

Special Education Bond Information - May 5 2026

In 1966, there was no mandate that a school district had to provide special education programs and services to any child with a disability. Lansing was unusual. It provided services on a voluntary basis to a lot of kids with disabilities.

My life was changed the day I stepped foot in Beekman. I left here that day with an application in my hand. I was recruited by one of the assistant principals to become a teacher's assistant, a paraprofessional working with severely disabled students here.

I found some of the most amazing human beings — teachers, paraprofessionals — that were working with God's most precious children, the most severe of all students that would reside here in our community.

In 1978, Heartwood opened to serve a very similar population from outlying county schools to provide special education services and supports for our most complex needs in the ISD.

Back then, it was hard to get a job as a teacher, especially here. You had to really work your way into it. I was very happy and very fortunate, and from day one I realized what a privilege it was to work here — and I'm here 50 years later.

It's a new day and age, and there are new technologies to be had. So when you bring safety into it, it needs to happen.

Beekman is beyond its useful life expectancy, like many buildings that were constructed in the 60s. Different construction techniques and materials that wouldn't be used today were used inside the school, so it is definitely in need of significant improvements, which is why we're looking at having a wholesale rebuild.

Heartwood, on the other hand, is a little bit newer, and we've tried to maintain it as best as possible, but it is in need of renovations as we look to the future.

It would be nice to have some closer parking spots. Right now I park on the side of the road kind of on and off so the buses have room to unload her off the pavement. Having that space to securely unload her and get her to the school would be very beneficial.

Most of our kids need help with toileting, and it's a very limited space. We have support stations for kids that need it, but when the bathrooms are so small, it's a problem.

The space is quite tight. Our building was built years and years ago prior to a lot of the advances in technology and equipment. Our students have all of these resources that they can utilize to help make progress and gains and meet their maximum potential, but sometimes our space doesn't allow for utilizing that equipment or the medical devices that we have available.

Our students have much more equipment than they used to have — bigger equipment, stuff that helps with mobility — but right now with our current building, we don't have storage for all of our wheelchairs and mobility aids.

You see them shoved in random closets or lining the halls outside of classrooms.

We are so grateful for Heartwood for taking absolutely amazing care of my child. They will grow in the best environment possible with peer interaction and everything they deserve — they're going to get at Heartwood.

The staff is amazing. They really work with the kids. They're very hands-on. The activities that they do for my son when they go here — he does all types of things. He comes home and he sings the songs that they have sung throughout the day.

Every day there's something that the students do that touches your heart. To be able to see that on a day-to-day basis, it's priceless.

There's a certain magic about this building that no matter what you do to it, including even tearing it down physically, it will remain. It will serve students in a way that no other school can.