



March 2022



# The BRIGHT SIDE



# Bond Scheduled for Vote on May 3, 2022

The Lansing School District Board of Education unanimously approved a resolution to hold a special election on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 that will ask Lansing voters to consider a zero mill increase bond. This bond **would not increase the debt millage above the 2021 debt millage rate** and would generate \$129.7 million to enable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.

"If approved, the proposal would have a lasting and significant impact on our district for generations to come. With no anticipated change to our current tax rate, it would generate \$129.7 million to invest in safe, secure, and flexible 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environments." a letter sent to district stakeholders said.

It would also allow us to rebuild four end-of-life elementary schools across the district: Lewton Global Studies and Spanish Immersion; Mt. Hope STEAM Magnet School; Sheridan Road STEM Magnet School; and Willow Elementary.

Additional provisions in the bond include renovations to J.W. Sexton High School and the installation of modern, energy-efficient **air conditioning for students in all classrooms across the district** resulting in better air quality and fewer unplanned HVAC system repairs.

Find more information [in this issue](#) of the Bright Side or attend a community input meeting on April 18th by clicking [here](#).



**WE ARE ASKING YOU TO VOTE**  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**MAY 3**  
7:00 AM - 8:00 PM  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**ZERO MILL INCREASE BOND  
BUILDING LANSING'S FUTURE**

**The debt millage rate would not increase above the 2021 debt millage rate and would generate \$129.7 million to enable 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.**

 For more information visit [www.lansingschools.net/bond2022](http://www.lansingschools.net/bond2022)    

## In This Issue of *The Bright Side*

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>1</b> Bond 2022<br>We Are Asking You to Vote                        | <b>4</b> English-Language Learners<br>Supported by Specialists         | <b>7</b> Award-Winning Children's<br>Author Visits District |
| <b>2</b> Forest View Teacher Receives<br>Excellence in Education Award | <b>5</b> Everett Viking Theatre Guild<br>Performs in State Competition | <b>8</b> Pleasant Grove<br>Given New Life                   |
| <b>3</b> Gardner International Receives<br>Education Excellence Award  | <b>6</b> AF Group Donates 2,000<br>Winter Coats to Students            | <b>9</b> 2022 Bond F.A.Q.s                                  |



**Photo** Boyer poses after his interview on Michigan Lottery's Excellence in Education segment. Credit Michigan Lottery.

## Jeffrey Boyer Receives Michigan Lottery's Excellence in Education Award

One of Lansing School District's very own, Jeffrey Boyer, a third grade teacher at Forest View Elementary, won the [Excellence in Education Award from the Michigan Lottery](#). Boyer was nominated by a former student's grandmother who said Jeffrey exceeded at keeping his students motivated to learn, despite the pandemic.

"I am honored to receive this award," said Boyer. "Educators across the nation are going above and beyond to support students in these ever changing times, and I am very humbled to be recognized as one of them. I aim to engage kids in exciting learning experiences that teach them the ways of the world. I love every second of my job and plan to use this award to continue serving my students."

Mr. Boyer excels in his instruction style which helped him earn this award. To reinforce student engagement, Boyer visited students' homes to hand out goody bags, purchased school supplies out of his pocket, performed magic tricks, created educational games, and started a YouTube channel called 'Boyer the Teacher Guy'.

The award was established in 2014 to highlight Michigan public school educators. Each week, one outstanding educator receives a plaque, a \$1,500 personal cash prize, and a \$500 grant to their classroom, school, or school district. Winners are also featured in a news segment with the Lottery's media partner stations.

When the school year comes to a close, the Michigan Lottery will select the Lottery's Educator of the Year from the pool of previous weekly winners. The Educator of the Year will receive a \$10,000 cash prize for their outstanding contributions.

Boyer has been teaching for thirty-three years - the last seven of which have been serving the Lansing School District. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Eastern Michigan University.

**Congratulations, Mr. Boyer, and thank you for all you do for the Lansing School District family!**



## Gardner International Magnet's Global Education Program Receives \$2,500 Education Excellence Award

The Lansing School District has received a \$2,500 Education Excellence grant award from the [SET SEG Foundation](#), a branch of SET SEG a risk management organization serving Michigan public schools in cooperation with the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB).

The SET SEG Foundation is fueled by its mission to enable students to pursue enrichment opportunities that advance learning, leadership, and civic responsibility by providing services, scholarships, grants, and financial support directly to Michigan public schools and Michigan public school students.

"It is an honor for us to recognize the Lansing School District and Gardner International Magnet and all their educators, and to help support and advance their efforts," said Molly Mellema, SET SEG Foundation Executive Director. "Dedicated, passionate teachers and staff in public schools are what help provide opportunities to learn, grow, and build brighter, stronger futures for students in our communities and state."

"This is a terrific honor," said Kyle Burroughs, Principal at Gardner. "Our students are very excited about this global education honor and how this grant might help us grow our program." The Global Education Program at Gardner received the \$2,500 Education Excellence Award and the school will also receive a commemorative trophy, and an "Education Excellence Winner" roadside sign.

This award is an incredible achievement for Gardner, which was one of only 10 programs selected from many outstanding applications received from public schools across Michigan.



# Lansing School District English-Language Learners Supported by Sophisticated Team

Each year the Bilingual Education Department reports to the Board of Education on their work within the community. Deputy Superintendent of Special Populations, Sergio Keck, shared inspiring information on incoming and current language learners during the January 20 Board of Education meeting.

The Lansing School District has welcomed 200 new students from other countries so far this school year. "We are very excited to see these populations and we are excited to educate them," said Keck. The district currently serves 2,041 bilingual students who account for 18% of the student population. Of these bilingual students, 1,756 (16% of district students) are English learners. 1,227 students were born outside of the United States, coming from 87 different countries, speaking 66 native languages.

In their mission statement, the Bilingual Education Department states that their goal is to "foster an educational system that embraces refugee, immigrant, and language minority students." To do this, a comprehensive team must come together.

"There is a certain level of expertise required to truly understand what language each minority group speaks," said Keck. "The district called upon connections and relationships within the community to achieve this."

The department offers their services to eight different schools. Services include language and interpretation, community learning, training and digital resources. A role was created to serve diverse students and their families, called 'cultural brokers'. These cultural brokers are community members that speak the same language as the families and help to interpret, connect, and educate.

"The cultural brokers were created to break down barriers," Keck said. This kind of intricate work requires a sophisticated system of dedicated team members, with all hands-on deck. "This work is not done alone; it requires our schools, our teachers, our administrators," said Keck.

The Board of Education President, Gabrielle Lawrence, expressed gratitude on behalf of the entire school district to Keck and his team, for all of the important work they do to integrate diverse learners into the community.

For more information on the Bilingual Education Department, click [here](#).

**Below** Mapendo Fabiola (Specialized Instructional Bilingual Assistant), Tammy Killingbeck-Thelen (ESL Teacher), and Hang Pham (Specialized Instructional Bilingual Assistant), who serve as bilingual support specialists at Sexton.





The cast and crew includes Tobi Robinson, Camdyn Arnett, Jonah Miller, Allison Tomayo, Jolene Cabianca, Rosette Rwiya, Jackson Barker, Shaun Fox and Aspin Rutherford.

## Everett Viking Theatre Guild Performs in State Competition

Three years ago, the Everett High School Viking Theater Guild was established as a way for students interested in the arts to get experience acting and performing. Each year the group normally puts on a fall musical and spring production, but this year the Guild chose to participate in the Michigan Interscholastic Forensics Association State Festival with other schools from across the state.

The winter play starts with a district level competition and qualifying schools move up to the regional competition, then state competition. The 2021 season was altered to accommodate COVID-19 restrictions, but the Viking Theater Guild made it all the way to the state competition and won 11<sup>th</sup> place overall for their performance of *Mirrors*.

"I'm so glad we were able to compete again because the students love the opportunity to meet other kids across the state who also love theater," said Viking Theater Guild Director, Courtney McCampbell. "Kids come from all over and have different backgrounds, but they all have this shared interest in performing that connects them."

Everett students also appreciate the opportunity to get feedback on their performance from the judges. At each level in the competition, students are given notes to implement in the next performance. Judging criteria is primarily focused on acting, but it also includes blocking, set design, costumes, and teamwork.

"Parents love anything their kids perform so when you have a judge there to look at it with a critical eye and tell them what they did well and what they can improve on, the students get really excited to hear the feedback," said McCampbell.

The students in the Viking Theater Guild are not only passionate about performing but also about serving the community that has served them. Students participate in school-based service projects to help their teachers and they also go out to do community service projects within the Lansing area to shed a positive light on the other great things the Everett High students are doing.

"They're an amazing group of kids," said McCampbell. "The pandemic has made it a tough year for every program, but these kids overcame so many hurdles. I'm so impressed with their perseverance."



*Individual focus. Collective strength.*

## **AF Group Donates 2,000 Winter Coats for Elementary Students**

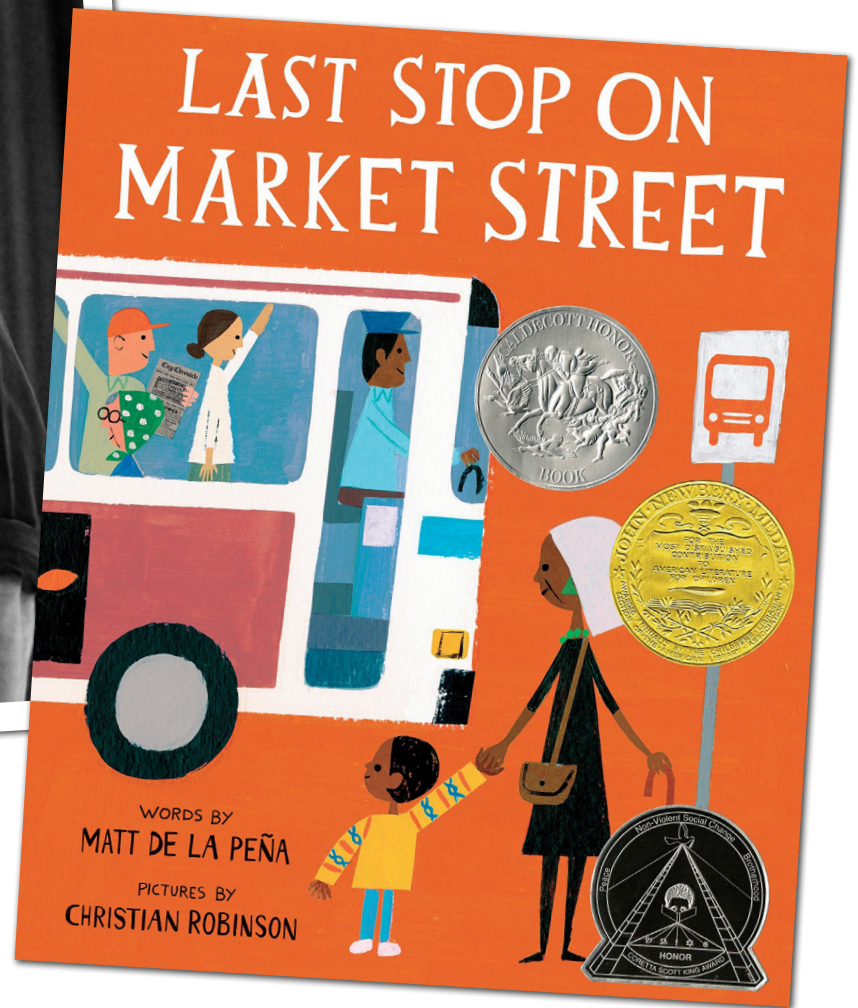
"[AF Group](#) has been a founding sponsor of the Lansing Promise and a partner with the Lansing School District for several years," said Sarah Garcia, AF Group Director of Community Relations. "When we learned of Operation Warm and the mission of providing coats to under-served children, we recognized a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to Lansing schools and most of all, support students and their families with a donation of 2,000 new coats. With the challenges faced by so many over the course of the last two years, it is our thrill to give back by spreading warmth and love to our community."

Operation Warm is a national organization that provides new coats and new shoes to under-served children so they can thrive in school. During the 2020-2021 school year, the Lansing School District had 2,000 unfulfilled requests for coats and 800 unfulfilled requests for shoes. AF Group's donation of 2,000 coats targeted children in grades K-3.

The coat donation and sponsorship opportunity align with two of AF Group's strategic areas of focus: Health & Human Services and Education. The donation also helps AF Group strengthen the partnership the company has developed with the Lansing School District through Lansing Promise, and provides a tangible opportunity to give back to those most in need in the Lansing community.

AF Group impacts communities across the country by giving time, talent and monetary donations to nonprofits and other organizations. AF Group is fueled by their mission to embrace a passion for making the world a better place.

**Thank you, AF Group!**



## READ and RIF Welcome Award-Winning Children's Author to the District for Visits

The Lansing School District recently hosted award-winning author Matt de la Peña at many schools throughout the district. Mr. de la Peña's visit was part of the READ grant which supports children's literacy.

Author de la Peña discussed his storytelling and encouraged young students to engage in creative writing. "Reading and imagination can take a child anywhere in the world," said de la Peña. "Reading opens your mind, and books are the ticket to exploring."

Each participating student received a copy of his book "Last Stop on Market Street," which won the 2016 Newbery Medal.

Sponsored by the Reading is Fundamental (RIF) program, older participating students also enjoyed the opportunity to choose a book from Matt de la Peña's young adult titles.



Photo Copyright Studio (Intrigue) Architects © 2021

## Pleasant Grove Given New Life with Housing Development

The site of Pleasant Grove Elementary School where civil rights leader Malcolm X once attended, will soon be the site of a community resource center for Lansing residents. The City of Lansing is working with Ferguson Development, LLC, to redevelop the site where the vacant school is located.

Plans for the site include the development of two buildings. One is a 27,445-square-foot building that will serve as an office, financial, and medical facilities that will be available for rent. The other will be an apartment complex that will hold 30 residential apartments.

"The plan for this redevelopment is to create an environment in which the southwest Lansing community has the resources and accessibility needed to reach beyond its full potential," said Joel Ferguson, principal at Ferguson Development LLC, Lansing. "I don't want people to just drive by an old, abandoned building where Malcolm X once attended school. I want them to build here, start a business here, shop here and send their kids to school here."

The City of Lansing is looking to bring a sense of community to those living in the residential apartments and surrounding areas. The redevelopment will hopefully promote additional growth in the southwest Lansing area.

"The community has worked so hard to preserve its rich history, yet has faced many challenges while other areas of Lansing have had opportunities for economic growth and revitalization," said Ferguson. "I want this redevelopment to be proudly identified not only as the place where Malcolm X attended school, but also remembered for how we all worked together to turn it around and make it a place of destination."

Site demolition will begin this summer and construction is expected to take as long as 20 months. Assuming everything stays on schedule, both buildings will be completed during the summer of 2024.



# ZERO MILL INCREASE BOND BUILDING LANSING'S FUTURE

## The F.A.Q.s

# Table of Contents

## **What a Bond Proposal is and How the Funds Can Be Spent ..... 1**

## **The Importance of Investing in Our School Facilities ..... 1-2**

What is the Lansing School District asking for on May 3? .....	1
But didn't we just approve funds for the district? Why do they already need more? .....	2
Why are Lansing's schools important to building a stronger city? .....	2
Why would Sexton get so much this time? .....	2
Do we really need air conditioning in the classrooms? .....	2
Why rebuild instead of just renovating? .....	2
Would the new schools be built in different locations from the current schools? .....	2

## **Building Lansing's Future ..... 3-4**

How was this bond proposal developed? .....	3
How will the district oversee the use of these dollars? .....	3
What has the district done in the last five years to reduce costs and balance its budget? .....	3
What is Lansing's overall capital millage rate compared to surrounding districts? .....	4

## **What This Bond Issue Means to Voters ..... 4-5**

What is the proposed millage increase and how much would it generate for projects? .....	4
How will this impact my taxes? .....	4
How can a bond be passed without increasing the current tax rate? .....	4
I am a Lansing voter, but I don't have any connections to the school district.	
What does the bond proposal do for me? .....	5
My family and I rent our residence. Will we be able to vote in this election? .....	5
How do I get more information about voting? Can I vote absentee? .....	5
What are the key dates leading up to the May 3 Election Day? .....	5



The Lansing School District is asking you to vote on a  
**Zero Mill Increase Bond**  
 May 3, 2022

**The F.A.Q.s**

**What a Bond Proposal is and How the Funds Can Be Spent**

A bond proposal is how a public school district asks its community for authorization to borrow money to pay for capital expenditures. 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 school supplies, textbooks, busing, employee salaries or benefits. Bond funds must be kept separate from operating funds and must be audited by an independent auditing firm.

**The Importance of Investing in Our School Facilities**

**What is the Lansing School District asking for on May 3?**

On May 3, 2022, the Lansing School District is asking voters to consider a bond proposal that would generate \$129.7 million for facility improvements throughout the district without an expected increase in the school district's debt millage for Lansing property owners above 2021 levels. Primary Investments would include:



**Four New School Buildings**

The aging school buildings known as Lewton, Mt. Hope, Sheridan Rd., and Willow would be replaced with brand new, 21st century schools. In addition to being far more cost effective in terms of lifetime value of the building, these new schools would be purpose-built, age-appropriate spaces that align to community input regarding current and future needs.



**Improvements to Air Quality and Comfort**

Improvements would be made to HVAC systems and all classrooms across the district would receive air conditioning. Studies have shown that Indoor Air Quality is directly linked to health outcomes and student performance. The systems would also include higher-grade air filters to improve air quality to help respond to COVID-19 and potential future pandemics.



**J.W. Sexton High School Refresh**

Eastern and Everett High Schools both received significant upgrades with previous bonds, now it would be Sexton's turn. Upgrades would include a complete renovation of the school's auditorium, athletic improvements, new ceilings, window coverings, and a refresh throughout the school.

## But didn't we just approve funds for the district? Why do they already need more?

Yes, we did. In order to build out an educational vision, the Lansing School District asked voters to consider a bond proposal in 2016 and a sinking fund proposal in 2019. Since its passage, the 2016 bond proposal proceeds have funded building additions, new furniture, new technology items, a new Eastern High School and athletic complex and more. The sinking fund has allowed the district to tackle much-needed safety and energy efficiency improvements, such as replacing roofs, boilers and other weak infrastructure and adding security features to all schools.

Those investments were important, but there is still more to do. With the 2016 bond work as the foundation, the district would make the next round of investments in safe and modern schools to continue building Lansing's future.

## Why are Lansing's schools important to building a stronger city?

Decades of economic research and data show the presence of high-quality schools increases local productivity, attracts new talent and business investment, and supports a stronger local quality of life.

For local property owners whose homes are located near a neighborhood school, school quality matters. Keeping schools safe and in good repair keeps home values stable and growing, as young families continue to be attracted to local K-12 programs. The Lansing community has redoubled its efforts to provide high-quality learning opportunities to Lansing students through the Lansing Pathway Promise.

## Why would Sexton get so much this time?

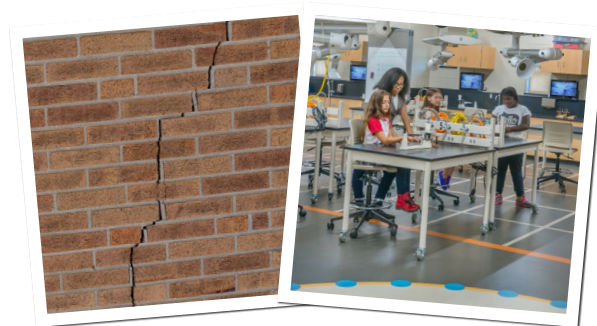
Both Eastern and Everett High Schools received significant upgrades with the previous bond, now it would be Sexton's turn. Upgrades would include a complete renovation of the auditorium, athletic improvements, new ceilings, window coverings, and a refresh throughout.

## Do we really need air conditioning in the classrooms?

Studies have shown that Indoor Air Quality is directly linked to health outcomes and student performance. The systems would also include higher-grade air filters to improve air quality to help respond to COVID-19 and potential future pandemics. The investments would also improve energy efficiency for the long term.

## Why rebuild Lewton, Mt. Hope, Sheridan Rd. and Willow Elementary Schools instead of just renovating them?

In addition to being far more cost effective in terms of lifetime value of the building, these new schools would be purpose-built, age-appropriate spaces that align to community input regarding current and future needs.



The left photo shows one of many facilities issues, the right shows what learning in Lansing could look like with this bond.

## Would the new schools be built in different locations from the current schools?

The new school buildings would be built on the same property as the existing schools.

## Building Lansing's Future

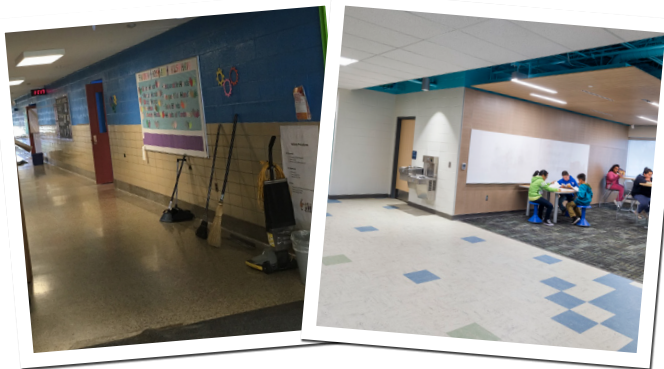
### How was this bond proposal developed?

This proposal was developed through an inclusive, collaborative and open process commissioned by the Board of Education. A committee of staff, students, community leaders, and other stakeholders met on a bi-weekly basis to develop recommendations to the board. The committee considered a detailed facilities study, professional consultant recommendations, enrollment projections, input from community forums, and a survey of citizens in developing their recommendation. The Board of Education voted unanimously to place the resulting proposal on the May 3, 2022 ballot.

### How will the district oversee the use of these dollars?

If the Building Lansing's Future bond proposal is approved by the voters, the money and projects will all be overseen by a special Bond Steering Committee. This committee would report to the Lansing Board of Education's Facilities Committee (made up of three district board members), which would approve and relay all recommendations to the full nine-member board at their regular public meetings.

This process is currently being used for the Sinking Fund Millage and was used successfully for the 2016 Lansing Pathway Promise Bond projects (see examples of before and after photos below). It has proven to be effective, transparent, and fiscally responsible, while keeping projects on time.



The left photo shows a dark dingy hallway at Pattengill, the right shows the renovated space post 2016 bond work.



Before and after photos of the atrium at Everett. These are just a sample of the work, but the improvements are significant.

### What has the district done in the last five years to reduce costs and balance its budget?

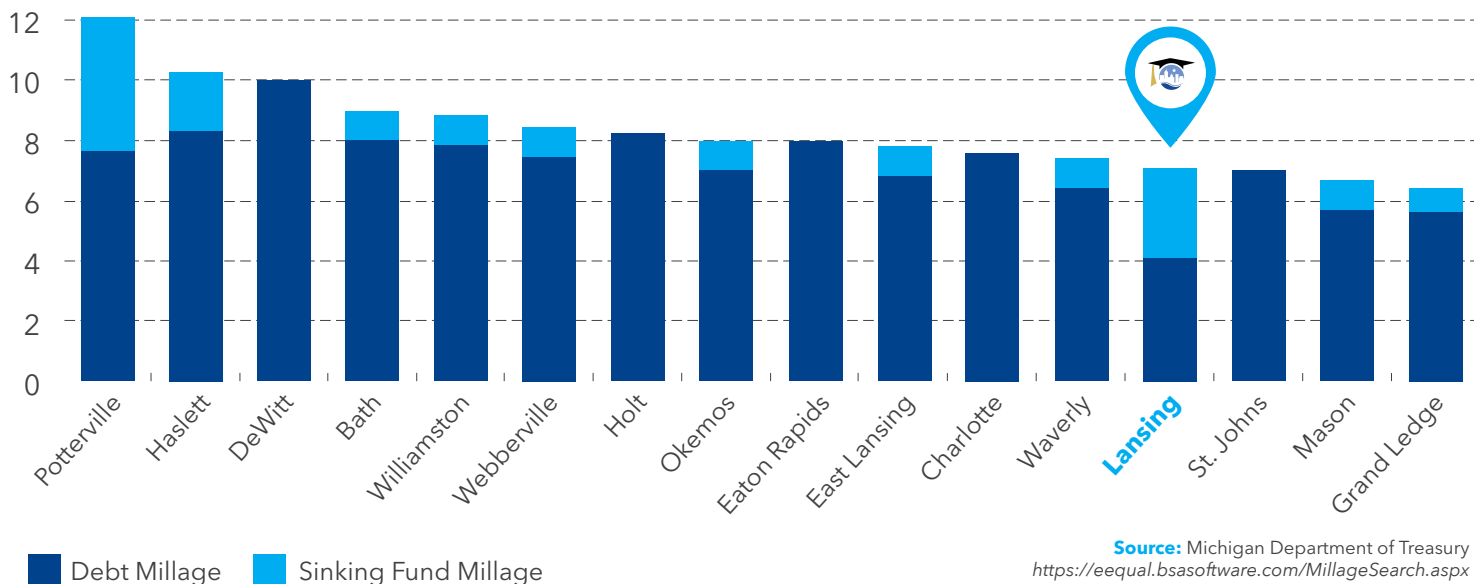
District staff have worked to bring the district's expenditures in line with revenues over the past several years.

- We have balanced the district's budget.
- Independent audits consistently show the district's financial picture to be solid and without exceptions.
- Our fund equity balance is kept at a level that is considered fiscally sound by state and federal experts and avoids operating debt.

### What happens if voters do not approve this bond?

If this bond is not approved, the district will have to reconsider its financial picture and determine next steps. It is possible that money currently spent on instruction would have to be diverted to facilities maintenance.

## Capital Millage Rates in Lansing and Neighboring Districts (Figure 1)



### What is Lansing’s overall capital millage rate compared to surrounding districts?

Currently, the total capital improvement millage rate for the Lansing School District is 7 mills, the 4th lowest rate among neighboring districts. It is also worth noting that Lansing has the **LOWEST DEBT** millage! Refer to figure 1 above for more information about Lansing’s capital millage as it compares to neighboring districts.

## What This Bond Issue Means to Voters

### What is the proposed millage increase and how much would it generate for projects?

The proposal that will appear on the May 3, 2022, ballot for voter consideration is an expected zero mill increase compared to 2021 levels for a bond issue that would generate \$129.7 million.

### How will this impact my taxes?

If approved, the \$129.7 million bond proposal would not be expected to increase the tax rate above your current (2021) tax rate.

Market Value	Taxable Value	Millage Increase
\$75,000	\$37,500	0
\$100,000	\$50,000	0
\$125,000	\$62,500	0
\$150,000	\$75,000	0

Refer to figure 2 for more information.

Figure 2

### How can a bond be passed without increasing the current tax rate?

At the end of this year, some of the district’s older debt will be paid in full. This allows us to extend the debt millage at the current level to support the payment on the proposed bond that would pay for critical needs of the district.