

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# BOND 2022

OKEMOS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**CREATING FUTURE-READY SPACES.  
IMPROVING SAFETY + SECURITY.  
ZERO MILL INCREASE.  
VOTE NOVEMBER 8TH.**



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS **BOND PROPOSAL 2022**

## **Q: WHAT IS ON THE NOVEMBER 8TH, 2022, BALLOT?**

With an expected continuation of the current millage rate, Okemos Public Schools (OPS) has an opportunity to re-imagine the future, to accommodate long-term enrollment increases and the aging building infrastructure. The proposal asks voters to consider a \$275 million bond that would allow for the following projects:

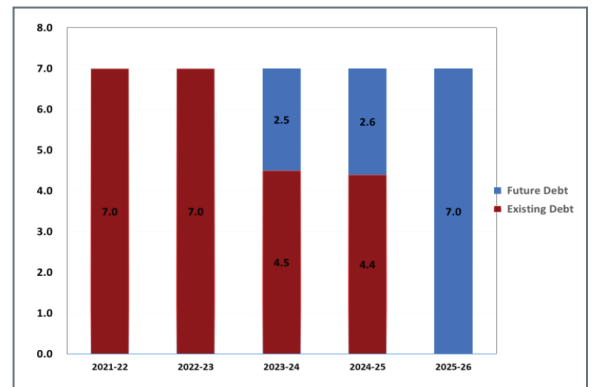
- The **replacement of three buildings** that are beyond their useful lives, including Kinawa and Chippewa Middle Schools, and Cornell Elementary
- Building **safety enhancements** with **secure entry vestibules at each school**
- **Pressing needs** improvements district-wide, as identified in a district-wide facility assessment
- Tennis courts expansion and replacement of the softball and baseball complex and equipment
- Performing arts, cafeteria, and kitchen expansion at Okemos High School
- Hiawatha Elementary School classroom addition and redesign of drop-off and pick-up areas for better traffic flow
- Furniture replacement and technology improvements, where needed district-wide

## **Q: WOULD MY TAXES INCREASE IF THE BOND PROPOSAL IS APPROVED?**

OPS is committed to educating with excellence by providing outstanding educational opportunities and modern learning environments. If approved, the ballot proposal would allow the district to sell bonds and generate approximately \$275 million **with no expected increase over the current millage rate**. To learn more about your tax impact, please visit [okemosbond.net](http://okemosbond.net).

## **Q: WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT NOW?**

While planning for the 2019 bond, it became clear that if enrollments continued to increase, a comprehensive process would need to be taken to review enrollment trends, neighborhood composition, and potential solutions to create a longer-term plan. The OPS 2020-2024 Strategic Plan identified high quality and equitable facilities and learning environments as a priority. **Today the district has the unique opportunity to ask voters for the authority to generate significant funds for improvements while maintaining the current millage rate.**



## **Q: HOW WAS THIS PLAN DEVELOPED?**

The proposal comes as a result of multiple forums to engage students, parents, community members, staff, administrators, and the school board, with the goal of being representative of all voices within Okemos. The common feedback was that our facilities were “run-down” and not reflective of a district that values public education.

In addition, OPS has an ongoing evaluation and monitoring process of all school facilities. The district, along with their architecture, construction, and technology partners, conducted a facility assessment of all school-owned buildings and ground in the fall of 2021. The study identified pressing facility needs district-wide which also helped inform the proposed direction of the bond proposal.

**Our goal was to ensure community engagement in the decision-making process. This proposal reflects a first step in the district’s master plan for facility improvements.**

**ELECTION DAY TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH**

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS **BOND PROPOSAL 2022**

## **Q: WHAT INFORMATION IS PROVIDED ON THE BALLOT FOR THE 2022 BOND PROGRAM?**

The bond proposal will be on the November 8, 2022 ballot. Below is a comprehensive breakdown of the ballot language.

Shall Okemos Public Schools, Ingham County, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed Two Hundred Seventy-Five Million Dollars (\$275,000,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefor, in one or more series, for the purpose of:

### **\$275 MILLION BOND**

The district would sell \$275 million in bonds to fund the proposed projects.

- Erecting, furnishing and equipping a new elementary school building; erecting, furnishing and equipping a new middle school building as an addition to Chippewa Middle School; erecting, furnishing and equipping additions to school buildings; remodeling, equipping and re-equipping and furnishing and refurbishing school buildings;
- Acquiring, installing, equipping and re-equipping school buildings for instructional technology; purchasing school buses;
- Preparing, developing, improving and equipping playgrounds, play fields, athletic fields and facilities and sites?

### **SAFETY + SECURITY**

### **FUTURE-READY + RIGHT-SIZED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

### **ENERGY + OPERATIONAL COST-EFFICIENCIES**

### **TECHNOLOGY + FURNITURE**

- To be legally accurate, the ballot language must indicate a renovation and addition at the Chippewa site since a portion of Chippewa that was recently renovated would be reused in the new construction **and** because the two new schools (Chippewa and Kinawa) would be on the current Chippewa site. **Chippewa and Kinawa schools would be replaced if this ballot language is approved.**
- A new two-story elementary would be constructed on the Cornell property to replace the current building.
- Secure entry corridors/vestibules for ALL school buildings.
- And other pressing needs.

YES \_\_\_\_\_

NO \_\_\_\_\_

The estimated millage that will be levied for the proposed bonds in 2023 is 2.49 mills (\$2.49 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 thirty (30) years. The estimated simple average annual millage anticipated to be required to retire this bond debt is 6.21 mills (\$6.21 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 \$23,095,000. 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.)

### **ZERO MILL INCREASE**

The bond is tax neutral, meaning the current 7.0 debt mills collected are not expected to be increased.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS **BOND PROPOSAL 2022**

## **Q: WHY DOES THE DISTRICT NEED A BOND PROPOSAL?**

Due to the size and scale of school buildings, maintenance, updates, and replacement of facilities is costly and typically not possible through the traditional funding received by school districts. Our district has several growing needs requiring large sums of money. A bond proposal is the best approach to making the significant updates and improvements needed at OPS.

School districts in the State of Michigan often 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 put before the Okemos Public Schools district voters was a successful election in 2019.

The Board of Education and district administration want all OPS facilities to reflect the district's academic excellence and commitment to public education. Upgraded facilities that support education for our current and future students would be a major component in achieving this goal.

## **Q: WHAT ARE THE MAIN GOALS OF THE PROPOSED BOND SCOPE?**

The 2022 bond program would allow OPS to preserve general fund money for instruction and classroom needs by providing a dedicated funding source to address the following pressing needs:



### **SAFETY + 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. Projects included in the bond include greater control of our building entries. Redesigning our site drop-off and pick-up areas would focus on better traffic flow and creating a separation of parents, buses, and pedestrians



### **FUTURE-READY + RIGHT SIZED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

As educational trends continue to change and evolve, our facilities need to be flexible and relevant to best support best practices in teaching and learning. State-of-the-art educational environments that are comfortable and adequately sized would help our students to be prepared for careers of the future.



### **ENERGY + OPERATIONAL COST-EFFICIENCIES**

Our boilers, building controls, and mechanical systems will be designed for greater energy efficiency to reduce energy consumption. As we look at replacing significant amounts of our building roofs, additional insulation would be added to comply with current energy codes that would provide a higher-performing building exterior. Energy savings allow the district to divert funding from operational costs toward items that would directly affect education.

## **Q: WHY DOES THE BALLOT LANGUAGE REFER TO AN ADDITION AT CHIPPEWA? AREN'T WE BUILDING TWO NEW MIDDLE SCHOOLS?**

To be legally accurate, the ballot language must indicate a renovation and addition at the Chippewa site since a portion of Chippewa that was recently renovated will be reused in the new construction and because the two new schools (Chippewa and Kinawa) will be on the current Chippewa site. The replacement of both Chippewa and Kinawa schools would occur if this ballot language is approved.

**ELECTION DAY TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH**

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS **BOND PROPOSAL 2022**

## **Q: HOW WOULD OUR STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY BENEFIT?**

The bond proposal would help assure that OPS can continue to provide our students and community with modern, right-sized learning environments and facilities.

## **Q: HOW ARE MICHIGAN SCHOOLS FUNDED?**

The state of Michigan provides funding to school districts on a per-pupil basis, based on the cost of educating the average pupil per year. The state of Michigan does not provide funding to address facilities, which are funded exclusively through local property taxes. There are two ways that school districts can raise money for facility improvements: levying sinking funds and selling bonds.

## **Q: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BOND PROPOSAL AND A SINKING FUND?**

Bond proposals are used to finance major capital projects. The district is able to borrow money upfront and pay back the bond amount over time.

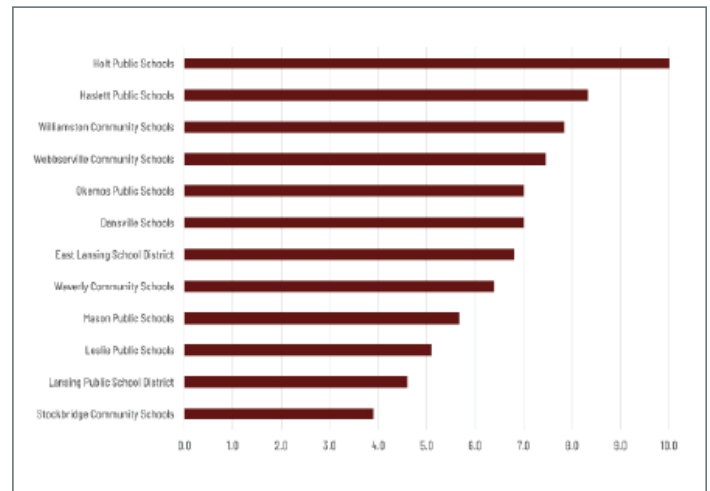
Sinking funds are provided on an annual basis to address the immediate needs of school buildings, facilities, and surrounding school sites. This is intended for short-term improvements rather than major renovations and upgrades.

## **Q: WHAT IS A MILL?**

A mill is equal to \$1 per every \$1,000 of taxable property valuation (not the market value of a home; homeowners can refer to their latest assessment for their home's taxable value).

## **Q: HOW DOES OUR CURRENT MILLAGE RATE COMPARE TO OTHER DISTRICTS?**

At 7.0 mills, the current rate is among the sixth lowest level in Ingham County. The district does not intend to change the current tax millage rate with the potential 2022 bond program but rather expects to continue at the current level.



## **Q: WHAT IF THE BOND PROPOSAL DOESN'T PASS?**

If approved, the bond proposal would enable the district to continue to make transformational improvements without sacrificing instructional funds.

Failure to approve the bond proposal would mean that the district would have to delay improvements and that any emergency repairs to address potential safety issues at district facilities would have to be paid for with general operating funds that would otherwise go to support educational programs for students.

## **Q: WILL TAXES CHANGE FOR SENIOR MEMBERS IN THE COMMUNITY?**

Property tax costs may be lower for senior citizens or households with incomes below a certain level that qualify for the Homestead Property Tax Credit. For more information, please visit:

[www.legislature.mi.gov/publications/ServicesforSeniors.html](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/publications/ServicesforSeniors.html).

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS **BOND PROPOSAL 2022**

## **Q: WHEN DO WE VOTE?**

Election day is **Tuesday, November 8, 2022\***. Polls are open from 7am-8pm. You will vote at your usual polling place for local, state, and national elections.

\*Absentee ballots will be available by September 29 and can be returned through election day.

## **Q: WHO CAN VOTE IN THIS BOND PROPOSAL ELECTION?**

Residents within the Okemos Public Schools district who will be 18 years of age or older on Election Day and are registered to vote. Please note, you can register to vote on the day of the election at your local clerk's office.

## **Q: 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](http://www.michigan.gov/vote) or contact your local clerk.

## **Q: WHERE DO I GO TO VOTE?**

If you are unsure of your voting precinct, visit [www.michigan.gov/vote](http://www.michigan.gov/vote) or contact your local clerk.

## **Q: 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.

## **Q: CAN I VOTE BY ABSENTEE?**

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 <https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/AVApplication/Index>.

## **Q: WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?**

For more information visit [okemosbond.net](http://okemosbond.net) or email [bond@okemosk12.net](mailto:bond@okemosk12.net).

You are also welcome to contact Superintendent John Hood at 517-706-5000.