

South Lyon Survey Questions

Thank you for responding to the South Lyon Community Schools' bond proposal survey.

Below are answers to the commonly asked questions from the survey. If you have questions that are not included among those answered, please contact Steve Archibald at (248) 573-8127 or by email at archibalds@slcs.us

Questions people are asking about the South Lyon Community Schools' no tax-rate increase bond election

Q. Is it true that if voters approve the bond proposal, there will not be an increase in the current tax rate?

A. Yes. If voters approve the August 4th bond proposal, the current tax rate will not increase. In fact, since previous bonds are nearing their payoff date, and due to community growth, the Board of Education was able to reduce the current bond tax rate from 7.90 mills to 7.10 mills beginning with the 2020 summer tax collection.

Q. How can the school district raise \$98.725 million without raising taxes?

A. The school district's current bond indebtedness will continue to decline as bond payments are made. As the current debt is reduced, the August 4th bond will replace those bonds. Hence, the current tax rate will be extended, not increased.

Q. What is the length of the bond proposal?

A. The bond term is 20 years.

Q. What projects will be completed with the bond proposal revenue?

A. For a complete list of all bond projects, go www.slcs.us and click on *2020 School Bond Election*.

Q. Why isn't the bond money being used to pay teachers more or cover other school district operating expenses?

A. 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 independently audited.

Q. Will the bond proposal support COVID-19 related changes?

A. Many of the items in the bond proposal—such as technology, technology infrastructure, and facility remodeling—will help assure that the school district is better prepared to meet the educational needs of students as school re-opens.

Q. How can I find out what projects will be completed at each school/facility?

A. A complete list of projects for each school/facility is posted on the school district's website. Go to www.slcs.us and click on *2020 School Bond Election*. The bond projects for each school/facility are included as part of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document.

Q. Can bond issues be renewed?

A. No. Bond issues cannot be renewed. All bond proposals are for a specific number of years and can only be used for bond projects specified in the ballot language.

Q. What percentage of the bond will be spent on technology?

A. Approximately 10 percent of the bond will be spent on technology. The dollar amount is approximately \$9.8 million.

Q. Will technology purchases help with home learning, if needed?

A. At this time, the school district is setting plans for the 20/21 school year that include options for families. Once the State of Michigan sets the back-to-school guidelines, the school district will finalize and share a detailed back-to-school plan with the entire community. The projects in the bond proposal, such as technology and technology infrastructure, will help assure that the school district is better prepared to meet the educational needs of students for the next school year in person and through distance learning.

Q. Why is a new pool being constructed at South Lyon High School?

A. The pool was constructed as part of the original 1990 building. The six-lane pool is bordered by structural elements that prohibit expanding the pool without reworking the building shell. To accommodate the new eight-lane competition pool and the three-lane therapy pool, the building shell and structure will need to be demolished and rebuilt, enlarging the overall space. The existing locker rooms, restrooms, and concessions (south and west of the pool) were added to the building in 1998 and will also be relocated and/or renovated.

Q. Why do we need to build an eight-lane competition pool at South Lyon High School?

A. The existing pool is six lanes, which does not comply with current Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) regulations for hosting competitions of any size. Eight-lanes are required, at a minimum, to have six competitive lanes and two lanes for warmup and cooldown. As a result, the pool is only used for practice. To meet MHSAA requirements, the depth of the pool will also need to be increased to meet safety requirements for diving.

Q. How will the therapy pool be used?

A. The therapy pool will be used for both recreational and school diving meets.

Q. Will the bond proposal include any updates to the CI programs?

A. The CI programs will benefit from upgrades and updates to technology and the technology infrastructure.

Q. Will new buses be purchased through the bond proposal?

A. Yes, the school district will replace buses that have reached the end of their useful life. Buses that are 8-10 years old or buses with high odometer readings will be replaced.

Q. Why is synthetic turf being replaced at some fields and added to others?

Artificial turf allows for expanded use of fields by students and the community. The fields are regularly used by school district athletic teams and community programs.

Artificial turf creates a safer playing field for student and community use and prevents cancellation of spring and fall sporting events due to field conditions. Artificial turf also reduces district maintenance costs (approximately \$200,000 annually).

The synthetic turf was installed at SL East in 2007. The synthetic turf will be replaced because it has reached the end of its life expectancy (10-15 years).

Q. Why isn't the school district building a third middle school to address community growth and overcrowding?

A. The middle schools were designed to serve 2,400 students. The current middle school enrollment is approximately 2,039.

At the high school level, both facilities were designed to serve 3,660 students. The current enrollment at South Lyon High School is 1,299 and at South Lyon East is 1,097.

Q. What improvements are scheduled for the Arts?

A. The bond will provide updates to the Arts programs by renovating classroom space and equipment, upgrading the theater lighting, replacing the pit cover in the auditorium, replacing band instruments, band equipment, choral risers, and replacing dance room flooring.

Q. Do I need to apply to vote by absentee?

A. Yes. To vote by absentee, you must complete the Absentee Ballot Application sent to you by Michigan Secretary of State or one provided by the South Lyon Community Schools. You can also visit www.michigan.gov/vote to complete an Absentee Ballot Application online. Once you complete your application, return it to your local clerk, and your clerk will mail you an Absentee Ballot.

Q. How are the bonds purchased? Can they be purchased by the public?

A. Bonds are sold by licensed agencies must be purchased through designed financial institutions.

Q. Will the parking lot space increase at Bartlett and the Early Childhood Center to replace the spaces that will be lost due to facility additions?

A. Yes. The Bartlett parking lot will increase by approximately ten spaces, and the Early Childhood Center will increase by about six parking spaces.

Q. Will the bond proposal accommodate students with disabilities or learning disabilities?

A. All bond proposal projects must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Q. How long will it take for bond proposal projects to be completed?

A. Work on the bond proposal projects will begin immediately following approval of the bond proposal. It is estimated that all projects will be substantially completed by the 2025-2026 school year.

Q. I heard that several projects were not completed as proposed during the 2015 bond proposal. Is this true?

A. All 2015 bond projects were completed as proposed. By law, all bond projects must follow the parameters outlined in the ballot language.

Q. Can bond funds be used to increase programs in the South Lyon Community Schools?

A. No. Bond proposal funds can only be used for projects identified in the ballot language. Approval of the bond proposal will significantly reduce the use of operational dollars for repairs and building updates and, instead, allow for operational dollars to support the educational program.

Q. Why doesn't the bond proposal include funds to make the district truly a 1-1 chrome book district?

A. The Bond funds that were previously identified for Mobile Computing Devices will cover a 1-1 chrome book initiative. The district plans to provide 1-1 devices for all grades for the 2020-2021 school year regardless of the instructional plan the district decides on with the Return-to-Learn Roadmap from the State of Michigan. The district will re-evaluate after the 2020/2021 school year to determine the need to continue with 1-1 for grades K to 12.

Q. How did the South Lyon Community Schools determine the amount for the bond proposal?

A. South Lyon Community Schools' strategic plan includes a process for ongoing evaluation and monitoring of all school facilities. Continually evaluating and monitoring of school facilities helps to protect the community's investment in its schools.

Working with construction, technology, and architectural specialists, an in-depth facility study was completed in the summer of 2019. The study identified all facility needs. While \$130 million in projects were identified, school officials wanted to bring to the community a proposal that would address facility needs and not raise the current tax rate. After reviewing and prioritizing each proposed project, the final bond proposal project list totals \$98.725 million.

The final list of facility projects to be completed was then reviewed by students, staff, parents, and community members in a series of focus panels conducted during December 2019.

Q. How will the bond help offset budget cuts?

A. Approval of the bond will allow projects to be completed that would otherwise have to come out of the operational budget. If operational dollars are used, then budget cuts could be required in order to make repairs to the schools.

Q. Will we be paying for bond items, such as computers and buses after they have exceeded their life expectancy?

A. No. The Michigan Department of Treasury and federal tax regulations require that specific items in a bond proposal (such as computers and buses) be paid for before they become obsolete. Computers must be paid off within five years of their first use. Buses must be replaced after 8-10 years or if they have high odometer readings.

Q. Will all the bonds be sold at one time?

A. No. The bonds will be sold in two series (in October 2020 and May 2023). Selling the bonds in two series reduces the interest cost for bond repayment.

Q. Why is the school district repaving the bus parking lot?

A. The pavement where the buses park is starting to fail and needs to be replaced. Repair of the parking lot will prevent damage to buses and save overall district bus maintenance costs. In addition, this work will address low spots that ice up in the winter and lead to slip/fall accidents.

Q. Will the traffic problems at Centennial/Millennium Middle Schools be addressed through the bond proposal?

A. Bonds proposal revenue can only be used to address on-site school facility needs. School district officials will continue to work with City officials to address traffic issues.

Q. To improve student safety, sidewalks were scheduled to be installed at Sayre Elementary. It has been over two years and the project has not begun. Why?

A. The plan to add sidewalks to the neighborhood near Sayre was part of a joint Safe Walks to School grant with local municipalities. While grant was able to be put in place, such as bike racks at schools and a traffic light at Marjorie Ann and Pontiac Trail, the costs for the sidewalk project came in much higher than anticipated and the project was not able to be completed.

Q. On the project list it includes adding additional fencing at Sayre Elementary? Where on the site will the fencing be installed?

A. The additional fencing at Sayre Elementary is planned for the north and south end of the school to create a barrier between the parking lot and playground area to improve safety.