



Proposed Facilities Improvement Bond Referendum

Remember to Vote • October 18, 2016

7 a.m. - 9 p.m. at Your Local Elementary School

Questions and Answers

Q: Why has the School Board called for a bond referendum?

A: The District is facing space shortages at two of its elementary schools and the high school. We are also confronting significant challenges with aging infrastructure in all of our schools, especially the middle school, which was constructed in 1939. The referendum will address:

- Health and safety issues.
- Failing infrastructure and infrastructural improvements at all six schools.
- Existing space shortages at Parsons Memorial School, Harrison Avenue School and Harrison High School.

Q: What is a bond referendum?

A: A bond referendum seeks voter approval to permit the District to borrow money up to a specified amount. The District is only permitted to borrow the amount authorized by voters, and the funds can only be used for purposes identified in the voter-approved referendum. A bond referendum is similar to a home equity line that a family might use to make large scale repairs that cannot be done within an annual family budget. The rate will be fixed throughout the repayment period. Based on our excellent financial rating, our fiscal advisor has indicated that we are likely to receive a very favorable rate.

Q: Why a bond referendum?

A: A bond is the mechanism used to fund large capital projects. The costs of the capital projects required are too large to include in any one, or even a series of annual operating budgets. A bond permits the District to borrow funds at an advantageous interest rate, and maximize state aid. The Referendum is structured so that it will not add any additional cost to the taxpayer over the life of the borrowing. This no-impact bond is accomplished by reallocating money currently used for capital improvements and repairs to fund the annual cost of the borrowing.

Q: What is the proposed finance period for the bond?

A: The bond will be financed over a 30 year fixed rate term.

Q: What will happen if the referendum fails?

A: If the referendum fails, health and safety concerns, failing infrastructure, and space shortages will remain. Furthermore, the opportunity to take advantage of existing funds within the budget to fully fund the bond will dramatically diminish. In the future, funding a referendum would have a financial impact on the annual budget. Additionally, with interest rates at historic lows the cost of construction will likely

increase and a future building plan is likely to cost more to finance and to construct. Most importantly, we would likely lose the opportunity to fund the borrowing for this referendum without adding any additional cost to the taxpayer by reallocating existing funds for repairs and improvements within the budget.

Q: How were the projects in the bond referendum developed?

A: The Board directed the superintendent, assistant superintendent for business and a subcommittee of the Board to develop a bond referendum that would address the District's most essential needs without adding any cost to the taxpayer. The Facilities Committee began meeting and reviewing information and reported periodically to the Board of Education. Demographic studies were conducted and used in conjunction with actual enrollment data and assessments of physical conditions. Working with the District's architects, each school was carefully inspected to identify the most essential capital improvements and health and safety issues. The analysis identified and prioritized a scope of work within a budget that does not require new funding.

Q: What are the District's plans for the future?

A: The District continues to pursue academic excellence and to modify programs to best meet the needs of students and to address the rapidly changing educational demands of the 21st century. While we anticipate some programmatic changes and increases to our academic offerings in the future, this referendum allows for flexibility to modify, or add programs within that vision.

Q: What is the intended outcome?

A: The proposed capital improvement projects will ensure that our buildings remain safe and structurally sound, create appropriate instructional spaces for students based on enrollment growth, provide additional ADA-compliant accessibility to facilities, provide an additional athletic field at LMK and address the limited number of fields available to District students and for community and recreational use.

Q: Why is less work required at both Purchase and Preston?

A: In the last bond referendum, these two schools received new building additions and major renovations. Enrollment is steady at both schools, so the most essential needs in these schools focus primarily on repair of building infrastructure.

Q: Will construction impact students or staff?

A. At times, students may be relocated to different classrooms to minimize any disruption. However, a substantial amount of work will occur in the summer when feasible. In addition, the project additions are designed to be built as small satellite buildings and will not be connected to the main building until the end

of construction. This approach minimizes disturbance to students and allows for the more disruptive work to occur at times when students are not in school.

Q: What is the timeline for completion of the proposed work?

A: If the bond is approved by voters, the project will be submitted to the New York State Education Department for approval. The estimated timeline for receiving approval from the SED is currently six to nine months. Therefore, if the project is approved by voters, it is expected that some items included in the bond may begin during the summer of 2017.

Q: How does the community benefit from this project?

A: The most obvious benefit is that our students will be in buildings that are structurally sound, safe, appropriately sized, energy-efficient and more handicap accessible. A strong school system is the center of a community, and maintaining our schools is essential to maintaining a high quality of life in our community and enhances real estate value. A thriving school District will continue to attract new families and businesses to our area.

Q: How much will the project cost?

A: The proposed cost of the project is \$46,499,341. Based on the current annual appropriation of \$2.6 million in the capital budget, the District will transfer the capital appropriation to an annual debt service appropriation, enabling it to fund repayment of the bond at no additional cost to the taxpayer.

Q: Can this money be used for any other purpose?

A: By law, the approved funds can only be used for purposes described on the ballot and

nothing else.

Q: Where do I vote?

A: Polling places will be the same as for school budget votes; citizens may vote at their neighborhood elementary school between the hours of 7 a.m. and 9 p.m.

Q: Who is eligible to vote?

A: There is no personal registration. At the time of the vote, voters will sign a statement affirming that they possess the following qualifications of being: 1) a citizen of the United States, 2) 18 years of age, and 3) a resident of the District for a period of at least 30 days. Voters must be able to produce at least one of the following proofs of residency: a driver's license, a non-driver identification card, a utility bill, or a voter registration card.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Applications for an absentee ballot may be obtained at the Office of the District Clerk, 50 Union Avenue, Harrison, or may be downloaded from the District website, www.harrisoncsd.org.

Completed applications must be received by the District Clerk at least seven days before the vote if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or the day before the vote if the ballot is to be picked up personally by the voter. Completed ballots must be received in the District Clerk's office no later than 5 p.m. on Bond Vote Day.



Connect with Us

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