



Excellence and Equity in Education

Sinking Fund Proposal 2024: Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a millage?

- A millage rate is the tax rate used to calculate local property taxes. One mill represents a tax of one thousandth of a dollar for each dollar of the assessed value of the property. The taxable value of 1 mill on a \$100,000 home is \$100. This is calculated as \$100,000 (home value) × 0.001 (1 mill).

2. What is a Sinking Fund?

- When a school district proposes a Sinking Fund, it is asking for the approval of a millage rate to be levied on property within the district to be used for the purposes specifically identified in the Proposal. This millage, if approved by voters, would become a source of revenue for the district, specifically earmarked for the Sinking Fund.

3. What can a Sinking Fund be used for?

- Funds can be used for purposes identified in the Proposal: school security improvements; acquisition and upgrading of technology; the repair and upgrading of school buildings; the purchase and maintenance support of student transportation vehicles; and the purchase of school property sites. Sinking Funds cannot be used for operating expenses, salaries, employee benefits, or routine building maintenance.

4. Does Kentwood Public Schools currently have a Sinking Fund?

- Yes. KPS voters approved Sinking Fund millages in 1996, 2005, and 2015. Each of these millages were approved for 10 years. The sinking fund millage approved in 2015, which is expiring in 2025, is currently levied at a rate of 1.5718 mills. If approved, the Sinking Fund proposal on the ballot in 2024 would authorize a millage rate of 1.5718 mills.

5. What are the benefits of a Sinking Fund?

- The district can use Sinking Fund revenue towards purposes identified in the Proposal, such as facilities, safety, and purchasing technology, preserving more general fund dollars for direct educational uses to support student learning.
- Properly repaired and updated facilities support the District's mission to provide an education of excellence. Sinking Fund revenues would also be used to fund projects enhancing student safety and provide technology devices.

6. What are the district's priorities for the New Sinking Fund?

- Safety:
 - To ensure the safest possible educational environment, the district must continue to monitor and enhance our safety and security measures.
- Technology and Connectedness:
 - Updated instructional technology allows students to compete in today's connected world.
- Functional Facilities:
 - A safe, secure and comfortable physical environment supports the District's mission to provide excellence and equity in education.
- To see more specific items related to the Sinking Fund, go to the district's [presentation on Sinking Fund needs](#).

7. How does the Sinking Fund contribute to school safety and security improvements?

- If approved, the Sinking Fund will be utilized to implement vital security measures, including expanded security cameras, audible fire-alarm systems, energy efficient LED lighting, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) enhancements (e.g., wheelchair access, visual impairment features, etc.), among other enhancements, all of which play an important role in keeping students, staff, and school facilities safe.

8. How will the Sinking Fund be used for technology enhancements?

- If approved, the Sinking Fund will support the acquisition and upgrading of technology, ensuring students have access to the latest tools and resources for an enriched learning experience, which is so important for learning in the 21st century. This will include the continuation of 1:1 student to laptop availability, updates to the wireless network, upgraded phone systems and Public Announce (PA) systems.

9. How will the Sinking Fund impact school buildings/facilities?

- Major building repairs and upgrades are a large part of how Sinking Fund dollars are used. Roofs, boilers, parking lots, and other aspects of building infrastructure will be replaced and upgraded, as they reach the end of their useful lives. The funds can also be used if emergency repairs are ever needed. This ensures student safety, air quality, and energy efficiency, all of which contribute to maintaining a positive learning environment for our students.

10. How will the Sinking Fund be used to support student transportation needs?

- Funds will be used to acquire buses and student transportation vehicles, when needed, as well as parts, supplies, and equipment to keep vehicles operating smoothly in order to ensure the reliability and safety of our transportation fleet.

11. Why is the district asking for a new Sinking Fund?

- In 2015, when voters approved the most recent Sinking Fund, state law only allowed sinking fund revenues to be used for building upgrades and repairs. In recent years, the legislature revised and expanded the uses of the Sinking Fund to include

security upgrades, technology, and transportation needs. The district will benefit from the flexibility to use Sinking Fund dollars in these areas, as well.

12. Is the millage rate in the 2024 election the same, more, or less than the millage rate from the 2015 election?

- The same. The 2015 approved Sinking Fund stands at 1.5718 mills. The ballot proposal for the Sinking Fund in February 2024 is not to exceed 1.5718 mills. This means, if a home is valued at \$100,000, it would be calculated at $\$100,000 \times 0.0015718 = \157.18 .

13. If the millage rate is the same, why does the 2024 ballot proposal language say there will be an “increase” for the Sinking Fund?

- The 2024 Sinking Fund Proposal authorizes additional purposes and is considered a new tax. The new fund, though, is asking for 1.5718 mills in 2026 which is the same as the 1.5718 mills from the current fund approved in 2015 and scheduled to expire in 2025.

14. When can I vote?

- Absentee ballots are available beginning January 18, 2024. Early voting begins on Saturday, February 17, 2024. Election day is **Tuesday, February 27, 2024**. The polls are open on that date from **7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

15. Where do I vote?

- Information on where to vote can be found at [the Kent County Elections website](#) or by scanning the QR code to the right. This site includes information on where to drop absentee ballots, early voting sites, and election day voting locations.



16. Where can I get more information about the 2024 Sinking Fund Proposal?

- Please visit our district website Sinking Fund information page at kentwoodps.org/ourdistrict/sinking-fund/ or by scanning the QR code to the right.

