



WESTBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BUILDING A FUTURE-READY DISTRICT

BOND REFERENDUM 2018

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF THE PROPOSED BOND PLAN?

The proposed Bond Plan includes projects for Westbury Middle School and Westbury High School. Fourteen modular classrooms and vital infrastructure work addressing building health, safety, and security are proposed for Westbury Middle School. Twelve modular classrooms and health, safety, and security infrastructure projects are proposed for Westbury High School.

WHAT IS THE TOTAL COST OF THE PROPOSED BOND REFERENDUM?

The proposed Bond Plan is \$58,585,000, to be financed over a 17-year period. With interest conservatively estimated at three percent, total principal and interest payments over the 17 years will amount to \$80,109,683. New York State building aid will cover a total of \$55,790,836 in principal and interest costs. The District's share – \$24,318,847 over 17 years – will be paid for by repurposing allocations in the District's current annual operating budget, *effectively making the Bond Plan tax-neutral for Westbury homeowners.*

WHAT IS THE DISTRICT'S STATE AID RATE? WILL ALL THE PROPOSED PROJECTS QUALIFY FOR STATE AID?

The District's current New York State building aid rate is 82.4 percent. The District's architects are estimating that 90 percent of all projects included in the Bond Plan will qualify for state aid.

HOW CAN A \$58,585,000 BOND REFERENDUM BE TAX-NEUTRAL FOR WESTBURY TAXPAYERS?

The District's state aid rate for qualifying projects is at an all-time high of 82.4 percent. The District is conservatively projecting 90 percent of all projects proposed will qualify for principal and interest funding with state aid. The balance of principal and interest, to be paid by the District, will be

covered by repurposing the following current expenditures:

- The leasing and associated bus transportation costs for the Ninth Grade Academy at Nassau Community College. These expenses, in the District's current operating budget and covered by current District taxes, will be redirected to help fund the District's portion of bond principal and interest payments.
- Current District debt service scheduled to retire in 2020 will be reallocated to funding the new debt service if the bond is approved on May 15th.

By reallocating expenses currently in the District's annual operating budget, approval of the Bond Referendum on May 15th will not add to District expenses. As a result, approval on May 15th will not add to residents' school taxes directly related to funding the Bond Plan.

WHAT LED TO THE DECISION TO SCHEDULE A BOND REFERENDUM NOW?

The overcrowding at Westbury Middle School and Westbury High School is at a critical level. Both schools are significantly over the building capacity guidelines established by the New York State Education Department (SED). The District was able to temporarily alleviate some of the overcrowding at the high school by setting up a Ninth Grade Academy in space leased at Nassau Community College. However, the SED has made it clear that the District will only be permitted to continue with this leased space on a temporary, short-term basis; a long-term plan has to be developed and put into place. That directive from the SED made it incumbent upon the District to solicit community input on possible solutions, develop a plan, and have the community vote on that proposed plan and associated costs. Rather than asking residents to come out for two separate votes, the Board of Education opted for having the Bond Referendum vote on the same day that the community will be voting on the 2018-2019 annual budget and Board elections. Scheduling the vote for May 15th also ensured that if the plan is approved, students will be able to move into the new modular classrooms for the start of the 2020-2021 school year.



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HOW DOES THE 2018 BOND INCORPORATE THE DISTRICT'S LONG-TERM EDUCATIONAL AND FINANCIAL PLANS?

The educational values that guided the process in planning for the proposed 2018 Bond Referendum are the same that form the foundation of the District's educational vision and are consistent with the District's initiatives to build a ***Future-Ready District***. The proposed bond scope offers a path to creating the educational space and resources in both Westbury Middle School and Westbury High School necessary to help ensure our students are well prepared for college and beyond. The bond scope also addresses major health, safety, and security issues at both the middle school and the high school that impact education and the overall building experience for students, faculty, staff, parents, and community members.

A major fiscal assumption in the bond planning has been the achievement of tax neutrality. If the Bond Referendum is approved by the community on May 15th, the District will repurpose District expenses currently allocated for the Ninth Grade Academy lease and transportation costs when the ninth grade is returned to the high school in the 2020-2021 school year, as well as funds currently allocated to District debt service that will be retired concurrent with the new debt service in the 2020-2021 school year. These two amounts, combined, will cover the costs of the new debt service, resulting in no change in resident taxes directly related to funding the Bond Plan.

WILL ANY OF THE PROJECTS PROPOSED IN THE BOND SCOPE INTERFERE WITH CLASSES AT EITHER THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OR THE HIGH SCHOOL?

No class time will be interrupted or cancelled due to construction or other work being performed. Construction crews and other contractors' work shifts will be concentrated during summer months and other times when school is not in session. If any interior work is to be done during the school year, work shifts will be scheduled during weekends, evenings, and other times when interior building spaces are unoccupied.

FOR ANY CONSTRUCTION TAKING PLACE DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR, WHAT SAFETY MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN, BUILDING PERSONNEL, AND SCHOOL VISITORS?

New York State Education Department (SED) guidelines must be followed when performing work within any school facility. All capital construction projects require a building permit issued by the SED. The importance of a building permit is

to ensure that the work will be done properly to preserve the health and safety of a facility's occupants or users. SED also requires permanent separation between all work areas and students. In addition, the District has retained the services of a construction manager who will be on site during all phases of construction.

HOW DO WE GET ALL THIS WORK DONE IF THIS REVISED BOND REFERENDUM IS NOT APPROVED?

The bond referendum focuses on:

- Providing critically needed classroom space to accommodate the severe overcrowding in Westbury Middle School and Westbury High School.
- Necessary infrastructure and ADA compliance work addressing building health, safety, and security at both Westbury Middle School and Westbury High School.

If the Bond Plan is not approved by the community, the overcrowding issues still remain. The New York State Education Department has told the District that the housing of 9th grade students in space leased at Nassau Community College will not be permitted on any long-term basis. These students would have to return to the high school, thereby exacerbating the current overcrowded conditions even further. With the projected increase in enrollment at the high school over the next several years, there would be very few options open to the District other than to dramatically increase class size, eliminate elective and other non-degree mandated classes, or consider going to a split schedule. These same unsatisfactory options would hold true for the middle school.

Additionally, the infrastructure work at the middle school and the high school will still need to be done. The only other way to pay for these projects would be to include them in the District's annual operating budgets. The tax impact to achieve these projects would put an unacceptable strain on taxpayers in our community. It could take up to 10 years or more to accomplish. That would necessitate increased levels of maintenance to keep up with deteriorating conditions of projects that would have to be deferred far into the future. It would also require severe cutbacks to existing programs and services, including non-mandated special education services, non-mandated services to private and non-public schools, music and art programs, elective courses, athletics, and before- and after-school programs/clubs.

WITH COMMUNITY APPROVAL OF THE BOND REFERENDUM, ALL PROPOSED PROJECTS WILL BE COMPLETED BY 2022.