

DIALOG



FEBRUARY 2021

VOL 60, ISSUE 1

LPS LOOKS TO "ZERO TAX RATE INCREASE" BOND ISSUE TO CONTINUE PROGRESS AS A "DESTINATION DISTRICT"

The Livonia Public Schools Board of Education voted unanimously to move forward with a **"zero tax rate increase"** bond proposal during a May 4, 2021 election.

The highlight, according to board members, is that the district would garner \$186 million for needed improvements without raising the tax rate.

"I am thrilled to have this opportunity in front of us, to propose to our community a 'no new tax rate increase' bond that will still bring in the number of dollars we need to not only continue the good work of our last bond, but also look at exciting things such as the possible expansion of our career technical center and an early childhood center," said Board President Colleen Burton. "To achieve these improvements with a zero tax rate increase is a win-win for our students, staff, parents, and the community."

Timing is Right

District Finance Director Alison Smith explains that now is the time to seek additional funding through a bond, while interest rates are historically low. She also notes that the debt retirement is at the point where the millage rate can continue at the current level and provide \$186 million with no increase to taxpayers. This would not be the case if the bonds are secured at a later time.

The 20-year proposal is the latest effort to carry out the work



that is identified in the district's 10-Year Facility Plan, a living document that guides long-term projects at the district's 28 occupied properties. Within that plan, detailed needs for each site have been categorized in areas such as paving, roofs, plumbing, electrical, windows,

ventilation systems, doors, lockers, and more. Continued reinvestment in our facilities is essential.

It is the district's strong fiscal stewardship that has built financial stability in Livonia Public Schools, through a steady growth of the fund balance; refinancing of prior bonds; consistently high ratings on external audits; and a strong credit rating for the district.

Important Voting Information

ELECTION DAY

May 4, 2021

ABSENTEE VOTING

March 20 - Absentee ballots become available to voters
April 19 - Last day to register to vote by mail
To request an absentee ballot, visit michigan.gov/vote

IN-PERSON VOTING

Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
To find your voting location, visit michigan.gov/vote

Next Step Forward

While the 2013 bond went a long way in modernizing the district's buildings, which are on average 60 years old, several improvements and critical needs were not able to be included in the scope and budget of the bond.

The projects completed by the prior bond are a great source of pride in our district and community. However, many items of remaining need include air conditioning in classrooms, offices and labs; the redevelopment and re-imagining of the district's library media centers; kitchens and food serving lines; and facility improvements such as improving ventilation; and further enhancing security, technology, and the district's athletic areas.

Protecting & Enhancing Investment

The next phase of the proposal addresses protecting and enhancing the district's investments.

The district has nearly 3 million square feet of space on 700 acres, across 28 buildings.

Areas that would be included in this portion of the bond are: the ongoing updating and replacement of instructional technology; furniture and instructional equipment for classrooms; further security enhancements; school bus replacements; additional replacements of playground equipment; improvements to the athletic areas such as the high school field houses, pools, annex buildings, and middle school gymnasiums.

Continued on page 3.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

HOW TO REGISTER

Livonia Public Schools is eagerly anticipating the 2021-2022 school year. We can't wait to welcome our new class of kindergartners!

Kindergarten registration is now open. (Please see below for Young Fives registration dates and information.) Here's how to register:

Visit www.livoniapublicschools.org/registration and complete the online registration packet associated with your child's assigned school. Gather the required documentation (listed on the packet and on the district website). The school secretary will contact you to schedule an appointment to complete the registration process.

Kindergartners must be five years old on or before September 1, 2021, and we encourage families to adhere to state guidelines. However, you may apply for early entry if your child will be five on or after September 1 but no later than December 1. Early entry request forms are available at your child's school.

If you are uncertain which school your child will attend, please contact the Communications Office at 734-744-2522, or email Katie Patterson at kpatters@livoniapublicschools.org. Please include your home address when emailing or leaving a message.

PARENT MEETING APRIL 14

Livonia Public Schools is hosting an informational meeting for parents of incoming kindergartners. This meeting will be held on April 14, 2021, from 6-7 p.m. Please note that this meeting is for parents only. Parents should attend the meeting at their child's assigned school. This meeting will be filled with useful information for parents, including:

- Program overview
- Information on busing and food services
- Question-and-answer session
- Building tours

Registration will be available on-site for parents who have their required documentation with them.

Information on kindergarten orientation ('kindergarten round-up') will be communicated when details are finalized. Please watch for updates in the spring.



YOUNG FIVES PROGRAM

If your child has a summer birthday but is not quite ready for kindergarten, consider the Young Fives program!

- Designed for students turning five between July 1 and September 1, 2021, but who require more time before entering kindergarten.
- State-funded, tuition-free program.
- Housed at Jackson Early Childhood Center.
- Students attend five days a week, in either the AM or PM session. Enrollment for Young Fives childcare will be accepted on the day of Young Fives registration.



A virtual FAQ meeting will be held for parents on March 11 at 6:00 p.m. The link for the meeting is available at www.livoniapublicschools.org/youngfives. Registration for Young Fives begins online on March 15. (See "How to Register" above.)

Please note: Only parents or legal guardians (with proper paperwork) are able to register Young Fives students.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Specialized Early Childhood Programs 734-744-2813

- Early On developmental screenings for infants and toddlers from birth to 36 months
- Preschool programs for children ages 2.5 to 5 years with special needs
- Early childhood programs for students with speech concerns
- Kids First Great Start Readiness Program
- Parent Education Programs



Jackson Early Childhood Center 32025 Lyndon, Livonia 734-744-2813

- Preschool enrichment for children ages 3 and 4 years
- Childcare with a preschool component: five days per week, year-round
- School-Age Childcare (SACC)



BOND ISSUE - CONTINUED

Future Forward

Lastly, the bond would bring innovative opportunities to further expand the district's offerings for students and families. These forward-thinking projects include expanding the district's Project Lead the Way program offerings, the gold standard for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education. Also envisioned is a new "home" for the LPS robotics programs; a state-of-the-art comprehensive early childhood center and the expansion of the award-winning Livonia Career Technical Center while growing career tech courses that are in high demand and supporting enhanced workforce development.

"We are able to take a look at our existing offerings and be certain that we can continue to keep an eye moving forward with growth, innovation, and excellence in mind," said Superintendent Andrea Oquist. "This is important for

the retention and the recruitment of students and families - to have LPS remain a destination district for families and our community."

With the approval of the Board of Education, the district will now embark on a robust informational campaign within the LPS community.

"We are excited to share our vision for the future with the community," said Communications Administrator Stacy Jenkins. "We know that every improvement in our school district benefits our entire community and propels our sense of pride. A nearly \$200 million investment such as this would bolster property values and further attract families to our community for years to come."

For more information, please visit www.livoniapublicschools.org/2021bond.



Staff furniture



Kitchens and serving lines

Fast Facts:

- Zero tax rate increase
- Address critical infrastructure needs
- Further enhance security
- Upgrade, enhance technology
- Add air conditioning in schools
- Future-forward opportunities



High school athletic facilities

CELEBRATING OUR OWN

If the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it is that we are stronger than we think and that together, we can do anything.

In Livonia Public Schools, it is a more than 40-year tradition to recognize staff who go above and beyond for our students, staff, and community. This year, we would like to give a shout-out to each and every member of our LPS staff family who continue to give their all during these challenging times.

In keeping with tradition, we sought nominations in the spring for our 2020-2021 Educator and Support Staff of the Year. As is typical, we received dozens and dozens of wonderful nominations from our students, parents, and staff!

The following exceptional staff members were selected by a committee in January and will be celebrated throughout the remainder of the school year. Please enjoy the following snippets describing each of these very special people.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR: LORRAINE GIORGINO



Mrs. Giorgino is a physical education teacher at Webster Elementary and Cooper Upper Elementary. She is in her 27th year in LPS and was nominated by a colleague at Webster.

She is described as a veteran teacher who exudes tremendous energy, enthusiasm, and creativity. She goes to great lengths to build relationships with students and works to connect students in the ACAT program with students in the ACT 18 program through a special offering called Unified Physical Education. Mrs. Giorgino is described as a team player with a quick smile, a pep in her step, and arms that are always open to support her students and colleagues. She cares for the physical, social, and emotional needs of her students each day. Webster Principal Lora Boka describes her as "Webster's ray of sunshine."

SECONDARY EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR MIRIAM "MIMI" KASS HIGGINS



Mrs. Higgins is a special education teacher at Holmes Middle School, who has been with Livonia Public Schools for 22 years. She was nominated by a Holmes Middle School parent.

She is described as a teacher who knows no bounds when it comes to caring for her students. She works closely with students and their families to determine the absolute

best course for each individual student. Getting to truly know her students is something that comes very naturally for Mrs. Higgins. She keeps in contact with former students, who often will come to visit, text her, or give her a call to let her know that she changed the trajectory of their lives by taking such a genuine interest and giving all of her energy to them when she was their teacher. Her colleagues recognize that "everyone matters to Mimi."

SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR PAT SCHUCHARDT

Mrs. Schuchardt is the supervisor of the Food and Nutrition Services Department and has been with Livonia Public Schools for nine years. She received two nominations from colleagues.

She is one of the "unsung" heroes in our school district who works tirelessly behind the scenes and manages dozens of food service staff throughout the district. She has high standards and believes that students are the department's "customers." During the spring school closure, due to COVID-19, Mrs. Schuchardt was truly remarkable in organizing and carrying out a first-ever curbside meal program for all students and families in our

community. The result of her hard work meant LPS was able to distribute 264,364 meals to families during that three-month period, a time when families were struggling with the virus, job loss and general uncertainty. She is described by her supervisor as genuine and having that "can-do" spirit to get the job done.



LPS LEADERS "WORK TO KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE" ON MLK JR. DAY



Livonia Public Schools' leaders gathered on MLK Jr. Day to "keep the dream alive" through a special workshop aimed to further establish the district's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion work.

Our school and district administrators were led

through the workshop by Mr. Daniel Willenborg, Director of Secondary Programs; Ms. Shanan Wheeler, Principal at Frost Middle School and Mr. Kevin English, Assistant Principal at Frost Middle School.

Goals included raising consciousness, strengthening awareness and establishing a more formal structure and intentional avenues to the district's work in issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. Honing working definitions related to the topic, drafting the district's "why" statement in this work and creating an initial draft of the "belief statements" were some of the items addressed by the group.

Next steps for the DEI efforts include a continued growth and

awareness in issues of diversity, equity and inclusion; addressing implicit bias; establishing working subcommittees; reviewing district policies; tracking data points; planning ongoing training for staff; and strengthening community ties with organizations such as the Livonia Human Relations Commission, for example.

The professional development workshop complements the Engagement in Equity team effort as well as the district's SEED (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity) training for staff, a multi-year effort led by Wayne RESA, in addition to the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge, which many staff members have completed.

"It is our intent to continue to grow in this important work," said Superintendent Andrea Oquist. "We know that our DEI efforts align and enhance our district's Community with Character initiative which centers around respectful interactions and valuing each and every member of our school community."



PUBLIC NOTICE

It is the policy of the Board of Education that Livonia Public Schools School District will not discriminate against any person on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, religion, height, weight, marital status, handicap, disability, sexual orientation, sexual identity, or transgender status.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a federal law that affords parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. This includes the right to: inspect and review records; request an amendment to records; consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information in student's records (except in instances where disclosure without consent is allowed); and file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students." See the full policy at www.livoniapublicschools.org/publicnotices.

McKinney Vento Act

Livonia Public Schools follows federal mandates for the McKinney Vento Act by enrolling any homeless children who lack a regular and adequate night-time residence. Homeless children are placed according to their best interests, and have the same rights as resident students. If you are aware of children in this circumstance, please refer them to our homeless liaison, Cindy Pierson at 734-744-2535.

Child Find (Student evaluations)

If your child is between birth and age five and you suspect that they may have a special need or developmental delay, please call 1-800-EARLYON (for birth to age three) or 734-744-2765. If your child is enrolled in LPS in grades K-12 and you suspect a special need or disability, please contact the administrator at your child's school or the Student Services Department at 734-744-2524.

Lost or Stolen Property

Livonia Public Schools and its staff members are not liable for damage to or loss of personal property of students. It is suggested that items brought to school by your child and deemed by you to have substantial value be insured separately on your homeowner's policy.

AHERA Update

LPS, as required by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) conducts ongoing surveillance and re-inspection programs for asbestos. LPS has an ongoing operations and maintenance program to address the asbestos in the buildings owned and operated by the district. Contact Harry Lau at hlau@livoniapublicschools.org, or 734-744-2511 if you wish to view the report.

Integrated Pest Management

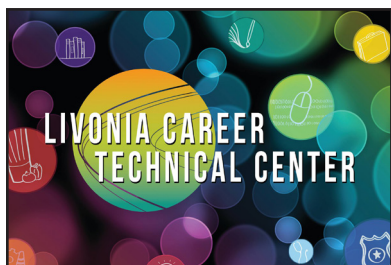
Occasionally, Livonia Public Schools may apply pesticides to our schools, school grounds, and athletic areas. As parents and guardians, you have the right to be notified prior to such applications. If you wish to be notified via first class mail or e-mail, please contact Harry Lau at hlau@livoniapublicschools.org or 734-744-2511.

A posting of pesticides used inside or outside of any LPS building will be placed in advance at the entrance of the building, and on the Livonia Public Schools website. In an emergency situation, LPS may make an application without prior notification to parents or guardians; however, parents/guardians will be notified of the application after it occurs.

Further information regarding pesticides can be obtained by contacting The National Pesticide Information Center at 800-858-7378.



CAREER TECHNICAL CENTER OFFERS VOCATIONAL CLASSES



Livonia Public Schools offers vocational education programs at the Livonia Career Technical Center and at Churchill, Franklin, and Stevenson high schools. These programs are designed to prepare

youth for a broad range of employment and educational training services.

All vocational education programs follow the district's policies of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, height, weight, marital status, handicap, or disability in all activities and employment. In addition, arrangements can be made to ensure that the lack of English language skills is not a barrier to admission or participation.

For general information about these programs, contact: Gary Harper, Principal, LCTC
8985 Newburgh Livonia, 48150; 734-744-2816.

GLOBAL EDUCATION PROGRAM DEADLINE

For incoming 9th Grade LPS Students and 9th Grade Non-Public Students Living Within LPS Boundaries

The School of Global Education is open on a limited basis for students whose home high school is Churchill or Franklin. More information is available online at livoniapublicschools.org/highschoolprograms.

A random drawing will be held to determine who enters the program if the interest is greater than the number of seats available. The deadline for submitting an interest form is March 5, 2021.

Interest forms should be submitted to: Mr. Pete Mazzoni, Stevenson High School 33500 West Six Mile Road, Livonia, MI 48152. A copy of the student's most recent standardized tests scores should be included with the interest form.

Contact Stevenson at 734-744-2660 ext. 48902 with questions, or for more information.

#LIVONIAPRIDE

SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION

School closure information is communicated through:

- **Our website:** www.livoniapublicschools.org
- **Social Media:** Facebook.com/LivoniaPublicSchools and Twitter @LivoniaDistrict
- **Phone/Email:** **Be sure you have an updated email address and phone number on file so you will receive district notices.** Check with your child's school secretary to ensure your information is accurate.



DO YOU HAVE A SOCIAL MEDIA POST YOU WOULD LIKE US TO SEE? USE #LIVONIAPRIDE OR TAG US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER @LIVONIADISTRICT.

DIALOG

LIVONIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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www.livoniapublicschools.org

Dialog is an official publication of Livonia Public Schools. It is published regularly and mailed to residents of the Livonia Public Schools district as a public service. We encourage your response. All correspondence should be addressed to: 15125 Farmington Rd., Livonia, MI 48154.

To contact the LPS Communications Office, please call (734) 744-2522, or email communications@livoniapublicschools.org.



LPS EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The mission of the LPS Education Foundation is to enlarge the resources available to the school district, which will foster and expand educational opportunities for programs impacting students by building effective collaborations.



DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR FIRST COMPETITIVE EDGE GRADUATES

The Competitive Edge program was established by the LPS Education Foundation in 2007 with the dual goals of encouraging students to: 1) get a “competitive edge” in saving for a post-secondary education, and 2) attract families to join the district. For those families who sign up, the Foundation pledges at least \$100 per kindergarten student who graduates from an LPS high school 12 years later.

That first class of 160 students graduated in 2020 and 72 of those students that informed the Foundation of their plans to continue their education received a check totaling \$220 due to accrued interest and supplemental investments.

Then the pandemic hit and the future plans for some students were thrown into turmoil. As a result, the Foundation has extended the deadline for students to receive their payment until December 31, 2021.

For those families who chose to participate in the program and have not notified the Foundation to date, a document from a college or university verifying their child's acceptance must be submitted. It can be mailed to: LPS Education Foundation c/o of Dianne Laura, 15125 Farmington Rd., Livonia, Michigan 48154 OR emailed as an attachment to lpsfoundation@livoniaschools.org.

Board members stated that “every child needs a foundation” and believe many LPS families over the years have used this unique program to save for their students’ future education.



FOUNDATION CORPORATE DONORS

- Alpha USA
- Applied Process Inc.
- Bill Brown Ford, Inc.
- Cheryl Bowker Agency – Allstate Insurance
- Community Financial Credit Union
- Feldman Chevrolet of Livonia
- Livonia AM Rotary
- Livonia Jaycees
- Livonia Kiwanis Early Risers
- LPS Employees
- LPS PTAs/PTSAs
- LPL Financial
- MacFarland and Company Home Sales
- Marathon
- Masco Corporation
- Michigan Educational Credit Union
- Parkside Credit Union
- Rock Out Entertainment
- Roush Industries
- St. Mary Mercy Livonia
- TCF Bank Plymouth Road, Livonia
- ZF TRW Automotive

**BUY OR LEASE A VEHICLE, AND
\$200 WILL BE DONATED TO THE
LPS EDUCATION FOUNDATION.**

**Bill Brown Ford 734-421-7000
Feldman Chevrolet of Livonia 734-425-6500**

Bring this coupon to Bill Brown Ford or Feldman Chevrolet of Livonia when purchasing or leasing a new or used vehicle. Does not include prior sales.

Coupon must be presented at time of purchase.
For more information, call the LPS Education Foundation at 734-744-2510.



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