



# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 6, 2025

## **Fennville Public Schools Approves Zero Mill Increase Bond Referendum for August 2025 Ballot; will decrease millage rate by 0.5.**

FENNVILLE, MI — At its regular board meeting on Monday, April 21, 2025, the Fennville Public Schools Board of Education approved a resolution to place a Zero Mill Increase bond proposal on the August 5, 2025 ballot and further reduce the district's millage rate by 0.5. This bond aims to reinvest in critical school infrastructure and student learning environments — while maintaining current tax levels.

The proposal supports major improvements in safety, air quality, energy efficiency, and accessibility across all district buildings. The total investment is designed to fit within existing millage rates due to the retirement of previous debt. In fact, most taxpayers will see a **net reduction** of 0.5 mills on their tax bill.

*“This is a tremendous opportunity to reinvest in our schools while being fiscally responsible,” said Superintendent Albert Lombard. “Our students deserve safe, modern spaces to learn — and this proposal allows us to achieve that without raising taxes.”*

### **Official Ballot Language**

As approved by the Board, the proposal reads:

Shall Fennville Public Schools, Allegan County, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed Twenty-Two Million Three Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$22,350,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefore for the purpose of: remodeling, equipping and re-equipping, and furnishing and refurnishing school buildings and facilities; erecting and equipping structures for outdoor education programs; and preparing, developing, improving, and equipping playgrounds and sites?

### **What’s Included in the Bond Proposal?**

Each school building in the district would benefit:

- **Elementary School:** Full HVAC replacement, roof replacement, window improvements, and more
- **Middle School:** ADA-compliant restroom renovations, HVAC upgrades, cafeteria improvements, and intercom system upgrades

- **High School:** Roof replacement, HVAC system improvements, ADA-compliant restroom renovations, and classroom enhancements
- **District-Wide:** Outdoor learning environments across the district's campus, boilers, flexible classroom furniture and common spaces, and upgraded fire alarms and communication systems

These improvements aim to reduce energy costs, protect aging infrastructure, and enhance the day-to-day learning experience for students.

## **Built on Community Voice & Strategic Vision**

This proposal reflects the input of a community-led task force composed of 14 volunteer members who met eight times between November 2024 and February 2025. Their work included school tours, reviewing facility assessments, learning about school finance, and evaluating potential project scopes. Along with community survey responses and expert analysis, this input helped shape a proposal that aligns closely with the District's Strategic Plan, *Fennville Forward: Our Roadmap for Success*, which prioritizes fiscal responsibility, student wellness, and modern learning environments.

## **IMPACT Framework: A Plan with Purpose**

### **Budget Impact**

- No increase to current tax rates. This bond is structured to maintain existing tax levels, while most residents will see a 0.5 mill decrease.
- Utilizes expiring debt for new improvements.
- Reduces future emergency repairs and operating costs.
- Aligns with Strategic Plan goals for financial stewardship.

### **Community Impact**

- Protects community investments in school infrastructure.
- Helps retain families, support property values, and foster pride.
- Adds outdoor learning spaces designed for student use and occasional community benefit.
- Reinforces the District's commitment to transparency and community engagement.

### **Student Impact**

- Modern, comfortable, and inclusive spaces improve focus and performance.
- Upgrades like flexible furniture and improved cafeteria spaces support collaboration.
- Strategic reinvestment frees up operational dollars for academics and programs.
- Supports core plan goals of "Academics for All" and "Wellness for All."

## **Why Now?**

This proposal is not about spending more, it's about being smart with timing. At a time that can feel somewhat uncertain, this plan offers local stability: maintaining a consistent tax rate while still investing in safer, healthier, and more efficient schools.

Postponing these updates would lead to potentially higher future costs due to inflation, possible system failures, and missed energy efficiency savings. By acting now, **Fennville can do more with less — protecting its legacy and building a stronger future for students.**

## **Stay Informed**

In the coming weeks, the District will release a dedicated website, distribute a referendum fact sheet and community mailer, and share updates through social media and other platforms.

## **Join the Conversation: Attend the Town Hall**

Community members are invited to attend a public Town Hall to learn more, ask questions, and share feedback:

**Wednesday, May 14, 2025**

**7:00 to 8:00 PM**

**Fennville High School Media Center**

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