



Benzie County Central Schools

FAQ's – May 7th Bond Proposal

Why is Benzie Central Schools seeking a bond proposal?

- We have a number of infrastructure concerns, which have been growing over time. Crystal Lake Elementary was built in the 1950's originally. Betsie Valley and the MS/HS were both built in the early 1960's. Even Lake Ann, our "newest" elementary" is over 20 years old and is in need of significant investment in infrastructure to ensure viability over the long term. Our last major investment in our school infrastructure took place over 20 years ago with the building of the auditorium, the Middle School, and construction of Lake Ann Elementary.

What projects are included in the bond proposal?

- The centerpiece project is the construction of a new elementary school on the campus of the current MS/HS building to replace Crystal Lake Elementary. In addition, we seek to do a major remodel and renovation of our High School gymnasium that will include construction of new locker rooms and a community fitness center with indoor walking track. Alongside these major projects, we also plan to construct a new bus garage and have ongoing purchases of new busses over the next decade to upgrade and create a sustainable fleet. Finally, we seek to invest into our other buildings and grounds to replace roofs, upgrade HVAC, mechanical, and electrical systems, repave parking lots, and other upgrades to make our buildings viable, comfortable, and sustainable for the next generations of Benzie Central students.

How much will this proposal raise and what will it cost the taxpayers in Benzie Central Schools?

- We are asking for a modest increase of only 0.5 mill from our current tax rates from taxpayers. For a homeowner with a house worth \$100,000, this proposal would add approximately 24 dollars **per year** to their tax bill, or an effective increase of just over \$2 per month. This modest increase will generate 47,850,000 dollars.

What is our current millage rate and how does it compare to other school districts?

- Benzie Central currently levies 1.6 mills for capital projects and another 0.9 mill for a sinking fund for infrastructure improvements for 2.5 total mills. When compared to the 20 nearest surrounding districts, Benzie Central ranks 12th. Should the voters approve the 0.5 mill increase, our revised ranking would be 10th. Statewide, the average millage rate for school districts is approximately 5.4 mills, making our 3.0 mill proposal **over 40% lower than the statewide average**.



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What about the sinking fund that passed in 2017?

- The district is asking taxpayers to essentially roll the sinking fund millage into this new bond proposal. When calling for the election, the Board of Education committed by resolution in the same meeting not to levy the sinking fund millage in the future if the bond passes. All projects planned to be addressed by the sinking fund will be addressed through the bond proposal.

How did the district arrive at this proposal?

- This final proposal was the result of a great deal of community work and input over the last 2+ years. An ongoing community committee originally formed to examine infrastructure concerns in 2016 has been working on this proposal alongside our Board of Education and school staff to determine the best means of addressing our needs. This proposal is the culmination of that work and represents our best efforts to address significant needs in the district while simultaneously being careful stewards of taxpayer dollars and minimizing burden on the community.

What can bond proposal dollars be used for?

- Bond dollars can by law only be used by schools for capital improvements and cannot be used for any salaries or regular materials or maintenance.