

Oppenheim-Ephratah-St. Johnsville Central School District sets date for Capital Project Referendum

On Monday October 24th, The Oppenheim-Ephratah-St. Johnsville School District Board of Education unanimously passed a resolution authorizing a public vote on a proposed capital project.

The capital project referendum will be held on Tuesday December 13th between 12:00 noon and 8:00 pm with voting taking place at both the Elementary School gymnasium and the Jr/Sr High School auditorium.

Residents will vote at the same location they do for the annual school budget vote in May. If residents are unsure which polling location they should use, please contact the district office at 518 568-2011 and we will inform you.

General outline of our capital project proposal:

Building condition studies have illuminated the need for full roof replacements dating back prior to the merger.

A visible main entrance and secure vestibules for visitors at the Jr/Sr Building is a security goal.

There is a need to update the science, agriculture and technology programs to meet student career needs.

The creation of an easily accessible district office area at the Jr/Sr building would be incorporated into the project.

At the OESJ Elementary School a number of instructional spaces are slated for updates as the former k-12 building is retrofitted to accommodate a preK-6 population.

The vestibule outside the main office would be expanded and modernized and restroom facilities improved to serve this change in population.

An auditorium at the elementary school would provide a location conducive for building wide assemblies, concerts or events. Having young students sit on the gym floor with parents and families sitting on gym bleachers is not safe or appropriate as we strive to improve the confidence and self image of our student population.

All work on this project will include the latest in energy saving products, remove the increased burden on long term maintenance functions and are responsive to the needs of the students and community.

Our financial plan:

The total proposed project will not exceed \$24,016,000 and the use of local capital reserve funds will be capped at \$4,196,194.

Strategic long range fiscal planning has positioned the district to fund the local portion from our capital reserves, thus ensuring no increased impact on taxpayers.

It is important that we recognize that our state has a constitutional responsibility to provide safe, functional school buildings for the students of New York State. The students of OESJ deserve to be educated in schools that are safe, efficient and state of the art. They deserve it as much as any other students across our state.

Continued progress:

The last two years has seen improvement in graduation rates and performance on Regents exams with a greater focus on student learning.

The district is in the midst of a major multi-year curriculum overhaul, and has implemented a one to one chromebook initiative in the 7-12 building.

Other technologies recently made available to students includes drones, 3d printers and laser engravers to enhance instruction.

The district has made a commitment to deploying technology to improve instruction, communication and assessment across the continuum, with our teachers receiving a great deal of professional development in teaching with technology, project based learning, and assessment.

In short, we have made excellent gains programmatically and are poised to continue improving instruction and student preparation prek-12.

Our facilities goal for our educational program:

What remains is the need for a significant improvement in facilities to improve the safety, efficiency and functionality of our campuses for generations of learners to come.

More information detailing various aspects of the proposed project will be forthcoming and a number of public engagement events will be scheduled prior to December 13th. I look forward to engaging the community in the days ahead as we continue our quest to create a school district that will unite the residents of the region and attract families from elsewhere.

Sincerely,

David Halloran
Superintendent of Schools