

AN INVESTMENT IN THE FAIRFIELD SCHOOLS

BOND REFERENDUM: NOVEMBER 5, 2024



FCSD Mission

One Fairfield: Where relationships foster growth, protect learners, unlock individual potential, and serve every student every day!

The Fairfield Community School District is an integral part of the community. Our schools are safe, welcoming places where all students can thrive. However, our middle school building is in disrepair and requires urgent attention.

On **Tuesday, November 5**, our community will be asked to approve a \$38.51 million general obligation bond to fund the construction of a new middle school.

OUR NEEDS



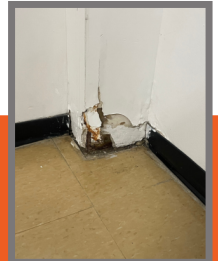
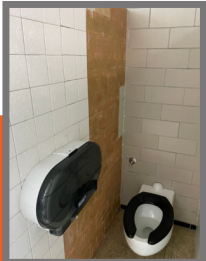
Our current middle school building has exceeded its intended lifespan.



The school's facility and infrastructure failures are too costly to maintain and repair. Replacing the building would allow FCSD to realize significant cost savings over time.



Due to significant design flaws, the middle school facility is no longer conducive to 21st century learning for today's students.



FAIRFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

A facility assessment has identified the following as some of the most pressing needs at the middle school:

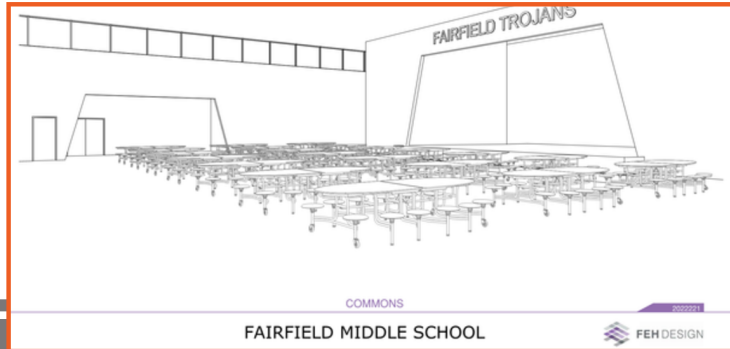
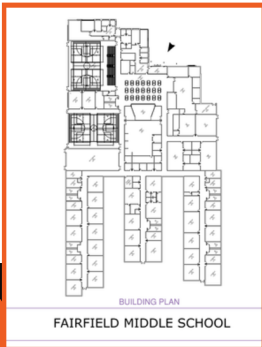
- The building was constructed too low on the site, leading to perpetual water infiltration due to poor drainage. **This problem cannot be effectively remedied.**
- The building envelope lacks secondary drainage and flashing behind the exterior cladding, causing water to leak into the walls.
- The windows in the original middle school are single pane glass and have significant water and air leaks.
- The original building does not comply with The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and would be very costly to modify.
- The building lacks a secure entrance for student safety, and adding one would require major reconfiguration.
- Classrooms are about 150 square feet smaller than current standards, and the building wings are too narrow to enlarge them without making the rooms long and narrow.

WHAT IS THE BEST USE OF OUR TAX DOLLARS?

- We are currently facing ongoing annual maintenance costs of \$1 million per year.
- Total cost to renovate the existing middle school would be \$40.4 million.

THE FUTURE OF FAIRFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

If a referendum is approved on November 5, the Fairfield Community School District will use the funds to construct a new middle school for students in grades 4-8.



We believe building a new middle school is the best course of action. A new middle school building will:



Provide more resources and programming options for students.



Expand our preschool program at Washington Elementary.



Make the district more appealing to new families and potential residents.



Allow Fairfield CSD to strengthen its facilities for future generations of students in grades 4-8.



Help retain current staff and attract new hires.



Enhance the community as a whole and help create a vibrant economic boost.



Allow the district to accommodate growing enrollment and operate at a positive rate for open enrollment.

KEY ELECTION DATES

- **Aug. 28:** First day to request mailed absentee ballots
- **Oct. 16:** In-person absentee voting begins at county auditors' offices
- **Oct. 17:** County auditors begin mailing absentee ballots
- **Oct. 21:** Final day to request mailed absentee ballots
- **Oct. 25:** Satellite voting option at the High School from 2-8 p.m.
- **Nov. 4:** Final day of in-person absentee voting
- **Nov. 5:** Election Day, polls open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

AUGUST 2024						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

OCTOBER 2024						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER 2024						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30



FAIRFIELD
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINIMIZING TAX IMPACT

Fairfield CSD has a history of maintaining a steady overall tax rate. We strive to balance the needs of our taxpayers and the needs of our students.



Fairfield plans to minimize the financial impact on our local taxpayers by **combining** referendum funding with existing SAVE funds.



The total project budget for the new middle school is \$59 million, with **\$21 million funded by SAVE**, a statewide sales tax that doesn't increase property taxes, reducing the financial burden on our community.



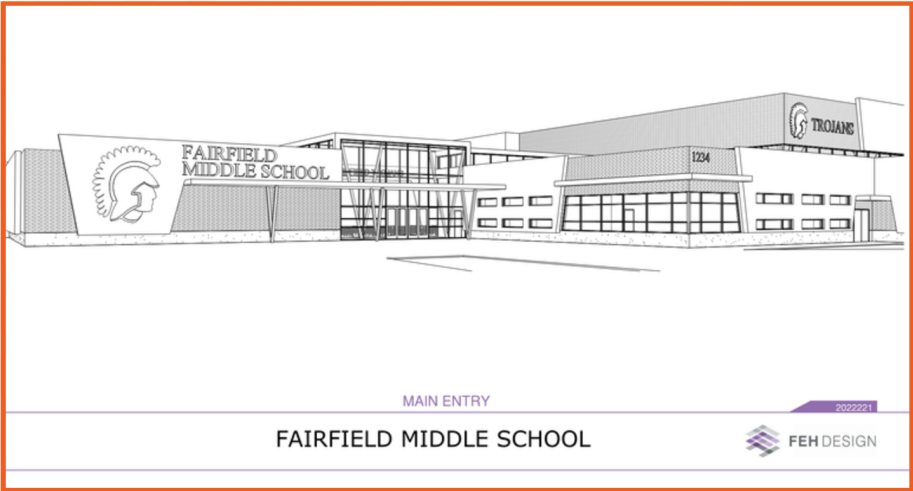
We are aiming to keep the project cost under \$56 million, using SAVE funds as a financial buffer to manage any unforeseen expenses.



By utilizing both general obligation (GO) bonds and SAVE funds, we can complete the project without affecting our operational budget, allowing us to continue to provide a safe, high-quality learning environment for our students while the project is being completed.

Tax levy rates for the Southeast Conference show that Fairfield CSD is the **second-lowest** in FY2025.

- Washington: \$16.12
- Keokuk: \$14.90
- Burlington: \$12.25
- Mount Pleasant: \$12.23
- Fairfield: \$12.11**
- Fort Madison: \$11.78



BENEFITS OF A NEW BUILDING



Long-term **financial savings** due to lower maintenance energy costs



Enhanced educational environment, leading to **improved student outcomes**



Attract and retain new families and teachers to our community



State-of-the-art **safety and security** features to protect our children

IN A COMPARISON OF THE 10 SCHOOLS STATEWIDE WITH CERTIFIED ENROLLMENT TOTALS COMPARABLE TO FAIRFIELD CSD, WE HAVE THE SECOND-LOWEST TAX RATE

District	Enrollment	Tax Levy Rate
Sioux Center	1,493	\$17.43
Gilbert	1,607	\$17.00
Washington	1,648	\$16.12
Winterset	1,667	\$15.90
Vinton-Shellsburg	1,612	\$15.12
Grinnell-Newburg	1,495	\$13.77
MOC-Floyd Valley	1,506	\$12.31
Fairfield	1,525	\$12.11
Carroll	1,613	\$9.84

HOW WILL THIS IMPACT MY PROPERTY TAXES?

To see how the **\$2.70 per \$1,000** tax impact from the referendum and the 2023 property tax rollback will affect your property, find your home's approximate value in the chart below. This will help you determine your estimated tax increase **if the November 5 referendum is approved.**



An approved bond issue on November 5 would have a tax impact of **\$2.70 per \$1,000** of taxable property value, per year.



Fairfield CSD's expected tax levy rate for FY2025 is \$12.11 per \$1,000 of taxable property value, which is down **6.8% since 2003.**



The tax impact of this referendum would increase residential property tax by **\$2.70 per \$1,000 of taxable value.** For a **\$150,000** property, this would mean an annual increase of **\$174.59.**

THE TAX IMPACT OF AN APPROVED NOVEMBER 5 BOND VOTE:

Home Value	Yearly Increase	Monthly Increase
\$75,000	\$80.75	\$6.73
\$100,000	\$112.03	\$9.34
\$150,000	\$174.59	\$14.55
\$250,000	\$299.72	\$24.98
\$350,000	\$424.84	\$35.40
\$500,000	\$612.53	\$51.04
\$750,000	\$925.35	\$77.11
Agricultural Land	Yearly Increase	Monthly Increase
320 Acres	\$912.39	\$76.03
Commercial Property	Yearly Increase	Monthly Increase
\$550,000	\$1,336.50	\$111.38

WHAT IS THE COST OF INACTION?



The school's facility and infrastructure failures are **too costly to maintain and repair.**



Ongoing maintenance costs of **\$22.8 million** over the 20-year life expectancy of the bond, accounting for inflation.



Replacing the building would allow FCSD to realize **significant cost savings** over time.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do we have the official ballot language ready to share with the public?

Yes, the ballot language is as follows: *"Shall the Board of Directors of the Fairfield Community School District in the Counties of Jefferson, Henry, Van Buren, Wapello, and Washington, State of Iowa, be authorized to contract indebtedness and issue General Obligation Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$38,515,000 to provide funds to build, furnish, and equip a new middle school building, including site improvements?"*

Does this bond referendum need 50% +1 to pass, or does it need 60 percent approval?

The bond referendum requires a supermajority to pass, meaning it must receive at least 60% +1 of the vote.

How much will the project cost?

\$56 Million

How are we paying for the rest of the project?

The rest of the project will be paid through Secure an Advanced Vision for Education (SAVE) funds, this is a revenue stream that has to be utilized solely for school infrastructure needs or school district property tax relief. We have the ability to borrow up to \$21 million of future revenue to build a new structure and relieve the taxpayer impact.

Does the referendum include a budget for furnishings?

Yes!

How much is the bond for?

\$38.51 Million. This is an estimated total design, construction and bonding costs for a new 4th-8th grade attendance center. FEH Design, Piper Sandler and Carl A. Nelson & Company determined the projected costs.

How would this project affect students, and where will they be housed during construction?

Students will remain in the current middle school during construction to avoid displacement. The project includes additional drop-off loops and updated design plans to enhance academic programming and improve school safety.

What do you anticipate the effect on the district's tax levy will be to accommodate this bond?

The anticipated increase in the district's tax levy of \$2.70 per \$1,000 of taxable valuation. This would mean that a family owning a \$150,000 house would pay an extra \$175 in property taxes per year. A farmer who owned 320 acres of farmland would see their taxes increase \$912 per year, and a commercial property valued at \$550,000 would see a tax increase of \$1,337 per year. Fairfield's current tax levy is second-lowest among the 10 schools in the state with comparable enrollment, and the second-lowest among the six schools in the Southeast Conference.

Over how many years will the \$38.51 million be paid off?

The repayment period will be determined by the Board of Directors during bond sales. Typically, General Obligation Bonds have a term of around 20 years, but this can vary. There are also options to structure the bonds to allow refinancing for better rates or early payoff.



FAIRFIELD
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What will happen to the current middle school?

Phase 1 would be to demolish the current building and make space for extracurricular activities.

I understand that the plan is to move fourth grade into this new middle school so that it would serve grades 4-8, Pence would serve grades 1-3, and Washington would serve pre-K and kindergarten. Is that right?

Yes, that is correct. This plan will also allow us to potentially expand our early childhood programming, which could help increase enrollment.

If the bond is approved, when would construction on the new building begin, and when would students move into it?

If the bond is approved, we will immediately enter the design phase, which could take 6-9 months, pending FEH confirmation. This process will involve significant collaboration with district stakeholders. Once designs are finalized and contractor bids are awarded, construction will begin with an estimated construction time of approximately 20 months. Ideally, we would like to start construction in the spring of 2026 with an official opening date of Fall 2028.

When the referendum passes, can project plans be changed?

No, the project connected to the funds will have to go to a new middle school. There may be design modifications based on feedback from stakeholder groups, but it will all be going towards the new building.

What happens if construction bids come back higher than anticipated?

The Fairfield Board of Education has two options if bids for the construction project come back higher than allowed by the bond referendum. One option would be to direct the architects and engineers to review and critically analyze the construction projects to make it more economically possible without sacrificing quality. The second option would be to allocate other district resources like more sales tax (The Board has already approved bonding against SAVE funds for up to \$20 million) or PPEL funds toward construction of the project to make up the difference.

What is the plan for the current ACT building if the central office moves into the new middle school?

The plan would be to sell the current building.

Will any existing sports or academic complexes have to be moved?

The current middle school football field will be occupied with construction, but we will be using space at the current high school for fall practices to take place. The tennis courts can go unimpacted based on the current concept drawings.

How were facility priorities decided?

The district has analyzed facility needs through outside partnerships who have provided us with several needs assessments, in house facility experts working on building projects, and concerns brought to the District's attention through staff.



FAIRFIELD
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can vote on the referendum?

Anyone who lives within the Fairfield schools boundaries and is 18 years of age or older can cast a ballot on November 5th. Anyone who is not registered to vote can do so the same day at the polling place by providing proof of age and residence.

What availability will the community have to use/rent the facility?

Yes!

See board policy ([905.1](#)) connected to facilities usage for specifics.

What is the proposed construction timeline?

Following the vote on November 5th, there will be 6-9 months connected to a design development phase. This will allow multiple stakeholder groups to have input on the layout and plans for the building. Construction documents would then be provided to contractors that would result in scheduling a date to open up bids.

If low bids came in where established for the project (\$375 per square foot), groundbreaking would occur as soon as possible (projected early spring of 2026). Construction is scheduled to take approximately 20 months to complete, so the goal for opening the new facility would be August of 2028.

What's the district's current debt and how much will be freed up over the next 4 years?

The precise amount owed is \$4,111,998.30. Below are the details of how this cash flow will be freed up over the coming years. For illustration, we are currently in FY25 as a district:

- The Physical Plant and Equipment Levy Note of \$230K will be paid in full at the conclusion of FY25. This allows the district to either take on more projects annually or reduce the 1.34 newly approved levy to meet current project needs, which can vary year by year.
- The Sales Tax Revenue Bond (2020 Series) will be paid in full by July 1, 2028, assuming no additional payments. This will return \$300,174.20 to the district's revenue. Depending on the timing of bond sales, the district could potentially take out more revenue bonds instead of General Obligation Bonds. We plan to utilize \$21 million from this fund to offset the need for additional taxes, which is why we're asking for an additional \$38 million for the currently priced \$50 million project. Flexibility for construction inflation.
- The Sales Tax Revenue Bond (2017 Series) will be paid in full by July 1, 2029, assuming no additional payments. This will return \$435,273 to cash flow.
- This is \$965,447.20 returned in cash flow to this district.

Will the Geothermal Well be impacted?

No, it will not be impacted. The current site layout will allow for the new building to utilize the same well.

Will there be recess for students in the new middle school?

Yes, we will have recess with state-of-the-art playground structures and equipment for 4-8 grade students.

Do all members of the board of education support this plan?

Yes, the board voted 7-0 in favor of moving forward with this plan.

What is needed for the referendum to pass?

Bond referendums need 60% +1 of the votes cast to be "yes".



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