



Bond 2010 ~ Promoting Educational Excellence

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

February 23, 2010 Bond Program

Hartland Consolidated Schools

HISTORY AND FEATURES

1. What has motivated the district to put this bond program before voters on Feb. 23, 2010?

The Board of Education and administration have evaluated facilities and sites, technology, energy, safety and transportation needs and have determined that the need is beyond general fund dollars. The district is able to extend and refinance existing bonds and offer this bond proposal with NO INCREASE to the current tax rate. Without the bond program; technology, facility, transportation and equipment replacements must be funded by the district's already strained general operating fund.

2. What is the focus of the 2010 bond program?

The 2010 bond program includes upgrades to facilities, including sustainability improvements to lower future operation costs. The bond will enhance facilities and technology throughout the district to aid student learning as well as for safety and security. Bond program highlights are as follows:

Facilities: Improvements and updates to ensure that the school district can provide a quality education for our children. These costs become more expensive the longer they are deferred.

Energy: Conserving energy and operating school buildings at a lower cost is socially responsible. By implementing energy saving initiatives, the school district will be able to reduce future annual operating expenses. It is estimated the school district will save thousands of dollars each year on these energy saving initiatives.

Technology: Technology today is as fundamental to learning as textbooks. Progressive technology provides the framework for a curriculum that ensures students learn critical skills demanded by colleges and employers.

Safety: Keeping our students safe has always been a foremost priority for the school district and parents. An investment in security, such as building card access, avoids putting children at risk and helps to ensure safety and security for our students.

3. How was this plan developed?

- The HCS administration retained professionals to assess district facility needs. These professionals included architects, engineers, technology and construction specialists.
- Buildings were assessed by the district administrative team to review conditions and needs.
- Building administrators reviewed the needs list.
- Building work lists were developed to include line items budgets.
- Work lists and costs were reviewed with the HCS Board of Education. The goal was determined to keep the bond program within the no tax rate increase limit.
- The bond program was pared down to get within the no tax rate increase goal.
- The Board of Education unanimously approved a February 23, 2010 bond election.

4. What are the features of the February 23, 2010 bond program?

The February 23, 2010 bond program includes building improvements at all school facilities. This program focuses on upgrades to address district safety, security, energy savings, facility and site improvements, transportation, technology and accessibility.

Creekside Elementary

- Create secure building entry at main lobby
- Replace gym lighting and parking lot lighting for energy savings

Lakes Elementary

- Reconstruct additional brick wall areas
- Replace some windows and doors
- Replace roofing
- Replace gym lighting and parking lot lighting for energy savings
- Replace boilers, heat pumps, and heating system piping

Round Elementary

- Create secure building entry at main lobby
- Replace gym lighting and parking lot lighting for energy savings
- Construct additional parking area

Village Elementary

- Replace corridor lighting and ceilings
- Replace classroom ceilings
- Replace gym lighting and parking lot lighting for energy savings
- Upgrade Epley Park toilet facilities

Farms Intermediate School

- Reconstruct additional brick wall areas
- Replace exterior doors and hardware
- Replace boilers, heat pumps, and heating system piping
- Install air-conditioning in the gym
- Replace gym lighting and parking lot lighting for energy savings

Middle School at Ore Creek

- Replace roofing
- Replace corridor carpet and ceiling system pads
- Replace gym lighting and parking lot lighting for energy savings
- Repave main parking lot

Hartland High School

- Replace cooling tower
- Replace pool heater, filters, and equipment
- Replace gym lighting and parking lot lighting for energy savings
- Install energy savings demonstration projects
- Resurface indoor and outdoor tracks
- Replace weight room equipment

Educational Support Service Center

- Replace boiler system
- Replace some rooftop air-handling units
- Replace gym lighting and parking lot lighting for energy savings
- Retrofit four tennis courts

1951 Building

- Remove remaining asbestos (currently contained)
- Install air-conditioning in gym and lunchroom
- Repave hard surface play area and drive

District-Wide Items

- Increase electrical distribution to support technology
- \$2,500,000 for improved technology infrastructure
- \$2,500,000 for interactive classroom systems
- \$2,800,000 for replacement of primary computers and printers
- Install card access systems at entrances
- Classroom furnishings to replace worn-out furnishings
- Band instruments
- Construct practice fields on the Clyde Rd. property
- Purchase 27 replacement buses

5. What are the 2010 bond program technology features?

- Increase electrical distribution to support technology
- Improved technology infrastructure
- Interactive whiteboards for instructional areas
- Primary computers and printers replacement
- Installation of a security card access system

6. What is “interactive classroom technology”?

Interactive classroom technology is a flexible set of tools such as projectors and interactive whiteboards that combine the power of a computer with equipment to enlarge information onto a large screen to enhance whole-class, small group and individual learning. This equipment allows teachers and students, through dynamic software and Internet resources, to interactively bring images, video and sound front-and-center, keeping students engaged and on-task.

7. What are the benefits of the bond program for residents who don’t have students in the district?

There are a number of benefits for residents without school-aged children. Hartland Consolidated Schools’ facilities and sites are regularly used by community members who do not have school-aged children. The district has worked over many years to become a community resource and partner. Thousands of residents enjoy and take part in activities at our school facilities. Community groups that utilize HCS facilities and sites include: American Cancer Society, American Legion; Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts and Brownie Troops; Black Sheep Weavers Guild; Area Homeowners’ Associations; Cromaie District Library; Encore Youth Theater, Eagles Fastpitch Club; Hartland Area Historical Society; Hartland Area Community Council; Hartland Community Chorus; Hartland Fire Department; Hartland Players; Hartland Music Boosters; Hartland 4-H Rangers and 4-H Extension Office; Hartland Soccer Association; Hartland Women’s Club; Hartland Wrestling, Youth Lacrosse, and Youth Outdoors Clubs; HAYAA Sports Teams; Jumpin Allstars; Liberty Lakes Fencing Club; Livingston County Senior Nutrition Program (Meals on Wheels); Livingston Educational Service Agency; Livingston Gem &

Mineral Society; Ore Creek Community Church; The River Community Church; Washtenaw Community College

Studies have shown that quality schools positively impact home and business property values. It is in the communities' best interest to protect its investments and to attract businesses and families to Hartland Consolidated Schools.

8. Why is it important to attract and retain students in the district?

Hartland Consolidated Schools receives operational funding from the State of Michigan for every student who attends our schools. The quality of instructional programs and the condition of facilities are two key factors that parents use when deciding where to send their children to school. It is also a major factor for individuals, with or without children, who decide where to purchase a home. Realtors confirm there is a tie between the quality of schools and home values.

The goal of this bond program is to upgrade facilities to support updated teaching methods and to provide progressive learning environments. Parents have choices regarding where their children will receive an education. We intend to remain a district of choice and to maintain our reputation for providing quality programs to attract and retain students.

9. What are the plans to improve the bus fleet?

Hartland Consolidated Schools covers 94 square miles. On average, buses drive 3,287 miles each day. A reliable bus fleet is necessary to maintain reliable transportation and student safety. The District maintains a fleet of 70 buses on a 9-year replacement schedule. This bond program includes money to purchase 27 new buses. Buses, like your personal vehicle, need to be replaced when they wear-out, and purchasing buses through bond dollars reduces general fund loan payments.

10. Why does the 2010 bond program include musical instruments?

State education funding has declined dramatically in recent years and the district's operating expenses have increased. The purchase of musical instruments is permissible by law through bond proceeds, which will free-up operating funds that were allocated to instruments in the past.

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

The program's construction manager, Barton Malow Company, and architect, TMP Architecture, have a long track record successfully and safely delivering K-12 projects. Work will be scheduled so it does not interfere with day-to-day operations or pedestrian safety.

The construction schedule is reviewed and coordinated with District administrators and building principals. There is clear separation between construction and ongoing operations through barricades and fencing. The construction implementation plan focuses on safety, including clear directional signage relating to students, staff, administration and the general public.

12. What is the timing for projects in this program?

The work in this bond program is going to be done over five years. Not everything will be (or can be) done the first year. A detailed schedule will be developed for all the work items once the bond passes. Items that do not need to be addressed immediately will be accomplished toward the end of the program.

FINANCIAL AND ELECTION INFORMATION

13. What is the breakdown of bond program costs?

Creekside Elementary	\$1,035,100
Lakes Elementary	2,179,500
Round Elementary	1,217,700
Village Elementary	2,630,900
Farms Intermediate School	3,409,000
Middle School at Ore Creek	3,780,400
Hartland High School	5,979,800
New Athletic Fields (Clyde Rd. site)	514,400
Educational Support Center	3,991,600
New buses	2,580,000
1951 Building	483,200
Former Transportation Building site	29,700
Bond costs less earned interest	<u>213,700</u>
Total Program	\$28,045,000

14. Economically, is this a good time for a bond program?

Financial consultants concur that this is an excellent time for a bond program. Bond interest rates are at the lowest level in nearly 40 years. Additionally, the economic slowdown increases competition to drive down facility improvement costs. We can get more for our bond dollars now with no tax rate increase.

15. Why are we financing buses and technology for 25 years?

We are not financing buses and technology over 25 years. The amount of principal paid back in the early years covers the cost of the items with a shorter useful life (technology and buses) so those items are not financed over 25 years. Additionally, some of the technology and buses are being purchased in years 2, 3, 4, and 5. Work items with a longer life are paid back in the later years of the bond.

16. Is it true that the 2010 bond program won't increase the property tax rate?

Yes. The current millage rate of 7.6 mills would remain the same. There is no tax rate increase if voters approve the 2010 bond program.

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

Yes. Property taxes are fully 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.

18. 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!

19. Can money from the bond program be used to pay teachers salaries and benefits?

No, it is against State law. School districts are not allowed to use funds from a bond for operating expenses such as teachers, administrators, or employee salaries, repairs or maintenance costs or operating costs. Bond program funds must be kept separate from general operating funds.

20. Please explain what bond program money can cover and what it can't.

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

- Staff salaries and wages
- General operating expenses and maintenance
- Classroom supplies and textbooks
- Administration

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

- Construction and remodeling of facilities
- Purchase of technology equipment
- Equipment and furniture
- Site Improvements
- Purchase of buses
- Purchase of musical instruments

21. What are the key dates leading up to the February 23, 2010 bond election?

- Final day to register to vote is Monday, January 25, 2010.
- Final day to vote absentee is Monday, February 22, 2010.
- Election day is Tuesday, February 23, 2010.

22. Where and when do I register to vote?

To vote in the February 23, 2010 bond election, you must be a U.S. citizen; at least 18 years of age by Election Day; and a resident of Michigan and Hartland Consolidated Schools. Please visit your city or township clerk to register to vote or visit any Secretary of State office.

Hartland Township Hall, 2655 Clark Road, Hartland, 48353	(810) 632-7498
Brighton Township Hall, 4363 Buno Road, Brighton, 48116	(810) 229-0555
Genoa Township Hall, 2911 Dorr Road, Brighton, 48116	(810) 227-5225
Oceola Township Hall, 1577 Latson, Howell, 48843	(517) 546-3259
Tyrone Township Hall, 10408 Center Road, Fenton, 48430	(810) 629-8631
Deerfield Township Hall, 4492 Center Road, Linden, 48451	(517) 546-8760

You must be registered 30 days prior to an election to be eligible to vote. The official "last day to register" for the February 23, 2010 election is Monday, January 25, 2010. Printable voter registration forms are available on the state website, www.michigan.gov/vote.

23. How will this proposal appear on the ballot?

The following text will appear on the February 23, 2010 ballot:

Shall Hartland Consolidated Schools, Livingston County, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed Twenty-Eight Million Forty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$28,045,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefore, for the purpose of:

Partially remodeling, refurbishing and re-equipping school district buildings; acquiring and installing educational technology improvements; purchasing school buses and developing and improving athletic fields and facilities, playgrounds and sites?

The following is for informational purposes only:

The estimated millage that will be levied for the proposed bonds in 2010, under current law, is -0- mill (\$0.00 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation). The maximum number of years the bonds 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 1.31 mills (\$1.31 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation).

If the school district borrows from the State to pay debt service on the bonds, the school district may be required to continue to levy mills beyond the term of the bonds to repay the State.

(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.)

24. What is the procedure for absentee voting?

Applications for Absentee Ballots are available:

- Clerk's office
- On-line at www.michigan.gov/vote
- In your school building offices

Note: 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.

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

You are welcome to call or email:

Janet Sifferman, Superintendent
janetsifferman@hartlandschools.us
Phone number: (810) 626-2100

Scott Bacon, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations
scottbacon@hartlandschools.us
Phone number: (810) 626-2100

District Website at: www.hartlandschools.us