



Gull Lake Community Schools 2014 Facilities Improvement Millage Proposal *Frequently Asked Questions*



What is the Gull Lake Community Schools ballot proposal on February 25, 2014?

This ballot proposal creates the ability to maintain and improve the school system’s facilities over the next nine years.

How much is being requested, and what will it cost a homeowner?

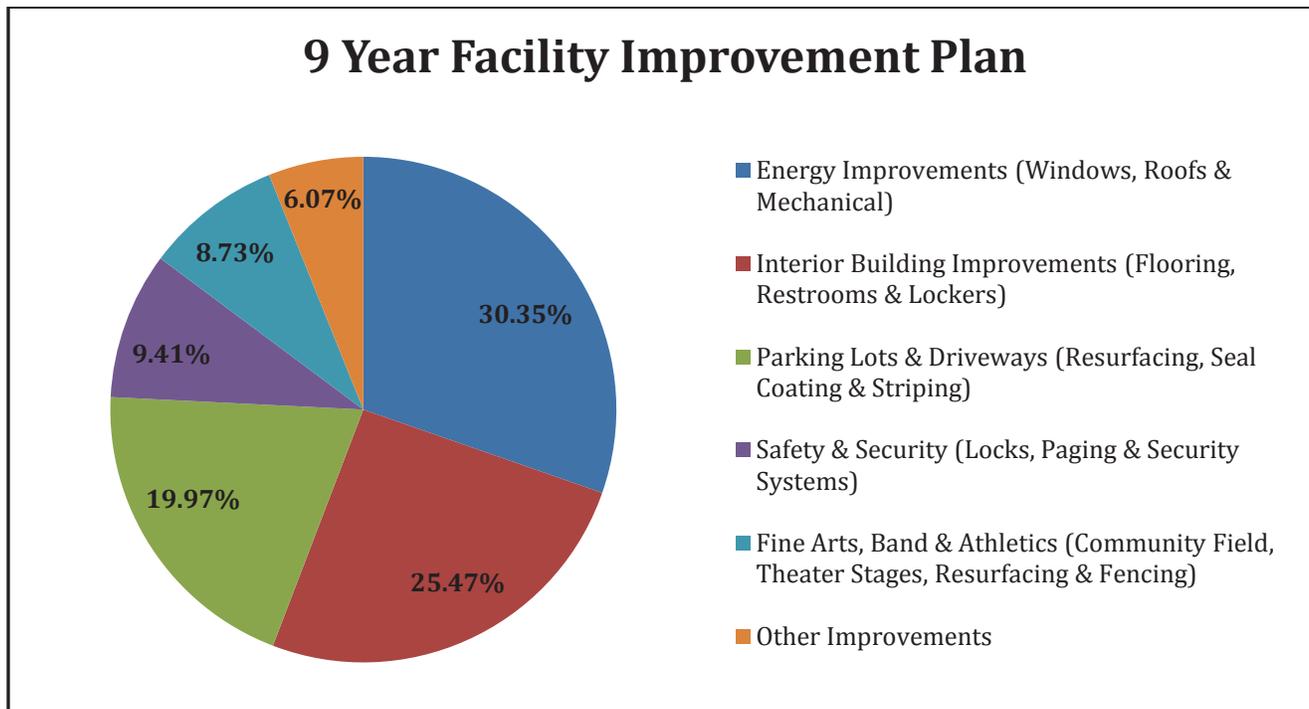
The nine-year request is for .65 mill. For the life of the millage, it will cost \$65 per year for the owner of a \$200,000 home (\$100,000 taxable value).

Why is the district putting this request on the ballot?

Based on input from staff, parents and other community members, the Board of Education voted unanimously to seek voter support to secure funding for facility improvements over the next decade, believing this is the best strategy to preserve and protect the district’s \$60 million in assets.

How will the funds be used?

Funds will be used for energy improvements; parking lot and driveway improvements; safety and security enhancements; interior building improvements; and fine arts, band and athletics facility improvements - basically expenditures which protect the value of the community’s investment in school facilities to maintain the high quality of our learning environment. An allocation of anticipated expense categories is as follows:



What CAN’T be funded with this millage?

Under current state law, sinking funds cannot be used for ongoing school operations, employee salaries, employee benefits, purchase of real estate, equipment, buses, or technology. The money cannot be used for school employees to provide ongoing maintenance, but rather specific projects identified to improve the facilities and infrastructure of the district.

What is a “sinking fund”?

This is the state law description of the proposed millage that will be used to improve facilities when needed. This is best described as a “pay-as-you-go” system. By contrast, bonds are used to borrow money and finance projects such as technology upgrades, equipment, buses, and new facility construction.

What is the current millage for Gull Lake Community Schools?

The current debt millage levy is 4.2000 mills.

How does Gull Lake’s millage compare with other school districts?

District	Bond + Sinking Fund Millage
Otsego Public Schools	7.00
Parchment School District	7.00
Plainwell Community Schools	7.00
Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools	6.50
Kalamazoo Public Schools	6.25
Vicksburg Community Schools	5.35
Portage Public Schools	5.80
Delton-Kellogg Schools	5.15
Lakeview School District	4.80
Comstock Public Schools	4.68
Mattawan Consolidated Schools	4.60
Hastings School District	4.25
Gull Lake Community Schools	4.20

What is the difference between this millage request and the one approved by voters two years ago?

The 2012 bond issue was used primarily for new technology and safety and security improvements and the debt millage for the 2012 bonds was .29 mill. The 2012 bonds were issued at the time that the debt millage for the 1991 and 2004 bonds was either ending or going down. Therefore, there was no net millage increase for the 2012 bonds.

How much money will the millage raise?

The millage raises approximately \$500,000 a year.

If the millage is for pay-as-you-go improvements, how is it decided which projects are eligible or have priority?

State law is very strict about the types of projects that can be completed with this millage. The Board of Education utilizes a planning process that includes staff and administrative input, along with citizen input and review. The district has a 30-year, long-range, facility life-cycle plan and a 10-year facilities maintenance and improvement plan. The Board recently conducted focused groups and will continue to provide forums to help determine the most pressing needs for the most important priorities. The process of review is ongoing.

Are there safeguards on how the money is spent?

Yes, the school district is required by law to have an independent audit of the expenditure of monies generated by sinking funds and the audit is submitted to the Michigan Department of the Treasury. The Board of Education also publishes its facilities improvement plan.

When is the election?

Tuesday, February 25, 2014. The polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m.