



Forest Hills Public Schools

All Learners Achieving Individual Potential

focus

November 2018

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special edition

**Bond Proposal
Election is Tuesday,
November 6, 2018**

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FHPS Bond Proposal Designed to Invest, Secure, Inspire

Inspiring Student Learning, Transforming Educational Spaces

"Educational design has evolved over the decades, but most of our learning spaces have not," said Lynn Cvangros, Forest Hills Eastern High School English teacher. Cvangros, who has been a teacher for 33 years said that most of the classrooms throughout the district have not seen major renovations since they were originally built. "That is why over half of the Forest Hills Public Schools bond would be spent on transforming classrooms and learning environments for all students, and would affect over 500 classrooms, and impact every learner throughout our district."

Cvangros is referring to a bond proposal on the Tuesday, Nov. 6, 2018, ballot. The Forest Hills community will have the opportunity to vote on this proposal, and if approved, there is expected to be no increase to taxpayers. It would provide \$130 million to fund capital improvements phased in through 2027.

The bond proposal has three key components and was developed to INVEST in the district's infrastructure by upgrading aging systems to save operational costs, SECURE our schools by upgrading safety measures and INSPIRE students by providing modern learning environments. If voters approve



Middle schoolers in Amisha Groce's classroom try to "circle up" to have a conversation about the day's Spanish lesson.

this bond proposal, about 55 percent of the funds would go toward classroom upgrades.

"Today's learning environments support cross-curricular, interdisciplinary activities," added Amisha Groce, Spanish immersion teacher at Northern Hills Middle School. "One size does not fit all in regard to education — from spaces to technology, and how students learn. We must be adaptive and purposeful to provide meaningful education for all students."

John Fisher, a language arts teacher at Central High School, agreed with Groce. "This really is about creating intentionally- (continued on page 2, column 1)



INVEST



SECURE



INSPIRE

**This bond proposal would
preserve our educational
assets with NO TAX RATE
INCREASE EXPECTED for
Forest Hills Public Schools
taxpayers.**



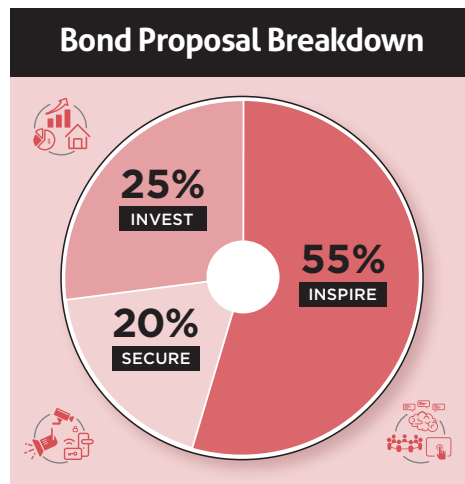
Inspiring Student Learning, Transforming Educational

(continued from page 1)

designed spaces that provide for more effective learning,” Fisher said. “Our learning environments provide authentic experiences to help each student discover, and nurture their own interests, passions, and gifts.”

Scott Kemperman, industrial arts teacher at Northern High School, and a teacher in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) program had this to say about flexible learning environments. “Grounded in actionable learning, it is important for FHPS to provide students with dynamic and interactive opportunities to acquire foundational skills and build relevant connections in education,” Fisher said. “There are competencies that go beyond academic rigor, things that are harder to test and assess in students such as communication, collaboration, creativity, curiosity, compassion, and citizenship.”

As FHPS is helping prepare students for life beyond the classroom and helping build skills Kemperman mentioned, there is more



to this work than the century-old education model of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

“Students need relevant skills they can apply in all areas of life,” said Christina Keller, FHPS parent and president and CEO of Cascade Engineering. “Renovations to classrooms would support new learning styles

and dynamic teaching that prepare students for tomorrow’s world. The incoming class of kindergartners will be graduating in 2031. We must empower our students to be self-directed lifelong learners and help prepare them for jobs that have not yet been created.”

As stated, a majority of this bond would go toward reimagining the learning environments where students spend a majority of time at school. This is the category known as INSPIRE. The remainder of the bond would support the other two categories: INVEST and SECURE.

According to Ron Boezwinkle, director of operations, FHPS operates 26 buildings totaling more than two million square feet on over 650 acres. “To continue to invest and improve our building sites, boilers and chillers need to be replaced, as well as fresh air handling systems, roofs, parking lots, sidewalks, and athletic improvements as identified,” he said. “We would improve our overall building efficiency by upgrad-



INVEST

This proposal was developed to **INVEST** in the district’s infrastructure by:

- Upgrading critical mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems such as boilers, chillers, and fresh air handling units in all schools
- Replacing systems at the end of useful life cycles
- Continuing snowmelt systems
- Replacing roofing, parking lots, and sidewalks
- Relocating and constructing the district’s administration office to the Fine Arts Center campus
- Improving athletic facilities, as identified



SECURE

This proposal was developed to **SECURE** our schools by:

- Funding continual improvements to safety and security measures within our district as school safety solutions evolve
- Updating lighting, occupancy sensors, and surveillance systems
- Replacing aging buses to keep the fleet modern and safe



INSPIRE

This proposal was developed to **INSPIRE** our students by:

- Transforming over 500 classrooms to create dynamic learning environments and age-appropriate workspaces, including flexible furniture, energy efficient LED lighting, and integrated technology
- Updating technology infrastructure, including classroom multimedia and devices, to support teaching and learning
- Providing project-based learning environments to support collaborative learning
- Continuing media center improvements
- Spending the majority of bond funds to transform classrooms, where students spend a large part of their time at school

FHPS Facility and Operations Responsibilities are Immense

- 26 Educational and Support Buildings
- 650 Acres of Land

- Over 2 Million Square Feet of Educational Space
- 36 Years ... The Average Age of Our Buildings



Spaces

ing existing fluorescent lighting to enhanced LED lighting and would update interior finishes as needed, such as flooring, cabinetry, and casework."

Under the SECURE category comes additional school security measures as well as bus replacements. While the district has made upgrades to safety components and systems, "It remains paramount that we continue to be vigilant to keep students safe while in our care," said Mitch Balingit, principal of Collins Elementary School.

Over the summer, the district enhanced the secure entrances at all schools and changed how visitors access school buildings. "As safety and security measures evolve, it is important that we remain in the forefront of security; and if approved, this bond would allow for that," Balingit said. "It also would allow us to replace aging school buses, as needed, to keep the fleet modern and safe."

The last time FHPS asked its voters to approve a bond was in 2013. Similar to the bond election in 2013, if voters approve this bond proposal, there is expected to be no increase to taxpayers.

For more information about how this bond proposal would INVEST, SECURE, and INSPIRE, visit the district's website, www.fhps.net or call the administration office, 616-493-8800. Please remember to vote, Tuesday, Nov. 6, 2018.

Voting Information

■ Polls Open

Tuesday, Nov. 6, 2018, 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.

■ Poll Locations

If you are unsure of your polling place, please contact your local city/township office.

■ Absentee Voting

You can receive an absent voter ballot from your local city/township office. The deadline to apply to receive an absent voter ballot by mail is 2 p.m. on the Saturday prior to the election. After this, you may vote an absent voter ballot in person at your local clerk's office up until 4 p.m. on the day before the election.

Bond Proposal: Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is a bond proposal and how can funds from a bond be spent?

A. A bond proposal is how a public school district asks its community for authorization to borrow money for capital expenditures by selling bonds. Voter-approved bond funds can be spent on new construction, additions, remodeling, site improvements, athletic facilities, playgrounds, buses, furnishings, equipment, and technology. Funds raised through the sale of bonds cannot be used on operational expenses such as employee salaries and benefits, school supplies, and textbooks. Bond funds must be kept separate from operating funds and must be audited by an independent auditing firm.

Q. Why is Forest Hills Public Schools asking voters to consider a bond proposal now?

A. The last time FHPS voters approved a bond was in 2013 and the previous bond projects are nearing completion. The November 2018 bond proposal would fund projects for the next eight years, and would continue to preserve operating funds for student programming.

Q. How will the bond impact student learning?

A. Educational design has evolved over the decades, but most of our learning spaces have not. Our classrooms have not seen major renovations since they were originally built, with our oldest school building originally constructed in 1954. Some schools need more improvements than others. A majority of this bond would be spent on transforming classrooms and learning environments for all students. Modern learning environments support more collaborative and interactive teaching and learning styles that prepare students for success beyond the classroom.



High school students use their media center to work together on an English project.



Most classrooms haven't been updated since they were originally built.

Q. Will any of the bond funds be used for safety and security?

A. Yes. The district will use bond funds to continue our efforts to ensure buildings and sites are secure for students and staff. As safety and security measures evolve, it is important that we remain in the forefront of security. Over the summer, the district enhanced the secure entrances at all schools. These projects were funded by the voter-approved bond proposal in 2013.



A secretary checks her monitor before unlocking the vestibule door in the school entrance.

Q. Why \$130 Million?

A. FHPS operates 26 buildings, totaling more than two million square feet on over 650 acres. Within these facilities, FHPS educates nearly 10,000 students, operates the Community and Aquatic Center, the Forest Hills Fine Arts Center, and provides programming for youth, adults, and senior citizens. The district is larger than 96 percent of public school districts in Michigan. Proposed bond projects were identified through extensive facility needs assessments and input from the district's revenue task force. If approved, the majority of bond funds would be spent on transforming over 500 classrooms, and fund additional capital improvement projects over the next eight years.

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Forest Hills Public Schools

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FAQs

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Q. Will this increase my taxes?

A. No. If voters approve this bond proposal, there is expected to be no increase to taxpayers. This summer, the FHPS Board of Education approved a reduction of .70 mills in the tax rate to meet its required bond payments, which reduced the tax liability for our taxpayers. The district continues to demonstrate good stewardship and fiscal responsibility by retiring bonds as soon as possible. Forest Hills Public Schools holds an Aa2 rating with Moody's Investors Service, one of the highest ratings held by public schools in Michigan, with strong financial management being a contributing factor.

Q. What about the current administration building?

A. The current administration building was constructed in 1951 as an elementary school and has not had any major work in over 30 years. According to the school district's architect, the integrity of the building is failing, and many building systems are far beyond their useful life cycle. The cost of replacing building components such as roofing, heating and cooling, electrical and plumbing systems, and finishes is more expensive than a new building. In 2015, the district formed an Administration Task Force to determine future plans for the administration building. The task force was comprised of 10 community members and was led by GMB Architecture + Engineering. After reviewing data and options over multiple meetings, the task force recommended the construction of a new administration building on the campus of the Fine Arts Center.

The district anticipates selling the property that houses the current administration building and using the proceeds to offset the cost of a new administration building. The cost of constructing the new administration building is expected to be less than 6 percent of the \$130 million bond proposal.

Don't Be Too Fast! Cast Your Vote on the Last!

The FHPS bond proposal is the last item on the November ballot. Don't forget to vote on this proposal.

Ballot Language



Forest Hills Public Schools Bond Proposal

Shall Forest Hills Public Schools, Kent County, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed One Hundred Thirty Million Dollars (\$130,000,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefor, in one or more series, for the purpose of:

remodeling, equipping and re-equipping and furnishing and refurbishing school buildings; erecting, furnishing and equipping additions to school buildings; acquiring, installing and equipping or re-equipping school buildings for instructional technology; erecting, furnishing and equipping a new administration building; purchasing school buses; and erecting, furnishing and equipping playgrounds, play fields, athletic fields, athletic facilities and sites?

The following is for informational purposes only:

The estimated millage that will be levied for the proposed bonds in 2019 is 0.45 mill (\$0.45 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a 0.10 mill net decrease over the prior year's levy. The maximum number of years the bonds of any series may be outstanding, exclusive of any refunding, is fifteen (15) years. The estimated simple average annual millage anticipated to be required to retire this bond debt is 1.99 mills (\$1.99 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation).

(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.)

Please Vote Tuesday, November 6, 2018



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