



## A Letter to the Mona Shores Community...

Dear District Resident,

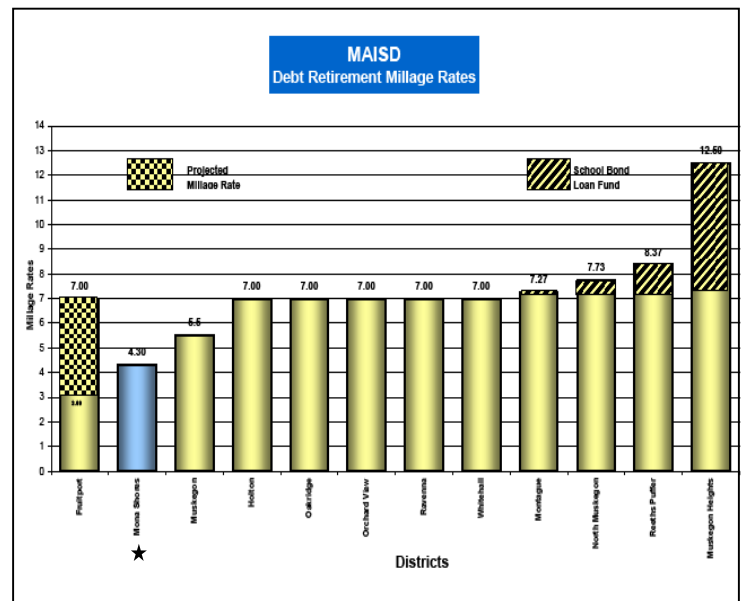
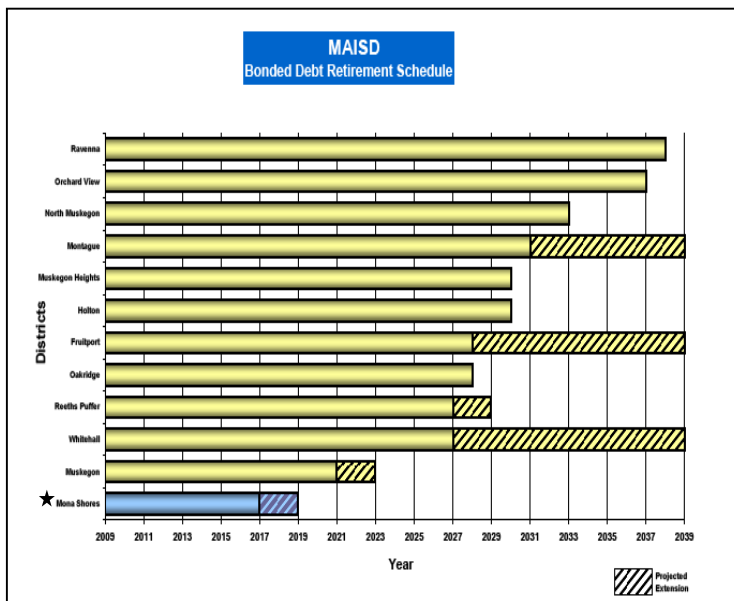
On February 24, 2009, Mona Shores Public Schools will ask voters to approve a bond proposal that will generate approximately \$13 million. This proposal will allow the district to meet pressing student/teacher instructional needs **without** putting any additional tax burden on area residents. That's because the proposal does **NOT** raise the district's millage rate. It simply extends it for two years ... out to 2017 and 2018 at a **reduced millage rate**.

Maintaining a safe and secure environment for students, staff, and guests and reaching high quality levels of teaching and learning will always remain the top two priorities here in Mona Shores. However, there are times when other high priority concerns require equal support in order to preserve and maintain our District mission. If approved, all children will benefit from the district's \$13 million bond proposal. Here are some very important facts about the upcoming bond proposal:

- Approval of this request will **NOT** raise the district's current debt retirement millage rate.

- Passage of this proposal will maintain and limit the current millage to its existing 4.3 mill rate and extend the payment schedule for only 2 years at a **reduced** millage rate.
- The district currently levies the **2<sup>nd</sup> lowest** debt retirement millage rate of all 12 public school districts in Muskegon County (see chart below).
- The district has the **shortest** debt retirement payment schedule of all 12 public school districts in Muskegon County (refer to chart below).
- Mona Shores High School is 47 years old and the Middle School is over 40 years old with some areas of these buildings needing major renovation and reconstruction after remaining relatively untouched for over four decades.
- Strong school systems are directly related to high personal property values.
- The State of Michigan per-pupil funding formula requires school districts to compete with one another for students and families in the area. Our ability to attract new students and keep those already here will depend largely on the quality of district facilities we offer now and in the future.

*These charts show how ★ Mona Shores Public Schools compares to other K-12 Districts in Muskegon County.*



Mona Shores Public Schools has a strong tradition of high quality, success-driven, technology rich educational offerings that enhance every student's learning. It is critical that Mona Shores continues to provide state-of-the-art facilities and accelerated offerings that support an ever-changing curriculum. This will ensure that our students are prepared to meet the growing demands of our competitive global society.

As a community, we can meet these student needs **without** increasing our millage rate.

The following list of projects will be addressed by successful passage of this millage rate extension:

- Address High School facilities to meet increased State graduation requirements by remodeling one existing classroom into three Science classrooms and labs
- Renovate two oversized High School classrooms into three for a computer lab, Social Studies and Publishing classroom
- Provide equity in Physical Education programs and use of facilities for all High School students and the community by constructing a competition gym that will provide a safer environment along with additional storage, fitness, indoor track, locker and multi-purpose rooms, and renovating the old gym
- Add a High School music classroom to meet growing program needs
- Renovate and modernize the current High School Career/Technical (Vocation/Industrial) Arts Building to allow for additional use and programming
- Upgrade and redesign outdoor High School sites to replace aging and deteriorating facilities while increasing safety and security for our students
- Add lighting at the High School soccer/softball complex to extend playing time/opportunities
- Provide increased opportunities at the Middle School by adding an orchestra classroom with instrument storage space
- Expand the Middle School Cafeteria to ensure a safe, secure area while meeting the students' needs for a quiet study space
- Redesign Middle School traffic circulation for safer student drop-off and improved visitor parking
- Repair/upgrade existing Middle School tennis courts
- Add Aluminum bleachers to the Middle School field
- Replace the oldest buses in our fleet
- Upgrade Technology
- Lower operational costs by improving energy efficiency of all existing facilities
- Address Elementary needs including playground improvements, floor covering replacement, parking lot/traffic safety circulation and building energy efficiency needs such as lighting and window replacement with existing sinking funds.



## Questions & Answers

### What is a bond issue?

A **bond issue** seeks voter approval for the sale of bonds. These certificates of debt guarantee payment plus interest by a set date. The process is very similar to a homeowner securing a home improvement loan. In Mona Shores, capital improvement funds generated by the sale of bonds finance some of the district's necessary capital improvements. *Please note, **bond funds may NOT** be used for general operating purposes such as staff salaries, supplies, or other expenditures associated with the day-to-day operation of our schools.*

### How much of an increase will this bond proposal cost me?

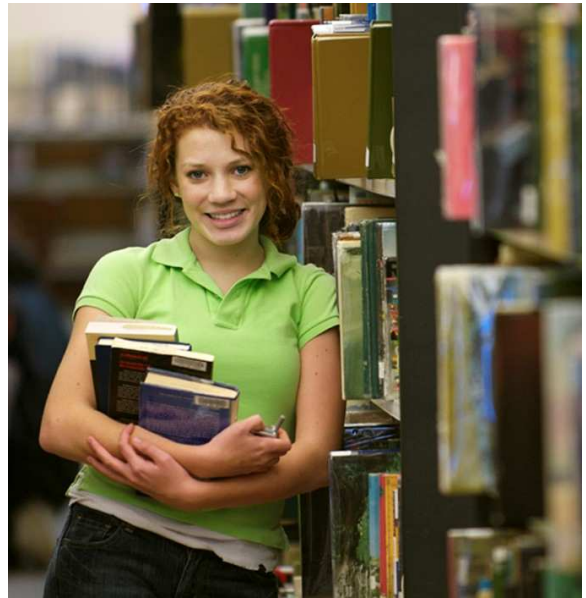
Nothing. Although this bond extension will generate approximately \$13 million dollars, it will **NOT** increase the current millage rate. This bond seeks to extend the current millage repayment schedule by two years at a **reduced** rate! This proposal will allow the district to meet pressing student/teacher instructional needs **without** putting any additional tax burden on area residents.

### Why not use existing general operating funds to repair and remodel district school buildings?

General operating funds are provided by the State of Michigan on a "per-pupil basis" and are needed to run the district on a daily basis (i.e., buying textbooks, library books, training, paying salaries, etc.). When districts must repair and remodel facilities, they need dedicated funding to do so. The cost of making proposed capital improvements is too high to come out of existing general operating funds.

### What is the date of the election and where do I vote?

Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, February 24, 2009**. Absentee ballot applications are also available from your City Clerk's Office.



Voting will take place at each of the district's 12 voter precincts and by absentee voter ballots. Election day is **Tuesday, February 24, 2009**. The polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

### How do I register to vote?

If you are at least 18 years of age by the date of election, a citizen of the United States and a resident of either the City of Roosevelt Park or Norton Shores you may still register to vote for the February Election.

If you are already registered to vote and have moved or changed your name, you must contact your local clerk's office to ensure that your registration is correct. To register you may visit any Secretary of State branch office, County Clerk's Office, or either the City of Roosevelt Park or Norton Shores.

**Deadline to register is Monday, January 26, 2009.**

### Can you provide me with information on voting by absentee ballot?

Absentee voter applications and ballots are available at both city offices. The City of Norton Shores (798-4391) is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The City of Roosevelt Park (755-3721) is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Ballots are due to your City Hall by 8:00 p.m. on the day of election. For additional information and deadlines, please call your city office at the numbers listed above.

### **In Closing...**

The State of Michigan per pupil funding formula requires school districts to compete with one another for students and families in the area. Our ability to attract new students to Mona Shores and keep those already here will depend in large part on the quality of district grounds and facilities we have to offer them now, and in the future. That is why this bond proposal is so important for the school district.

The staff of Mona Shores Public Schools is absolutely committed to meeting the many leadership challenges of today and tomorrow. The staff certainly appreciates the generous community support received over the years in helping them meet these challenges. It's the power of this school-community partnership that makes Mona Shores "the district of choice" in Muskegon County.

Three parents in the school district, Chad Wegner, Bob Grevious, and Sean Deur are currently chairing a 'Help Mona Shores' Millage Committee. This committee was established to promote community

understanding of how local school districts in Michigan are financed, and why Mona Shores needs this millage extension at this time.

There are also over 100 additional community citizens working on this committee. Members are working hard from now until Election Day to share millage information with residents throughout the community. If you have questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact any of the three parent Tri-Chairs: Sean Deur at (231) 730-9434, Bob Grevious at (231) 329-4683, or Chad Wegner at (231) 642-0181.

On behalf of the Board of Education, thank you for taking time to review this entire newsletter and the additional millage materials you receive in the weeks ahead. More information is available on the district website at [www.monashores.net](http://www.monashores.net).

Kay M. Olthoff  
Board President

Terry L. Babbitt  
Superintendent

**Please Remember to Vote February 24, 2009**



**3374 McCracken Street  
Norton Shores, MI 49441  
Website: [www.monashores.net](http://www.monashores.net)**



**To Postal Customer**