Mattawan Consolidated School District
May 7, 2024 Bond – FAQs

OVERVIEW & FUNDING

Why do we need a bond proposal?

Many school districts in the State of Michigan typically seek approval for bond proposals every 5-10 years. This allows for significant improvements to occur and keep district facilities current. The last bond proposal brought to the Mattawan Consolidated School district voters was a successful election in August of 2018.

The vision and mission set forth by the Board of Education and district administration identify that the district seeks to provide the highest quality education for all students in a caring, safe, and inclusive learning environment. The district holds the vision of being the leading collaborative learning community in which every individual will be valued, engaged, and empowered in an ever-changing, diverse, global society. As a district we strive to prepare our students so they can achieve personal success while being ready to engage and contribute in the global marketplace. Upgraded facilities that support education for our current and future students will have a major impact in achieving these goals.

Due to the size and scale of school buildings, maintenance, updates, and replacement of facilities is costly and often not possible through the traditional funding received by school districts. Our district has a number of growing needs that require large sums of money to undertake. A bond proposal is the best approach to making the significant updates and improvements needed at MCS.

What funding sources are available to schools?

Schools receive funding from a number of sources. A simple breakdown of the sources is as follows:

Foundation Per Pupil Allowance*#

The State of Michigan provides a per pupil amount of funding to school districts. Currently, the amount received per pupil is $9,608.

Operational Millage (Non-Homestead tax levy)*#

This is a voter-approved tax levy that provides operational funding to support the annual school budget. The current Non-Homestead levy in Mattawan Consolidated School District is 18.0 mills. This funding is ***included*** in the Foundation Per Pupil Allowance above. This ***not*** an additional funding source.

**** Staff salaries and benefits account for approximately 80-85% of the use of Foundation and Operational Millage funding. The remainder of these funds are typically used for costs of educational programs, building operation costs, and supplies. This leaves very little funding available for facility improvements.***

 # In the State of Michigan, school infrastructure is not included in the Foundation Per Pupil Allowance. Funding for school infrastructure improvements is obtained through local voter support.

Voter-Approved Sinking Funds

Voter-approved sinking funds provide an annual collection of taxes based on property values. Typically, the collection provides a smaller amount of funding that allows for minor facilities improvements and renovations. Under new legislation, sinking funds can pay for buses, student technology and safety/security improvements. Sinking funds cannot be used for the purchase of furniture. Mattawan Consolidated Schools currently does not levy a sinking fund millage.

Voter-Approved Bond Funds

A bond is a state-approved borrowing process for a set scope of projects. When voters approve a bond proposal, the school district sells bonds in the authorized amount and uses the proceeds of the sale to pay for those projects identified in the bond proposal. Bond proposals are most useful when a district needs a large funding source for facility improvement projects.

In many ways, the bonding process is like a homeowner obtaining a mortgage and making payments over a period of years. The current levy for bond debt in the Mattawan Consolidated School District is 7.00 mills. The proposed bond proposal is ***not*** anticipated to increase the tax rate over the current millage rate of 7.00 mills.

Can any of the bond proposal funds be used for employee salaries or operating expenses?

No, by law, bond proposal funds cannot be used for employee salaries and benefits, athletics or student programming. They also cannot be used for repair or maintenance costs or other operating expenses. Bond proposal funds must be used only for purposes specified in the ballot language, and as required by state law, they must be independently audited.

How does our current millage rate compare to other area districts?

District	2023 Millage Total (Combined Sinking Fund + Bond Debt)
Plainwell	10.55
DeWitt	10.00
Lawton	9.60
Allegan	8.53
Otsego	8.49

Paw Paw	8.20
Lowell	7.98
Byron Center	7.97
Portage	7.35
Caledonia	7.00
Mattawan	**7.00**
Gull Lake	6.30
South Haven	4.50

We appreciate the continued investment the community has made in our school district and have been mindful of our impact to taxpayers by not asking for a tax rate increase over the current levy.

What are the basic facts of the May 2024 bond proposal and how would the bond proposal affect my taxes?

Two ballot proposals are being brought to the voters for consideration in May of 2024.

Ballot Proposal 1: Safety, Academics + Student Experiences

- Project Focus: Addressing our district's most pressing facility needs that have impact on academic achievement.
- Bond Amount = $92.0 Million
- If approved, Ballot Proposal 1 would have a tax impact of **0.0-mill net increase** over the current tax rate, meaning ***the current debt levy of 7.0 mills will not change***.

Ballot Proposal 2: Student + Community Pool

- Project Focus: Construction of an Indoor Pool Facility
- Bond Amount = $18.0 Million
- If approved, Ballot Proposal 2 would have a tax impact of **0.0-mill net increase** over the current tax rate, meaning ***the current debt levy of 7.0 mills will not change***.

If I own multiple properties, how does the millage impact me? Does it only apply to my primary residence or business?

The millage will impact all real properties that you own that are located within the Mattawan Consolidated Schools District boundary.

Would all the bonds be sold at one time?

No. The bonds would be sold in series. A series bond means that voters are asked to approve the overall bond amount once at the May 7th, 2024 election, but then bonds to generate project funds would be sold in stages to help reduce interest costs. For Proposal 1, the first series is expected to be sold in 2024, and the second series is likely to be sold in 2026. Final timing of the sales will be determined by the Board of Education with advise from the district's financial manager. Proposal 2 is a single series bond and would be sold in 2026. The multi-series approach with Proposal 1 is an opportunity to save in interest costs, and it also staggers cash flow for the project, so it is received when needed for construction to align with the potential staggered start and completion dates of the proposed projects.

Why are there two proposals on the ballot?

From the onset of the planning process, the District has been committed to fiscal responsibility by bringing bond proposals that do not increase the current millage rate of 7.0 for taxpayers. Presenting two distinct, yet equally essential, proposals allows the District to manage the phased release of bond sales during the construction project timelines. This strategic approach ensures that the millage rate remains unchanged and prevents any increase throughout the duration of the projects.

Proposal 1 addresses much-needed student experiences - academic spaces, infrastructure and environment improvements, and external campus enhancements. While Proposal 2 (Student + Community Pool) holds significant importance, its execution as a stand-alone initiative may pose challenges without the combined approval of Proposal 1. The proposals are interdependent, and their combined approval would create a more seamless and effective implementation of the envisioned improvements.

Both proposals are essential to address our District and Community needs while being fiscally responsible and preserving our existing assets for generations.

If the bond proposal passes in May, will the district seek a bond anytime in the near future?

School buildings are constantly in need of facility updates. As we move into the future, the district will monitor opportunities for generating funding for necessary facility improvements. There is no specific timing that has been identified, however we would anticipate a future opportunity to exist in 5-10 years to seek voter approval of another bond. The timing will be dependent upon property value changes and other variable. As these future opportunities arise, the district intends to continue to be transparent with the community and will seek feedback on potential approaches.

BOND SCOPE & SCHEDULE

How was the project scope of the bond proposal developed?

Mattawan Consolidated School District is committed to a process of creating and maintaining a proactive approach to updating facilities. Continually evaluating and monitoring school facilities helps to protect the community's investment in its schools. A comprehensive effort has been made early in the process to identify current facility needs while also identifying and anticipating future needs through the creation of a long-term facilities plan.

In January of 2023, working with architectural, engineering, construction management, and technology specialists, the school district completed an in-depth facility study. The study identified districtwide facility needs and has helped inform the proposed direction of the bond proposal. Overall, there were approximately $68.7 million dollars of total facilities recommendations indicated in the report for the district educational buildings. A summary by building is as follows:

Early Elementary School	
Recommendations Years 1-10	$1,622,965
Later Elementary School	
Recommendations Years 1-10	$1,205,743
Mattawan Middle School	
Recommendations Years 1-10	$30,907,549
Mattawan High School	
Recommendation Years 1-10	$31,148,298
District Administration Building / Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC)	
Recommendations Years 1-10	$3,767,692
TOTAL ALL RECOMMENDATIONS	**$68,652,247**

In the late winter and spring of 2023, conversations with staff, students, community members, and the Board of Education identified additional thoughts for advancing the facility offerings as they relate to the educational needs and goals of the district. A district-wide survey was also offered to all district staff members in order to solicit internal viewpoints regarding facilities. Many of the items that were shared were beyond the maintenance and upkeep needs identified in the facility study and were focused on projects that help support educational programming needs.

As ideas and scenarios were studied for a potential bond proposal, additional input was provided by a community-based steering committee during the spring, summer and fall of 2023. Two community-wide surveys were conducted and a series of community forums were also hosted to allow for all community members to receive information and provide thoughts and ideas on a potential bond scope. Input received was critical in testing potential scope ideas for a bond proposal along with gaining feedback on the financial impact to the community of a prospective bond.

What are the main goals of the proposed bond scope?

During the planning process, three goals were established to help guide and shape a potential bond plan. Main goals of the project include:

1. Preserve Existing Assets
2. Prioritize Safety + Security
3. Provide Future-Focused Academic + Student Experiences
4. Enhance Infrastructure
5. Demonstrate Fiscal Responsibility

Key Priorities of the Established Bond Scope Include:

Safety and Security – The safety and security of our students and staff is the highest priority. Peace of mind in the classroom allows for a more comfortable learning experience.

Security Camera Upgrades – Additional security cameras are proposed at the Middle School and High School for better coverage throughout each facility.

Classroom Wing Security – New doors and controls are proposed at the Middle School to create better building compartmentalization. The new doors and controls will allow for staff to lock down individual sets of doors or all doors that would provide access to the classroom wings. This approach is similar to the doors that are in place at each of the elementary classroom wings.

Fire Alarm System Replacement – The current fire alarm system is out of date at the Middle School and High School. The proposed fire alarm system will provide enhanced emergency communication with students and staff that meets today's code requirements.

Site Traffic Flow Separations – Overall campus traffic pattern upgrades are included as part of the bond scope. The potential plan will allow for greater separation of parent/visitor vehicular traffic and bus traffic, through the addition of new drives and traffic loops, which will provide a safer environment for the drop-off and pick-up times of the day.

Improvements to Support Academic and Student Experiences – As educational trends continue to change and evolve, our facilities need to be flexible and relevant in ways that best support best practices in teaching and learning. State-of-the-art educational environments that are comfortable will help our students to be prepared for careers of the future. In addition to experience in the classroom, extracurricular activities are extremely important in the development of students and the bond scope seeks to provide a combination of new amenities to support student engagement and performance.

Classroom Environment Upgrades – Classroom flexibility will be possible through the replacement of outdated furniture that is difficult to rearrange for a variety of teaching and learning modes. New classroom furniture will provide a comfortable environment for students that is

agile enough to adjust for a variety of arrangements in the rooms. With some recent purchases of classroom furniture at the Middle School, only partial replacement is proposed. Full replacement of classroom furniture is proposed at the High School.

Science Program Space Upgrades – Science labs at the 6th and 7th grade wing of the Middle School along with the 1991 labs at the High School will be upgraded with new casework and interior finishes. The design approach for these spaces will focus on greater flexibility of the labs to be able to provide a wide variety of teaching and exploration by students.

Fine Arts Facilities Upgrades – Our auditorium at the High School provides a number of great opportunities for our students involved in a variety of programs to showcase their talents and express themselves. These experiences are paramount to a well rounded academic experience for those enrolled in our many fine arts programs. The auditorium was constructed in 1991 and is in need of many updates to make it a venue that continues to provide great benefit to our students. Updates to the auditorium include new seating, new audio technology, a new theater lighting system and replacement of the stage floor.

Athletics Facilities Upgrades – Our athletic programs are an important part of the overall educational experience for our students. The current athletics facilities are in need of significant improvement in order to provide the level of practice and competition spaces for our student athletes to excel.

Multipurpose Fieldhouse – The construction of a new multipurpose fieldhouse is included in the bond scope. The facility will be equipped with a walking track, synthetic turf practice area and other support spaces. The facility will provide a much-needed amenity for our athletic programs by increasing indoor practice space for many of our outdoor sports when the weather isn't favorable for outdoor practices. The facility will provide opportunities for use by programs such as our marching band and it also has the potential for community use.

Tennis Complex Improvements – A new facility for tennis will include 12 new post-tensioned concrete courts, a new concessions and toilets facility, storage facility and an improved spectator experience. The facility will be located so that it will also be easily accessible for community use.

Athletic Stadium Improvements The athletic stadium will receive much needed improvements including new synthetic turf sized for football, soccer and lacrosse, a new 8 lane track with a new drainage system, upgraded bleachers and improved entry/ticketing areas for home and visitor spectators. The stadium will serve as the centerpiece of the overall athletic complex and the design will focus on creating flexibility of use for the ticketing, concessions and restroom facilities so that duplication of these facilities isn't required.

Athletic Complex Upgrades – Additional improvements to the athletic complex will include updated baseball and softball facilities that will include new dugouts, bleachers, and press boxes. Practice fields will also be upgraded to provide higher quality playing surfaces for athletes.

Technology Upgrades – Educational technology is constantly changing. The proposed bond funds for technology would be aimed at replacement of student devices throughout the district to keep them relevant with today's needs. Classroom audio upgrades at all facilities is also proposed.

Infrastructure Upgrades- Energy savings improvements allow the district to divert funding from operational costs toward items that will directly affect education and have student impact. The proposed bond scope includes a number of energy efficiency upgrades in addition to items that will provide more comfort to our students and staff.

Interior Lighting Replacement - Select areas of the Middle/High School building will have existing lighting replaced with new LED fixtures. The new fixtures typically have been shown to provide significant energy savings. The new fixtures will also be accompanied by new lighting controls that will allow for staff to adjust lighting levels based upon specific needs.

Mechanical Systems Replacements – The Middle School is to receive new energy efficient boilers and pumps. A third boiler is also expected to be installed to provide redundancy for the building. This allows for boiler life span to be extended while also giving additional heating capacity for the coldest days of the year.

Cooling Upgrades – The outdated chiller at the Middle School is expected to be replaced as part of the bond scope. Upgrades to the gymnasium mechanical units at the High School gymnasium and at the ECEC gymnasium will allow for these spaces to be cooled.

Temperature Controls – New temperature controls will be installed at the Middle School and High School buildings. The new control systems will replace outdated control systems that are difficult to manipulate. The new systems will allow district staff to monitor energy usage and provide more consistent heating and cooling at our facilities.

District-Wide Infrastructure Improvements

Bus Replacement – Our large bus fleet requires that we stay on top of replacement of our most out of date buses to maintain a fleet that is reliable. The bond proposal allocates dollars to continue the practice of periodic and systematic replacement of the aging portion of our fleet.

Maintenance and Transportation Facilities – The bond proposes to replace the existing maintenance and transportation facilities that are not suitable for the needs of these very important departments in our district. The new facilities will provide better amenities for workspace and storage space. The new facilities are proposed to be located in the heart of the campus to allow for easy access to all facilities by the maintenance and transportation staff. Relocation of the facilities will also allow for updates to the south and east sides of our campus to support the development of our athletic campus.

With the age of the Middle School, why isn't it being considered for replacement?

The facilities assessment identified many needs for the Middle School. The assessment recommendations for the Middle School totaled approximately $31 Million in needs over the next 10 years for the facility. Consideration for replacement involves the calculation of the Facilities Condition Index (FCI)

as a metric to gauge the need for building replacement. The FCI compares the cost of recommendations versus the cost for building a new facility at the current building square footage. In the case of Mattawan Middle School, the FCI was identified to be in the range of 48-53%. The typical FCI that triggers the need for conversation about building replacement is 67%. Even when a facility is at or above the 67% FCI, other factors may come into play that do not justify building replacement. The full list of FCI information on our educational facilities is as follows:

Facility	Cost of Assessment Recommendations	Cost of Facility Replacement	FCI Index
Mattawan Early Elementary	$1,622,965	$54,100,000 - $59,510,000	2.7% - 3.0%
Mattawan Later Elementary	$1,205,743	$60,602,500 - $66,662,750	1.8% - 2.0%
Mattawan Middle School	$30,907,549	$58,040,500 - $63,844,550	48.4% - 53.2%
Mattawan High School	$31,148,298	$106,935,000 - $117,628,500	26.5% - 29.1%
Admin / Early Childhood Ed. Ctr.	$3,767,692	$32,353,500 - $35,588,850	10.6% - 11.6%

How would the community be involved in design and facility planning following a successful election?

Upon a successful election, many stakeholders including staff, students, and parents will be engaged to further define and develop the designs of the proposed projects. We also plan to host a community forum and receive input from the community to help shape the potential designs.

Will local emergency response teams be involved in the design process?

Yes, representatives of local law enforcement and emergency management organizations will be brought in early into the design process to gain feedback on how the facilities designs best support access and response for emergency personnel.

When would the projects be complete?

The schedules for project completion haven't been finalized. We are reviewing schedules that create the best alignment of district and community priorities, impact of the phasing of projects on district operations and determination of optimal bidding timing that will reap the greatest financial benefits for the district. Following the successful passing of the bond, we will develop and share out a formal schedule after further analysis by our architectural and construction management teams.

Why aren't all of the projects being completed on the same timeline?

The bond proposal proposes a significant amount of work, and for several reasons, it is best to stagger the implementation of bond projects. A phased approach offers several advantages that contribute to the overall success of the projects and will benefit our students, staff, and community. Here are some key reasons projects will be staggered:

1. **Resource Management:** Staggering projects helps the school district better manage resources such as funding, personnel, and materials, ensuring efficient utilization and allocation across phases.
2. **Priority Focus:** Critical projects can be prioritized and completed first, addressing immediate needs and benefiting students, staff, and the community without delay.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility:** By selling bonds in series and allocating funds strategically, the district can stay within its borrowing capacity and ensure adequate financial resources are available for each phase.
4. **Risk Mitigation:** Staggering projects allows for better risk management by addressing unforeseen issues as they arise, maintaining quality control, and avoiding overwhelming challenges that could arise from simultaneous implementation.
5. **Market Considerations**: Staggering projects to alleviate stress on the local construction market encourages greater contractor participation, leading to increased competition, better bid results, and, ultimately, cost efficiencies for the school district.
6. **Operational Continuity:** Minimizing disruptions to ongoing school activities is crucial, and a phased approach to construction helps achieve this by spreading out the construction timeline and minimizing interference.
7. **Feedback and Improvement:** The phased approach allows for feedback and adjustments between phases, which, based on lessons learned, improves designs, cost efficiencies, and overall project success.

By considering and implementing these strategies, the school district can optimize outcomes, effectively manage risks, and ensure the successful completion of the proposed bond projects while maximizing the benefits for all Wildcats.

How do cost escalation and the current market impact the project scope?

The budgeting that has been provided for the proposed bond scope is based on current market conditions. Going forward, the costs include typical yearly escalation factors and construction contingency funds for unforeseen conditions that are encountered during construction. The district will work to preserve the projects as originally presented to the community during the pre-bond planning phase. In the event unexpected market conditions arise, the district intends to implement projects in order of highest priority to lowest priority and will be fully transparent about any change in plans that may be necessary due to elements outside of their control.

VOTING INFORMATION

Who can vote in this bond proposal election?

Residents within the Mattawan Consolidated School district who will be 18 years of age or older on Election Day and are registered to vote.

Where can I get information about voting (such as how to register, where to vote, and absentee voting)?

Go to the Michigan Voter Information website www.michigan.gov/vote or call the Clerk's Office where you reside.

Do I need to update my voter registration?

You need to update your voter registration if you have changed your name or address since the last time you voted. You can do this at any Secretary of State Office or at the Clerk's Office where you reside.

Can I vote by absentee ballot?

Yes. Since voter approval of Proposal 3 in November 2018, registered voters do not need a reason to vote by absentee ballot. You can request an absentee ballot application from your Clerk's Office or by going online to www.michigan.gov/vote and clicking on Absentee Voting in the left column. Absentee ballots should be available to voters no later than March 28, 2024, and may be cast through Election Day.