



Helena School Bond
HIGH SCHOOL & ELEMENTARY BOND 2025

TODAY'S VOTE. TODAY'S INVESTMENT. TOMORROW'S IMPACT.

ELECTION DAY: SEPTEMBER 9TH

The Time is Now.

Across our Helena Public Schools, our buildings are aging—the **average facility is over 70 years old**—and decades of **deferred maintenance** have taken a toll. Failing systems, outdated learning environments: if our buildings could speak, they'd be telling us that they can't keep up with the needs of our students. Over the years, there hasn't been significant bond investment, and now construction costs continue to rise—meaning the longer we wait, the more expensive it gets to fix what's broken and build what's needed.

A recent Facilities Master Plan, built on months of study and public input, identified the most urgent projects.

These include:

- A **new Helena High School** to replace the deteriorating facility.
- Significant renovations to **Capital High School** to address critical infrastructure needs.
- A **new Kessler Elementary School** to replace an outdated, undersized building.

- **Athletics investments** for a new competition field and HHS/CHS Practice Facilities.
- A **new location for the District Kitchen**, which currently operates out of a space never meant for food service.
- A **new facility for the Project for Alternative Learning (PAL)**, providing better support for students who need it most.

To make this happen, we're asking voters to consider two bond measures:

- **\$240 million for the High School District**
- **\$43 million for the Elementary District**

These are strategic, future-focused investments in safe, healthy, and functional learning environments—not just for today's students, but for generations to come.

THE ELECTION IS SEPTEMBER 9. This is our moment to act—before costs rise further, and while we can still choose to build a stronger future for Helena.

If Our Buildings Could Speak

The 2025 High School Bond

The District Kitchen:
Where Every School Meal Begins.

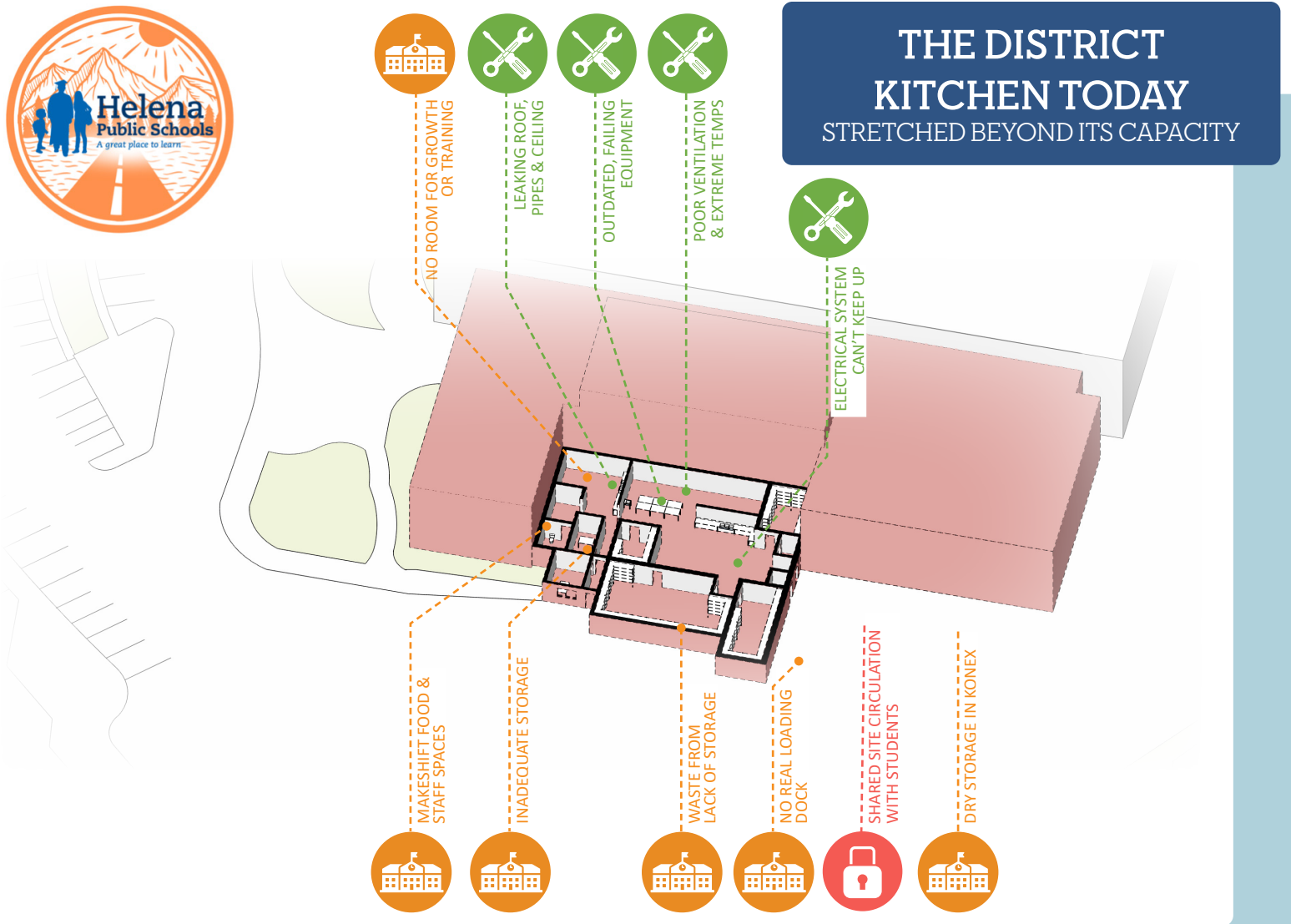
Located behind Capital High School, the Central Kitchen is the hub of Helena Public Schools' nutrition program, preparing meals for every student across the district. But the facility is outdated and only a third the size it should be, forcing staff to use outdoor storage and navigate a loading dock that disrupts traffic and safety. These limitations reduce efficiency, restrict menu options, and prevent the district from accepting free USDA food commodities. As part of the 2025 High School Bond, a new, properly sized Central Kitchen will improve food quality, expand storage, enhance safety, and ensure all students—regardless of school or income—have access to fresh, nutritious meals every day.





THE DISTRICT KITCHEN TODAY

STRETCHED BEYOND ITS CAPACITY



What are the current issues at The Central Kitchen?



UNSAFE LOADING & INEFFICIENT DELIVERIES

Without a loading dock, deliveries arrive on a sloped sidewalk and must be **hand-carried inside**, slowing operations and increasing strain. Early morning deliveries **begin as early as 4 AM** to avoid student traffic, since food distribution and school circulation share the same space.



CRAMPED, OVERFLOWING STORAGE

Dry, cold, and freezer storage are undersized, with supplies **stacked to capacity**—even in walkways. Limited space and **hard-to-access outdoor containers** restrict planning and use of cost-saving food programs, costing the District up to \$20,000 annually in unused USDA commodities.



INSUFFICIENT SPACE FOR STAFF & GROWTH

Staff amenities are **limited to one shared restroom**, a **small breakroom**, and **no dedicated locker** or meeting space. Office, training, and catering functions are housed in **improvised areas**, restricting efficiency and future growth.



AGING INFRASTRUCTURE & EQUIPMENT

Much of the kitchen equipment is **past its service life**, requiring frequent maintenance to stay operational. Aging building systems like plumbing and roofing also **need constant repairs**, disrupting daily workflow and efficiency.



CHALLENGING WORKING CONDITIONS

Ventilation is limited, and there's no air conditioning - causing extreme temperature swings - **ranging from below freezing in winter to over 90°F in summer**. These conditions make it harder to maintain **comfort for staff and consistency in daily operations**, particularly during peak production periods.



INADEQUATE UTILITIES & BUILDING SYSTEMS

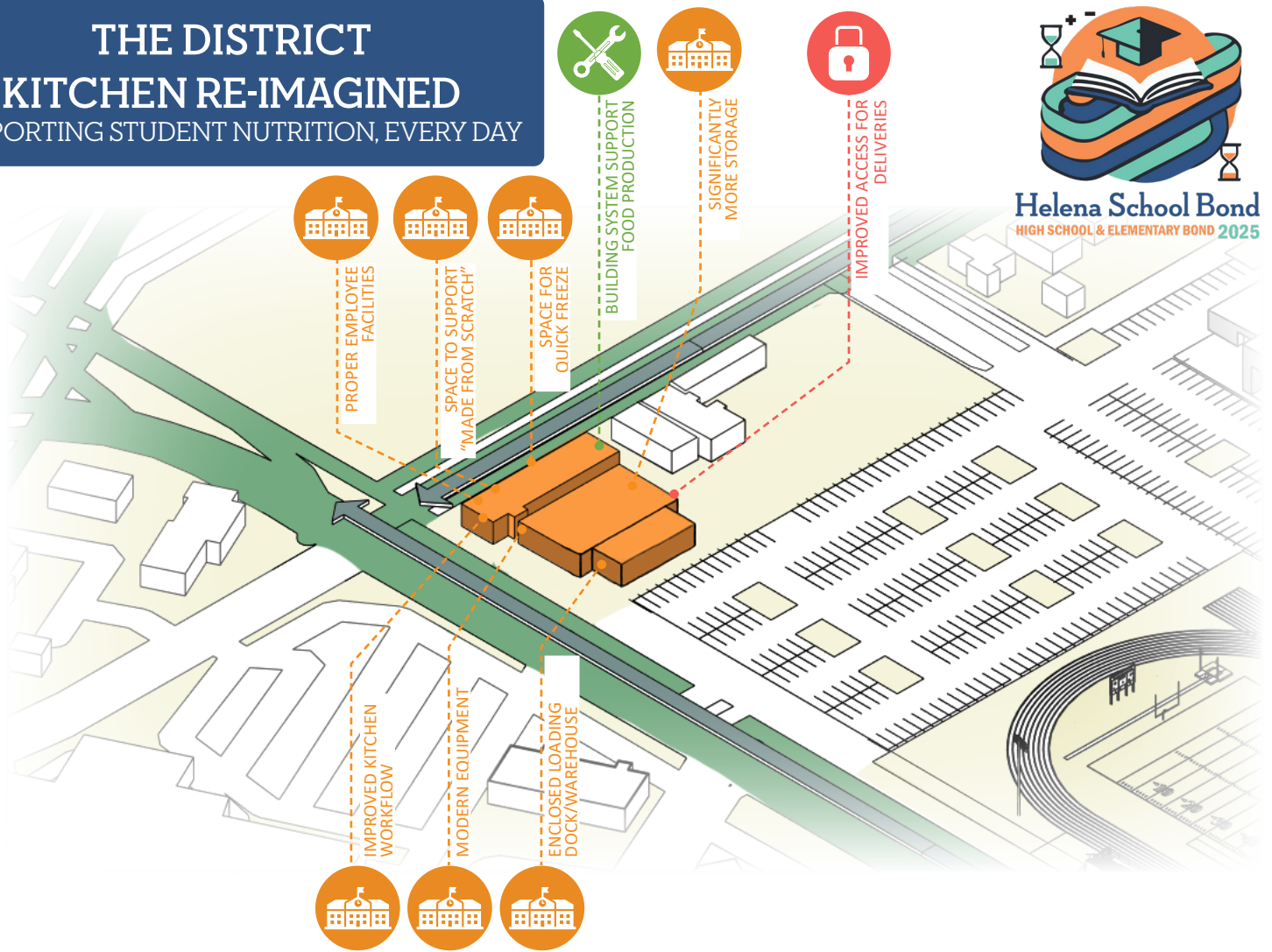
The electrical system **cannot reliably support** the volume and type of equipment needed for a central production kitchen. As demands grow, **power limitations restrict equipment use and reduce efficiency**. Modernizing infrastructure is **critical to meet current and future service needs**.

THE DISTRICT KITCHEN RE-IMAGINED

SUPPORTING STUDENT NUTRITION, EVERY DAY



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EFFICIENT DELIVERY & STORAGE

A new enclosed loading dock with **space for multiple trucks and forklift access** makes **deliveries safer and faster**. Right-sized walk-in coolers, freezers, and dry storage **eliminate the need for offsite containers** and **allow full use of USDA commodities**.



EQUIPPED FOR FRESH, HIGH-VOLUME COOKING

Reliable, modern equipment—paired with upgraded kitchen infrastructure—will support scratch cooking and daily production for the **entire Helena School District**. New quick-freeze capacity **improves distribution efficiency**, while **providing fresher meals to students across the district**.



SMART LAYOUT, BETTER WORKFLOW

A re-imagined kitchen design **creates distinct zones for prep, cooking, cleaning, and packaging**—**reducing congestion and increasing productivity**. Added space also allows for **efficient staff movement** and **better quality control throughout the day**.



FACILITIES THAT SUPPORT STAFF

Dedicated office, break, and training areas give employees the space they need to **collaborate, learn, and recharge**. His and her bathrooms, lockers, and workspace improvements help **retain staff** and **support professional kitchen operations**.



RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR DAILY OPERATIONS

Upgraded mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems will ensure reliable kitchen operations—from **consistent refrigeration and ventilation** to **sufficient power for commercial equipment**. These modern systems **reduce downtime**, **prevent breakdowns**, and **create a safer, more comfortable work environment**.

HOW WILL THIS BOND AFFECT MY PROPERTY TAXES?

Helena voters will be asked to consider two separate bond measures in 2025:

\$43 MILLION ELEMENTARY BOND (20-YEAR TERM)

The Elementary Bond will appear on tax rolls starting in the 2026–27 fiscal year. To help reduce the early impact on taxpayers, the bond is structured to levy fewer mills until two existing school bonds are paid off in 2037 and 2039—balancing near-term affordability with long-term investment in Helena’s aging elementary facilities.

\$240 MILLION HIGH SCHOOL BOND (30-YEAR TERM)

The High School Bond, also appearing on tax rolls in 2026–27, funds critical safety upgrades, new construction, renovations, and facility modernization at Helena’s two high schools.

The chart below shows **estimated tax increases** based on your home’s market and taxable value. These examples reflect homestead-qualified residential properties (primary homes or long-term rentals).

	ELEMENTARY BOND		HIGH SCHOOL BOND	
	20-Year Term		30-Year Term	
	\$43M		\$240M	
	ANNUAL (ESTIMATED)	MONTHLY (ESTIMATED)	ANNUAL (ESTIMATED)	MONTHLY (ESTIMATED)
2024/25 MARKET MULTIPLIER				
\$100,000	\$13.15	\$1.10	\$73.45	\$6.12
\$200,000	\$26.30	\$2.19	\$146.9	\$12.24
\$300,000	\$39.46	\$3.29	\$220.35	\$18.36
\$400,000	\$52.61	\$4.38	\$293.81	\$24.48
\$500,000	\$71.66	\$5.97	\$400.12	\$33.34

New in 2025: Montana’s tax laws are changing. Your home’s taxable value will now be based on its market value range:

- Up to \$400,000 – taxed at 0.76%
- \$400,001 to \$1.5 million – taxed at 1.10%
- Over \$1.5 million – taxed at 2.20%
- Non-primary homes and some agricultural properties will be taxed at different rates.

ALL BALLOTS MAILED ON AUG 22
ELECTION DAY: SEPT 9

UPCOMING EVENTS | BROWN BAGS & BONDS

- Tuesday, July 15 | 12-1 pm @ Capital High School
- Tuesday, July 22 | 12-1pm @ Helena High School
- Tuesday, July 29 | 12-1 pm @ Kessler Elementary School
- Tuesday, August 5 | 12-1 pm @ Capital High School
- Tuesday, August 12 | 12-1 pm @ Helena High School

CHECK BACK WITH THE HELENA
SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR MORE
BOND EDUCATION EVENTS AND
TOURS THROUGH THE SUMMER.

QUESTIONS? WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Check out the website for more information on the high school and elementary bonds, tax increase, images and more.

Check helenaschoolbond.org on July 11th for more information!

