

# Second time's a charm?

*The decision on the bond measure for a new Grand Junction High School building will be decided Nov. 2*

by brynley **gorman** and miah **hines**

Students of Grand Junction High school will know within a matter of days whether or not they will receive a new school.

The students and staff of Grand Junction High School will wake up in anticipation on Wednesday, Nov. 3, to the results of the voting on a proposed new school building. The existing school, built in 1956, is widely considered to be in need of replacement.

"When you look at how the community views the new building, it takes commitment and we sometimes forget that. Building a new school takes money and that gets passed onto the community and not everybody in the community can afford higher taxes," stated Meghan Roenicke, principal of GHJS.

The proposed new building would cost at least \$140 million if it does get passed by voters. Students and staff will miss the beauty of the orange bricks and green grass of the original building, but the new building has created a buzz that will surely meet expectations.

"The part for me is I think this building is the prettiest and there will be things that we will lose," stated Roenicke.

Roenicke is hopeful that the new building will bring a sense of belonging and pride to the students and staff. Drawings of the proposed building have been on display in the school library.

## **The Proposed Building**

This isn't the first time that a new building for GJHS has been proposed.

In 2019, a bond for GJHS was suggested but to no luck; it failed in a November election. The vote showed



that 53 percent were opposed to the idea, and so the bond was not passed.

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The proposed new building would be three stories high; a difference from the two-story building students currently have along with other classes spread out across multiple buildings. The new building would be built on the same site, near the current tennis courts and baseball field.

The design has the gymnasium and theater programs anchored on one end of the building, with a clear main entrance. All classrooms will be in one building. Initial drawings provide abundant windows, using natural lighting throughout the building.

The new building would be estimated to take around three years to build.

"The architecture showcases what we do really well," stated Roenicke.

The whole new building itself will reportedly cost about \$3 per month for homeowners whose house costs \$300,000. The bond would be fully paid for in 20 years.

## **Student Experience**

Excitement and hope abound amongst students as we get closer to the bond vote for the proposed new Grand Junction High School.

Many freshmen at Junction are especially excited about the new building. Many agree that a new gymnasium is most exciting for them and they have high expectations and hopes.

"Our gymnasium is about to cave in on us while we're playing. That's kind of terrifying," said GJHS freshman Piper Marshall.

Freshman Jack Kaul has high hopes for a new building and wishes for a big

beautiful gymnasium with lots of windows.

“Walking really far to my classes has been hard and trying to find my classes, especially as an underclassmen. I think it’s hard at other schools too but worse here,” said GJHS senior Lilianna Echanove.

Grand Junction High School is close to surpassing its 75th year. It has lived through many presidents as well as many historical events during the years. It’s easy to say that the building has seen more things than any student at the school.

### History and Safety of GJHS

Grand Junction High School as we know it isn’t the first version of GJHS to exist.

The first Grand Junction High School was opened in 1891 on Rood Avenue, according to the School District 51 website. Twenty years later, Grand Junction High School moved to Chipeta Avenue and finally to Fifth Street as we know it today in 1956.

“If this was your house, wouldn’t you want to move?” GJHS teacher Justin Whiteford was quoted asking in the Oct. 1, 2021, edition of the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel newspaper.

The building itself has had

complications from the decaying of the school and settling of the building due to a faulty foundation. The safety for both students and staff has also been interrupted many times.

“Two years ago we had a gas leak in the art building. We’ve also had to evacuate the science classes out of learning because sewage was blocking up the bathrooms. We keep doing things but it doesn’t always work,” said Roenicke.

Many students and staff have had safety concerns because of the age of the building. The history of the school is fragile but so is the building itself. If this proposal does not pass, it is widely expected there will be another vote soon because the current building problems will just get worse.

While it may not benefit them, students hope that this new bond will pass for future generations of Grand Junction High School students. To many, the future of Junction’s pride rests on this bond passing.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** *Byrnley Gorman, freshman, and Miah Hines, sophomore, are in a reporting class this semester and teamed up to write this article. They hope to join the Orange & Black staff one day.*

## GJHS Building Timeline

**1891**

*Grand Junction High School opens on 6th St. and Rood Ave.*

**1911**

*GJHS moves to 9th St. and Chipeta Ave.*

**1920**

*A new west wing addition opens at GJHS*

**1926**

*A new GJHS gym opens*

**1956**

*GJHS moves to 1400 N. 5th St.*

**1963**

*New GJHS addition opens*

**1982-83**

*New GJHS addition opens*

**1998**

*New GJHS addition opens*

**2005**

*New GJHS addition opens*

