



## March 10, 2020 Bond Proposal Frequently Asked Questions

### HISTORY AND FEATURES

#### 1. What is on the March 10, 2020 ballot?

On March 10, 2020, voters in the Birmingham Public Schools will be asked to consider a bond proposal to address and enhance facility needs at each school building, improve high school athletic fields and provide capital improvements to items like roofs, parking lots, HVAC and bathrooms. Major renovations, some of which, would begin in 2021, include:

- Groves High School main entrance and building updates.
- Bingham Farms Elementary School building renovations and classroom addition.
- Pierce Elementary School new cafeteria and kitchen addition.
- Harlan Elementary School classroom additions.
- Birmingham Covington School building updates and Technology Services (housed at BCS) infrastructure.
- BPS Annex (Instruction for students with IEPs after age 18) addition and building improvements.
- Bathroom improvements throughout the District.
- High school athletic fields, auxiliary gymnasiums and athletic entryway enhancements.
- Midvale preschool and senior center building additions and increased parking.

If the bond proposal is approved by voters, BPS is expected to maintain the existing school debt levy (3.8 mills) and issue the bonds with a **ZERO INCREASE to the current debt levy**. The bond proposal authorizes the issuance of \$195 million of bonds. The proposed bonds will be issued in 3 series through 2026.

#### 2. What are the major features of this bond proposal?

A full review of the District's capital needs, including projects by building, can be found in the [Dec. 11 Capital Needs presentation to the Board](#) linked on the [www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/bond2020](http://www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/bond2020) website.

#### 3. How was this plan developed?

As a result of the capital planning work that began in partnership with Plante Moran Cresa (facilities) and Barton Malow (technology) this past spring, significant attention was paid to key infrastructure needs, technology and notable, needed site developments across the District. Each building in the District will receive attention for projects placed in a top priority category through the capital planning process.

#### 4. Why should this bond program be presented to the voters at this time?

Early this calendar year, the Birmingham Public Schools Board of Education challenged the central office administrative team to engage in a detailed and thorough capital planning process that took full inventory of our Districts facilities needs, including escalation costs, over the next decade. Included in the process were professional assessments of critical infrastructure, meetings with building administrators to capture needed educational improvements and meetings with various staff and community members to solicit input for upgrades and enhancements. The nine-month, detailed capital planning process revealed significant needs to our facilities and operations that were labeled as top priority items for the immediate future. After evaluating several funding strategies to make those projects a reality, the Board of Education selected a strategy that would permit Birmingham Public Schools the opportunity to address all top priority items without increasing (based on year to year comparisons) the debt tax rate for taxpayers.

**5. What are the benefits of the bond proposal for residents who don't have students in the District?**

Strong schools equal strong communities. Realtors and city officials regularly report that the number one reason people choose to live in Birmingham and our surrounding communities is the strength of our school district. Maintaining our facilities and ensuring that we continue to provide an exemplary system of schools is critical for every resident's property values.

Additionally, the District's school facilities and sites are regularly used by the community for recreational/athletic opportunities and events, meetings, performances, and senior citizen activities. To further support these uses, the addition of auxiliary gyms at both high schools, updated fields and space additions at the Midvale center will offer the community new opportunities to better utilize our buildings.

Improvements will be made to Next, the community's center for those ages 50 and up, including additional parking for members, to offer an enhanced experience for our residents. This will simultaneously relieve parking pressure at the Midvale Early Learning Center.

## FACILITY AND SITE UPGRADES

**6. When will we begin to see changes in the District?**

While this process does take time, if approved by voters, the public can anticipate noting changes and construction beginning the summer of 2021.

**7. Why are we looking to make additions in some buildings when enrollment is declining?**

Birmingham Public Schools pays close attention to enrollment numbers by conducting an annual, professional enrollment analysis that includes predictions based on actual Oakland County birth rates over the last five years. Last year's report indicated that enrollment dips continue to exist at the middle and high school levels. However, the numbers at the elementary schools are currently projected to increase by 73 students by 2023. This trend indicates that our current building utilization will continue to sufficiently meet the needs of our students. Any additions to facilities are designed to meet strategic needs where increased space is necessary to provide the highest quality education to our students, which our community expects.

**8. What infrastructure upgrades will be addressed as part of this bond proposal?**

BPS finalized a capital plan of our facilities in December 2019. The plan indicated the need for a variety of facility improvements, including aging restrooms throughout the District, roofs, parking lots and HVAC and electrical systems.

**9. Where will I see construction in the District under this bond proposal?**

Updates and enhancements are planned for each school within the district. Specific expected renovations can be found in the [Dec. 11 Capital Plan presentation to the Board](#), linked here and available on the [www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/bond2020](http://www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/bond2020) website.

**FINANCIAL AND ELECTION INFORMATION****10. What is the breakdown of total estimated costs for the bond program?**

Find the [BPS Priority 1 items by category](#), linked here or on the [www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/bond2020](http://www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/bond2020) for a detailed summary.

**11. Economically, why is this a good time for a bond proposal?**

Options available to Michigan public school districts are limited when considering large capital improvement projects. Limited increases to K-12 public education funding from the State of Michigan and increased operational expenditures make it cost prohibitive to consider paying for major capital improvements out of District general operating funds. Therefore, a taxpayer-supported bond continue to be an effective option to finance District capital improvements.

**12. Why doesn't the District use the general fund to pay for all of this?**

Quite simply, the general fund cannot afford to pay for these large capital investments. State of Michigan for K-12 public schools has at best provided minimal annual increases over the last 12 years. A recent report by Michigan State University indicated that Michigan ranked 50<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states for enhancements in K-12 funding over the last decade. Ultimately, general fund dollars are needed to fund our instructional programs.

**13. Explain what bond money can cover and what it can't.**

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

- Staff salaries and wages;
- General operating expenses, repairs and maintenance;
- Classroom supplies and textbooks; and
- Administrative costs.

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

- Construction and remodeling of facilities;
- Purchase of technology equipment and infrastructure;
- Purchase of equipment and furniture;
- Site improvements; and
- Purchase of buses.

**14. Will money from the bond proposal be used to pay employees' salaries and benefits?**

NO. School districts are not allowed to use funds from a bond for operating expenses such as teacher, administrator or employee salaries, maintenance, or operating costs. Bond revenue must be kept separate from operating funds and must be audited by an independent auditing firm. This information is also included in the ballot proposition.

**15. What are the key dates leading up to the March 10 vote?**

- Voters can register up until the day of the election. Learn more at <https://www.usa.gov/register-to-vote>
- All voters are eligible to register absentee. Learn more about absentee voting and important dates at [https://www.michigan.gov/documents/AbsentVoterBallot\\_105377\\_7.pdf#absentee](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/AbsentVoterBallot_105377_7.pdf#absentee)
- Election Day is Tuesday, March 10, 2020.

**16. Where do I vote?**

You will vote for bond election at the same location you always vote. The location is printed on your voter registration card provided by the Secretary of State. If you're unsure of your precinct's voting location, please go to the following link to review your city or township:

<https://www.oakgov.com/clerkrod/elections/>

**17. How will the bond proposal appear on the ballot?**

Find the [bond proposal as it will appear on the ballot](#) linked here or on our website at [www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/bond2020](http://www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/bond2020).

**18. Do I have to be a registered Republican or Democrat to participate in the March 10 election?**

No. There is no political party registration requirement in Michigan Election Law. Any Michigan registered voter can participate in the primary. Learn more by viewing this [Michigan.gov FAQ sheet](#).

**19. If I have questions not covered in this material, where can I get additional information?**

You are welcome to call or email:

BPS Communications and Family Engagement Director

Anne Cron

Email: [acron@birmingham.k12.mi.us](mailto:acron@birmingham.k12.mi.us)

Phone number: 248.203.3026

Visit the district website at: [www.birmingham.k12.mi.us](http://www.birmingham.k12.mi.us)