



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – May 2023 Bond Election

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

1. What is on the May 2, 2023 ballot?

On May 2, 2023, voters in Spring Lake Public Schools will be asked to consider a bond proposal that focuses on major additions and remodeling to infrastructure and education programs of SLPS. Spring Lake High School's upgrades would include a newly configured secure entry with new administrative offices, remodeled media center and cafeteria upgrades, remodel of visual arts labs, the addition of space for collaborative, hands-on learning, and construction of a fieldhouse. Outdoor learning spaces, technology, buses, and acquiring adjacent property to expand and upgrade the HS building and campus are also included.

If the bond proposal is approved by voters, it is estimated that the District would be able to maintain the existing school debt levy (7.0 mills) and issue the bonds with a **ZERO INCREASE to the current debt tax rate**. The bond proposal would authorize the issuance of \$49.8 million in bonds.

2. What is the rationale for the bond election & why now?

Spring Lake High School was constructed in 2000 and while well maintained, some of the building's components, including select roofing, utilities, and finishes have reached their design life and are scheduled for replacement. Additionally, standards for safety and security have changed and improved since the High School's original construction. The District's *Facilities Condition Assessment* identified Spring Lake Middle School as a high priority for energy efficiency upgrades and select replacement of finishes.

This bond is part of the District's long term master plan for facility updates, supports current best practices in education facility safety, provides infrastructure updates, and would provide modern learning enhancements for students. Based on the District's planned bond payment timelines and financial projections, these improvements are projected to be made without increasing the debt millage for taxpayers, and without impacting operational funds.



3. How was this plan developed?

- In the spring of 2022, SLPS engaged construction firm Owen Ames Kimball to complete a *Facilities Condition Assessment* and TMP Architecture to complete a *Program Assessment*. Together, these assessments outlined infrastructure and educational program projects across District buildings with an emphasis on Spring Lake High School.
- The District convened a group of 35 community members (parents, staff, Board members, and other community members) to serve on the Bond Study Committee (BSC). The BSC was charged with developing a plan for upgrading educational and extracurricular facilities to support flexible, student-centered educational spaces that meet the mission and vision of the District.
- The Bond Study Committee held meetings from August 2022 through October 2022.
- Over the course of four meetings, the BSC established guiding principles, evaluated a variety of design concepts against those principles, and reviewed community polling data on proposed concepts.
- On November 21, 2022 the Bond Study Committee presented its findings and recommendation to the SLPS Board of Education.
- On January 23, 2023, the Board unanimously supported placing the recommended \$49.8 million bond initiative on the ballot.

4. What are the Key Areas of Focus for Bond 2023?

Student Well-Being

Safe & secure entry at SLHS - Comfortable & welcoming student commons area at SLHS - Outdoor learning spaces District-wide

Operational Efficiency & Infrastructure Upgrades

Building Structures - Replace/upgrade systems and components that are beyond their useful life, with the goal of reducing operational expenses and providing efficiencies.

Future-Ready Learning Environments

Build on Academic Excellence - Design innovative and engaging educational spaces - Foster collaboration and critical thinking

Student Life

Arts & Athletics improvements - Auditorium upgrades - New athletic training spaces - Indoor practice space for band & athletics



Spring Lake Public Schools

BOND 2023

FACILITY AND SITE UPGRADES

5. What are the major features of the High School upgrades?

The needs of high school learners and the methods of high school teachers have evolved since SLHS opened 23 years ago. In addition, school safety has become a larger concern. Spring Lake High School would receive improvements targeting safety/security, energy efficiency, and utilities, as well as creating and renovating spaces for collaboration, 21st century learning, and hands-on educational opportunities.

Spring Lake High School upgrades include:

- New secure entry and Administrative Offices
- Upgrade fire alarm and security camera system
- Secure classrooms with new door hardware and window film
- Select roof replacement
- Select heating, cooling, and controls replacement
- Add 4 new classrooms and common space
- Remodel and add Visual Arts space supporting hands-on learning
- Improve classroom and instructional technology
- Re-design and renovate media center
- Auditorium upgrades including sound, lighting, flooring and finishes
- New outdoor learning spaces
- Athletic upgrades including new tennis courts, addition of varsity baseball field and fieldhouse

6. Why construct a fieldhouse?

The proposed fieldhouse is a 65,000 SF new facility, which would create a year-round indoor space intended to support the Laker student-athletes of all ages, cheer, band, and community programs, as well as HS physical education. This space specifically provides a weight room, indoor turf field, multi-purpose space, and storage, supporting a variety of student activities.

7. Why replace existing tennis courts?

The MS and HS asphalt tennis courts have outlived their useful life and require significant annual resurfacing expense. Most tennis facilities consider total replacement of asphalt surface courts after 15 years. The existing MS courts were installed 30+ years ago and the HS courts 23 years ago.



Spring Lake Public Schools

BOND 2023

8. Why would Hickman Field (varsity baseball) be relocated from the Middle School site to the High School?

Relocating Hickman Field to the High School is about safety and access. Athletic training staff are usually posted at events located at the High School (in the spring, soccer, lacrosse, tennis, track, and softball are all located at the HS) and “on call” for baseball games, which creates a safety concern for baseball players. In addition, most schools have their baseball and softball fields at the same site as the games are usually played simultaneously against the same visiting school. If Hickman Field were moved to the High School, spectators could attend any of the contests taking place at the site.

9. What would the existing varsity baseball field at the Middle School be used for?

The site would be redesigned to support youth football and lacrosse; regular use by Holmes, the Intermediate, and Middle Schools; and, community use.

10. Are there any projects/improvements slated for the Intermediate/Middle School?

The 2014 bond addressed nearly all of the Intermediate/Middle School’s infrastructure projects relevant at the time. Additional improvements in this program include:

- Secure classroom door hardware
- Energy efficient lighting (LED)
- Replace select heating units
- Outdoor learning space
- New tennis courts

11. Are there any projects/improvements slated for Holmes or Jeffers?

Holmes and Jeffers were the focus of the 2014 bond improvements and were determined to be in overall excellent condition during the 2022 *Facilities Condition Assessment*. The 2023 bond program includes K-12 student and staff technology, and outdoor learning at all school buildings.

Additionally, Jeffers Elementary is slated to receive select replacement of mechanical units not replaced in the 2014 bond.



Spring Lake Public Schools
BOND 2023

TECHNOLOGY AND TRANSPORTATION

12. What are some of the Technology Upgrades in the bond program?

Instructional Technology Improvements

- Staff and student instructional devices, including laptops, tablets, and lab devices
- Classroom instructional technology, including projectors, displays, and audio systems
- Instructional support devices, including copiers, printers, and multimedia equipment

Non-Instructional Technology Improvements

- Network infrastructure cabling at SL High School
- Network equipment including switches, access points, and server hardware
- Security infrastructure including cameras, sensors, public address, and door hardware
- Administrative technology including phones, signage, scanners, and multimedia equipment
- Auditorium improvements including cabling infrastructure, lighting, and audio/video equipment

13. Why are we planning to purchase buses and technology with bond proceeds? Would these purchases be amortized over a 25-year period?

Buses represent a significant capital expense and need to be replaced as they age. Bond funds that are used to purchase buses are required to be repaid over a 6-year period beginning at the time the buses are put into service. Technology is required to be amortized over a 5-year period beginning at the time of installation.

FINANCIAL AND ELECTION INFORMATION

14. Would this ballot proposal increase homeowners' taxes?

No, the Bond millage rate is projected to remain at 7.0 mills.



Spring Lake Public Schools

BOND 2023

15. Can the money from the Bond be used to pay teacher or other employee salaries and benefits?

No. School districts are not allowed to use Bond dollars for operating expenses such as teacher, administrator or employee salaries or benefits. Bond funds must be kept separate from the district’s operating funds.

16. Explain what bond money can pay for and what it can’t:

Bond proceeds **cannot** be used for the following items:

- Staff salaries and wages;
- General operating expenses, repairs and maintenance;
- Classroom supplies and textbooks; and,
- Administrative costs.

Bond proceeds **can** be used for the following items:

- Construction and remodeling of facilities;
- Purchase of technology equipment and infrastructure;
- Purchase of equipment and furniture;
- Site improvements;
- Property purchase; and,
- Purchase of buses.

17. If the bond proposition is approved by the voters, how would Spring Lake Public Schools’ debt compare to other Ottawa County districts?

The following chart provides a comparison of other OAISD districts. If voters approve this proposal, Spring Lake would continue to have the 7th highest/5th lowest total debt millage out of 11 school districts.

| District | Total SF & Debt Millage | District | Total SF & Debt Millage |
|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Allendale | 12.0 | Spring Lake | 7.00 |
| Coopersville | 8.99 | Holland | 5.91 |
| Jenison | 8.50 | Grand Haven | 4.20 |
| Zeeland | 8.43 | Saugatuck | 3.92 |
| West Ottawa | 8.04 | Hamilton | 2.18 |
| Hudsonville | 7.95 | | |



Spring Lake Public Schools
BOND 2023

18. What is the breakdown of total estimated costs for the bond program?

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Core Infrastructure | |
| Select roofing, heating, electrical, and finish replacement, as well as energy efficiency upgrades and transportation improvements | \$ 14,469,620 |
| Total Infrastructure | \$ 14,469,620 |
| Program & Learning Enhancements | |
| Safety & Security: High School Secure Entry & office would create a "through office" routing, requiring visitors to check into the building during school hours. Additional & replacement security cameras on site | \$ 3,303,407 |
| High School Collaboration & Learning: Re-imagine Media Center and Cafeteria to create collaborative gathering spaces for project-based learning, team activities, and student engagement | \$ 3,441,586 |
| Visual Arts - create and enhance appropriate spaces for visual arts and hands on learning | \$ 1,910,796 |
| High School Classroom Additions: Add 4 new classrooms at the high school, increasing capacity, creating additional flexible teaching environments, and allowing for curricular expansion | \$ 3,639,591 |
| Fieldhouse with weight room and multi-use room : Year round indoor / outdoor space supports all athletic teams, cheer, band | \$ 15,833,290 |
| Athletic & Site Improvements: Move and update athletic fields for safety and proximity | \$ 4,085,143 |
| Outdoor Learning: Flexible outdoor teaching areas supporting learning and student well-being | \$ 552,000 |
| Band Instruments: replace instruments at the end of their useful life | \$ 125,000 |
| District & Classroom Technology: Sustainable technology plan to equip teachers and classrooms with current instructional technology | \$ 2,375,000 |
| Total Program & Learning Enhancements | \$ 35,265,813 |
| Total Bond Program | \$ 49,735,433 |



19. When would improvements occur?

If approved by voters, design work would commence immediately, followed by construction anticipated to occur between Spring 2024 and Fall 2027.

20. Can I deduct these property taxes on my income tax return?

Property taxes may be deductible as itemized deductions on your federal income tax return if you itemize. You may also be eligible for the Michigan Homestead Property Tax Credit on your Michigan income tax return. Please consult your tax preparer.

21. What exactly is the Michigan Homestead Property Tax Credit?

The Michigan Homestead Property Tax Credit is a method through which some taxpayers can receive a tax credit for an amount of their property tax that exceeds a certain percentage of their household income. This program establishes categories under which homeowners or renters are eligible for a Homestead Property Tax Credit.

Please consult your tax preparer to determine if you are eligible for this important and valuable tax credit.

22. What are the key dates leading up to the May 2, 2023 election?

- Absent voter ballots must be available by Thursday, March 23, 2023 to be sent to members of the general public.
- Final day to register to vote: May 2, 2023 (Election Day)
- Final day to vote absentee: 8:00 pm on Election Day if you submit your ballot in-person or drop it off to a secure, designated drop box within your jurisdiction.
- It is recommended that you mail your absentee ballot at least 14 days before the election to ensure it is received on time and can be tabulated.
- Election Day is Tuesday, May 2, 2023.

23. Where and when do I register to vote?

To vote in the May 2, 2023 school election, you must be a U.S. citizen; at least 18 years of age by Election Day; not currently serving a sentence in jail or prison; and, a resident of Michigan and Spring Lake Public Schools for at least 30 days when you vote. Please visit your local city or township clerk's office to register or visit any Secretary of State office. You



can also register online. You must show your proof of residency (hard copy or digital) including driver's license, current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or other government document.

24. What is the process for voting by absentee ballot?

Due to the passage of the Statewide ballot proposal in November 2018, all eligible and registered voters in Michigan may now request an absentee voter ballot without providing a reason. Applications for Absentee Ballots are available:

- At your local clerk's office
- On-line at www.michigan.gov/vote (available 75 days before Election Day)

25. How will the proposal appear on the ballot?

SPRING LAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOND PROPOSAL

Shall Spring Lake Public Schools, Ottawa Count, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed Forty-Nine Million Eight Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$49,800,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefor, in one or more series, for the purpose of:

erecting, furnishing, and equipping additions to the high school building; acquiring a site for and erecting, furnishing, and equipping a fieldhouse building; remodeling, furnishing and refurbishing, and equipping and re-equipping school buildings; acquiring and installing instructional technology and instructional technology equipment for school buildings; purchasing school buses; and erecting, preparing, developing, improving, and equipping athletic fields and facilities, playgrounds, and sites?

The estimated millage that will be levied for the proposed bonds in 2023, under current law, is 0.99 mill (\$0.9 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 twenty-five (25) years. The estimated simple average annual millage anticipated to be required to retire this bond debt is 2.80 mills (\$2.80 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation).

The school district expects to borrow from the State School Bond Qualification and Loan Program to pay debt service on these bonds. The estimated total principal amount of that borrowing is \$8,598,246 and the estimated total interest to be paid thereon is \$2,801,429. The estimated duration of the millage levy associated with that borrowing is 11 years and the estimated computed millage rate for such levy is 7 mills. The estimated computed millage rate may change based on changes in certain circumstances.

The total amount of qualified bonds currently outstanding is \$45,115,000. The total amount of qualified loans currently outstanding is \$0.



(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.)

26. If I have questions not covered here, where can I get additional information?

You are welcome to call or email:

Dennis Furton, Superintendent

Spring Lake Public Schools

Phone number: (616) 847-7919

Email: dfurton@springlakeschools.org

Visit the District website at: <http://www.springlakeschools.org>