



## **St. Michael – Albertville Independent School District 885**

### **Excellence is Our Tradition**

#### **STMA Bond Projects FAQ**

- 1. How did the school board decide which projects to include in the STMA Bond?**

The STMA Bond was based on a comprehensive 9-month evaluation of student, community, and facility needs that included a demographic study and broad stakeholder input. The School Board considered recommendations for projects from a 17-person task force composed of parents, community members, and staff members. At the end of the thorough planning process, the School Board voted unanimously to ask voters to approve the student-centric STMA Bond. The STMA Bond honors the community's commitment to students and the long tradition of excellence in academics, arts, athletics, and community access. The bond was approved by voters on February 7, 2017 with 2,281 yes votes and 2,034 no votes (52.9% Yes and 47.1% No).
- 2. Who are the architects involved in the proposed facilities bond project?**

STMA School Board selected Architects Rego + Youngquist, Inc. (ARY) as the architects for many of the bond projects. ARY is a planning and design firm that specializes in community facilities in the State of Minnesota. STMA has a 35 year history with ARY as they have built the high school, Middle School East, Big Woods, Fieldstone, and renovations on a number of buildings including Albertville Primary, Middle School West, St. Michael Elementary. ARY offers a wealth of experience and is responsive to the district's vision.

To learn more about ARY, visit its website at <http://www.aryarch.com/index.html>

- 3. How will the district monitor the progress of the projects?**

At its February 21 meeting, the school board approved a comprehensive process to complete projects included in the STMA Bond. The process includes forming a Core Project Team (CPT) to provide leadership and oversight on all projects. The CPT is composed of two school board members, superintendent, construction manager, district architect, various school staff, and parents. The CPT is charged with:

  - Provide leadership and oversight on all projects
  - Seek input as needed from community and school stakeholders
  - Facilitate or serve on subcommittees
  - Monitor all projects to ensure they are done on time and stay within budget
  - Provide updates to the STMA School Board (ultimate decision makers)

Subcommittees of key stakeholders will be formed to determine further details of each project before the final blueprints are made and submitted to contractors for the bidding process. Subcommittees include:

- High School Site Team
- Albertville Primary Site Team
- Technology
- All-Purpose Facility
- Ice Arena

- Tennis
- Baseball/Softball

**4. What are the projects in the STMA Bond?**

Bond projects include improvements in the areas of safety, technology, maintenance, and activities.

**Safety**

- Secure entrances to buildings at Albertville Primary, Middle School East and STMA High School
- Relocate baseball field, track, tennis courts, and football field to the high school to increase student and community safety by increasing stadium crowd capacity, reducing student travel, and providing quicker access to the athletic trainer

**Technology**

- Updated infrastructure and data center
- New computers and mobile devices

**Maintenance**

- Improve energy efficiency (LED lights, generators)
- Add 12 classrooms at the High School and 8 classrooms at Albertville Primary
- Repair Middle School East pool

**Activities**

- All-purpose facility at the high school to create community access for youth organizations, community expos, art events, music concert series, marching band, dance team, speech tournament, PE use during the day, and high school team use (lacrosse, soccer, baseball, softball and football). Free walking/running for community members and toddler/youth open play times.
- A second sheet of indoor ice (new hockey arena)

**5. I heard that classroom additions will be added at Albertville Primary and STMA High School? Why are they needed?**

The last bond referendum for building projects was 2005. Since 2005, student enrollment has increased 62% with no other classroom or facility space added. STMA schools serving grades 1-12 were designed for approximately 500 students per grade level. The capacity at Albertville Primary is 460 kindergarten students. 453 kindergartners are enrolled this year (2016-2017), which leaves little room for future growth. The addition of eight classrooms at Albertville Primary will permit a class size of 500 kindergartners. In addition, the 3-5-year-old early childhood special education program was moved to St. Michael Elementary School (STME) in 2014-2015 in order to make space for full day kindergarten. The 3-5-year-old special education children would be best served at Albertville Primary with similar aged peers. In addition, the district is anticipating needing space at STME for future enrollment increases because new housing developments are located in its elementary boundary and returning the program to Albertville Primary will free up classrooms at STME.

The high school was built for 2,000 students. A July 2016 demographic study projects the high school to enroll slightly over 2,000 students in 2017-2018 with growth projected to be 2282 students by 2020-2021. An additional twelve classrooms will increase the capacity of the high school to 2360.

**6. What is the timeline for the projects?**

Bonds will be sold in February and March and construction is expected to start in the spring of 2017. All projects are expected to be completed by early fall 2018. See below for a tentative timeline for project completion.

Project	Construction Date	Completion Date
Second Sheet of Ice	Oct. 2017	Oct. 2018
High School Front Security Entrance	June 2017	Aug. 1, 2017
Middle East Security Entrance	June 2017	Aug. 15, 2017
Albertville Primary Security Entrance	June 2017	Aug. 1, 2017
Classroom Additions HS 12 Classrooms	Sept. 2017	Aug. 2018
Classroom Additions Albertville Primary 8 Classrooms	Sept. 2017	Aug. 2018
Generators MW/ME/STME/AP/CE	June 2017	August 2017
Community Ed. Off-Season Boiler/Backup/AC Gym	June 2017	August 2017
Lighting Retrofit LED All-Rooms District-Wide	April 2017	August 2018
Technology	April 2017	August 2019
ME Pool Repair	April 2017	June 2017
Tennis Courts Relocated to HS	Sept. 2017	Aug. 1, 2018
Baseball Field Moved to HS/Upgrades to Softball Field	Sept. 2017	Aug. 1, 2018
All-Purpose Facility	Sept. 2017	Aug. 1, 2018

**7. What are the safety entrances for Albertville Primary, STMA Middle School East, and the high school?**

School safety and security is on the frontlines nationally due to unfortunate tragedies that have cost lives of students and staff around the nation. An area of focus for the district is ensuring buildings are safe and secure for students, staff, and the community. Security best practices have evolved over time and there is a need to make changes to the entrances of three buildings (AP, ME, and HS) to maximize student and staff safety.

**8. What is being done to the pool at STMA Middle School East?**

The pool was constructed in 2000. While care has been taken to maintain the pool, it requires necessary repairs and maintenance that are typical for a pool 16 years old. The repairs are not cosmetic improvements but repairs that are necessary to keep the pool open and functioning in a safe and healthy manner.

**9. What are the energy efficiency projects?**

Generators at Middle School West, Middle School East, St. Michael Elementary, Albertville Primary, and Community Education will allow the district to reduce

electrical rates by fully participating in a program that grants significant savings by Xcel because it can restrict use during high demand. These projects will result in savings in the general fund that can be reallocated to educational programs. Other STMA schools with generators already participate in the program. A smaller, more efficient boiler will be installed at the Community Education Center to operate in mild temperatures and will serve as a backup. Finally, the district would retro fit all schools with LED lights which save energy and last longer.

**10. What are the technology projects and why are they needed?**

The district's technology infrastructure and data center including switches, servers, wireless access, and storage, is aging. Network switches in the district are 10 years old. This results in reduced speed, capacity, and functionality of applications and systems used for teaching and learning. Service interruptions are common and affect teaching and learning. Classroom equipment such as SMART Boards and sound field systems are also old and require repairs on a regular basis. Parts for SMART Boards and sound field systems are no longer produced and can no longer be repaired. Further, 50% of the computers in the district are seven to ten years old and operate very slowly. The projects include updating the district's infrastructure and data center and replacing old computers.

**11. What can the all-purpose facility that has a removable dome be used for? Is it just an athletic facility and what do I get out of it as a community member who doesn't have any kids at home?**

The domed all-purpose facility is not just an athletic facility. It has something for all ages---ages 2 to 92! The current football field located on the MW campus is used 5-7 times/year for football only. Constructing a turf field on the high school campus expands its use so it can be used for multiple sports such as HS football, soccer, and lacrosse. Covering the artificial turf with a dome makes it much more than an athletic field as it becomes an all-purpose facility that meets the arts, academic, and athletic needs for needs of students but also provides community access for all ages. The dome will be used for PE classes as space for PE is limited due to increased student enrollment. After school, high school activities such as lacrosse, soccer, baseball, softball, dance, golf and marching band will use the space for practice. The district has committed to renting the dome to community youth organizations (lacrosse, baseball, softball, and soccer) and other community groups every weeknight and on weekends. To create additional community access, there will be designated time for community members to walk free of charge in the dome. The district also plans to use the dome for toddler/youth play during the day. In addition, the district has partnered with the Cities of Albertville and St. Michael and they could use the dome for events such as a Business/Community Expo. Further, the dome could host various art and music events such as an art festival, speech tournament, and a music concert series.

**12. I heard that artificial turf is unsafe. Is the district aware of these concerns and how will it affect this project?**

STMA is aware of concerns that have been raised about the safety of recycled crumb rubber. Nationwide, 98 percent of artificial turf fields use crumb rubber infill. Many west metro schools including Hopkins, Minnetonka and Wayzata use crumb rubber fields. The choice was made to entertain artificial turf as a possibility because limited studies have not shown an elevated health risk from playing on fields with tire crumb.

STMA does acknowledge that the existing studies do not comprehensively evaluate the concerns about health risks from exposure to tire crumb.

In December 2016 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) issued a status report titled “Federal Research Action Plan on Recycled Tire Crumb Used on Playing Fields and Playgrounds.” This report states:

“Over the past several years, parents, athletes, schools, and communities have raised concerns about the safety of recycled tire crumb rubber used as infill for playing fields and playgrounds in the United States. The public has expressed concerns that the use of these fields could potentially be related to certain health effects. Studies to date have not shown an elevated health risk from playing on fields with tire crumb rubber, but these studies have limitations and do not comprehensively evaluate the concerns about health risks from exposure to tire crumb rubber.”

“Since research is currently ongoing, the status report does not include any preliminary findings of the research. The results of the research on synthetic turf fields will be available later in 2017.”

STMA will continue to monitor the research and is also considering other infill options as an alternative to crumb rubber such as environmentally friendly thermoplastic elastomer pellets (TPE).

The link to the full EPA status report is:  
[https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-12/documents/federal\\_research\\_action\\_plan\\_on\\_recycled\\_tire\\_crumb\\_used\\_on\\_playing\\_fields\\_and\\_playgrounds\\_status\\_report.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-12/documents/federal_research_action_plan_on_recycled_tire_crumb_used_on_playing_fields_and_playgrounds_status_report.pdf)

**13. How will the district pay for the annual operating costs of an all-purpose facility (dome)?**

STMA staff made site visits and had conversations with two school districts (Wayzata and Eden Prairie) and a city-owned facility in Plymouth that have artificial turf fields and domes. Both Wayzata and Eden Prairie give priority to their high school teams and rent the remaining time to youth organizations and community groups. Revenues exceed expenditures in both school districts. STMA community and youth groups have expressed their intent to purchase time in a dome should this concept come to fruition. The district has made the commitment to rent the dome to youth organizations and community groups on weekday evenings and on weekends. During those times, the district will generate revenue. However, we are a school district and not a business. We do not charge our PE students to use our facilities during the day. Likewise, we plan to open up the dome to the community for walking free of charge. With that being said, we will generate revenue for the times we rent it out but it may not cover all of the expenditures. During available rental times our Activity Center has a 90% rental rate. Last year alone over 63,000 people used the facility. From talking to community and youth organizations and studying how other districts operate their domes, the district believes the domed facility will also have high rental rates and operational costs will be greatly offset by revenue from renting it out.

**14. I attended a football game this year and could not find a seat. Will the all-purpose facility have adequate seating?**

Yes! The current football stadium holds 2,370 (1,700 home side and 670 visitor side). The all-purpose facility will have seating for 4,000 (2,800 home side and 1,200 visitor side).

**15. I heard that the projects benefit only "a few students" who are mostly involved in sports. Is that true?**

The projects in the STMA Bond benefit only "a few students" who participate in sports. In fact, it is quite the contrary. STMA is proud of its tradition of having a large number of students participate in academic, arts, and athletic activities as there is a clear link between participation in activity programs and student success. Participation in these vital activity programs is where our students learn lifelong lessons that complement the academic lessons taught in the classroom and yield positive results even after graduation. Students who participate in activity programs have better educational outcomes, including higher grades, higher achievement test scores, better physical and mental health, and higher educational expectations beyond high school. Data from 2015-2016, show that STMA high school students participated in activity programs (arts, athletics, and academics) 1801 times. The overall high school student participation rate in activity programs was 69%. The middle school participation rate for 2015-2016 was 83.5% (arts, athletics, and academics). The projects will allow STMA to continue its tradition of excellence in meeting the needs of our students by allowing continued student participation in academic, arts, and athletic programs.

**16. With the addition of classrooms at the high school and Albertville Primary, will the district hire more teachers? If more teachers are hired, how will the new teachers be funded?**

The district receives basic education revenue from state aid to fund teachers for the additional classrooms. For 2016-2017, STMA receives \$6067 for each pupil in basic education revenue. For the 6298 students currently enrolled the district receives \$38,209,966. These dollars can be used to pay for operating expenses including staff salaries and supply costs. A problem the district is currently facing is classroom space to put additional teachers. In short, the district has the funds to hire teachers but lacks classroom space for them to teach in. For example, at the high school there is a math class with 37 students that meets in the FACS (home ec) room. The district has state aid funds to hire a teacher to lower this high class size but there are no available classrooms for a teacher. To accommodate growth, the district hires teachers to maintain low class sizes but at the high school this practice cannot be followed as there are not available classrooms. The bottom line is basic education revenue will pay for new teachers for the additional classrooms.

**17. Why is a second sheet of ice needed?**

The impetus behind a second sheet of ice is to provide equitable ice time for the boys high school program and be proactive in avoiding Title IX violations for the girls high school program. When the school board sanctions an activity it is their responsibility to provide adequate facility space for that activity. That is why the board is cautious in approving new activities and takes official action on the approval of new activities. For example, the board recently approved high school dance. That means the district

has an obligation to the dance team to provide facility space for practice and competitions as well as fund a coach, transportation costs, etc. High school hockey is the same. Years ago when the board sanctioned hockey as an official STMA activity they obligated themselves to provide adequate facility space for practice and games and to fund jerseys, coaches, transportation, etc. It is the same for football, soccer, marching band, speech, lacrosse, etc.

The boys high school hockey program has approximately 93 hours less of practice/game time than similar districts in their section. The girls program is in a coop with Monticello. Approximately 75% of the girls in the coop girls program are from STMA. This works well as ice time is split between STMA and Monticello. However, the district anticipates the girls becoming their own STMA team in the next couple of years due to growth. There is not equitable time for a standalone girl's program at the existing arena and STMA would be in violation of Title IX requirements.

The current sheet of ice is equally owned by the school district and the Cities of St. Michael and Albertville. The school district was considering participating in a tax abatement with the two Cities last year but heard from community members they wanted a voice in the decision and wanted the possibility of state aid (a tax abatement does not require voter approval and there is no state aid). The school board assembled the STMA Ice Arena Design Committee to design a facility that struck a balance between cost considerations and the immediate and future needs of the district and community. The STMA Ice Arena Design Committee was charged with touring various arena facilities, reviewing past concept designs, and ultimately developing a facility concept with an associated cost estimate. The group met multiple times, toured various ice arenas, and consulted with an architect. On August 8, the Arena Board unanimously accepted the facility concept at a cost of \$9.2 M. The Arena Board also agreed to use a \$250,000 Mighty Duck Grant and \$40,000 Kraft Hockeyville Grant to offset the costs. These grants were largely secured by the Youth Hockey Association and lowered the cost to \$8.9 M. The STMA School Board reviewed the recommendations of the Ice Arena Design Committee on August 15 and ultimately voted to approve the concept in the STMA Bond.

The concept included in the STMA Bond includes:

- A second sheet of ice parallel to the exiting sheet of ice
- Varsity locker rooms for girls and boys varsity teams
- Additional locker rooms for tournament use
- Toilets, sinks and showers to serve locker rooms
- A meeting room for team and community use
- Elevated lobby to maximize spectator viewing space
- Parking to accommodate 220 spots (117 spots at current arena)
- Spectator seating for 720 (existing rink has 400)
- Standing room for 180 in the arena
- Standing or sitting room for 50 spectators in the lobby
- Standing or sitting room for 50 in the community room
- Adequate amenities such as concessions and restrooms
- Heated and accessible viewing options

**18. I heard that the cost for the second sheet of ice increased from \$8 million a few years ago to \$9.2 million. What caused the increase?**

Throughout the years there have been many concepts proposed for a second sheet of ice. Each of these concepts has varied in complexity and cost. The current concept has been described as a “workhorse” rather than a “showhorse.” The concept is not grandiose but will meet the needs of the district and community for the foreseeable future. The difference in cost between the current concept and past concepts is mainly due to inflationary construction costs over the last several years. The architect reported that construction inflation increased construction bids over the last three years by 12% in 2014, 12% in 2015 and 4% in 2016. The architect included an additional increase of 5% for projects bid in 2017. The final design increased square feet by approximately 800 square feet and cost approximately \$200,000.

**19. Would the district have to pay for ice time and have priority for use?**

The district would have priority for ice time. There are two approaches the district could take with this. One approach is the district could take full responsibility for all operations and maintenance of the facility. The district would be responsible for all costs associated with operations and maintenance including cleaning the facility, routine maintenance, concession stand operations, scheduling, marketing, etc. This would be a significant expense to the district. The advantage would be that the district would not have to pay ice time. Another approach is for the district to amend the operations agreement with the Cities of Albertville and St. Michael and operate the second sheet the same as is currently done at the existing rink. Under this approach the district would be responsible for paying ice time for boy’s and girl’s hockey. This approach is more cost effective for the district. The district would also have 80-100 hours of additional ice time for boy’s and girl’s hockey at no cost to the district. Additional girl’s and boy’s practice time would make STMA comparable in practice time to neighboring school districts.