



This project is focused on improving the learning environments we provide to all students and staff.

On December 8, North Syracuse Central School District voters will be asked to consider \$64.95 million worth of construction upgrades to Cicero-North Syracuse High School, Cicero Elementary, Lakeshore Road Elementary, and Smith Road Elementary Schools.

We call this project Structured for Success! because District leaders have worked painstakingly with our architects, the Board of Education and the State Education Department to design a proposal to maximize State Aid and minimize the local tax impact. Proposition 1, which includes renovations to the buildings mentioned above, will not increase local taxes. The priorities and structure of the project, along with good fiscal management of the District over time, creates a structure for success.

Proposition 2 asks voters to consider the construction of a school-community pool on the site of Cicero-North Syracuse High School. There is a modest cost associated with this project, less than a 1% increase in the local tax levy. A third proposition asks voters to approve the creation of a capital reserve fund that will reduce the need for tax levy increases on future capital projects.



VOTE DECEMBER 8, 2021 6 AM - 9 PM

Polling Places

For residents living SOUTH of 481:
Administrative Office Building
5355 West Taft Road North Syracuse, NY

For residents living NORTH of 481:
Cicero Elementary School Route 31 Cicero, NY

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE BOND

Wednesday, December 1 @ 6 PM
Jerome F. Melvin Admin. Office Bldg.

PUBLIC MEETING ON THE BOND

Monday, November 29 @ 6 PM
Cicero-North Syracuse High School

In-person space is limited due to social distancing guidelines, and masks must be worn at all times in the building. The meetings will also be livestreamed and made available for future viewing on the District's YouTube Channel. For registration and complete meeting attendance information, visit <https://www.nscsd.org/board> or contact the District Clerk at jherrera@nscsd.org.

PROPOSITION #1

No Tax Increase for \$64.95 Million in Building Renovations

Proposition #1 calls for improvements to four of our school buildings. A State-required Building Condition Survey (BCS) has identified C-NS High School, Lakeshore Road Elementary and Cicero Elementary as the three buildings with the highest level of facility need. A modest amount of additional work at Smith Road Elementary, which was not addressed in the last upgrade, is also proposed to round out the project.

The proposed work, totaling \$64.95 million, is tax neutral due to a high level of State building aid and on-hand reserve funds that will be applied to offset the local share of the cost.

“Investment in school buildings is a normal and expected part of our business operations,” said Don Keegan, the District’s Associate Superintendent for Business Services. “The key is to address the most acute challenges in a manner that brings us the most funding from New York State. I’m happy to see we’ve achieved that here, and residents can be assured that this work will not increase their school taxes.” If approved by voters, the District is expected to petition the State for immediate approval of replacement and upgrade of the HVAC (Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning) system at Cicero-North Syracuse High School, which would take place in the summer of 2022. All remaining work would be designed and receive State approvals in time for the commencement of construction in 2023 and likely last for two years beyond that.

“It is incredibly exciting to understand what we will have at the completion of the project,” said Dan Bowles, Superintendent of Schools. “Our high school gym and auditorium will be completely renovated. These are not only a source of pride for our school programs; they are also used extensively by our community.

“Then there are the modernization plans for Lakeshore and Cicero

Elementary Schools. The ongoing renovation of KWS Bear Road Elementary demonstrates for our staff, families and students how thrilling it is to work and learn in modern spaces, and how much more effective contemporary instructional spaces can be. That is what we have to look forward to at Cicero and Lakeshore. We are methodically upgrading our buildings into conformance with 21st century demands. These are important community assets that will continue to be a source of pride for our residents.” Broadly speaking, the following work will take place under Proposition #1 at the four schools:

C-NS High School Renovations

- HVAC systems are in critical condition and require replacement and upgrade
- The fire alarm and public address systems and certain electrical panels require upgrade
- A minor amount of roofing is beyond its useful life and must be replaced
- Gym, locker room, and auditorium renovations to address safety and program needs
- Repave the majority of roads and develop the connector property

Lakeshore and Cicero Renovations

- Renovations to 50s/60s portion of CE (about half of the building)
- Partial renovation of LRE, which is more than 60 years old
- Both renovations are similar in extent to KWS Bear Road and Smith Road Elementary School projects

Smith Road Elementary School

- Repave certain parking areas in poor condition and construct a new playground. These elements were not addressed in the last project and the PTO has raised funding to cover the local share of the playground
- The fire alarm and public address systems require upgrade



Current Conditions



The heating and ventilation system at C-HS is a critical infrastructure need of the building, so much so that the District will attempt to expedite approval from the State Education Department for July '22 construction.



Current Conditions

The wooden bleachers at the HS gym are no longer manufactured or utilized, as they pose safety concerns (e.g. no handrails).



Current Conditions

Above is an example of the learning/assembly spaces at Cicero Elementary. This space, which has served the District well over the years, is now targeted for renovation to provide greatly improved utility, technology integration, and safety for students and staff.



Current Conditions

Picture above demonstrates the extent to which basic building systems at the elementary schools require upgrade or replacement.



Proposed Conditions



Proposed Conditions

Pictured above are renovated athletic facilities from a few different area school districts, all designed by King + King.



Proposed Conditions

Pictured above is an example of a renovated classroom. This demonstrates the contemporary approach to flexible furniture and layout, incorporation of technology, and easy access storage.



PROPOSITION #2

New Community Pool Facility at Cicero-North Syracuse HS

Proposition #2 is subject to voter approval of Proposition #1

Most of the larger school districts in Central New York have community pool facilities, but North Syracuse has lacked this important community resource. While we have had successful men’s and women’s swim teams, they have had to practice and compete in other area pools, resulting in inconvenient practice times and excessive transportation, and community members have had to find other non-community resources to pursue swim-related activities.



Example of a community pool facility.

As a result, the District began a study process in 2017 with a facilitator working with a Board of Education Pool Study Committee. This group ultimately issued a report that called for construction of a District pool. Since that time, the District has secured \$2 million in State grant funds through the help of Assemblyman Al Stirpe to support the project, along with dedicating a portion of our District fund balance (savings) to the effort.

The Board of Education commissioned its architects to conceptualize a facility on the site of Cicero-North Syracuse High School. It’s total cost – \$16.95 million – will result in an increase in school taxes of about \$1.50 per month (less than 1% increase in the tax levy) for an average \$100,000 home in the District.

“We are always thinking of ways to improve the co-curricular experience for our students, and certainly, a pool would offer a significant upgrade to our programs,” said Superintendent Bowles. “But it’s more than that – pool facilities are truly emblematic of how school buildings are so tightly integrated to the needs of the community. Whether its recreation, instruction, or safety training, a community pool can be a tremendously impactful asset to our schools. “That’s why we are presenting this proposition separately subject to the passage of the first proposition.”

PROPOSITION #3

Authorization for a No Tax Increase Capital Reserve Fund

A well-managed school budget should result in a reasonable level of excess funding each year. With that, districts in New York are permitted to establish reserve funds for dedicated future use, thereby eliminating or reducing future tax impacts.

After consultation with the District’s financial managers and outside partners, the Board of Education has agreed to ask voters to consider creating a Capital Reserve Fund over the next 15 years, with a maximum value of \$30 million. It is estimated that if fully funded, this fund would offset future tax increases associated with school construction.

“This is a dedicated savings account with specific rules,” said Don Keegan, the District’s Associate Superintendent for Business Services. “The voters have to create it, the Board has to agree to fund it if we manage our budget well, and the voters have to be asked to use the money in the future, which can only be for building projects.”

If voters agree to create the reserve fund, **there is no tax impact associated with it.** Anticipated fund balance from annual District operations will be placed in the fund over the next 15 years.

NORTH SYRACUSE CSD RESIDENT ECR WSS

DATED MATERIAL – PLEASE RUSH

PLAIN TALK

Questions and Answers about the December 8 Bond Vote

Why is the District proposing a large bond issue, rather than paying for school improvements through the annual budget?

Managing the facility needs of our school District is no different than managing the needs of your home, except on a much larger scale. For most people, investing in home renovations requires taking out a home equity loan or saving up for a period of time. Our position is the same. School building improvements are costly and cannot be funded out of the annual budget. Using a bond, like a home equity loan, spreads the cost over a long period of time and achieves two goals: it allows the work to be completed in a relatively short period of time while receiving State Aid payments over the life of the bond to pay the District's debt.

How did the District determine the composition of this project?

Every five years, the District must submit a Building Condition Survey (BCS) to the State Education Department. This survey, conducted by our architects, identifies and rates the condition of the facilities, thus providing a general timeline for addressing them. For the first proposition (C-NS High School, Cicero, Lakeshore, and Smith) all of the work that will be addressed represents the top-level facility priorities of the North Syracuse School District as determined by design and construction professionals.

This means that there is other work that will be addressed in the future?

Yes. Realistically, school buildings will always require investment along the life cycle of their use. For example, a school building that is decades old will have integrated systems (i.e. electrical, plumbing, roofing, windows, lighting) that will require upgrade or replacement.

And as technology evolves and the requirements of teaching and learning change, schools require reconstruction and refurbishing. The current KWS Bear Road Elementary School is a good example of this. Classrooms and common areas are being reconfigured and updated to reflect today's needs, which are much different from when the building was constructed decades ago.

How will the construction schedule be determined?

If the project is approved in December, we will petition the State Education Department for fast-track approval of the HVAC work at C-NS so that it can be done in the summer of 2022. That's because our engineers have determined that the system, which is original to the building, is at an acute stage of replacement need. The renovations to the other buildings will be designed and approved during the 2022-23 school year and construction is likely to begin in the summer of 2023 and extend over two or more years.

How is it possible to do \$64.95 million of construction without increasing taxes?

It's all about the timing of the construction, State Education Department rules, and the District's reserve funds. Under the rules for State Aid reimbursement, we can spend a certain amount (determined by the State) every five years. If we exceed this amount, we do not receive State Aid on that portion. Therefore, we can only get close to our maximum reimbursement of 85% if we limit our spending to the State's formula. This simply means that our timeline for making improvements will be extended in the future. But on the flip side, the vast majority of the cost is paid for by the State. The remaining share becomes our District's obligation.

But because we are retiring old bonds, and because we have prudently saved money in reserves in recent years, we can pay for this difference WITHOUT increasing the tax rate.

The community pool project at the C-NS does carry a small tax increase. How come?

This is largely due to the fact that a project like this is aided by the State at a much lower level (in this case, State Aid for the community pool project will be about 19% of the total cost). Fortunately, we have received a \$2 million State grant through the efforts of Assemblyman Al Stirpe, and we have on-hand reserves of \$2 million to apply to the project.

How will the proposed project improve the experiences of students and staff?

There are multiple ways to look at the benefits of this kind of improvement project. Let's start with safety and security. These are public school buildings used by thousands of people each day. Safety and security – through improved ventilation, fire alarm systems, secure windows and doors, secure entryways, safer bleacher systems, safer curbing/sidewalks, etc. are the obvious examples of our commitment to each individual who enters our campuses. Instructionally, we can look at how vastly improved common areas, the integration of technology, and the reconfiguration of classrooms and classroom furniture completely change and improve the learning experience. There's no better example than the comparison to the modern workplace. If you work in an office that hasn't changed much since its construction more than 50 years ago, you immediately recognize the limitations and challenges of the facility. Conversely, if you work in a modern facility, you know how your workplace stimulates thinking, creativity, and collaboration.

We welcome your project questions and would like to answer them publicly at one of the upcoming meetings. Please email us at Structured4Success@nscsd.org so we can be sure to address all questions.