

Chippewa Valley earns safety grant from Michigan State Police

Bond upgrades continue through summer

- By Nicole Tuttle For MediaNews Group
July 31, 2019



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Voters approved a \$97 million bond issue in November 2018 to finance Chippewa Valley Schools updated security in district buildings and other items. On July 22, the district's board of education approved a School Loan Revolving Fund resolution.

Bond project safety improvements at Chippewa Valley Schools buildings recently received a boost with a grant from the Michigan State Police.

The district announced on Facebook July 18 it had recently been awarded a 2019 Competitive School Safety Grant from the Michigan State Police in the amount of \$48,179. It will be used to obtain new public address systems at Chippewa Valley and Dakota high schools.

Out of 366 applications submitted, Chippewa Valley Schools was one of 230 grants selected to obtain the funding. Chippewa Valley Schools spokesperson Diane Blain said that the district applied for the grant about a year ago.

"This grant will provide better communication throughout the building and in the event of an emergency," Blain said. "Both PA systems at each high school were currently at the end of their useful life."

The district will implement a Care Hawk system, which can be attached to a network and allows alerts and announcements to be made from the district's central office building and school buildings, according to Blain.

"This system also allows the consumer to tie emergency alerts to strobe lighting which can be useful for individuals that are hearing impaired," Blain said. "We currently have a few different PA systems in use throughout the district and we would like to eventually have all of the PA systems networked and standardized. If we wanted to, this system can also be integrated with our door swipe system and security cameras."

Voters approved a \$97 million bond issue in November 2018. Billed as a "Safe Schools, Strong Schools" proposal, it called for financing security enhancements to existing buildings, updated classroom technology and infrastructure improvements. Under the proposal, the debt millage rate in Chippewa Valley set to expire in 2035 would not increase but would be extended to 2043. The district currently levies 8.64 mills for debt retirement. A mill is equal to \$1 of tax for every \$1,000 of a property's taxable value. Taxable value is approximately one-half of a home's market value.

Bond project information can be found at chippewavalleyschools.org under the "Our District and 2018 Bond Improvements – Safe Schools, Strong Schools" tab. Financials are listed under a bond financials section. Work on some bond projects began this summer, and others are being designed with bids set to go out this year for work during summer 2020. The interior entrance renovations for security at Dakota High School in Macomb Township and Chippewa Valley High School in Clinton Township are scheduled for completion this fall. Work has also begun on upgrading the wireless network district-wide, which is expected to continue through the end of summer and be complete by the start of the 2019-20 school year.

A new district-wide security system has been designed and equipment has been ordered. Work is expected to begin when it is received. High school campuses are currently marked for highest priority, and the project will continue through the 2019-20 school year with an expected completion for all district buildings by the end of summer 2020. Other summer 2019 bond construction updates include:

Elementary schools:

- This summer Cherokee Elementary in Clinton Township will have large group instructional area lighting added to the emergency lighting system.
- Wakely Associates, the district's architect, is nearing completion of the design documents for classroom door lock upgrades and emergency alert systems. The project is scheduled to be bid this summer and work is scheduled to be completed during the 2019-20 school year.
- The design work for the summer 2020 projects has begun. These projects include playground updates, media center upgrades and relocating the main office of Cheyenne Elementary School in Macomb Township for better security. Further 2020 projects also include parking lot work at four elementary schools.

• Middle schools:

- Roofing and electrical service are being worked on at Iroquois Middle School in Macomb Township. Algonquin Middle School in Clinton Township will receive upgraded choir room lighting.
- Wakely Associates, the district's architect, is nearing completion of the design documents for classroom door lock upgrades and emergency alert systems. The project is scheduled to be bid this summer and work is scheduled to be completed during the 2019-20 school year.
- Design for summer 2020 work has begun, including media center upgrades and renovations of Algonquin's main office for improved security.

• High schools:

- Upgraded pool lighting at Dakota. Tennis courts at both high schools will be upgraded. Temperature control systems will be upgraded.
- Wakely Associates, the district's architect, is nearing completion of the design documents for classroom door lock upgrades and emergency alert systems. The project is scheduled to be bid this summer and work is scheduled to be completed during the 2019-20 school year.
- Design work for summer 2020 projects is ongoing, including parking lot upgrades and Cougar Drive safety improvements at Dakota High School

Online district financial information indicates a grand total of payments to vendors from June 1 to June 30 at \$501,598.19.