



# FERNDALE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TOGETHER

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## Press Release - Revised

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Unanimous Board Approval to Move Forward with Bond**

*Ferndale Public Schools* – At their regular August meeting, the Ferndale Board of Education unanimously accepted the recommendation of the Board’s Operations Committee to pursue placing a \$22,825,000 bond issue on the ballot in February 2012, authorizing the Superintendent to notify the Michigan Department of Treasury that a bond application will be forthcoming.

District Operations Director Gary Sophia presented the recommendations of the Operations Committee to the Board indicating that in the weeks and months ahead the administration, in collaboration with district architects from TMP Architecture and construction management consultants from the George W. Auch Company will work diligently to prepare the Department of Treasury application in a manner that will result in approval of the plan. Once the application is approved, the Board must officially call for the election 70 days prior to the election date, which would be held February 28, 2012.

Sophia also recommended to the Board that a construction oversight committee be established upon approval of the bond issue, and through a resolution of appreciation thanked the members of the bond issue planning committee, including tri-chairs Marie Haener-Patti, James O’Donnell, and Mary Schusterbauer, for their dedication and diligence as they worked with the Operations Committee over the past nine weeks

to determine the scope and timing of the issue. Both recommendations were unanimously approved by the Board.

Specifically, the proposed bond issue is designed to complete facilities improvement work that started in 1995 with voter approval of a \$47-million bond issue and continued in 2004 with voter approval of a \$15.5-million bond issue. Ferndale Superintendent Gary Meier said, “The projects proposed in this 2012 issue will close the loop on the facilities vision established by community residents and the Board of Education nearly 20 years ago.” He added that he is “proud of the foresight of those who started this journey for our students so many years ago, and I appreciate the prudence of the current committee as they carefully examined essential improvements across the district.”

Meier added that a list of the specific projects included in the recommendation is posted on the district’s website <http://www.ferndaleschools.org/administration/bond.html>, adding that, “the primary focus of the issue, as always, is health, safety, and infrastructure improvements, including technology, asbestos abatement, and mechanical improvements.”

Meier also said: “Community information meetings will be scheduled in the weeks and months ahead to review the proposed bond issue projects and their impact on ensuring the long-term viability of our facilities and an appropriate teaching and learning environment for students.” Dates, times, and locations of the information meetings will be widely publicized, so they can be attended by all interested community residents.

While nearly two generations of school families have worked on district facilities improvement programs and campaigns, Meier believes it is important to recognize those who initiated and continued the facility improvement process throughout the years since 1994.

The 1995 bond committee led by the late Nelson House, who was not only a Bond Issue Tri-Chair, but also liaison to Ferndale High School, Coolidge Middle School, and Wilson Elementary School; former Ferndale Mayor Robert Porter, who served as a Bond Issue Tri-

Chair and was the liaison to Taft, Grant, Roosevelt and Jefferson Elementaries; Mary Schusterbauer who served as a Bond Issue Tri-Chair until she was elected to the School Board; and Kathy Wiley, who served as a Bond Issue Tri-Chair and liaison to Best Middle School and Harding, Jackson, and Washington Elementaries.

The 1995 bond work continued in 2004 by the Citizens Bond Committee led by the late Nelson House and Marie Haener-Patti, and was later promoted by a community group called Citizens for Quality Schools led by tri-chairs Bruce Bethuy, former Ferndale Schools Board member; Shaun Butler, FHS Assistant Principal/Athletic Director; and Eileen Wunderlich, district resident and parent of two FHS graduates.

Meier says he looks forward to taking the bond conversation to the community to share the district's facilities needs and help all stakeholders fully understand the goal to complete the work of the 1995 bond committee and ensure we leave a legacy of solid facilities management in place for the students of the future.

For more information about the bond issue as it progresses, please refer to the district's website, [www.ferndaleschools.org](http://www.ferndaleschools.org) and Facebook where a 2012 bond information page will be established and updated information posted continually.

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