

COXSACKIE-ATHENS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
REPAIR AND RENOVATION PROJECT REFERENDUM

December 14, 2009

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Q: In the simplest terms, what are the major components of the proposed renovation project?

The project is comprised of areas addressing facilities repairs, energy, safety, and handicapped accessibility. Sections of roofs would be replaced at each school, some dating back to 1978. The original, 43 year old boilers at the elementary schools would be replaced with more efficient ones. The secure access to each building would be upgraded. Electrical fixtures and energy controls would be replaced and/or updated, especially at the high school. Some original heating and ventilation systems would be upgraded in the 1953 and 1971 sections of the middle school and one classroom in the high school. Required fire and safety upgrades would be carried out. All in all, energy savings would be generated with these upgrades as well as the installation of solar panels at the high school, Coxsackie Elementary School, and E. J. Arthur Elementary School to reduce electrical usage.

2. Q: We renovated the elementary entrances during the 1999 – 2000 capital project to make them more secure. Why would we make additional changes?

The design of the 1999 – 2000 project occurred before the high profile school shootings at Columbine High School in 1999. Since that incident, the recommendations have become more restrictive. The New York State Legislature passed the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act (SAVE Legislation) in 2000 to assure greater security during the school day.

3. Q: Is this proposal a package or will separate sections be placed before the voters for them to pick or choose?

The resolution being placed before voters is a total package. Voters will cast ballots in favor or against the entire proposed \$7.4 million project.

4. Q: While economists are saying that the recession is over, people are still feeling unsure about the economy. Why is a renovation project being brought to voters now?

The Board of Education has a fiduciary responsibility to taxpayers to maintain the nearly \$28 million of buildings, machinery, and equipment under its care. Some components of our buildings are in need of significant repairs. Our responsibilities require us to act. We would make these renovations with approval of this project referendum. C-A has Expanding our Children's Education and Learning (EXCEL) and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) grant money available to offset the local share which we may not have in the future.

5. Q: What will happen if the project is not approved by voters?

The replacement of aged roofs, 43 year old boilers at the elementary schools, and outdated electrical fixtures and control systems will be needed in the very near future. The district would have to repair or replace them as needed, using money from the District's operating budget. If repairs were made from the operating budget, the district would not receive any **NYS** building aid on these expenditures. Taking on such projects under

the general fund of the school district could have an impact on the funding of day – to – day operations of the school district.

6. Q: What is our current debt status? The 1992 bond issue will be paid off at the end of the 2009 – 2010 school year. The only outstanding debt is from the 2000 project which will be paid off in 2017. We are and have been on schedule to make these routine payments for the existing debt service. For the type of project being proposed, the state pays building aid over 15 years. This mandate forces the district to finance the project over 15 years.

7. Q: How would this project be funded? Because of State Aid, State EXCEL funding, the fully funded Capital Reserve Fund, grants, and energy savings, the cost of this project would not mean any additional cost to the taxpayer. It would be financed with State Building Aid, \$510,000 in State EXCEL funding, \$1,000,000 from the capital reserve fund, \$335,000 in grants for energy upgrades from the NYSERDA, \$85,000 from the Petroleum Overcharge Fund secured by Senator Seward, and \$68,700 in annual energy savings from the project. Funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act would pay for upgrades required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

8. Q: How would State Building Aid flow to the school district? State Building Aid would come to the district over the 15 years the district financed the project as required by New York State Law.

9. Q: My home is currently assessed for \$100,000. How will the renovation project have an impact on my taxes? With approval of voters this December, this \$7,400,000 CAPITAL project would have **no tax impact** on a home assessed for this or any other amount.

10. Q: How can I be sure the project would have no impact on my taxes? The district's Chief Financial Officer has worked closely with Fiscal Advisors to calculate the amount of State Building Aid the district would receive and to confirm the State EXCEL funding. We are confident in these figures. The district's \$1,000,000 Capital Reserve Fund is fully funded. The grants listed are secure. The savings due to energy costs are conservative, and there are additional energy related incentives that will be pursued to enhance the project's savings.

11. Q: What happens if voters approve the project and the bids for repair and replacement come in high? If bids come in high, the District would need to scale back the scope of work because it cannot spend any more than the amount authorized by voters.

12. Q: If approved by voters, when would this project be completed? With timely approval of architectural plans submitted to the State Education Department, the roof replacements would be done in summer 2010, while the remainder of the work would be done by the conclusion of summer 2011.

13. Q: What would be the impact of any mid-year cuts proposed by the Governor? The State Aid cuts to education relate to Operating Aid; monies used to run the school on a day – by – day and yearly basis. State funding in support of this project would come from Building Aid. There is no indication that Building Aid would be cut. Operating Aid and Building Aid are different funding streams for local school districts.