



Frequently Asked Questions

About the May 2, 2017 School Bond Election

Through a combination of sound financial management and fortunate timing, the West Bloomfield School District (WBSD) is able to propose a bond program that will not only reinvest in the school district, but also cut taxes at the same time. The WBSD community can invest \$120 million in updates, renovation and construction with a half-mill reduction in the school tax rate!

This unique opportunity is possible due to six converging forces:

- 1) Student enrollment is stabilizing, providing an opportunity to “right size” the school district.
- 2) Student safety and security continue to be top priorities.
- 3) Instructional spaces need to be re-imagined to accommodate new and emerging teaching methods.
- 4) Instructional technology and technology infrastructure need to be refreshed.
- 5) School buses need to be replaced as they reach the end of their useful life.
- 6) Existing bonds are reaching maturity.

The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) provide greater detail about the bond proposal. If you have other questions and/or comments, please let us know by contacting Superintendent Gerald Hill at 248/865-6485 or Gerald.hill@wbsd.org. You may also go to www.wbsd.org and click on *Talk to us* any time, day or night, for a timely response.

The bond proposal will provide opportunities to enhance the following eight general areas:

1. Consolidating Abbott and Orchard Lake Middle Schools into a new 21st Century middle school
2. Transforming outdated spaces at WBHS to accommodate innovative teaching and learning, including Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM), Fine Arts, iCenter, Career and Technical Education (CTE), Health & Wellness, and Athletics
3. Adding an auxiliary gym to WBHS and remodeling fine arts facilities, the auditorium, the pool area, and bathrooms
4. Redesigning elementary iCenters, common areas, and classrooms to create flexible learning spaces that support student interaction, research, problem-solving, and creativity
5. Continuing to improve student safety and school security
6. Upgrading and replacing instructional technology to enhance student learning and operational efficiencies
7. Closing the Administration and Community Services (ACS) building, relocating all Central Office functions to a school building, and selling the ACS property
8. Replacing school buses as they reach the end of their useful life. (Replacing buses with bond funds eliminates the need to use operating funds for this purpose, thus providing additional revenue to support the educational program.)

The “**4 Rs Bond Proposal**” will **right-size**, **re-imagine**, **renovate**, and **refresh** the school district. If approved by voters, the bond proposal will positively impact every WBSD student, every school, and every facility while positioning the school district for current and future generations of students.

1. When is the election?

Tuesday, May 2, 2017. The polls will be open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m.

2. Why is this bond election necessary?

The primary purpose of the bond election is to implement the school district’s strategic plan. This includes ensuring that our facilities operate efficiently and that they match current and projected student enrollment. Identified instructional spaces in our schools will be strategically redesigned to accommodate new and emerging educational methodology, and to enhance the learning environment for all students.

If approved by voters, the bond proposal will “right-size” the school district for this generation and the next. It will also enhance student safety and security, provide necessary instructional technology, upgrade technology infrastructure, and fund the purchase of school buses when they reach the end of their useful life. The bond proposal will affect every West Bloomfield student and every West Bloomfield school. The bond proposal on the May ballot

is an outgrowth of the school district's strategic planning.

3. How will the bond proposal benefit students and the community?

The bond proposal will benefit students and the community in several ways, including...

- improving learning opportunities at all schools for all students
- upgrading school facilities and improving learning environments
- attracting new families to our community
- enhancing residential property values by having up-to-date school facilities
- reducing duplicate operating costs by consolidating two middle schools
- closing and selling the Administration and Community Services (ACS) building to save costs
- assuring that school facilities are upgraded, renovated, and kept in good repair

All bond proposal projects are designed to reflect positively on homeowner property values and the community's enviable reputation.

4. What will the bond proposal cost?

If voters approve the bond proposal, **the current tax rate will be reduced by one-half mill** (from 7.5 mills for bond debt to 7.0 mills). The debt service tax rate will continue to gradually decline over the 20-year life of the \$120 million bond proposal as previous debt comes off the books.

5. What millage rate will be reduced if voters approve the May 2 bond proposal?

The school district currently levies a 7.5 "debt service" millage. (Debt service is equivalent to a homeowner's mortgage.) This millage would be reduced by one-half mill to 7.0 if voters approve the bond proposal. The chart below shows the effect of the millage reduction for various home values.

Home Market Value	Home Taxable Value (approx. 50% of Market Value)	WBSD current property taxes for debt service millage rate:	WBSD projected property taxes for debt service millage rate:	Estimated reduction in annual property taxes
		7.5000	7.0000	
\$ 500,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 1,875	\$ 1,750	\$ (125)
\$ 400,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,400	\$ (100)
\$ 300,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 1,125	\$ 1,050	\$ (75)
\$ 200,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 750	\$ 700	\$ (50)
\$ 100,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 375	\$ 350	\$ (25)

6. Why will the school district continue to levy the 1.25 mill sinking fund?

The sinking fund millage generates approximately \$2.1 million per year, which is needed for routine and recurring district-wide repairs for items such as roofing, asphalt, and HVAC. 2016-17 plans include improvements to all heating and cooling systems district-wide.

The sinking fund is used as a “pay-as-you-go” funding source to preserve and protect the community’s investment in school facilities.

7. What’s included in the bond proposal?

If approved by voters on May 2, the following projects will be completed at each school.

West Bloomfield High School

- Remodel antiquated classroom space at WBHS to accommodate Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) instruction
- Add an auxiliary gym
- Improve/remodel fine arts instructional space
- Improve iCenter
- Remodel the auditorium, stage, & technology
- Replace pool filtration and pump components
- Remodel bathrooms

Abbott Middle School

- Abbott Middle School will be repurposed in 2022. The bond project budget includes an amount of \$1,018,247 in order to demolish Abbott Middle School. There is the potential that that sum could be deployed instead to make renovations at Abbott in order to continue utilizing it for other district purposes. The future utilization of this building will require additional analysis.

It is possible that Abbott Middle School may be converted to a Community Services and district Administration building, while incorporating other ancillary district programs that are currently housed at the J&S Office Building on Orchard Lake Road.

- Central to the district’s “right-sizing” plan are the elimination of the current Administration Building at Hiller and Commerce, and consolidating the two existing middle schools into one state of the art middle school. By continuing to utilize Abbott for other purposes provides additional and more versatile space that may be beneficial long-term.

Orchard Lake Middle School

- A new \$59 million middle school will be constructed at the rear of the Orchard Lake Middle School property. When the new middle school is completed, Orchard Lake Middle School will be razed and replaced with athletic and recreational facilities that will serve students and members of the community. The new school is projected to open in 2022.

The new middle school will have a capacity of 1,200 students. Instructional programs and the physical spaces will be designed in a way to support smaller learning communities, (i.e. grade-level families and collaboration areas). In addition to being a state-of-the-art instructional facility, the new middle school will provide expanded co-curricular space for athletics, fine/performing arts, and enrichment opportunities for all students.

Because the new school will be built on vacant land, there is no need to relocate OLMS students during the construction phase. The design and construction timeline allows ample opportunity for input from all stakeholders including staff, parents, students, and community members.

Roosevelt Elementary School

- Roosevelt Elementary will continue as a K-5 elementary school program. The idea of converting Abbott Middle School to an elementary school has been eliminated from consideration based on analysis of the costs and issues related to converting a middle school to an elementary school. See this document for more information.

All Elementary Schools (Scotch, Doherty, Roosevelt, Sheiko, and Gretchko)

- Elementary iCenters, project-based learning collaboration areas, common areas, fine/performing arts, and classrooms will be redesigned to support student interaction, research, problem-solving, and student creativity.

District-Wide Improvements

- The school district will continue to improve and upgrade provisions for student safety and school security, including construction of secure entry vestibules at all schools, the installation of new video surveillance equipment and installing a key-card access system at all buildings.
- Upgrading technology to enhance student learning and operational efficiencies.

Transportation

- Fifty school buses will be replaced. WBSD buses have an average age of 11 years. The reliability of school buses and annual maintenance costs both become increasingly significant and make their replacement appropriate after they have been on the road for 12 years.

Central Office

- The Administration and Community Services (ACS) building will be closed, Central Office will be relocated to a school building, and the current ACS property will be sold.

8. What will happen if voters do not approve the bond proposal?

While right-sizing the middle schools will still occur, consolidation would take place without the benefit of comprehensive instructional improvements. The proposed high school and elementary school bond projects would not be feasible. It is important to note that **failure of the bond proposal closes the window of opportunity** to positively transform the West Bloomfield School District with a reduction in the tax rate.

9. What is the schedule for bond proposal projects?

If approved by voters, the bonds will be sold in two series.

Series One projects (totaling \$49.9 million) take place between 2017 and 2019. They include:

- improvements at West Bloomfield High School
- improvements at all elementary schools
- safety and security improvements district-wide
- replacement of worn out school buses
- first phase of technology upgrades
- design and phase one construction of a new middle school

Series Two projects (totaling \$70.1 million) take place between 2020 and 2022, and include:

- phase two construction of a new middle school
- decommissioning of Abbott Middle School
- retirement and razing of Orchard Lake Middle School
- retirement and razing of Administration and Community Services (ACS) building
- second phase of technology upgrades

10. What is a 21st Century School?

Forecasters are now saying that today's high school graduates will have nine career changes in their lifetime. Not job changes. Career changes.

This means many of our students will work in jobs that have not yet been created and will need skills that are yet to be defined.

To assure that our students are prepared for this future, we are altering the way we do business.

We, of course, will continue to emphasize the mastery of core subjects. In the 21st Century classroom, however, teachers will become facilitators of learning, not dispensers of information. Technology will enable our classrooms to have access to world-wide resources and learning

opportunities. Students will assume more responsibility for their own learning. And, much more emphasis will be placed on teaching skills related to collaboration, creativity, communication, and critical thinking.

In short, the 21st Century school will provide students with the educational foundation and learning skills they'll need to be successful, regardless of their life pursuits and the opportunities the future presents.

11. Will all bond proposal revenue stay in the West Bloomfield School District?

Yes. All revenue from the bond proposal will stay in the West Bloomfield School District. None of the revenue will go to Lansing or to any other school district or political entity.

12. If the bond proposal is approved by voters, will property values be affected?

Real estate values tend to be higher in communities with school districts that offer a quality education program and have up-to-date school facilities. Property values tend to be lower in communities that do not offer an adequate curriculum or that have schools that are out-of-date and poorly maintained.

13. What does it mean to “right-size”?

Right sizing means operating the *right* number of school buildings for the current and projected *size* (student population) of our school district. (If you will, the WBSD is currently *wrong sized* to serve its current and projected student population.)

Since the 2009-10 school year, the West Bloomfield School District’s enrollment has declined by approximately 1,500 students or 22%. As a result, the WBSD has excess space in its facilities. Every year, operating this excess space requires unavoidable expenditures that could be better used for educational programming. Incidentally, declining enrollment is not unique to the WBSD. Student enrollment has declined across Oakland County and almost all of Michigan for the past decade.

14. How will the size of the new consolidated Middle School be determined?

Based on current enrollment and future projections, the new middle school will be designed to accommodate resident enrollment with room for growth.

15. What will happen to the staff at Abbott Middle School and Orchard Lake Middle School when the new middle school opens?

While most instructional staff will move with students to the new middle school, consolidation will result in some staffing reductions. However, staff layoffs may be moderated—and even avoided—by employee attrition.

16. How much will be saved by consolidating two middle schools?

The combined, recurring savings from consolidating Abbott and Orchard Lake Middle Schools is expected to exceed \$600,000 annually. These dollars can be redeployed for preserving and improving educational and co-curricular opportunities for WBSD students district-wide.

Staffing efficiencies, reduction in annual maintenance functions (such as trash and snow removal, grounds upkeep, building supplies, and building repairs and maintenance), and reduced energy consumption will contribute to the annual cost savings.

17. What is the purpose of an auxiliary gym at WBHS?

Equitable access for all students (Title IX) requires additional program space. Too many teams are competing for gym time. This means many students cannot have a routine and dependable schedule. A new auxiliary gym will ensure that all teams will have adequate practice space and time. The community will also have expanded opportunities to use district athletic facilities.

Many neighboring school districts have an auxiliary gym at their high school. Without such a facility, WBSD students are at a competitive disadvantage for academics as well as athletics.

18. What improvements will be made to the WBHS auditorium?

The emphasis will be on upgrading space, access, and safety of the main stage and backstage areas. Improvements will also be made to the lighting and sound systems.

19. Why is Central Office being moved to another facility?

Central Office will be relocated to another school facility to reduce costs and make more efficient use of school district facilities.

20. What will happen to the current Administration and Community Services building?

The facility will be demolished and the property will be sold.

21. What are the approximate savings that will result from closing the Administration and Community Services building?

The recurring annual savings from closing the ACS building will be approximately \$250,000. These dollars can be redeployed to preserve and improve educational programs for all WBSD students. In addition, the school district will avoid significant costs related to deferred maintenance on the ACS building.

22. What will happen to WB Preschool programs currently housed in the Administration and Community Services building?

The WBSD remains committed to providing high quality, accessible, and affordable preschool education. Classroom space will be allocated in our buildings to preserve these preschool programs.

23. What are the student enrollment projections for the next five years?

The school district's enrollment is projected to shrink between one-to-three percent over the next five years before it stabilizes. WBSD now has more students in the upper grades compared to the lower grades. As these smaller classes of students work their way from the elementary school to the middle school, student enrollment will justify consolidating to one middle school.

At some point an increase in resident enrollment will naturally limit the number of schools of choice students the WBSD can accept due to the capacity constraints of one middle school.

24. Why will musical instruments be included in the bond revenue?

Because musical instruments are used for both instructional and co-curricular purposes, they require periodic replacement due to normal wear and tear. The school district plans to replenish musical instruments and equipment in grades K-12.

25. If the bond is approved, what will be the grade configuration?

The current grade configuration will **not** change. There will be one high school to serve all students in grades 9-12 and one middle school to serve all students in grades 6-8. The elementary school configuration will not change. Gretchko and Doherty will serve grade K-2 students, Scotch and Sheiko will serve grade 3-5 students, and Roosevelt will serve K-5 students.

26. Why is the election in May?

If the May 2 bond proposal is approved, the school district will have a "window of opportunity" enabling it to complete all bond proposal projects with a one-half mill reduction in the current tax rate. In addition, a May election will allow the school district to begin some projects during the summer months when students are not in school. See also Question #35 below.

27. What is a bond proposal?

A bond is a State-approved funding process that specifies a set scope of projects. When voters approve a bond, the money specified in the bond proposal is borrowed and the school district makes payments over a period of years, much like a homeowner pays a mortgage. Bonds are usually issued for 20-30 years. If voters approve the May 2 bond proposal, the West Bloomfield School District's bonds will be issued for 20 years.

Bonds can be used for long term assets:

- Constructing new school buildings
- Constructing additions to existing school buildings
- Remodeling existing school buildings
- Energy conservation improvements
- Land purchases
- Site development and improvements
- Athletic and physical education facility development and improvements
- Playground 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
- School bus purchases
- Loose furnishings and equipment purchasing
- Technology purchases limited to hardware and communication devices that transmit, receive or compute information for pupil instructional purposes only. The initial purchase of operating system and customized application software is allowed if purchased with the initial hardware.

Bonds cannot be used for:

- Repairs, maintenance, or maintenance agreements
- Supplies, salaries, service contracts, lease payments, installment contracts
- Purchasing automobiles, trucks, or vans
- Portable classrooms purchased for temporary use
- Uniforms
- Textbooks
- Upgrades to an existing computer operating system or application software
- Computer training, computer consulting, or computer maintenance contracts.

28. What technology is included in the bond proposal?

All technology upgrades included in the bond proposal are designed to support classroom instruction and enhance the learning environment. Because technology changes rapidly and there is a continuing need to maintain and upgrade instructional equipment, a primary focus of the bond proposal is to establish and implement a process that assures consistently current technology is available in every classroom. Student 1:1 learning devices will be replaced in year one of the bond and again in year six of the bond. Other instructional technology equipment will be upgraded or replaced as needed.

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

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 audited.

30. Who can vote in this bond proposal election?

You can vote in this bond election if you reside in the West Bloomfield School District, will be 18 years of age or older on Election Day, and are registered to vote by April 3, 2017.

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

You can go to the Michigan Voter Information website (<https://webapps.sos.state.mi.us>) or call the Clerk's Office where you reside. West Bloomfield Township Clerk's office - 248-451-4848. Keego Harbor City Hall - 248-682-1930. Orchard Lake City Hall - 248-682-2400. Sylvan Lake City Hall - 248-682-1440.

32. 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.

33. Can I vote by absentee ballot?

Registered voters can vote by absentee ballot if they meet one of the following:

1. They expect to be out of town on Election Day;
2. They are 60 years of age or older;
3. They are unable to vote without assistance at the polls; or,
4. They cannot attend the polls due to religious reasons.

Absentee ballots will be available to voters after March 25. The Clerk will mail absentee ballot applications to residents on the permanent absentee voter list before or shortly after March 25. After March 25, voters can complete their absentee ballot application and vote in one stop at their Clerk's Office. The whole process takes less than five minutes.

34. Will Roosevelt close if the Bond passes?

There are no plans to close Roosevelt. Closure is not in the school district's strategic plan nor is it a component of the May 2 bond proposal.

35. Why is the election being held in May?

The May election date is one of three possible dates that school districts are allowed to

conduct an election, as specified by law. The other two dates are August and November. The tax levy is in July 2017. So the May election date is the only election date that is possible during 2017 that precedes the actual tax levy. If we had the election in August then we could not sell the bonds and levy taxes on those bonds until July 2018 so we lose an entire year. The same goes for November of 2017.

By going in May we are able to sell the bonds and levy taxes as soon as July 2017; this is critical because much of the school construction season is during the ten weeks each summer that school is on summer recess. It is the most efficient election date for this proposal.

May has for decades traditionally been the school election date. So a school election in May should not come as a surprise in that regard. The estimate for this May is that as many as 35 school districts in the State are expected to conduct a school election for some proposal or renewal so WBSD is far from unique in selecting the May 2017 election date.

As would be the case on any of the three school election dates, the school district is working to make sure voters are informed about the bond proposal. Many mailings and presentations are scheduled across the school district, and all bond-related informational items are posted on the school district's website (www.wbsd.org). In addition, the news media have been carrying stories about the bond. Additionally, the school district invites anyone to ask a question by clicking on **Talk to us** at www.wbsd.org.

Get more information about the bond election and answers to your questions...

- Go to wbsd.org/bond
- Call any West Bloomfield school principal
- Call Superintendent of Schools Gerald Hill at 248/865-6485 or by sending an email to Superintendent Hill at gerald.hill@wbsd.org
- Go to www.wbsd.org and clicking on **Talk to us**, anytime... day or night.