. Of course, they had questions about the bond," he said. "The meeting was set up to let the district inform the members what exactly would happen if this money is approved."

Colquitt-Muñoz said she welcomed the questions of the people present at the meeting.

"The big question is 'why should I support the bond?' " she said. "That's a fair question, and it's our job to answer it."

Breitinger said his group has not decided whether to endorse the bond, or even if any endorsement will be made.