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L&T staff report

Liberal Young Professionals, an organization that formed to foster business and community leadership, has endorsed the school bond proposal.

Advanced voting began Thursday, and the general election will take place April 8. What is at stake is whether or not the voters will accept a plan to replace aging schools and use \$91 million of state matching funds and sales tax revenues to go along with \$36 million from property owners to fund the upgrades.

The bond proposal was designed by community members, educators and business leaders in an effort to address the overcrowding as well as the age of the elementary and middle school buildings.

“Through volunteer projects, leadership development and reaching out to form connections within our community, we believe that young people serve as the greatest resource for the future growth of Liberal,” LYP said in a release. “It is for these reasons – and many more – that the LYP board supports a ‘YES’ vote for the half-cent sales tax and a ‘YES’ vote for the USD 480 bond issue on April 8.”

The proposal would replace seven Kindergarten-through third grade elementary schools and two seventh through eighth grade middle school facilities with five Kindergarten through fifth grade elementary schools and two sixth through eighth middle schools. Three of the elementary schools would be new buildings, and the two intermediates in Liberal, Sunflower and Cottonwood, would be converted to K-5 facilities. South and West would be replaced with two new middle school facilities, and the current West facility would be used as part of the Liberal High School campus to relieve overcrowding there.

The older facilities will be repurposed to serve other needs in the district, many of which are

currently taking place in portable buildings.

The district has committed that no building would be vacant eyesores like the current old Liberal High School at Seventh and Lincoln. All buildings will either be repurposed or removed.

LYP's support joins the Chamber of Commerce, the Joint Economic Development Council, Seward County Chairman Ada Linenbroker, National Beef's Pat Pridie, Northeast Liberal Leadership, Bright Futures, former Liberal City Commissioner Jack Cooley, Wheatridge Park Care Center Administrator Lindsay Durler, and Kids Inc.

EDITOR'S NOTE — For the full endorsement letter, see today's Opinion page.

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