

Bond Questions & Answers

1. Why is a bond project needed?

The project will continue to ensure that the students of the Comsewogue School District are provided with a well-rounded education in a safe and secure learning environment. The improvements proposed through this capital project bond referendum will preserve the integrity of the school buildings, address repairs, improve instructional resources for all, and upgrade arts and athletic facilities.

2. What does the project entail?

The proposed project will provide all six schools in the district, as well as the administration office, with considerable building improvements: including security vestibules; replacing outdated casework; bathroom renovations; repairs to building masonry, sidewalks and curbing; upgrades to HVAC and electrical systems. In addition, certain instructional spaces such as Art and Family & Consumer Science classrooms are outdated and can no longer accommodate the evolving 21st-century curriculum.

3. How was the plan developed?

The Board of Education established a Facilities Committee to review the state-mandated five-year building condition survey, tour district buildings, review financial and enrollment data, and ultimately, present their recommendations and findings to the Board. The committee prioritized initiatives and presented their recommendations to the Board in a special public meeting on February 12, 2018. At the March meeting, the Board finalized the scope of work, which will be presented to the community for a vote.

4. How were projects prioritized?

Projects have been categorized by importance and urgency and separated into two groups – A-List items and B-list items. If the bond is approved by residents on May 15, the A-list items will be completed first. Upon the completion of the A-list items, B-list items will be reprioritized, based on available funds and need.

5. If the project is approved, what will be the average tax impact to community residents?

The total anticipated cost of the bond proposal is \$32 million. It is estimated that 95 percent of the projects included in the proposed plan are eligible for New York State Building Aid at a rate of 74 percent; this reduces the cost impact to local residents. For a home in the district assessed at 2,800, the annual cost impact would be approximately \$120 per year.

6. Where may I find more information about the proposal?

A full list of the proposed projects is on the district website <http://www.comsewogue.k12.ny.us/>

7. How many bonds are there?

There is only one bond. The bond is only the “A” list items on the list. The B list will only be done if there are available funds left over and will be prioritized.

8. How do you figure out the \$120 increase?

The full value of all the property in Comsewogue (after all exemptions except star) is \$21,729,284. There are 8,233 properties included in that assessment. 21,729,284 Assessed Value divided by 8,233 equals the average assessed value of 2,639. In the calculation we used a 2,800-assessed value which is slightly above average. The net cost projected per year is an increase in the tax levy of \$927,174. We divide that by the assessed value estimated at \$21,600,000 (to be conservative instead of the higher number of 21,729,284). Mathematically stated: $\$927,174/21,600,000 = .0429 \times 2,800 = \120 .

9. Is the bond increase tied to the budget?

The 2018-2019 Budget that is put up for vote on May 15th does not include a bond increase. The residents are only voting on a Bond proposition.

10. Why is roofing for the other buildings not being addressed in the bond?

The other building roofs are expected to have a useful life beyond 5 years. Terryville Road School has the oldest roof in the district and it will be beyond its useful life in 5 years.

11. What’s the point of Solar on Terryville? Will we get savings from it?

The district estimated that it will receive a payback from the solar array on the roof in less than 4 years. The district receives 74.3 % aid on approved capital expenditures. The solar is expected to generate approx. \$90,000 per year, at a projected net cost of $\$1,200,000 \times .26\% = \$312,000$.

12. Why do the costs of the project seem high? How do you decide which contractor gets the job?

The project cost estimates are loaded costs that include contingency, escalation, soft costs and fees. Soft costs are costs of surveys, assessments, legal fees, bonding, and advertising. School Districts follow General Municipal Law which requires that contracts be procured in a manner so as to assure the prudent and economical use of public funds. Bids are advertised, competitively bid and awarded to the lowest responsible bidder.

13. Why a concession stand/press box that only caters to a select number of athletes?

The entire community will benefit from an improved area along Bicycle Path with bathrooms available for Homecoming, Graduation and many other events. In addition, there will be handicap accessible bathrooms and the unsightly port-a-potties will be removed. Additional parking will be provided. The improved appearance of the area will be a benefit to the entire community.

14. When will payments on the bond begin?

It is expected that a portion of the Principal and Interest will become due in Fiscal year 2020-2021, pending New York State Education approval. Bonds will not be issued before project approval which is expected to take 40 weeks from Bond approval. Interest must be paid within 12 months and principal has 24 months for first payments to begin after issue of Bond.

15. How do you register to vote for the bond?

Any resident that has voted in a general election in the Town of Brookhaven during the last four years is eligible to vote in a school district election. Please contact the district clerk at 631-474-8109 to register if you are over 18, a United State Citizen and have lived in the school district for a minimum of 30 days.

16. What are we doing to improve the Pre-K drop off?

The Pre-K drop off and pick up at the Norwood Elementary school will be improved by adding additional parking and a safe designated waiting area.

17. When will I see work begin on the bond projects?

Pending State approval, the residents may see work begin during summer 2019.

18. What is the building condition survey?

The State Education Department requires the District to hire a licensed Architectural/Engineering firm to prepare the Building Condition Survey Report every five years. The report identifies the condition of the building and site related components and is used to develop the five-year Capital Facilities Plan which serves as a tool for the District to manage its capital needs and goals. The survey is submitted to the New York State Education department.

19. How quickly does the State give us State Aid on a project?

The project must be substantially completed, and the final cost submitted to the State in order for Building Aid to start on a project. This will normally occur 18 months after the project is approved by the State.

20. I see the district is anticipating a savings of 90k per year for the solar on the Terryville roof, how much will we save on electric by upgrading electrical systems included in the bond?

The electrical work included in the Bond list is to accommodate new technology and other increased electrical needs in the building. LED light fixtures are included and will generate a small savings.

21. Is the new casework easier to maintain?

New casework will reduce ongoing maintenance of existing cabinetry and casework. It is difficult to replace parts and we have refinished many times.

22. Are we adding carpeting for sound quality – are there other options for new floor?

Auditorium aisles are typically carpeted to improve the room acoustics. Other materials can be evaluated during the project design.

23. What type of fuel do the current emergency generators run on? Can we look at a solar generator if we get to the “B” list?

If and when we get to the “B” list, we will certainly explore all options available.

24. What are wireless locksets on the “B” list?

They are wireless locksets that also provide keyless access.

25. Was the 2004 Bond – 15-year bond – approved in 2004?

The last two bond referendums were approved by residents on February 5, 2003 and March 8, 2007. The last issue was 6/15/2008 and all Capital Improvement Bonds will retire by 7/15/2025. They will begin to retire in fiscal year 2022-2023 and principal and interest payments will be complete by 2025.

26. What will happen if the bond fails?

If this Bond fails, the Board of Education has an option to put the same or revised Bond proposal up for voter approval.

27. What if we didn't have a bond and the Terryville Roof failed?

An emergency repair would have to be done. The roof cost would be added into the regular budget in one year, via a transfer to capital. The resident cost would be collected in one year and the average cost to a homeowner would be approximately \$370.