Starmont
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

STATEMENT FROM THE STARMONT SCHOOL BOARD

We understand that there has been some misinformation circulating in our community related to the general obligation bond referendum Starmont voters will consider on November 4, as well as other funding sources on which the district relies.

Engaging with community members and ensuring they have accurate information is a priority for all members of the board, which is why we wish to clear up any confusion.

A Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL) is a funding tool that Iowa school districts can use only for infrastructure and equipment repairs, purchases, and improvements. There are two kinds of PPELs that Starmont uses:

- The first PPEL is approved by the board, with a ceiling of $0.33 per $1,000 of taxable property value.
- The second is a voter-approved PPEL that cannot exceed $1.34 per $1,000.

Voted PPELs must be approved by a school district's voters every 10 years to remain in place. For Starmont, this happened in March. The timing was procedural and had nothing to do with the November bond vote.

In fiscal year 2025, the PPELs at Starmont were both set at $0.33, which is nearly $1 lower than the allowable limit. Together, these generated approximately $174,600 in 2025.

The bulk of these funds, however, was used to purchase a new school bus for $160,803. This reflects the fact that PPEL funds alone are not enough to address the millions of dollars in maintenance and infrastructure needs that exist in our schools today—and why the board unanimously opted to pursue a bond referendum.

Updating our infrastructure is a priority for the board, and we intended to address these issues sooner. The major facility assessments of our buildings occurred shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, which unfortunately led to these projects being delayed. At the same time, costs continued to rise.

Starmont's maximum allowable debt levy rate is $4.05 per $1,000 of taxable value, which has the potential to produce up to $17.2 million. The board decided against seeking that full amount and instead chose a $9.8 million general obligation bond proposal, with a maximum tax impact of $2.30 per $1,000.

The estimated total cost of facility improvements in our schools is $13.5 million. In addition to bond revenue, we intend to use funds that Starmont receives from the statewide sales tax revenue fund, known as SAVE. Doing so will lessen the burden placed on local property taxpayers.

It's also important to note that assessed/market value and taxable value are not the same thing when it comes to calculating the potential tax impact on your property. This can also be confusing due to the state rollback and tax credits that exist. Our bond referendum website (www.starmontbond.org) has charts showing all of this information, along with an interactive property tax calculator.

We want to thank everyone who has engaged with board members and administrators as part of this process. Your questions and feedback are greatly appreciated and help us in our shared mission to position Starmont for future success.