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Fairfield CSD Voters to Decide November 5 Bond Referendum

FAIRFIELD, IA — Voters in the Fairfield Community School District will consider a \$38.51 million bond referendum on Tuesday, November 5. If it's approved, the district will move forward with the construction of a new middle school.

Fairfield Middle School was originally constructed in 1966, but a thorough facility assessment led district leaders to determine that continuing to invest limited financial resources into the school is not a practical or cost-effective solution.

The list of issues identified by the assessment include water infiltration and poor drainage because the building was constructed too low on site, a lack of secondary drainage and exterior flashing that allows water to leak into the walls, and original single-pane windows that are susceptible to water and air leaks. The building is also out of compliance with ADA requirements, lacks a secure entrance, and has undersized classrooms that do not meet current teaching standards.

Annual maintenance expenses at the middle school total \$1 million. Architects estimate that the cost to renovate the middle school would be \$40.4 million.

"The middle school has proudly served our community for nearly 60 years, but the building's conditions have reached a point where continuing to invest money there is no longer the best use of taxpayer funds," said Superintendent Zach Wigle. "After careful planning and consideration of multiple options, the School Board decided to pursue a bond referendum in November that would allow FCSD to construct a new middle school, providing our students with the resources and opportunities they need for modern learning."

Along with funds provided by general obligation bonds, FCSD would borrow \$21 million against future revenue it receives from the statewide one-cent sales tax fund, known as [Secure an Advanced Vision for Education](#) (SAVE), to help pay for the proposed middle school. Using **SAVE** funds would reduce local property taxpayer costs.

The total amount of bond and SAVE revenue planned for the project would be up to \$59 million to account for unexpected expenses and potential construction inflation. However, FCSD intends to keep the cost below \$56 million.

FCSD's overall tax levy rate for the current fiscal year is \$12.11 per year on \$1,000 of taxable property value (not assessed value), which is down 6.8% since 2003. This rate is the second lowest in the Southeast Conference behind Washington (\$16.12), Keokuk (\$14.90), Burlington (\$12.25), and Mount Pleasant (\$12.23).

The tax impact of an approved referendum on November 5 would be \$2.70 per \$1,000 of taxable property value. For a home with an assessed value of \$150,000, this would amount to \$14.55 per month.

Bond referendums must receive support from at least 60% of voters to be approved.

District leaders continue to seek feedback from residents and will host a series of community meetings to provide information about the challenges at Fairfield Middle School, the solution on the November 5 ballot, and how the proposed project would benefit students and the community as a whole. Below are the dates, times, and locations of these meetings:

- **Thursday, September 5, 7:00 p.m., Fairfield Middle School Commons**
- **Monday, September 9, 6:00 p.m., ACT Building**
- **Monday, September 23, 7:00 p.m., Libertyville Community Center**
- **Monday, October 21, 6:00 p.m., ACT Building**
- **Sunday, October 27, 3:30 p.m., Fairfield Middle School Commons**
- **Sunday, November 3, 3:30 p.m., Fairfield Middle School Commons**

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