

SAULT SCHOOLS BOND ISSUE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the proposal?

It is a bond issue which is estimated to cost 0.7 mill on the taxable value of property. The average taxable value of a home in the district is \$50,000 which means the conservative estimated increase for the average homeowner is \$35 per year.

How can I calculate the cost of the bond issue?

District residents can go to www.mytaxcalc.com/ssm for more information on how the millage would affect their particular household. In some cases, taxpayers may receive part of the property tax increase back in the form of an increased tax credit. A link to this tool is available on the district's website: www.saultschools.org.

Why does the district need a \$9 million bond?

In a post Sandy Hook world, schools across the nation are forced to consider the safety precautions in place for students. Due to budgetary shortfalls, the district does not have the general funds available to fund these improvements.

Why a bond now?

The fact is that school safety is a daily concern for all districts. The timing of the bond issue reflects the urgency of the need to make improvements in all of the buildings to create safer environments for our more than 2,400 students and nearly 300 staff. The Board of Education, with staff and community input, has determined that the use of technology for instructional purposes further advances academic achievement and is necessary so that students have as much experience in utilizing technology as they can to be competitive in today's global market. Additionally, Michigan will move to on-line state assessments beginning in the spring of 2015. Our district's technology needs updating to be ready for these new assessments.

What will the district do if the bond does not pass?

The committee and Board will discuss future plans if the bond does not pass. Clearly there are security and technology issues that need to be addressed, but there are still no additional general funds to pay for these necessary improvements. If we do nothing, our students and staff will not benefit from the additional security measures we could install if the bond passes.

How did the district decide to pursue a bond issue?

After a thorough review of the district's facilities it was determined by the Board of Education, with staff and community input, that our buildings need security improvements. During committee meetings with parents and district employees, the initial list was pared down to a list of items needed at each building.

When will the money be spent if the bond passes? When will all the work be finished?

All building security and technology improvements are expected to be underway this summer and all work completed by May, 2016, if the bond issue is approved by voters.

Can the district use money from the bond to pay for salaries or other operating expenses?

NO. It is important to note that, 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.

Part of the bond is for technology improvements. How will this benefit the students? How will you ensure teachers use the technology?

Students will benefit by using the technology as an extra “tool” to support their academic growth. The district will have an established training schedule, as is done with other hardware/software program rollouts. Our instructional programs will increasingly require the use of technology by all teachers and students.

Will any of the remodeling disrupt the students during the school year?

While every effort will be made to avoid interruptions of the instructional day, there is a chance that there may be occasional, minor disruptions. Of course, we will work diligently to minimize any disruptions.

What is the specific bond language?

“Shall Sault Ste. Marie Area Public Schools, Chippewa County, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed Nine Million Dollars (\$9,000,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefor, for the purpose of:

erecting, furnishing and equipping additions to and partially remodeling, furnishing, equipping and re-equipping Sault Ste. Marie Area Public Schools’ facilities in part, for security purposes; acquiring, installing and equipping technology for school facilities; and developing and improving sites?”