



Frequently Asked Questions - 2019 Bond Proposal & Strategic Planning

This is a living document that will be updated as appropriate with new information as questions arise during the bond campaign. The information is separated into groups specific to the following areas: the bond proposal, the strategic plan, elementary level, middle level and high school level. Please feel free to send questions or comments to Jared Field, LCS Director of Communications, at jfield@lapeerschools.org.

#	Question	Answer
Questions Related to the Bond Proposal		
1	When is the election?	November 5, 2019. The polls will be open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m.
2	What is on the ballot?	Registered voters residing within the boundaries of Lapeer Community Schools District will vote on a \$94.9 million bond proposal.
3	Why has the District scheduled this bond election?	The primary purpose of the bond election is to restructure, right-size and upgrade our schools to serve this generation and the next.

<p>4</p>	<p>What is the current millage rate?</p>	<p>The District currently levies 2.75 mills, the lowest rate in Lapeer County. The 2018 millage rates* in Lapeer County are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almont: 8.45 mills • North Branch: 8.44 mills • Imlay City: 7.00 mills • Dryden: 3.03 mills • Lapeer: 2.75 mills <p>* Data collected by the Michigan Department of Treasury</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>What would the bond proposal cost in mills?</p>	<p>If voters approve, the estimated total new millage rate is projected to be 4.71 mills, an increase from our current levy of approximately just under 2 mills. If approved, the District would still have the second-lowest school debt millage rate in the county.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>What would the bond cost the average homeowner?</p>	<p>The cost to the average homeowner in the District is estimated to be \$12 per month or 39 cents per day. (Based on most recent average taxable value in the District).</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>The bonds will be sold in two or more series. What does this mean?</p>	<p>The total amount of \$94.9 million bonds will not be needed all up front at the beginning of the project. Therefore, the district will sell the bonds in two or more issues in order to pay for those projects covered in the proposal.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>What technology is included in the bond proposal?</p>	<p>All technology upgrades included in the proposal are designed to support classroom instruction and to enhance the learning environment. This includes computers, projectors, cameras, tablets and more.</p>

<p>9</p>	<p>Would taxpayers still be paying for computers when they are obsolete?</p>	<p>No. The Michigan Department of Treasury and federal tax regulations require that specific items in a bond proposal (such as computers) be paid for before they become obsolete. Computers must be paid off within five years of their first use. If the bond proposal is approved, taxpayers will not be paying for computers that are out-of-date or obsolete.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Why is this bond proposal so comprehensive?</p>	<p>The November 5th bond proposal is an outgrowth of the District’s strategic planning process. For more information on strategic planning, jump to question #24.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>What is included in the bond?</p>	<p>Click on <u>“Bond Projects”</u> under documents and links.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>What is the schedule for bond proposal projects?</p>	<p>Work on the projects will begin immediately after voter approval of the November 5th bond proposal.</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>Would all bond proposal revenue benefit Lapeer Community Schools?</p>	<p>Yes. All revenue from the bond proposal would benefit Lapeer Community Schools. None of the revenue would go to Lansing or to any other school district or political entity.</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>If the bond proposal is approved by voters, will property value be affected?</p>	<p>Research indicates that real estate values tend to be higher in communities with school districts that are perceived to offer a quality educational program and have up-to-date school facilities. All Lapeer bond proposal projects are designed to reflect positively on homeowner property values and the District’s enviable reputation.</p>

15	What is a bond proposal?	<p>A bond proposal is a state-approved funding process for a set scope of projects. When voters approve a bond proposal, the school districts sells bonds in the authorized amount and uses the proceeds to pay for those projects in the bond proposal. Bonds are typically paid back in 20-30 years. In many ways, the bonding process is like a homeowner obtaining a mortgage and making payments over a period of years.</p> <p>Bonds can be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Construction of new school buildings• Construction of additions to existing school buildings• Remodeling of existing school buildings• Energy conservation improvements• Land purchases• Site development and improvements• Athletic and physical education facility development and improvements• Refunding debt (if new present value savings can be demonstrated)• Direct bond program costs such as professional fees, election fees, issuance costs, qualification fees, insurance fees, final audit costs, etc.• School bus purchases
16	Can any of the bond proposal funds be used for employee salaries or operating expenses?	<p>No. Bond proposal funds cannot be used for employee salaries. 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.</p>

17	What will appear on the November 5th ballot?	(Ballot language coming soon)
18	A “yes” vote typically means that you support a proposal. Is that the case in this election?	Yes. Voters who support the Lapeer Community Schools’ bond proposal should vote YES; voters who oppose the bond proposal should vote NO.
19	What will happen if voters do not approve the bond proposal?	The bond projects cannot be addressed as proposed. For more information, see question #31.
20	Who can vote in this bond election?	Residents of the Lapeer Community Schools District who will be 18 years of age or older on Election Day and are registered to vote.
21	Where can I get information about voting (such as how to register, where to vote and absentee voting)?	Go to the michigan.gov/vote or call the Clerk’s office where you reside.
22	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.
23	Can I vote by absentee ballot?	Yes. Since voter approval of Proposition 3 in 2018, registered voters do not need a reason to vote by absentee ballot. You can get an application from your local Clerk’s office or by going to michigan.gov/vote and clicking on “Absentee Voting” in the left column. Absentee ballots will be available to voters after September 21.

Questions Related to Strategic Plan

24	What is the purpose of strategic planning?	To secure the long-term viability of the District by identifying the best structure and resources to meet the educational needs of the community now and into the future.
25	How does this strategic plan compare to the last?	<p>The District’s last strategic plan initiative culminated in the merger of our two traditional high schools and continued the trend of right-sizing the District operationally. In 2004, the District operated 16 schools. After the conclusion of our last strategic planning initiative, which began in 2012, we lowered our number of schools to 8* — the same number we operate today. Under this plan, we would operate six*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Campus (Turrill) • 1-4 Campus (East) • 5-6 Campus (R-W) • 7-8 Campus (Zemmer) • LHS (West Campus) • Alternative/Virtual (Schickler) <p><small>* The District still owns and utilizes the Cramton Campus and Maple Grove for programming including the Lapeer HomeSchool Partnership.</small></p>
26	Has the plan changed since the start of the process?	Yes. Based on staff/student/community feedback, the plan evolved significantly. The final proposed district structure is tied directly to the work of our community focus groups.
27	What would the new district structure look like?	Click on <u>“Proposed District Structure”</u> under documents and links.

28	What is required to support the strategic plan and the new, long-term district configuration?	The annual per-pupil state funding received by the District is primarily used for the day-to-day operation of the school district. School districts require bond issues in order to both build facilities and fund renovation of existing facilities.
29	What is the timeline for implementation of the strategic plan?	If the bond proposal is approved by voters, the construction of the high school at the CFI site would begin in the latter half of the 2019-20 school year. The new high school would open for the 2022-23 school year and the new district configuration would begin that same year.
30	Why is the current plan necessary?	In the midst of our last strategic planning process, we assured the community that we would re-evaluate our plan over time and continue the process in another five years. During this time, the declining enrollment trends we witnessed back then have continued. The District does not have the necessary funds to cover the nearly \$25 million in identified facility maintenance costs that must be addressed. As a result, our current structure is not feasible for the long-term financial viability of the District.

31	How would the failure to pass the bond impact the structure of the District?	Failure to pass the bond would require the District, in the short-term, to make significant changes to the current structure. This would include building closures that would require re-districting, the re-deployment of staff and the determination of how to fund remaining facility maintenance costs not currently appropriated. Additionally, long-term implications from having to use operating dollars to address critical core building deficiencies would put severe strain on the District's fund balance.
32	How would the new district structure impact transitions for students?	Under this plan, students would make each building transition together, as an entire group. For instance, a student starting kindergarten in 2022 would make every major transition with the same group of students all the way to graduation.
33	Why is enrollment declining and what impact does that have on the District's budget?	Enrollment has been on a steady decline for many years, due in large part to the declining birth rate in Lapeer County. This is not a phenomenon limited to Lapeer. Birth rates across the state have continued to decline since the Great Recession (begun in 2007). For example, at the conclusion of the 2017-18 school year we had 476 students in our senior class. The following fall, we had 322 incoming students in Kindergarten. The difference of 154 students represents nearly \$1.2 million in lost revenue. (See County Birth Rate Figures from Michigan Department of Health and Human Services).

<p>34</p>	<p>How can the District save on operational costs by restructuring?</p>	<p>Operational savings from this plan would be achieved in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer buildings/students require fewer overall resources. • <u>The overall cost of day-to-day maintenance, utilities and major capital expenditures would be lowered significantly</u> • Properties that are no longer in use would be marketed and sold (as we have done in the past with Elba, Hadley, Seaton, Attica, etc.)
<p>35</p>	<p>How much are the school buildings/properties worth?</p>	<p>Simply put: Not nearly as much as you might expect. The buildings normally have a value far less than the appraised value once their use as a school ends. It is often the case with old school buildings that the properties are worth more without the buildings than with them. As a frame of reference, Hadley and Elba elementary schools were sold for \$100,000 and \$150,000, respectively. Seaton Elementary was most recently sold for \$140,000.</p>
<p>36</p>	<p>Would the new building configuration require fewer teachers when fully implemented?</p>	<p>No. The number of teachers we require is tied directly to the number of students we have. This structure would, however, require the District to examine/assess the current deployment/assignment/configuration of staff in order to best meet the academic needs of students.</p>

37	How would this structure impact class sizes?	Even though it may seem logical that fewer buildings would mean larger class sizes, the opposite is true. First, having all third graders in the District in one building would minimize the large class size outliers that we sometimes see under our current structure. Instead of, for instance, having 30 second graders in one class at one building and 22 in another class at another building, you could have 26 in each class in the same building.
38	Would this plan improve the learning environment for all students and staff?	Yes. Under this plan, all students and staff in the District would be housed in climate-controlled buildings. There are currently four buildings in the District that do not have the ability to adequately control climate. This is particularly important as our county has transitioned to pre-Labor Day starts.
39	How would this structure impact travel times on buses?	This structure would allow us to streamline our transportation department as well, allowing for more flexibility with bus runs. Under the plan, we would move from a 3-tier to a 2-tier system, achieving operational savings while keeping ride times essentially unchanged. As it stands today, we still transport students from all four corners of the District to LHS, R-W, Zemmer, CFI and Turrill Elementary.
40	Would this structure impact start/end times for students?	Yes. Since we are moving to a two-tier transportation system, the result would be a constriction of start and end times across the District. The specific details will be determined and communicated at a later date.

Questions Related to Elementary Level

41	When would any changes to the elementary configuration go into effect?	The new configuration for elementary would not go into effect until the start of the 2022-23 school year.
42	What are the benefits of a 1-4 elementary building?	The benefits of having the majority of elementary grades together in one building are not limited to the operational savings it provides. Benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to higher-level facilities, including competition-size gym, auditorium, science labs, computer labs and state of the art playground.• Enhancement of our learning coach model, teacher collaboration and professional development.• Elimination of many of the split classrooms and large class size outliers that are possible under our current structure.• The structure allows us to focus more of our resources, including those earmarked for student safety, into fewer buildings.• It would also make our delivery of specials programs — music, art, physical education, etc. — much more efficient.• More equitable academic opportunities, support services and learning environments.• Improved serving and seating lunchroom capacities, as well as expanded food offerings.

<p>43</p>	<p>How would the elementary facility be structured to accommodate all students in grades 1-4?</p>	<p>In order to make the learning environment as small as possible, the elementary building could be divided into pods by grades. Each grade, in other words, would have its own wing. We have also allocated space for separate office facilities to accommodate students and staff. There are a number of possibilities that will be explored in consultation with our elementary staff and parent communities.</p>
<p>44</p>	<p>What about the year-round program?</p>	<p>The plan calls for the maintenance of the year-round program. The programs would exist as a choice within both the elementary and middle schools (K-8) under this configuration.</p>
<p>45</p>	<p>What about the “neighborhood schools” concept?</p>	<p>We have one of the largest school districts in the lower peninsula (square mileage). In 2004, we operated 12 elementary schools. Today, because of the continuing enrollment decline, we have five. This decline is not projected to level off for several more years. (See Elementary Boundary Map). As a result, the “neighborhoods” are far more expansive than they were in the past.</p>
<p>46</p>	<p>What about the unique programming options that exist at individual elementary schools like STEM at Lynch?</p>	<p>Under this structure, many of the opportunities offered by individual buildings, would be made available to all elementary students.</p>

<p>47</p>	<p>The District has the two highest-performing elementary schools in the county on the M-STEP. Why close those buildings?</p>	<p>We have a fundamental belief that student achievement is not about brick and mortar facilities, but about the learning community that resides inside – students, teachers, support staff and parents. They make all the difference. The academic and extracurricular opportunities for our elementary students would be expanded greatly, as would the ability of our elementary staff to collaborate.</p>
<p>48</p>	<p>What would happen to the elementary buildings once they are closed?</p>	<p>The facilities would be marketed for sale and the funds from those sales would be used for capital improvements at the remaining buildings or to pay down any outstanding bond principal for those buildings. Anything of value in the buildings (including many items previously purchased with bond dollars) would be retained and used at the remaining buildings. (Such as furniture, portable technology, etc.)</p>
<p>49</p>	<p>Would the 1-4 campus have a playground area?</p>	<p>Yes. The 1-4 campus would have a state of the art playground on the north side of the building that would be designed to mirror a park setting.</p>

Questions Specific to Middle Level

<p>50</p>	<p>Do the Rolland-Warner and Zemmer Campuses require renovation?</p>	<p>No. They are our most-recently renovated facilities. The only identified needs for the campuses in the bond relate to technology upgrades and improvements to the existing heating and cooling systems. We would, however, enhance the outdoor play space that exists at Rolland-Warner.</p>
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51	What are the advantages of the 5-6 configuration?	There are many advantages to this configuration. The structure is more developmentally sound because it is a blend of elementary and middle school that eases one of the key transition points for students. In addition, using this structure we will be able to offer more academic and extracurricular opportunities to 5th grade students, including outdoor education.
52	Are there examples of this configuration in other districts?	Yes. Davison Community Schools, our neighbor to the west, has a 5-6 intermediate school.
53	Would Kids & Company remain at the R-W Campus?	Yes.

Questions Specific to High School Level

54	Why did the District choose the West Campus for the site of the new High School?	<p>The West Campus is ideal as a site for a new high school for several reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its geographic position in the center of the the District – within 0.5 miles of Zemmer, Rolland-Warner, Schickler and the Mott Campus. • Large and accessible property (73 acres) • Site of LCS Athletic Campus
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55	Will any part of the existing CFI (West Campus) remain?	Yes. We would propose to use the existing auxiliary gym in the new building. The new building footprint would also be very similar to the existing one, while also using as much of the existing parking and driveway infrastructure as possible. It has not yet been determined if any other portion of the building could be maintained,
56	Would the new Lapeer High School have a performing arts center?	Yes. The proposal calls for the construction of a performing arts center with seating for 650.
57	What would happen to the programs now housed at CFI (West Campus) during construction phases?	The majority of the programs at CFI will be incorporated into existing buildings during construction phases.
58	What are the next steps?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued engagement in community dialogue • Development of task force groups to aid in the design of educational programs and facility utilization for: E-5, 1-4, 5-6, 7-8 and 9-12. • Frequent communication/updates from the Superintendent regarding the bond.

Anyone interested in more information can visit the District Website at LapeerSchools.org and click on the strategic planning graphic on the main page.

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