



Space, Security & Infrastructure Bond Referendum Tuesday, April 10, 2018

FAQ

How was the scope of the project determined? Why is the Board putting up another bond?

In 2016, a Facilities Exploratory Committee composed of members of the school community and the community at-large convened to analyze current enrollment figures and projections as well as the Building Conditions Survey. The committee then provided recommendations to the Board of Education which were discussed and refined over the period of a year. An extensive project was compiled addressing the needs and goals that were identified from this process: Growing Enrollment, 21st Century Learning, Infrastructure and Security Upgrades. Following the defeat of the capital project bond referendum in December 2017, the Board examined the immediate challenges facing our school facilities and reflected on valuable feedback from different constituents in our community. The current plan, up for vote on April 10, has been scaled back significantly to less than half the original cost and addresses the district's overcrowding due to growing enrollment, security upgrades, and infrastructure priorities.

What's in this Bond? How does this current bond proposal differ from the 2017 proposal?

The current bond proposal addresses the following:

Space: Second floor, eight classroom addition at William E. Cottle School.

Security: A new external security vestibule at William E. Cottle School as well as modernized communication systems for building-wide announcements, security upgrades, fire alarm systems, egress lighting and replacement and rekeying of interior and exterior doors.

Infrastructure improvements: Turf field replacement (currently year 11 of a 10-12 year average lifespan), Cottle field renovation, telephone and bell system updates, univent refurbishment, energy system upgrades, select floor and ceiling replacements, and additional mechanical plant repairs.

The current proposed bond does not include any construction in the libraries, gymnasiums or cafeterias of any building.

Why Now?

Addressing such issues through a single, comprehensive capital project allows the district to take advantage of an estimated 23.8% in state building aid. The timing of the project is designed to coincide with retiring existing debt service as well as a favorable interest rate. Additionally, with the scaled back list of projects the district increased its chance to secure



NYSED approval in time to begin construction on the eight classroom second story addition in Summer 2019 with an estimated construction completion date of Summer 2020.

What is the total amount that would be borrowed?

The proposed amount being borrowed is \$9,987,000. The financing would be over 20 years, but the majority of the payments would not begin for approximately 2 or 3 years. The district estimates that it would receive 23.8% in state building aid. Interest rates for school districts are at historic lows, but our estimates have factored in a cushion for a modest increase in rates to 3.1% for TUFSD.

What is the cost breakdown?

William E. Cottle Elementary School

- Second Floor Classroom Addition: \$7,000,000
- Entry Security Upgrades: \$ 260,000
- Secondary Entry Security: \$ 50,000
- Playfield Upgrades \$ 500,000

Tuckahoe Middle School/High School

- HSMS Turf Replacement: \$ 750,000

Districtwide:

- Infrastructure Priority 1 & 2 \$1,232,000
- Exterior & Interior Door Security \$ 195,000

What is the tax impact of this proposed bond?

Taxes would increase for the first two years, starting in 2020-21. From 2022 on, the net impact of the project would be budget neutral - the cost of the new debt will be more than offset by the retirement of existing debt. The cost of the project for a median home with an assessed value of \$8,500 would be \$254/year. However, as stated above, due to the retirement of existing debt, the net impact to a homeowner for the project would be close to neutral – approximately \$60/year for years 1 and 2 and then cost neutral.

Why can't the general budget be used to address these needs?

Projects of this size are too large to be included in the District's general operating budget due to the limits required by the tax cap. By financing the project, the District spreads the cost of the project over 20 years as well as offsets a portion of the cost by taking advantage of NYS building aid – currently 23.8% for the District.

What is the current state of the district's finances?

TUFSD's credit rating was recently upgraded to Aa3 by Moody's Investor Service and it has remained within the NYS Property Tax Cap for the past five years. The district has been fiscally prudent implementing various cost saving strategies such as offering retirement incentives and bringing students placed in out of district programs back to our schools. Additionally, we have increased revenues by attracting non-resident tuition students and obtaining various grants such as Pre-Kindergarten, Smart Schools and Reward School. We have also increased our Tax



Certiorari Reserve Fund which allows the district to avoid taking on new debt to pay for Tax Certiorari settlements.

What is the district's current debt and when does it retire?

The district has \$15 million remaining in outstanding debt of which 97% will be paid off over the next 10 years.

Can the money to be raised for the proposed project be used for any other purpose?

No, the district can only borrow the amount of funds specified on the ballot and can only use those funds for the purposes specified. The Board cannot increase the amount being borrowed after the vote.

When would construction begin?

- Design & Documentation (12 Weeks) 2/18 - 5/18
- NYSED Permitting (36 Weeks) 5/18 - 1/19
- Bidding & Contract Award (8 Weeks) 1/19 - 3/19
- Steel Shop Drawing Process (6 Weeks) 3/19 - 4/19
- Steel Fabrication (12 Weeks) 4/19 - 7/19
- Steel Erection (Summer Break) 7/19 - 8/19
- Construction Phase (42 Weeks) 3/19 - 1/20

While NYSED is currently taking up to 9 months for project approval, our goal is to obtain NYSED approval in time to begin construction in Summer 2019 with an estimated construction completion date of Summer 2020.

What is the interim plan?

After analyzing current enrollment projections, we have decided to maintain all K-5 educational programs at the elementary school for September 2018. If enrollment shifts, we will carefully weigh our limited options, which include increasing class sizes on particular grade levels and converting the WEC Library into a general education classroom.

During the construction phase, school will not be interrupted or cancelled. The steel for the second story at WEC will be erected during the summer months when school is not in session, and soundproofing and waterproofing will be completed before the opening of school in September. Although interior construction work would continue through the first half of the school year, air quality controls and safety protocols will be strictly enforced. A construction manager employed by the district will work closely with our school administrators to ensure that all NYSED guidelines are followed.

Will construction impact students or interfere with classes?

The district does not foresee any impact to students or classes from construction. State Education Department (SED) guidelines must be followed when performing work at any school



facility for the health and safety of building occupants. Included in these guidelines is a hard barrier requirement between construction and students. The timing of all work will be carefully planned to account for safety and noise. Significant work including erecting of steel, rigging and delivery of materials must occur during non-school hours. Additionally, the district will require that all construction workers are cleared through the school safety system.

What are the alternatives and what happens if the referendum is defeated?

The Board will still have the responsibility to address the needs for additional instructional spaces at William E. Cottle School and district-wide infrastructure. Already the district has suspended its Universal Pre-K program as a result of space constraints. Other alternatives include:

- Implement Music-on-a-Cart in addition to Art-on-a-Cart
- Move grade 5 classes to the MS/HS building
- Relocate District Offices to an off-site location
- Postpone infrastructure work and/or utilize fund balance to fund this work
- Reduce physical education and athletic program offerings

What time is the vote?

Residents will be able to vote between 6:00am and 9:00pm on Tuesday, April 10, 2018.

Where do I vote?

School Election District A (comprised of all of the area lying west of of Midland Avenue) to vote at Tuckahoe Community Center, 71 Columbus Avenue, Tuckahoe, NY.

School Election District B (comprised of all of the area lying east of Midland Avenue) to vote at William E. Cottle School, 2 Siwanoy Boulevard, Eastchester, NY. Chester Heights residents now vote at William E. Cottle School.

I'm not sure I am registered to vote, how can I find out and/or how do I register to vote?

If a voter has registered pursuant to Section 2014 of the Education Law and has voted at an annual or special district meeting within the last four (4) calendar years, he/she is eligible to vote at this Special Meeting; if a voter is registered and eligible to vote under Article 5 of the Election Law, he/she is also eligible to vote at this Special Meeting. All other persons who wish to vote must register.

Residents may register to vote with the District Clerk on any school business day before March 27, 2018 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. at the District Clerk's Office, at which time any person will be entitled to have his or her name placed on such Register, provided that



he or she is known or proven to the satisfaction of the District Clerk to be then or thereafter entitled to vote at such Special Meeting for which the register is prepared.

I will be out of town on April 10, 2018, how can I vote?

Applications for absentee ballots are obtainable during school business hours from the District Clerk or online at www.tuckahoeschools.org. Completed applications must be received by the District Clerk by 4:00 p.m. at least seven (7) days before the Special Meeting if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or by 4:00 p.m. the day before the Special Meeting, if the ballot is to be given personally to the voter. Absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk no later than 5:00 p.m., prevailing time, on April 10, 2018.

How can I learn more?

Please visit www.tuckahoeschools.org for information.