



November 2, 2021 Bond Proposal FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What is on the November 2, 2021 ballot?**

On **November 2, 2021**, voters in Battle Creek Schools (BCPS) District will be asked to consider a bond proposal to reimagine the BCPS middle school experience. If it passes, the measure will transform Northwestern Middle School into a K-8 visual and performing arts academy and make building renovations to Springfield Middle School to support its continued transition to a service-learning school.

The total principal amount of this bond proposal is \$44,800,000 which represents a 2.71 mill levy in the first year, if approved, for a 1.5 mill increase over the current bond millage rate.

2. **What is a bond issue?**

A bond issue allows a school district to place a question before voters on a ballot measure, asking voters to consider proposed spending by issuing bonds to pay for major capital projects (like renovations, building additions, remodeling, etc.) that are not covered by the district's normal operational budget. If it passes, it works somewhat like a home mortgage: a portion of the bond debt is repaid annually until it's paid off.

3. **What renovations will the bond measure cover?**

In order to transform the middle school experience at BCPS, the bond measure would provide funding for major improvements through renovations and additions to Springfield and Northwestern. At Northwestern, the bond would invest in building improvements to transform the space for arts education, including new spaces for kindergarten classrooms, welcome center, security improvements, art and dance studios, digital graphics and video production lab, auditorium and pool renovations, new energy efficient windows and doors, and heating, ventilation, and cooling (HVAC) upgrades. At Springfield, renovations will include new air conditioning systems, energy efficient windows and doors, heating, new lighting, updated bathrooms, accessibility improvements, and upgrades to technology and classroom furniture – all creating better learning environments for our kids.

4. How does this relate to the district transformation?

- Since 2017, we've been making bold, comprehensive changes to ensure that every student, in every grade and at every school, succeeds. The proposed middle school transformation project, represented by the November 2 ballot question, is the next step in our transformation as a district with more to come in the future!
- Since we began this transformation process, we have accomplished so much. BCPS families now have a wealth of options for their students, depending on their interests and talents, as they progress through our school system. And now, based on feedback from the community, we want to continue adding to that by transforming Northwestern into an arts-focused K-8 building and continue to shape Springfield into a service-learning school, where students learn the value of community. We believe this bond measure will be transformative for our middle schools and the district and community.

5. How was this plan developed?

- The middle school transformation is rooted in community input and will be deeply guided by the feedback of a wide range of stakeholders throughout the planning process. The bond committee hosted two town halls in January and student voice is being acquired through advisory councils that are already in place. We are also pleased that Jenasia Morris, who not only lives in the area but also serves as the Commissioner for Ward #2, is part of the bond committee. We have intentionally included parents, students and additional community members in planning sessions and committees as well to ensure all voices are heard.
- In the spring of 2020, BCPS hired C2AE Architects and Engineers, TMP Architecture, and Elite Companies Construction Management to assess Springfield and Northwestern and help us identify where and how we could improve the conditions of the school buildings. They also identified the improvements needed to convert Northwestern to a K-8 school with a performing arts emphasis.
- District administration and instructional staff participated in exploratory “field trips” virtually to school facilities within our state and across the country to see similar Arts programs and their facilities to inform the plans to transform Northwestern.
- On December 16, 2020 the District Transformation Team presented its findings and recommendation to the Board of Education, which supported moving forward with the May 4, 2021 bond election.
- After the ballot proposal was defeated in May 2021, the Board of Education voted unanimously to put the bond proposal back on the ballot for the November 2, 2021 election.

6. Is there a project timeline?

The following project timeline is only a **projection**. Dates and project order may be revised based on several factors including things such as: market conditions, student impact, weather, product availability and school calendar.

Early 2022 – Design to begin until summer of 2022

Fall 2022 – Construction will begin in phases

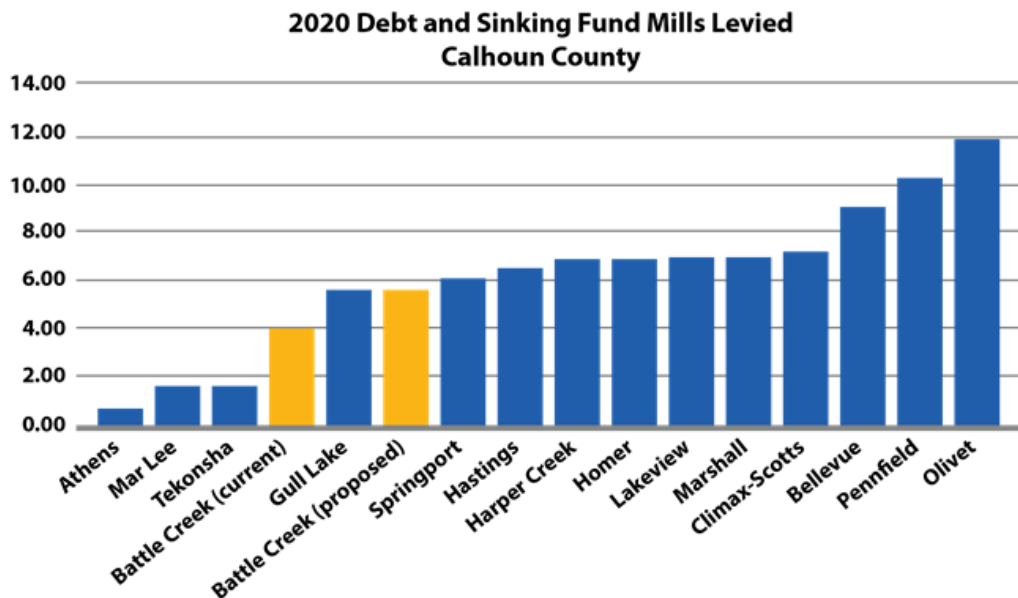
Fall 2024 – Completion of remodeling at NWMS & SMS

7. What is the plan to keep facility improvement disruptions to a minimum?

Work at our school buildings would be scheduled in a way that would limit interference with day-to-day operations, current programs, or community safety. The majority of the construction work would be completed during the summer months.

8. How are neighboring districts addressing the aging condition of their school buildings?

Neighboring districts have experienced the same issue of continually aging buildings. Bond programs have been approved and implemented all around us, including Lakeview Schools \$47 million bond, Gull Lake Schools \$64.9 million bond, and Marshall Schools \$40 million bond. In today’s competitive environment, districts seek every advantage to recruit and retain students.



9. What is the value of quality facilities to student learning and teacher retention?

The quality of school facilities affects students in two ways. First, a lack of facilities limits the ability of a student to achieve various learning and extra-curricular activities. Second, school facilities affect health, behavior, engagement, learning and growth in achievement. With respect to teachers, school facilities affect teacher recruitment, retention, commitment, and effort. Thus, facility quality is an important predictor of teacher retention and student learning.

10. Why is it important to attract and retain students in the District?

Public schools in Michigan receive operating funds on a per-pupil basis, meaning that attracting and retaining students plays a major role in keeping BCPS's operating budget stable. The middle school transformation will continue our district transformation efforts to provide a well-rounded portfolio of options for students and families within BCPS, catering to a variety of interests and talents. Offerings throughout the district will now include visual and performing arts, STEM, career training, global education, service learning and more, meaning students have more opportunities than ever to pursue their interests and succeed.

11. How will this benefit the community?

When our schools are strong, our community is strong. Together, these efforts across the district and community will create a thriving Battle Creek and benefit all residents. Since the district transformation began, BCPS has greatly expanded offerings across all grade levels to bring families back and attract new families to our community. BCPS wants to continue adding to that by transforming the middle school experience. If this measure passes, it will bring more businesses to the community, build strong local property values, prepare the future workforce, and increase workers' spending power.

12. What are the specific features of the November 2, 2021 bond proposal at each school?**Northwestern K-8 School**

- Kindergarten classroom addition
- Welcome center addition
- Music/Vocal addition
- Security upgrades
- New art and dance studios
- New digital graphics and video
- New production lab
- Auditorium upgrades
- Pool upgrades
- New energy efficient windows and doors
- Heating, ventilation, and cooling (HVAC) upgrades

Springfield Middle School

- New air conditioning systems
- New energy efficient windows and doors
- Heating, ventilation, and cooling (HVAC) upgrades
- New lighting
- Bathroom upgrades
- Accessibility upgrades
- Technology upgrades
- New classroom furniture

13. Why is Northwestern becoming a school with a performing arts emphasis?

We are transforming Northwestern into a visual and performing arts academy in response to our community’s desire for a well-rounded suite of options within BCPS. By transforming Northwestern into a K–8 visual and performing arts academy, students who are interested in the arts will now have more opportunities to explore that passion. A rich arts educational experience for students will include community performances, community arts and community involvement.

14. Why are the Visual & Performing Arts an important part of a student’s growth?

These programs:

- Help students discover healthy expression, build their sense of self-worth, engage in learning, and discover their power to contribute to the world around them.
- Positively influence the surrounding neighborhood and the community at large through community events and performances.
- Incorporate the arts throughout the curriculum to boost student achievement by increasing engagement, interest, and relevance.
- Use creative expression to help students with different learning styles find their voices.
- Include a wide array of creative and engaging potential courses: Visual Art, Literary Arts, Theatre, Ballet, Contemporary Dance, Band, Orchestra, Vocal Music, Music Composition, and Mixed Media Art.

15. Why is Northwestern turning into a K-8 school?

We know that students of all ages benefit from visual and performing arts and believe that a move to K-8 will enable the arts academy to be as beneficial as possible to students in our community. Moving to a K-8 model will also provide increased stability and reduce the difficulties that students often face in transition grades by enabling students to maintain strong and trusting relationships with educators and one another over the long term.

16. What’s changing at Springfield?

Springfield will continue its transformation into a service learning school, providing a high-quality education that prepares students for success in college, career and our community. The service learning model will help students create stronger connections with their community, develop communication and problem-solving skills, promote empathy and help students feel like they belong.

17. Is anything happening to the pool at Northwestern?

The Northwestern pool will remain and will be used for physical education, swimming lessons and community use. Improvements will be made to the pool through the bond measure, including upgrades to the pool filtration and heating equipment, lighting and heating/de-humidification equipment.

18. What is the estimated cost breakdown for the bond projects?

Approximate construction costs associated with the projects identified in 2021 Bond program are allocated in the following manner:

Building	Estimate of Construction Value
Northwestern K-8 School	\$32,191,373
Springfield Middle School	\$12,209,251
Total Bond	\$44,800,000

19. How much would the bond proposal cost the average taxpayer?

The bond proposal is \$44,800,000. It is estimated that if voters approve the bond proposal, the current debt millage rate for the new bond issue would be 2.71 mills in the first year (a 1.5 mill increase over the current debt millage rate) equating to the following impact on taxpayers:

Market Value of Home	Projected Annual Increase in Taxes
\$50,000	\$37.75
\$100,000	\$75.50
\$150,000	\$113.25

*Please note that the tax increases are estimated numbers and may change.

20. What does it mean for renters?

If the measure passes, it will not financially affect renters in the area, but you should still vote! As long as you are a registered voter in the city or township you are living in and live within BCPS’s district boundaries, your voice should be heard this November.

21. 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 with your tax preparer.

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

23. Could money from the bond program be used to pay for salaries and benefits?

No, that is against Michigan law. Bond dollars cannot be used for operational expenses such as employee salaries, facility maintenance, or energy costs. Bond program funds must be accounted for separately from general operating funds. Bond funds are also subject to audit.

24. Please explain what bond program money can cover and what it cannot.

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

- Salaries and wages
- General operating expenses and maintenance
- Classroom supplies and textbooks

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

- Construction and remodeling of facilities
- Purchase of instructional technology equipment
- Equipment and furniture
- Site improvements

25. Isn't the District receiving funds from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation already? Why aren't those funds being used for this project?

In 2017, BCPS received a five-year grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to transform the district and ensure success for every student. This funding will continue through June 30, 2022, but is only meant to support the operations of the district, including new programming and opportunities for students at every grade, in every school. These funds cannot, however, be used for construction.

26. Would the approval of the bond proposal have any impact on our current school operational budget?

The bond would allow us to reallocate funds that are currently being spent on updating our older buildings, mechanical systems, and technology towards student programs and resources instead.

27. Is the school district receiving ESSER Funds? What is that money being used for?

BCPS has received the following dollar amounts from the state:

- ESSER II - \$13,926,702
- ESSER III - \$31,277,395

The major use of ESSER II funding is to address learning loss as a result of the pandemic. We are addressing this through various classroom support positions as well as learning tools, such as age-appropriate devices and learning platforms.

The major use of ESSER III funding will include HVAC system assessments as well as energy assessments of 5 buildings to include Dudley, Fremont, Verona, Lamora Park and WK Preparatory. 20% of the funding is earmarked for continued focus on learning recovery.

28. How much does the State Aid Foundation Allowance represent and what are those funds being used for?

The District's State Aid Foundation Allowance currently represents \$8,700 per pupil/year. In Michigan, the foundation allowance serves as the main source of revenue for the day-to-day operation of schools. This essential funding covers the basic school district's need to conduct business including but not limited to teacher, administrator and support staff salaries and benefits, transportation costs, daily facilities maintenance and utilities, dual enrollment tuition and curriculum materials and supplies.

29. What are the key dates leading up to the November 2nd vote?

Voter registration procedures have changed since 2018.

October 18, 2021 – Last day to register in any manner other than in person with the local clerk for the November election.

October 29, 2021 up to 5pm – Deadline for electors to obtain an absent voter ballot via First Class mail.

November 1, 2021 up to 4pm – Deadline for voters to obtain an absent voter ballot in person in the clerk's office.

November 2, 2021 up to 8pm – Election Day registrants may obtain and vote an absent voter ballot in person in the township clerk's office or vote in person in the proper precinct.

30. If I cannot make it to the polls on November 2, 2021 what are my options for absentee voting?

The deadline to request an absentee ballot via First Class Mail is Friday, October 29, at 5 p.m., and voters may also obtain an absent voter ballot in person up to 8pm on Tuesday, November 2nd. The deadline to return a completed absentee ballot is Tuesday, November 2, at 8 p.m.

If you did not receive your absentee ballot application they are available:

- On-line at www.michigan.gov/vote
- At the City Clerk’s office

Note: Once election ballots are available in the clerk’s office, you can walk into your clerk’s office, receive an absentee application, fill it out, and immediately be given your ballot to cast your vote. Please check with your clerk’s office hours and if drop boxes are available.

31. Who may I contact if I have additional questions?

Ms. Rhonda Potts, Executive Director of Business and Finance
 269-965-9506 | rpotts@battle-creek.k12.mi.us

32. Where do I vote?

CITY OF BATTLE CREEK POLLING LOCATIONS		
Precincts	Building	Address
1	Trinity Lutheran Church	2055 Columbia Avenue, E
4 & 10	Christ United Methodist Church	65 N. Bedford Road
5, 11 & 20	Woodland Church	14425 S. Helmer Road
6 & 9	Chapel Hill United Methodist Church	157 Chapel Hill Drive
7 & 13	Trinity United Methodist Church	10 Bidwell Street, West
8	St. Peter Lutheran Church	1079 Riverside Drive
12 & 21	Second Missionary Baptist Church	485 N. Washington Avenue
15 & 17	Battle Creek Community Church	552 E. Emmett Street
18	Cherry Hill Manor	10 Clay Street
19	Maple United Methodist Church	342 Capital Avenue, NE
2, 3, 22 & 23	First Assembly of God	800 S. 24th Street

SPRINGFIELD CITY POLLING LOCATIONS		
Precincts	Building	Address
1 & 2	Springfield City Hall	601 Avenue A

BEDFORD CHARTER TOWNSHIP POLLING LOCATIONS		
Precincts	Building	Address
2	St. Jerome Catholic Church	229 Collier Avenue
3	Fire Station #3	5902 W. Morgan Road

33. How will the bond proposal appear on the ballot?

BATTLE CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BONDING PROPOSAL

Shall Battle Creek Public Schools, Calhoun County, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed Forty-Four Million Eight Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$44,800,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefor. the purpose of:

erecting additions to, remodeling, equipping and re-equipping, and furnishing and refurbishing school buildings; acquiring and installing instructional technology and instructional technology equipment for school buildings; and equipping, developing and improving playgrounds, parking areas, driveways and sites?

YES

NO

The estimated millage that will be levied for the proposed bonds in 2022 is 2.71 mills (\$2.71 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation). The maximum number of years any series of bonds may be outstanding, exclusive of refunding, is twenty-six (26) years. The estimated simple average annual millage anticipated to required to retire this bond debt is 3.31 mills (\$3.31 per \$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 \$42,785,000. 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 used for repair or maintenance costs, teacher, administrator or employee salaries, or other operating expenses.)