



Community Questions

This is a fluid document and will be updated as we receive additional questions.

These questions were asked in person, at our informational meetings, emailed or by phone.

- **What is a Bond?** Answer: A bond is a State-approved funding process that specifies a set scope of projects. When voters approve a bond, the money specified in the bond proposal is borrowed and the school district makes payments over a period of years, much like a homeowner pays a mortgage.
- **What is a millage rate?** Answer: A millage rate is a numerical multiplier attached to the value of a property and is used to calculate the local property taxes. It represents a dollar per thousand of a property's assessed value.
- **When would the millage for this proposal first be levied?** Answer: On the December 1, 2023 property tax bill.
- **What is a bond proposal?** Answer: A bond proposal is how a public school district asks its community for authorization to borrow money to pay for capital expenditures. Voter-approved bond funds can be spent on new construction, additions, remodeling, site improvements, athletic facilities, playgrounds, furnishings, equipment, buses and technology. Funds raised cannot be used on 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
- **Cafeteria - Why is an expansion needed?** Answer: The Michigan merit curriculum (State of Michigan requirements to graduate) has many more requirements compared to those in the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's. We do not have a lot of flexibility to schedule courses for students with a small sized school as one teacher may only be able to offer a class one hour per day. Due to this, we are only able to offer one lunch hour for the middle school and one lunch for the high school, whereas in the past there were multiple lunch hours. Right now we have overflow cafeteria tables set up in the middle school gym where students eat
- **Are there any public schools that do not use bonds?** Answer: It is very rare as this is the only way to fund capital projects besides saving up over years. If a school does not have a bond then they more than likely will utilize a sinking fund millage. A majority of districts have both a bond and a sinking fund. A sinking fund is a savings fund approved and generated by local voters that provides school districts with funds to pay cash for infrastructure maintenance and improvements as needed unless a substantial donation is made for such items.
- **How are public schools funded in Michigan?** Answer: The bulk of the funding to operate Michigan's schools comes from a foundation allowance paid by the State of Michigan.

- **Is there any other way for schools to receive funds?** Answer: Schools do not have access to subsidies/PPP loans. We utilize grants as much as possible and we used ESSER funds(one time funds) to pay for asbestos removal. The other ESSER funds we received were limited on how the funds were spent. Bonds or sinking funds are the only way schools can receive money in one amount to pay for capital improvements.
- **I was noticing on the school website that one of the ways the school can pay for repairs and renovations is by using the capital improvement fund. I was wondering if I or anyone else can donate money to that fund?** Answer: Yes, if someone wants to donate specifically to the capital improvement fund, they can certainly do so. They would simply send us payment with specific instructions on where to apply their donation and we will make that happen. We ask that checks be made out to P-W Schools.
- **For the new restrooms and locker rooms proposal for the football field area, will the fence line be modified that separates the football field and softball/baseball fields so that they also have access to use them? In the past, porta-johns have been placed by the softball diamond. If there are new restrooms being added, these should be available for use by the other sports as well. Porta-johns would not be acceptable at that point.** Answer: Yes, that is one of the reasons why we want to have the locker room building in that location. We want to have the public and players from softball /baseball to be able to utilize the bathrooms/space.
- **For the turf field proposal, what policy will be put in place to ensure that everyone has access to use the field when it is not the actual football season? This would be needed to ensure that a non-football activity is not denied usage of it when it is not the football season.** Answer: Yes, right now we utilize google calendars for our shared spaces (elementary gym, middle school gym, field house, weight room etc). This has worked really well as we give access to all teachers/coaches/supervisors. They communicate well with each other and move things around when needed to accommodate last minute changes. We usually have events scheduled in those shared spaces from 3-9 each school night and during the day on Saturdays.
- **Are there any plans to upgrade the sound system in the fieldhouse? It can be difficult to hear at times.** Answer: Yes, it stopped working last year and we got it fixed, but it is in need of a new system. We have it on our capital needs assessment.
- **The bond referendum approved by the Board of Education is for the first option in the survey, yet the turf field was in the second option. Why are we considering turf?** Answer: The survey indicated a dollar amount for option one. After reviewing all the items and staying within the cost parameters, we added restroom updates to the elementary, updates to the auditorium, and turf to the football field. The football stadium and surrounding areas have serious drainage issues especially during the fall and spring seasons after rainfall. After consultation from drainage experts, it was determined the tile under the football field is too deep and not effective. We have been advised to remove the dirt from the football field, dig down to remove the ineffective tiling and install a new drainage system to more efficiently disperse the water. Since the football field will be torn up, consideration for adding turf was discussed for cost saving and to allow other athletic/extracurricular programs to use the field.
- **How would I know the bond funds would be spent the way they are supposed to be spent?** Answer: Michigan law requires that 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. An audit would be completed at the end of the project financed with each bond series to ensure compliance.

- **What are the checks and balances during the construction process? Who makes sure that the work is being done correctly?** Answer: We have to abide by the Construction of School Buildings Act. This act has checks and balances to ensure that all work is done correctly.
- **When are the current bonds scheduled to be paid off?** Answer: Our current bonds are scheduled to be paid off in 2028, 2029 and 2041.
- **How much do you spend on maintaining the current athletic fields now?** Answer: We spend an average of \$35,000 a year to maintain our fields.
- **How long will the artificial turf last? How would we pay to replace it when needed?** Answer: Artificial turf has made many advancements in recent years. The life expectancy of the turf is 12-15 years. Many high schools are able to either update with a partial replacement of the worn areas or replace after 20 years or more. Keeping a line item in our budget will allow us to save the funds to purchase any replacements.
- **If the bond passes, what is the timeline for the turf?** Answer: If the bond passes, we will then look at the availability of product and installation. We will pick a time that is the least disruptive to our programs.
- **What are the plans for the bus garage?** Answer: The bus garage will continue to be a priority on our capital needs assessment. This assessment will list the physical needs of the property, useful life expectancy, replacement schedule, and cost.
- **How much more will the artificial turf cost compared to reseeding the field after the drainage issue is resolved?** Answer: Approximately \$450,000.
- **Who is responsible for checking the patching of the football field?** Answer: Currently we have a part time grounds employee that will take this responsibility after receiving training along with our facilities director.
- **A yes vote usually means that you approve the bond proposal. Is that the case this time?** Answer: Yes. A yes vote means that you are in favor of the bond proposal. A no vote means that you are opposed.
- **If the bond lasts for thirty years but there are things in the bond that won't last thirty years for example the turf or any electronics how does that work?** Answer: A school district must demonstrate that the weighted average maturity of the qualified bond issue does not exceed 120% of the average reasonably expected useful life of the facilities, excluding land and site improvements, being financed with the proceeds of the qualified bonds. Purchases that do not have a lifespan of the loan are required to be amortized.