

Frequently Asked Questions About the Bond

Q. Why is the Board of Education proposing a bond?

A. Our facilities needs must be addressed now. Our enrollment is growing and our schools no longer support a 21st-century education. To be eligible for NYS Building Aid, all final plans must be approved by the State Education Department, and the current wait time is approximately nine to twelve months. The longer we wait, the longer it will take to complete the project.

Q. What are the financial facts about the bond?

A. The total cost of the proposed bond is \$69,877,198. The district will be eligible for approximately 18.5% in NYS Building Aid. The cost to the average homeowner starting in 2015-2023 will be approximately \$106/year or \$8.83/month. After 2023, there will be no additional cost to taxpayers because the 2001 construction bond will be fully paid and the debt for the new bond will replace it, having a neutral tax impact moving forward.

Q. What is the proposed timeline for completion of the project?

A. The nature of the work, as well as the need to minimize disruption to the instructional program, will necessitate that the work be completed over a seven-year period.

Q. Is the majority of the bond directed toward districtwide maintenance and repairs?

A. **Absolutely not!** Approximately \$50 million of the proposed bond will fund new construction and major renovations to increase instructional space, auditorium renovations, upgrades to the science labs at Schreiber and Weber, new science labs at each elementary school, music room renovations, replacement of all classroom portables with permanent structures, installation of air conditioning in one common location in each school, installation of two multipurpose athletic fields, and improvements in technology and security. The remaining amount of the bond will support needed repairs and renovations to bathrooms, windows, floors, ceilings, parking lots, doors and HVAC.

Q. What type of multipurpose athletic fields will be installed?

A. The Board's priority is the safety of all students. No decisions will be made regarding how to surface the fields without first conducting a thorough investigation, including bringing in outside experts if necessary.

Q. Can the district spend more than the amount of an approved bond?

A. No. By law, the district is prohibited from spending above the amount approved by voters.

Q. If the bond is approved, how many classrooms will be added district wide?

A. The project includes a total of 21 additional classrooms broken down as follows: Daly – 6 (4 are pre-k); Guggenheim – 4; Manorhaven – 4; Sousa – 2; Salem – 1; Weber – 3 (1 general music, 1 orchestra, 1 band) + fitness (part of PE) and Schreiber – 1. Twenty-one classrooms is a large as the high school addition back in 2001.

Q. If the proposed bond is approved, how will there be a neutral tax impact after 2023?

A. After 2023, the 2001 construction bond, previously approved by voters, will be fully paid and the taxes, approximately \$400 to \$450 per average household, used to fund that bond will then be used to support the proposed bond. Therefore, taxpayers will see no increase in their taxes or a neutral tax impact after 2023.

If absolutely no new construction, renovations and repairs were done, taxpayers would see their annual taxes decrease after 2023. However, the Board of Education strongly believes that there is a significant amount of work that must be done to our schools to accommodate the needs of our current students, support our more rigorous and competitive global curriculum, address future enrollment projections and our educational vision for the future.

Q. Why was the proposed bond vote scheduled for March 10th and not on May 19th along with the Annual Budget Vote and Board of Education Trustee Election?

A. The longer we wait to vote on the proposed bond, the longer it will take to complete the projects. Once voters approve the bond, it will take at least four to six months for the district's architects to design and develop the final plans. To qualify for New York State Building Aid, all final plans must be approved by the State Education Department. Each project must then be bid, awarded and contracts signed. Currently, once the plans have been submitted to the SED, the wait time for review and approval is approximately nine to twelve months. We believe our facilities needs must be addressed now. To minimize disruption to our instructional program, we are hoping to complete some projects during the summer of 2016. Delaying the vote until May would definitely make that impossible.

Q. Where can I get more information?

A. Visit the district's website at www.portnet.k12.ny.us to view our video showing more about the proposed scope of work and to learn additional information about the details of the proposed bond.

**Please Remember to Vote on
Tuesday, March 10, 2015 6 a.m.-10 p.m. at Weber Middle School
For more facts about the bond, visit the district's website at www.portnet.k12.ny.us.**