



East Lansing Public Schools

May 7, 2024 Bond Proposal

FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Introduction: Our community will have the opportunity to vote on a bond proposal on the May 7, 2024 election ballot. If approved, it will provide **\$23,500,000** for building & site improvements to address identified and ongoing capital projects based on facility assessments and community input. If approved by voters, the 2024 bond millage is expected to have a **ZERO TAX RATE INCREASE** from the current tax year.

1. What is a bond proposal and how can bond funds be spent?

A bond proposal is how a public school district asks its community whether to authorize borrowing money to pay for capital expenditures. Voter-approved bond funds can be spent on additions, remodeling, site improvements, athletic facilities, playgrounds, furnishings, equipment, and other capital needs. Funds raised through the sale of bonds cannot be used for operational expenses such as employee salaries and benefits, school supplies, and textbooks. Bond funds must be kept separate from operating funds and must be audited by an independent auditing firm.

2. What are the key projects in this bond proposal?

This bond proposal would address the highest priority projects as determined by the district and community input with a focus on **Safety, Security and Accessibility** at MacDonald Middle School and East Lansing High School.

- East Lansing High School
 - New construction of a secure entrance and office area
 - Replacement of interior door hardware for all classrooms and offices
 - Upgrades to security cameras and security management system
 - Expansion of cafeteria seating
 - Addition of an interior ramp for accessibility between floors
 - Upgrades to HVAC control system
- MacDonald Middle School
 - Replacement of interior door hardware for all classrooms and offices
 - Upgrades to security cameras and security management system
 - Upgrades to HVAC control system
 - Replacement of carpet
- New construction of a Central Office building on Towar Ave. property currently owned by the District

3. Why a bond proposal now?

The 2024 bond proposal is planned to address the currently identified issues over the next three years. While the sinking fund dollars address many critical needs, there are still core infrastructure system needs, such as the safety and security systems and HVAC control systems, that have exceeded their expected lifecycles – replacing these systems will extend the useful life of our school buildings and sites.

4. With the addition of cafeteria space and seating, is the High School campus going to become a closed campus in the future?

There is no plan to close campus for junior and seniors for lunch. With the opportunity to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students, we are serving more students lunch at school and require additional cafeteria space.

5. Why is central office administration moving into a new building outside of the High School?

The security of East Lansing High School will be improved by eliminating access of non-school personnel to our students. With Central Office administrators and support staff moving to an offsite free-standing building, visitors, guests, vendors, meeting participants and others will not be moving through the hallways with our students at the high school.

With the addition of new student support positions (i.e. Dean of Student Success, Student Advocates, security personnel, counselor, social worker, Communities in Schools coordinator) and the addition of the Community Health Center, additional office spaces and small-group spaces are needed.

6. Why aren't there any projects for the Elementary buildings in this bond proposal?

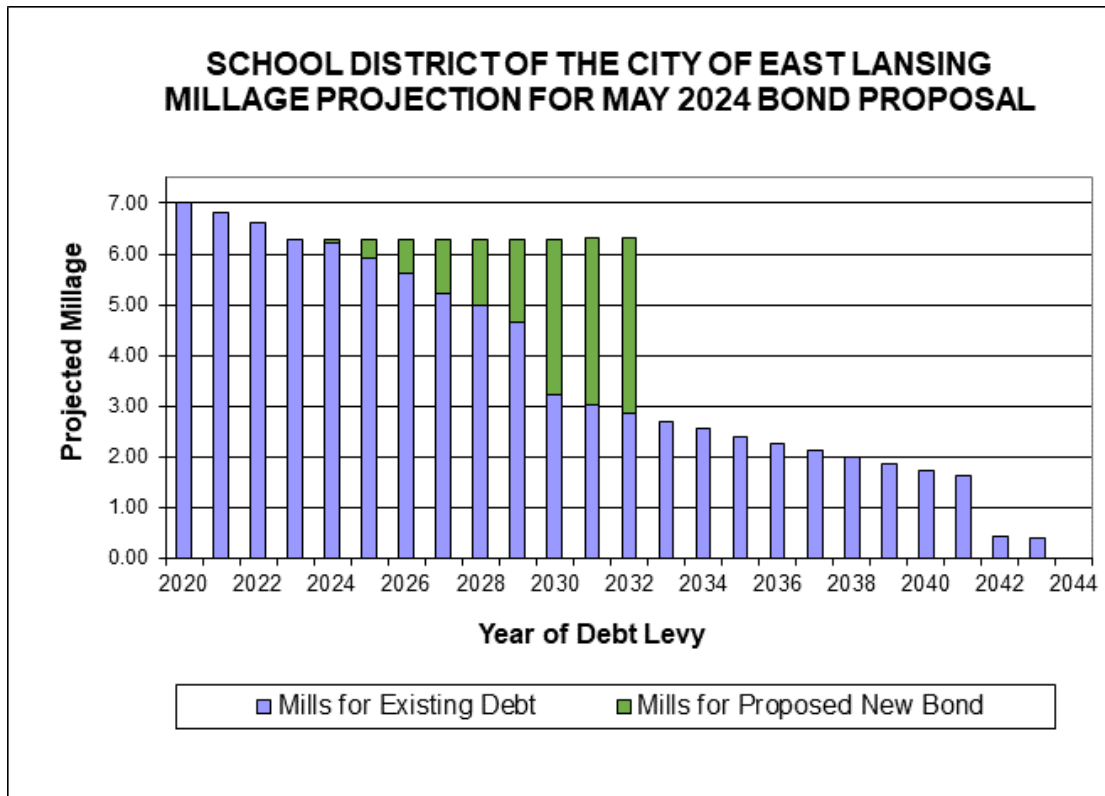
All of our elementary buildings have either been built or significantly renovated between 2017 - 2021 as part of the voter-approved 2017 Bond Projects and include layers of safety and security features. All elementary buildings, as well as MacDonald Middle School, have secure entrances. Only the high school is lacking a secure entrance and front-facing administration office area.

7. How would the bond proposal impact my property taxes?

East Lansing Public Schools currently levies 6.30 mills for the debt tax rate. If the 2024 bond proposal is approved by voters, the debt tax rate is expected to remain the same at 6.30 mills, resulting in a **no ZERO TAX RATE INCREASE** from the current tax year.

8. If the May 7, 2024 bond proposal passes, how will it impact the projected debt levy in the future?

Below is a graph depicting both the district's current debt millage as well as the debt millage if the May 2024 bond proposal is approved.



9. When would the millage for this proposal first be levied, if approved?

The millage for this proposal, if approved, would first be levied on the July 1, 2024 property tax bill.

10. Would the approval of the bond proposal have any impact on our current operational budget?

While funding from this bond proposal is independent of the district's general fund operating budget, the bond would likely have a positive impact on the district's general fund by allowing the district to reallocate operating funds that are currently being spent on aging facilities, mechanical systems, and technology. The operational savings generated from new and cost-efficient facilities would be redirected to student programs and resources.

11. Are businesses and second homes (non-homestead properties) and primary homes (homestead properties) treated the same regarding bond debt millage?

Yes, businesses and second homes (non-homestead) and primary homes (homestead) are treated the same regarding bond debt millage.

12. What oversights would hold the district accountable?

If approved by voters, the district's Architect/Engineer would design the proposed projects and prepare construction documents and specifications for the projects. Once the projects are designed, the district's Construction Manager will assemble bid packages and publicly advertise to solicit competitive bids for all work. This is required in the Revised School Code. This process ensures that the district selects the lowest responsible bidder. All qualified contractors will have an opportunity to attend a pre-bid meeting to obtain additional information and project clarification. All qualified contractors will have the opportunity to participate in the competitive bid process.

13. At what point would the State of Michigan, as well as the local fire and police departments, provide input into the bond projects?

Each project will be required to be submitted to both the State's Bureau of Construction Codes (BCC) and the Bureau of Fire Services (BFS) for both plan review and permitting. These agencies will review the projects to ensure they comply with applicable codes, before any building permits are issued. Building plans and specifications must be signed and sealed by a Licensed Architect/Professional Engineer before submission. As of March 21, 2019, Michigan law requires school districts to consult on the plans for the construction or major renovation regarding school safety issues with the law enforcement agency that is the first responder for that school building. This consultation would happen if the bond proposal is approved by voters, before construction documents are finalized prior to project commencement.

14. Are owners of property in the school district eligible to vote if they do not reside in the school district?

Owners of property are only eligible to vote if they reside in the school district boundaries. To be eligible to register to vote, you must be:

- A Michigan resident (at the time you register) and a resident of your city or township for at least 30 days (when you vote)
- A United States citizen
- At least 18 years of age (when you vote)
- Not currently serving a sentence in jail or prison

15. If I rent a home, can I vote?

Yes. If you rent a home, you can still vote as long as you are a registered voter in the city or township in which you live, and you live within the district boundaries.

16. How is an absentee voter ballot obtained?

Registered voters must complete and submit the application to receive their absentee voter ballot. To vote by mail, fill out the application and sign it, and then return it to your local clerk. If you registered to vote after absentee voter ballot applications were mailed, applications may be obtained online at Michigan.gov/vote. Absentee voter ballots are available from March 28 through May 7, 2024.

17. What are the key dates leading up to the Tuesday, May 7, 2024 election day?

- Registering to vote:
 - The last day for voters to register by mail/online is April 22, 2024.
 - Voters may register in-person through May 7, 2024 (election day) with the required documentation.
- Absentee Voting:
 - Absentee voter ballots are available from March 28 until May 7, 2024.
 - Contact your local clerk with questions

18. What is the ballot language?

**SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF EAST LANSING
BOND PROPOSAL**

Shall the School District of the City of East Lansing, Ingham and Clinton Counties, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed Twenty-Three Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$23,500,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefor, in one or more series, for the purpose of:

erecting, furnishing, and equipping an addition to a school building; remodeling, including security improvements to, furnishing and refurbishing, and equipping and re-equipping school buildings; erecting, furnishing and equipping a new administration building; and preparing, developing and improving sites?

The following is for informational purposes only:

The estimated millage that will be levied for the proposed bonds in 2024 is 0.1 mill (\$0.10 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a 0 mill net increase over the prior year's levy. The maximum number of years the bonds of any series may be outstanding, exclusive of any refunding, is nine (9) years. The estimated simple average annual millage anticipated to be required to retire this bond debt is 1.67 mills (\$1.67 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation).

The school district does not expect to borrow from the State to pay debt service on the bonds. The total amount of qualified bonds currently outstanding is \$84,855,000. The total amount of qualified loans currently outstanding is \$0. The estimated computed millage rate may change based on changes in certain circumstances.

(Pursuant to State law, expenditure of bond proceeds must be audited and the proceeds cannot be used for repair or maintenance costs, teacher, administrator or employee salaries, or other operating expenses.)

19. In the ballot language, it states that the estimated millage that will be levied in 2024 to pay the proposed bonds in the first year is 0.1 mills, what does this mean?

The proposed bonds are estimated to require 0.10 mill levy with the 2024 levy. However, the total debt levy is projected to remain at the 6.30 mills that were levied in 2023 for a no-mill increase from the 2023 levy. This is possible since the debt levy for the currently existing debt is projected to decrease by 0.10 mill with the 2024 levy.

20. In the ballot language it states that the maximum number of years any series of bonds may be outstanding, exclusive of refunding, is not more than nine (9) years, what does this mean?

The school district plans to issue three series of bonds with all bond principal and interest paid off within nine (9) years.

Questions?

If you have further questions, please contact Dori Leyko, Superintendent

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