

»
**MARCH 2026 REFERENDUM
PUBLIC PRESENTATION**

**SOLUTIONS
ARCHITECTURE**

FRANK A. MESSINEO • AIA

BERKELEY HEIGHTS BOARD OF EDUCATION



FACTS & FAQs

»» SOME FACTS . . .



- » We have submitted for DOE Project Approval and the Debt Service Aid Number of \$17.1 Million is being reviewed.
- » The District and their finance team have conservatively carried a 4.15% interest rate for all tax impact calculations - these rates may be subject to change at the time of bond sale.
- » There have been significant increases in the construction industry due to material cost increases, shipping increases, material shortages, and expanded schedules – **we still need to work within the original budget numbers and will need to adjust accordingly.**

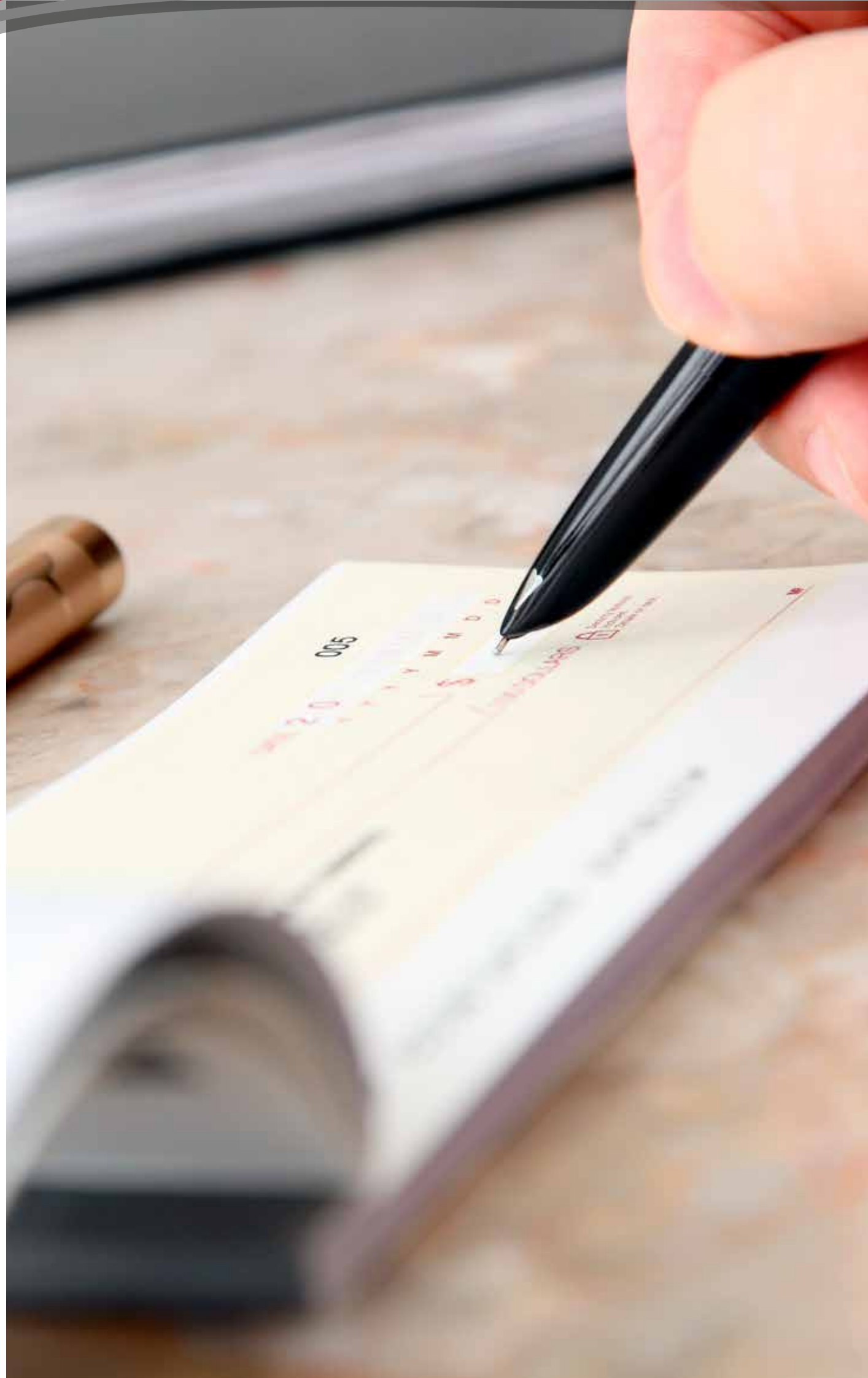
»» MORE FACTS . . .



- » The designs shown within this presentation are conceptual only. We are simply providing an “idea” of what these spaces can look like at this time.
- » If and when the referendum passes, we will be conducting numerous meetings with the staff and administration to work on the detailed design of all of the individual spaces. Looking at needs, finishes, furniture, and overall “feel” of these rooms.
- » It is of paramount importance that while the educational environment is modernized, that we maintain the character and appeal of the existing buildings in the community.

»» CAN MORE BE SPENT?

F.A.Q.



Q: Can more money be spent than the amount approved in the question?

A: No. The Cost of the Referendum Projects cannot exceed the amount approved by the voters. The amount approved by the voters includes a reasonable budget under which to complete the work as well as required contingencies to address unforeseen conditions and construction issues.



Q: What will happen to the children before, during and after construction work?

A: Safety, security and superior education are just three of the variables we take into consideration when planning District operations. In most cases, construction and renovations will be scheduled to be completed during the summer months or at other times when students are not in the schools. When school is in session, students will be separated from work at all times, this way, students can attend classes with minimal disruption.



Q: How will my taxes be impacted if I'm part of the NJ Senior Tax Freeze Program?

A: If you are currently participating in the NJ Senior Tax Freeze Program, your taxes will remain unaffected by this Bond Sale.

» If the Bond Referendum Passes - your taxes remain the same.

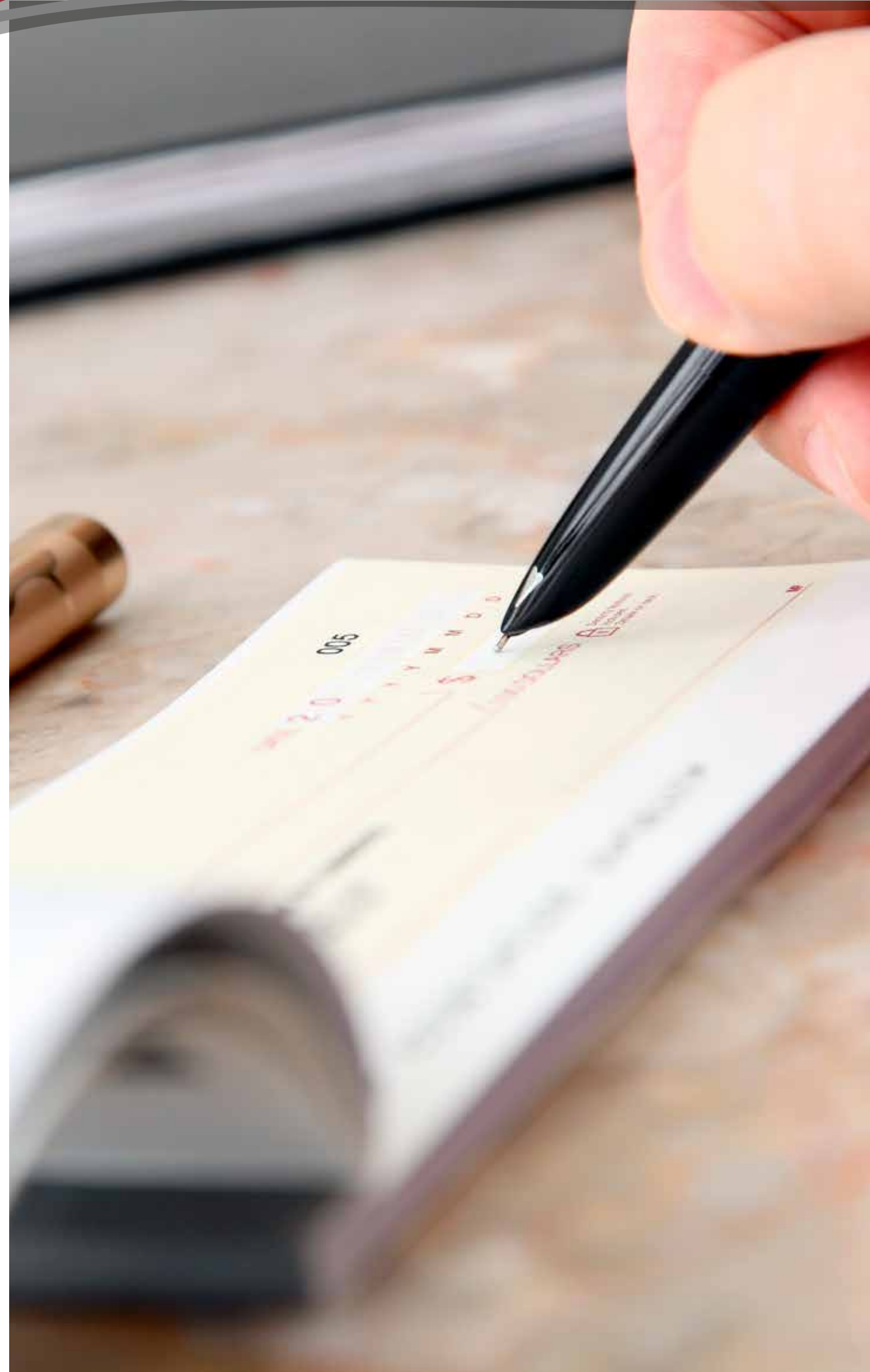
» If the Bond Referendum Fails - your taxes remain the same.

B: If you are not participating - application is a simple form if you meet the eligibility requirements.

Q: Are there other programs that could benefit us?

A: YES: Anchor - Property Tax/Rent Relief Program (*same application*)
Stay NJ - Tax Credit for Seniors

»» WHY WASN'T THIS WORK DONE BEFORE? | F.A.Q.



Q: Why hasn't the Board of Education done any of this work over the past 20 years?

A: It must be noted that this Board of Education and those that came before it, use Capital & Maintenance Reserve monies to conduct repairs and upgrades on an annual basis and have done so since the last Referendum.

It should be noted, however, that because of the District's 2% cap, it is impossible to complete the amount of work necessary out of the capital account. While some work has been completed, other work has been deferred and unfortunately that work continues to build up.

It's been over 20 years since the last successful referendum and the amount of work necessary to increase capacity is significant - at least through the Referendum - \$17.1 Million in state aid is pending approval.

»» POTENTIAL CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE



Q: When would the work begin and when will it be completed?

- A:**
- » The schedule for implementation of the projects will be carefully reviewed & crafted into a detailed timeline that works best for the School District.
 - » Some projects could begin construction as early as summer of 2026, however, we would develop a bidding strategy that optimizes project completions and provides opportunities for best pricing.
 - » Projects that require more time to design & develop will begin later in the 2026 year or the summers of 2027 thru 2029.
 - » Allowing for flexibility of scheduling allows us to bid at the most appropriate times resulting in the best pricing for projects.

»» WHY NOT WAIT UNTIL PRICES DROP ?

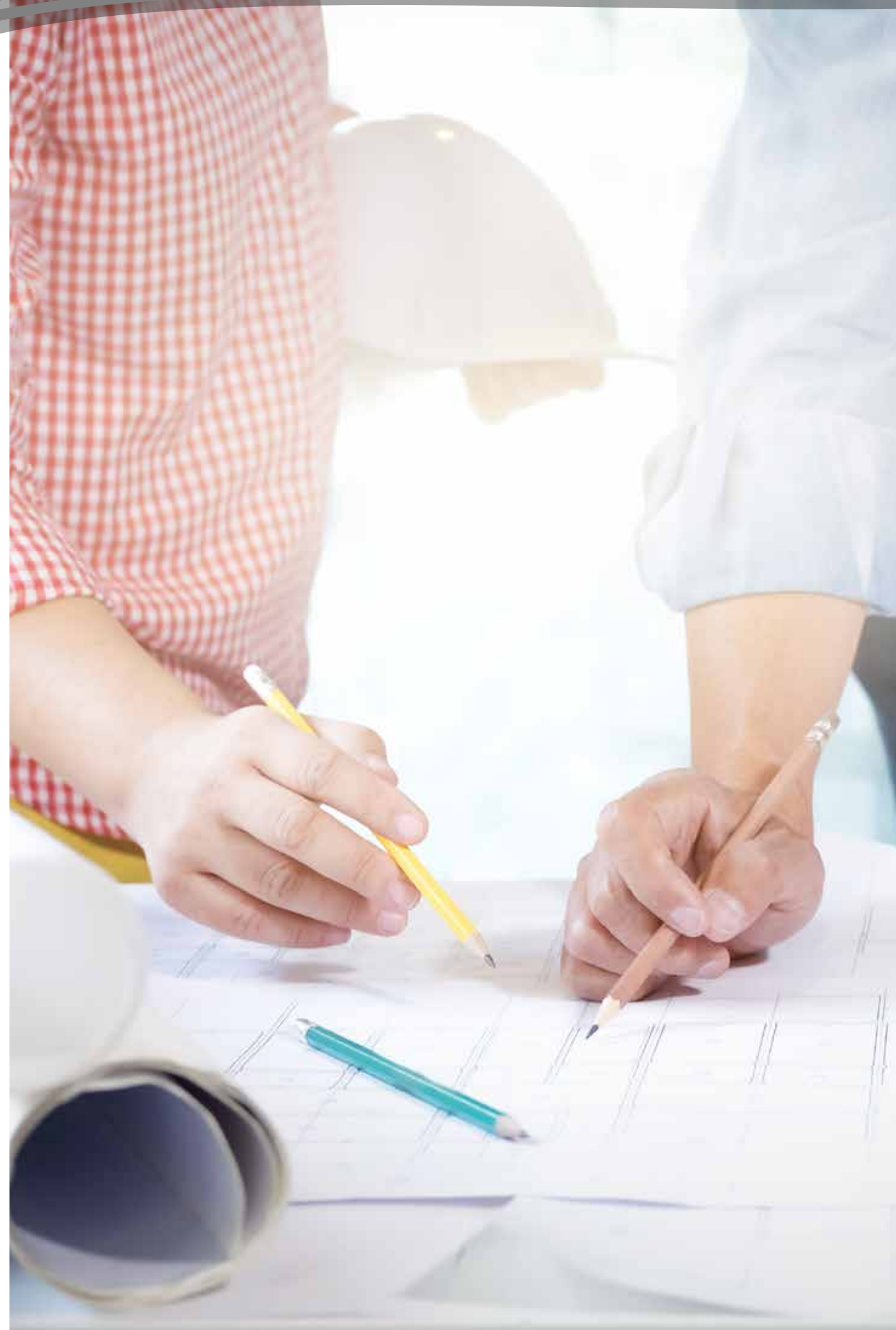


Q: Given the increased construction costs, why not wait until they drop before attempting this project?

A: Over the past several years costs have continued to rise, and while they are lower now than they were during COVID, it is not likely that they will return to pre-COVID values.

A: That being said, it would be safe to assume, that waiting longer to do this work will result in the District being able to do less for more money.

» WHY WERE THE QUESTIONS STRUCTURED THE WAY THEY WERE?



Q: Why were the questions structured the way they were?

A: The scope of work for these projects was selected largely in part by the District's Facilities Audit, Long Range Plan and then later the input received from the (2) community survey's that were sent out.

A: Originally the scope of work included some \$70 million dollars of work.
» Community survey feedback helped prioritize the most urgent and widely supported needs

A: There were projects that simply couldn't make the cut.

A: The original thought was that this would be a one question Referendum.

A: The structure of the questions was simply based upon the Board's mandate that by reinvesting the debt service retiring, that there be a Question that resulted in Zero Tax Impact for the community.

» WHY WERE THE QUESTIONS STRUCTURED THEY WAY THEY WERE??



A: At that point there were two goals –

That EVERY school facility received something – in the way of educational and capital infrastructure projects.

That Question #1 result in a NET NEUTRAL OR ZERO COST TAX IMPACT

A: It then became a numbers game in order to meet the two goals – but it also became clear to the Board that given the need to complete more work; a second question was needed.

A: We began to shift projects around and provided several scenarios – each time falling short on meeting the two goals.

- » Either some schools didn't get equitable scope
- » Or Question #1 exceeded the Net Neutral requirement.

The only format that met both requirements was the question that you see before you.

»» CURRENT SYSTEM LIFECYCLE STATUS

Q: What is the specific percentage of the district's total combined facilities (by square footage or unit count) where the structural (roofing), mechanical (HVAC), electrical, and plumbing (MEP) systems are currently documented as being either beyond their manufacturer-rated useful life or within 3-5 years of projected failure?

A: The referendum projects included in Questions #1 and #2 were selected by the District's Architect based upon the Facilities Evaluation/Audit Update completed in late 2024 and the District's Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) submitted to the New Jersey Department of Education. The Facilities Evaluation conducted in 2024 identified numerous building systems across the District with installation dates ranging from the late 1950s through the early 2000s. Several mechanical systems currently serving classrooms and major spaces were installed between 1958 and 1963, which places them well beyond typical industry service life expectations for HVAC equipment.

A: It is important to note that neither the Facilities Audit nor the LRFP is intended to be a complete inventory of every system in every school building. Rather, these evaluations identify building components and systems that were determined at the time of review to be in need of repair, replacement, or approaching the end of their useful life.

»» CURRENT SYSTEM LIFECYCLE STATUS CONT...

- A:** The referendum projects included in Questions #1 and #2 were selected from this evaluation and the District's Long-Range Facilities Plan to address the most critical and highest-priority systems. The evaluation, however, was not intended to be a complete inventory of every building system, and therefore a precise district-wide percentage of systems beyond their useful life cannot be calculated.
- A:** The referendum addresses a number of these high-priority systems, but additional building systems identified in the audit will continue to be addressed through future maintenance and capital planning cycles.
- A:** The 2024 Facilities Audit Update identified approximately \$75 million in potential capital improvement needs across the District. The District's original goal was to structure a referendum that would allow the most critical projects to proceed without creating a tax increase, which became Question #1.
- A:** Given the amount of additional work identified as necessary, the District created Question #2 to allow voters the option to address additional priority projects with a tax impact.

»» CURRENT SYSTEM LIFECYCLE STATUS CONT...

- A:** Even if both questions are approved, the referendum will not resolve every facility issue within the District's buildings, as addressing the full scope of identified needs at once would have required a significantly larger and more financially burdensome referendum.
- A:** The District will continue to monitor building systems and identify future maintenance and capital projects through its required Long-Range Facilities Plan updates, which must be submitted to the New Jersey Department of Education every five years.

» POST-REFERENDUM “RESIDUAL” DEFERRED MAINTENANCE

Q: If both Proposition 1 and Proposition 2 are approved by voters, will 100% of the district’s structural and MEP systems be within their recommended useful life cycles upon project completion (approx. 2027–2028)?

A: No, based upon the update to the facilities audit there was a significant amount more work that is needed for the District’s Facilities.

Q: If not, what specific percentage of these systems will remain in the “near-end-of-life” or “deferred maintenance” category even after this \$51.7 million investment?

A: See the response to question 1. It should be noted that the District is required to update its long-range facilities plan to include maintenance and renovation projects every five years. It does not require an entire inventory of systems for every District Building; That long range facilities plan was updated as part of this referendum.

» VERIFICATION OF STATE DEBT SERVICE AID CONT...

The district has projected receiving approximately \$17.1 million in State Debt Service Aid to offset the total cost.

Q: Has the New Jersey Department of Education issued a Final Relevant Status (FRS) or a Section 15 Letter confirming that 100% of the proposed projects are “eligible costs” for this aid? What happens if the state doesn’t approve all of the expected state aid but the referendum passes?

A: Unfortunately, the District doesn’t receive that an FRS letter until after the Construction is complete and all contracts are closed, and....

A: The \$17.1 million was an original projection of the full 34% on both questions included in earlier presentations, however...

A: The District has actually been approved in for \$16.8 million in Debt Service Aid by the Department of Education.

A: The District received both PEC (Preliminary Eligible Cost) and FEC (Final Eligible Cost) Letters approving project eligibility and Debt Service aid for the projects.

» VERIFICATION OF STATE DEBT SERVICE AID CONT...

- A:** For Question #1 which has a total project cost of \$21,226,999.69 – the District has been approved for \$7,053,979.89 or 33.2% of a maximum 34% in debt service aid; this reflects minor project elements which were not eligible for aid such as furniture and equipment
- A:** For Question #2 which has a total project cost of \$29,125,968.22 – the District has been approved for \$9,831,429.20 or 33.75% of a maximum 34% in debt service aid; this reflects minor project elements which were not eligible for aid such as furniture and equipment
- A:** Should the referendum be approved – the District will receive the aid noted.

» HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The district has indicated that Question 1 is structured to coincide with the expiration of debt from a previous referendum.

Q: Can the administration confirm the original principal amount and the primary projects that were funded by the expiring bond series that concludes in March 2026?

A: The original principal amount of the 2006 School Bonds is \$24,614,000.

A: The 2006 School Bonds funded renovations and improvements at all district schools, including Thomas P. Hughes School, Woodruff School, William Woodruff School, Mary Kay McMillin Early Childhood Center, Columbia Middle School, and Governor Livingston High School.

» HISTORICAL CONTEXT CONT...

A: The projects primarily focused on:

- Roof repairs and replacements
- HVAC, electrical, and plumbing system upgrades
- Window replacements and masonry repairs
- Interior renovations (classrooms, flooring, ceilings, and lighting)
- Fire alarm and security system upgrades
- Code compliance improvements
- Site improvements, including paving, drainage, sidewalks, and exterior work

Overall, the bond program addressed infrastructure modernization, safety enhancements, and facility upgrades across the district's school buildings and sites.

»» MEDIA CENTER & TV STUDIO

Q: Why are we prioritizing items like media center and tv studio improvements (\$9m as Part of Question #1) over leaking roofs and plumbing problems that are included in Question #2?

A: This question and many others as well as their answers are included in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) Section on the District Website

A: The scope of work for these projects was selected largely in part by the District's Facilities Audit, Long Range Plan and then later the input received from the (2) community surveys that were sent out.

A: Originally the scope of work included some \$70 million dollars of work.

A: Community survey feedback helped prioritize the most urgent and widely supported needs

A: There were projects that simply couldn't make the cut.

A: The original thought was that this would be a one question Referendum.

»» MEDIA CENTER & TV STUDIO CONT...

A: The structure of the questions was simply based upon the Board's mandate that by reinvesting the debt service retiring, that there be a Question that resulted in Zero Tax Impact for the community.

A: At that point there were two goals:

» That EVERY school facility received something – in the way of educational and capital infrastructure projects.

» That Question #1 result in a NET NEUTRAL OR ZERO COST TAX IMPACT

A: It then became a numbers game in order to meet the two goals – but it also became clear to the Board that given the need to complete more work; a second question was needed.

A: We began to shift projects around and provided several scenarios – each time falling short on meeting the two goals.

» Or Question #1 exceeded the Net Neutral requirement.

A: The only format that met both requirements were the questions that you see before you.

» VENDORS AND PROJECTS

Q: Who are the vendors you plan to spend this money with for the Educational Projects and Technology upgrades? Please tell us about the businesses, how price negotiations have gone so far, and what % of the funds will go to each vendor. It would be helpful to have a list of each vendors' deliverables so we have an idea of how the money is being used.

A: There are no vendors selected or slated for these projects.

A: Under NJ Bidding Law, the District must either Bid Projects to Contractors / Vendors approved by the State of NJ and must award to the “Lowest Responsible Bidder” or

A: The District may choose to use pre-approved vendors on Cooperative or State Contract Purchasing vehicles.

A: Either way, these projects haven't been designed yet and would only be designed after the passage of the Referendum; otherwise the District may have spent design dollars for a Referendum that could potentially not pass.

A: The Overall cost of the Referendum is broken up into multiple projects and scheduled to be completed over a multi-year period.

A: Once each project is designed – it will be put out to bid to qualified contractors and the District has no choice but to select the Lowest responsible bidder.

» RELEVANCY OF THE TV STUDIO

Q: The TV studio made a lot of sense when most households were on cable and could tune to channel 36 to see the local broadcasting. Now with everyone on streaming services and no local channels, why is this a priority over something that might be more relevant in the future (robotics and AI)?

A: That is a fair question. At first glance, a TV studio can feel like a relic of the “Channel 36” era. However, the renovation isn’t actually about preserving local cable access. While the “broadcast” method has changed, the demand for high-quality, structured storytelling has exploded. A renovated TV studio can help students learn the backend of real time digital storytelling. Modern storytelling includes YouTube, TikTok, Netflix, etc. as well as corporate communications. Whether a student wants to be a marketing director, a streaming engineer, or a film producer, the studio supports the building of the foundational skills to do so. Public speaking is a key skill for students as developing the ability to communicate ideas clearly on and off camera is a “future-proof” skill regardless of the industry.

Additionally, modern studios use robotic camera mounts and automated gimbals. By renovating, we create a possibility for collaboration where our Robotics students can see their hardware applied in a real-world professional setting.

Renovating the TV studio empowers our students to be architects and designers of digital media, rather than just consumers of digital media.

»» SCREEN TIME AND TECHNOLOGY

Q: If we understand that constant use of screens is harmful to kids, which seems to be the consensus as we are planning parent meetings around the topic, why are we then making these huge investments to increase the use of screens and spending on educational tech?

A: We share the community's concerns regarding screen time and the importance of digital wellness. To clarify, the educational technology in this referendum is not focused on purchasing more personal devices like Chromebooks or increasing daily screen consumption.

The technology upgrades in the referendum are targeting upgrading the security and PA system infrastructure, as well as technology and equipment that would support students in tech ed classes, robotics, STEM and science. The educational tech is not the purchase of Chromebooks.

» MEASURING SUCCESS

Q: How are we measuring success and if this money is being well spent?

A: We will be measuring the success of the referendum through tracking the completion of the projects within a three to five years time span. We intend to communicate our progress on the referendum webpage as the projects are completed.

A: The money that has been allocated for this Referendum must be spent on the projects included in the Referendum and those projects only. If approved, it signals that the Voters want those projects completed and the money will be spent in the interest of completed all of the projects at all of the schools.

»» WHAT IS THE PRICE PER PROJECT PER SCHOOL?

BERKELEY HEIGHTS POTENTIAL REFERENDUM PROJECTS SCOPE/BUDGET ANALYSIS - TOTALS BY CATEGORY FOR ALL SCHOOLS Q1 AND Q2											
School Facility	TECHNOLOGY ROBOTICS STEM	SCIENCE LABS	MEDIA CENTERS / TV STUDIO	SECURITY TECHNOLOGY	SITE / PARKING / DRAINAGE	ROOF REPLACEMENT	ELECTRICAL UPGRADES	MECHANICAL/ PLUMBING IMPROVEMENTS	TOTAL PROJECT COST BY FACILITY	ACTUAL DEBT SERVICE AID APPROVED (33.5%)	FINAL COST AFTER DEBT SERVICE AID
GOVERNOR LIVINGSTON HS	\$ 2,794,068.75	\$ 2,317,660.00	\$ 4,383,131.88	\$ 682,110.00	\$ 2,483,900.00	\$ 4,938,404.50	\$ 409,537.50		\$ 18,008,812.63	\$ 5,998,896.30	\$ 12,009,916.33
COLUMBIA MIDDLE SCHOOL	\$ 1,105,248.75	\$ 3,171,386.88	\$ 1,550,949.69	\$ 412,840.00	\$ 2,174,888.75	\$ 917,437.75		\$ 1,039,812.50	\$ 10,372,564.32	\$ 3,451,871.87	\$ 6,920,692.45
THOMAS HUGHES ES			\$ 961,287.50	\$ 216,920.00	\$ 1,024,026.25				\$ 2,202,233.75	\$ 735,159.48	\$ 1,467,074.27
MOUNTAIN PARK ES			\$ 761,335.00	\$ 84,502.50	\$ 815,804.00	\$ 2,679,011.00		\$ 2,917,624.13	\$ 7,258,276.63	\$ 2,459,314.05	\$ 4,798,962.58
WOODRUFF ES			\$ 614,925.00	\$ 94,966.75	\$ 759,036.75	\$ 1,728,865.63		\$ 3,706,844.38	\$ 6,904,638.50	\$ 2,342,477.09	\$ 4,562,161.41
MARY KAY McMILLIN ES			\$ 714,750.00	\$ 103,460.00	\$ 1,659,300.00	\$ -		\$ 3,128,932.09	\$ 5,606,442.09	\$ 1,897,690.31	\$ 3,708,751.78
TOTAL	\$ 3,899,317.50	\$ 5,489,046.88	\$ 8,986,379.07	\$ 1,594,799.25	\$ 8,916,955.75	\$ 10,263,718.88	\$ 409,537.50	\$10,793,213.09	\$ 50,352,967.91	\$ 16,885,409.10	\$ 33,467,558.81

BERKELEY HEIGHTS - POTENTIAL REFERENDUM PROJECTS SCOPE/BUDGET ANALYSIS - TOTALS BY CATEGORY FOR ALL SCHOOLS											
QUESTION 1 PROJECTS	TECHNOLOGY ROBOTICS STEM (ED)	SCIENCE LABS (ED)	MEDIA CENTERS /TV STUDIO (ED)	SECURITY TECHNOLOGY (CAP)	SITE / PARKING / DRAINAGE (CAP)	ROOF REPLACEMENT (CAP)	ELECTRICAL UPGRADES (CAP)	MECHANICAL/ PLUMBING IMPROVEMENTS (CAP)	TOTAL PROJECT COST BY FACILITY	ACTUAL DEBT SERVICE AID APPROVED (33.2%)	FINAL COST AFTER DEBT SERVICE AID
GOVERNOR LIVINGSTON HS			\$ 4,383,131.88	\$ 682,110.00	\$ 2,483,900.00				\$ 7,549,141.88	\$ 2,464,708.24	\$ 5,084,433.64
COLUMBIA MIDDLE SCHOOL			\$ 1,550,949.69	\$ 412,840.00	\$ 2,174,888.75				\$ 4,138,678.44	\$ 1,381,650.67	\$ 2,757,027.77
THOMAS HUGHES ES			\$ 961,287.50	\$ 216,920.00	\$ 1,024,026.25				\$ 2,202,233.75	\$ 735,159.48	\$ 1,467,074.27
MOUNTAIN PARK ES			\$ 761,335.00	\$ 84,502.50	\$ 815,804.00				\$ 1,661,641.50	\$ 556,458.11	\$ 1,105,183.39
WOODRUFF ES			\$ 614,925.00	\$ 94,966.75	\$ 759,036.75	\$ 1,728,865.63			\$ 3,197,794.13	\$ 1,082,150.00	\$ 2,115,644.13
MARY KAY McMILLIN ES			\$ 714,750.00	\$ 103,460.00	\$ 1,659,300.00				\$ 2,477,510.00	\$ 833,853.40	\$ 1,643,656.60
TOTAL	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,986,379.07	\$ 1,594,799.25	\$ 8,916,955.75	\$ 1,728,865.63	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21,226,999.69	\$ 7,053,979.90	\$ 14,173,019.79
QUESTION 2 PROJECTS	TECHNOLOGY ROBOTICS STEM (ED)	SCIENCE LABS (ED)	MEDIA CENTERS /TV STUDIO (ED)	SECURITY TECHNOLOGY (CAP)	SITE / PARKING / DRAINAGE (CAP)	ROOF REPLACEMENT (CAP)	ELECTRICAL UPGRADES (CAP)	MECHANICAL/ PLUMBING IMPROVEMENTS (CAP)	TOTAL PROJECT COST BY FACILITY	ACTUAL DEBT SERVICE AID APPROVED (33.75%)	FINAL COST AFTER DEBT SERVICE AID
GOVERNOR LIVINGSTON HS	\$ 2,794,068.75	\$ 2,317,660.00				\$ 4,938,404.50	\$ 409,537.50	\$ -	\$ 10,459,670.75	\$ 3,534,188.06	\$ 6,925,482.69
COLUMBIA MIDDLE SCHOOL	\$ 1,105,248.75	\$ 3,171,386.88				\$ 917,437.75	\$ -	\$ 1,039,812.50	\$ 6,233,885.88	\$ 2,070,221.20	\$ 4,163,664.68
THOMAS HUGHES ES							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
MOUNTAIN PARK ES						\$ 2,679,011.00	\$ -	\$ 2,917,624.13	\$ 5,596,635.13	\$ 1,902,855.94	\$ 3,693,779.18
WOODRUFF ES							\$ -	\$ 3,706,844.38	\$ 3,706,844.38	\$ 1,260,327.09	\$ 2,446,517.29
MARY KAY McMILLIN ES							\$ -	\$ 3,128,932.09	\$ 3,128,932.09	\$ 1,063,836.91	\$ 2,065,095.18
TOTAL	\$ 3,899,317.50	\$ 5,489,046.88	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,534,853.25	\$ 409,537.50	\$ 10,793,213.09	\$ 29,125,968.22	\$ 9,831,429.20	\$ 19,294,539.02
Q1 + Q2 TOTAL REFERENDUM COST									\$ 50,352,967.91	\$ 16,885,409.10	\$ 33,467,558.81

» PROJECTS THAT DIDN'T MAKE THE CUT...

OF THE PROJECTS EVALUATED FOR THE REFERENDUM, WHICH ONES WERE REMOVED IN ORDER TO CREATE A REASONABLE BUDGET?

- Locker Room upgrades and Team Room renovations - HS
- Classroom and district wide technology infrastructure upgrade - HS
- Electrical service and panel upgrades - HS
- Interior door and hardware replacement - All Schools
- Toilet room upgrades - HS, MS, MPES, Woodruff, MKM
- Mechanical systems, RTU replacements and AC Upgrade - HS
- Football field and track lighting - HS
- Tennis court rehabilitation - HS
- Culinary and art room upgrades - HS
- Main office renovations - HS
- Locker room upgrades - MS
- Multipurpose room upgrades - MS, Hughes, MPES, Woodruff, MKM
- A-wing and admin window replacement - MS
- Electrical panel replacement - MS, Hughes
- Backup generator - MS, Hughes, MPES, Woodruff, MKM
- Mechanical systems, RTU replacements and AC Upgrade - MS, Hughes, MPES, Woodruff, MKM
- Window replacement – front facade - Hughes
- Toilet room upgrades – principal and faculty - Hughes
- Health office renovation - MPES
- Replace perimeter casework - MPES, Woodruff, MKM





For further information and to keep updated on the District-Wide Facilities Renovation Program Referendum, please scan the QR Code to the left or visit the district website:

www.bhpsnj.org/page/referendum

Please send questions to: referenduminfo@bhpsnj.org

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