

Wynantskill

Union Free School District

NOVEMBER 2014

Capital Project an Investment in District's Future

On Tuesday, Dec. 2, the Wynantskill UFSD community will vote on a proposed Capital Project that would improve instructional space, create classrooms for a pre-kindergarten program, and address infrastructure needs with no impact on taxes.

"This project is an investment in the future for the community and the school district," said Superintendent Lee Bordick. "And we are able to finance it with no impact to our taxpayers."

A major element of the \$5,139,000 Capital Project is a 9,400-square-foot addition at the southeast corner of the school, behind the school gymnasium.

The two-story addition would provide a stage and instructional space for the school's music program. The stage would also be available for community use.

Four classrooms would also be part of the new addition. Two of the rooms would be used for a new pre-kindergarten program. The other classrooms would be used for regular instruction.

"With our enrollment continuing to grow, we need more class-

VOTE

Tuesday

December 2, 2014

12 – 9 p.m.

Gardner-Dickinson School
BAND ROOM

room space for our students," said Mr. Bordick. "The new classes would also take pressure off other classroom space in our school, providing more space for small learning areas for reading and math as well as academic intervention services."

Information technology and other infrastructure needs such as plumbing, security, electrical and ventilation would also be addressed in the Capital Project.

In conjunction with the Capital Project, the district also plans to pursue a lease agreement with a photovoltaics company to have solar panels installed on the school roof at no cost to the district. Such agreements have become increasingly popular with districts across the state as schools look to reduce electricity costs by using renewable energy.

The community vote will be held Tuesday, December 2 from noon to 9:00 p.m. in the school band room. If community members have questions, they are encouraged to attend a Board of Education meeting or call the district office at 283-4600 ext. 14.



No Local Tax Impact Expected for Capital Project

The Capital Project is expected to have no impact on local taxes for two main reasons.

First, 72.4% of the project would be paid for with state building aid. That is funding New York provides schools specifically for facility needs.

Second, the \$1.5 million local share of the Capital Project would come from a Capital Reserve Fund that voters created last May by approving a proposition on the budget ballot.

Money for the Capital Reserve Fund primarily came from fund balance and other reserves. When there was excess money left at the end of the school year, due to projected revenues being greater than expenditures, money was put into the Capital Reserve Fund to finance the project.

Major Elements of Proposed Capital Project

The proposed Capital Project addresses a number of school building needs, from adding classroom space and a school stage with a 9,400-square-foot addition to upgrading the school's aging infrastructure. If approved, work would be completed by Fall 2017. Below are details of some of the major improvements that the Capital Project would provide.

Pre-Kindergarten Program

Gardner-Dickinson School would be able to start a pre-kindergarten program starting in 2017-18 with two new classrooms in the building addition.

Superintendent Lee Bordick noted that New York State is encouraging schools to invest in pre-kindergarten by providing funding. Last year, the state announced \$1.5 billion over five years to support the creation of pre-kindergarten programs.

"A pre-kindergarten program would allow us to better prepare our youngest learners for school," said Mr. Bordick. "It also makes the district an even more attractive place for parents. A Pre-K – 8 school where students can choose one of four high schools to attend would be unique in New York State."

Additional Classrooms

The building addition would also provide two additional classrooms for instruction. Mr. Bordick noted that insufficient instructional space is a challenge to the school, something identified by the district's Strategic Planning Committee and Special Education study.

The two new classrooms would provide space for the school's growing enrollment. It would also provide flexibility where existing classrooms could be used for small learning groups to support reading and math or academic intervention services.

Stage and Instructional Music Space

To support the school's music program, a stage would be connected to the south end of the gymnasium for student performances. The gym's ventilation system would also be improved to provide a more comfortable environment for school concerts and events.

"A stage will provide greater opportunities for student performances," said Mr. Bordick. "It also will be a community asset available for their use." The music program would also be relocated to instructional space near the stage area.

Technology and Infrastructure Improvements

Improving the school's information technology and other infrastructure needs is another major component of the Capital Project.

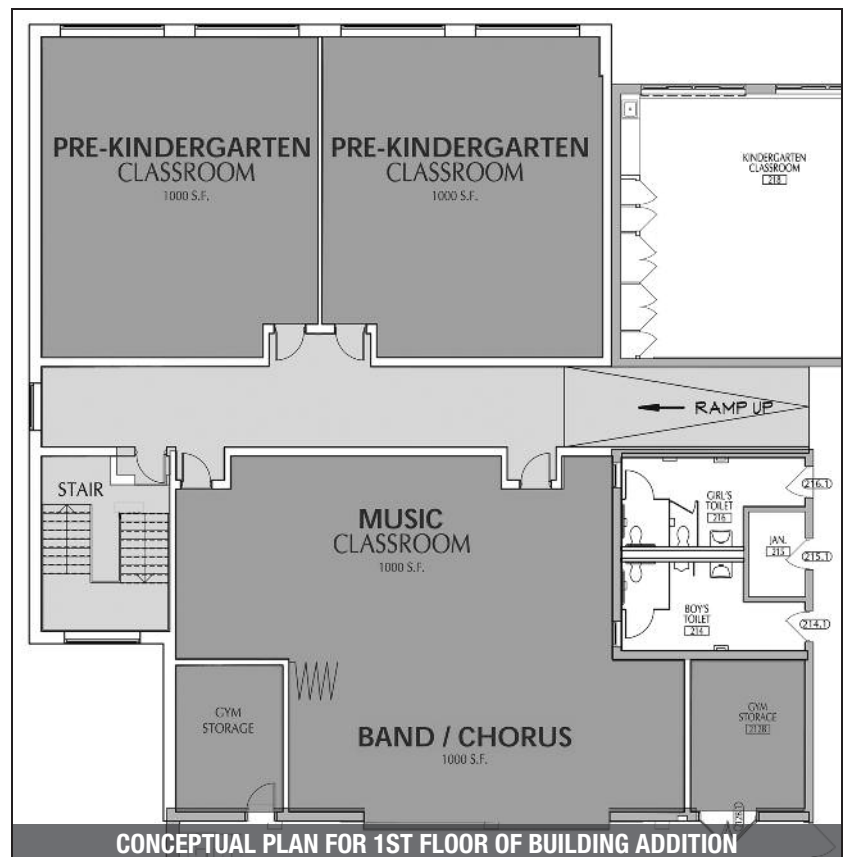
With teachers increasingly using tablets, laptops and other devices to engage students and better prepare them for college and careers, updating the district's internet capabilities would help integrate technology into curriculum.

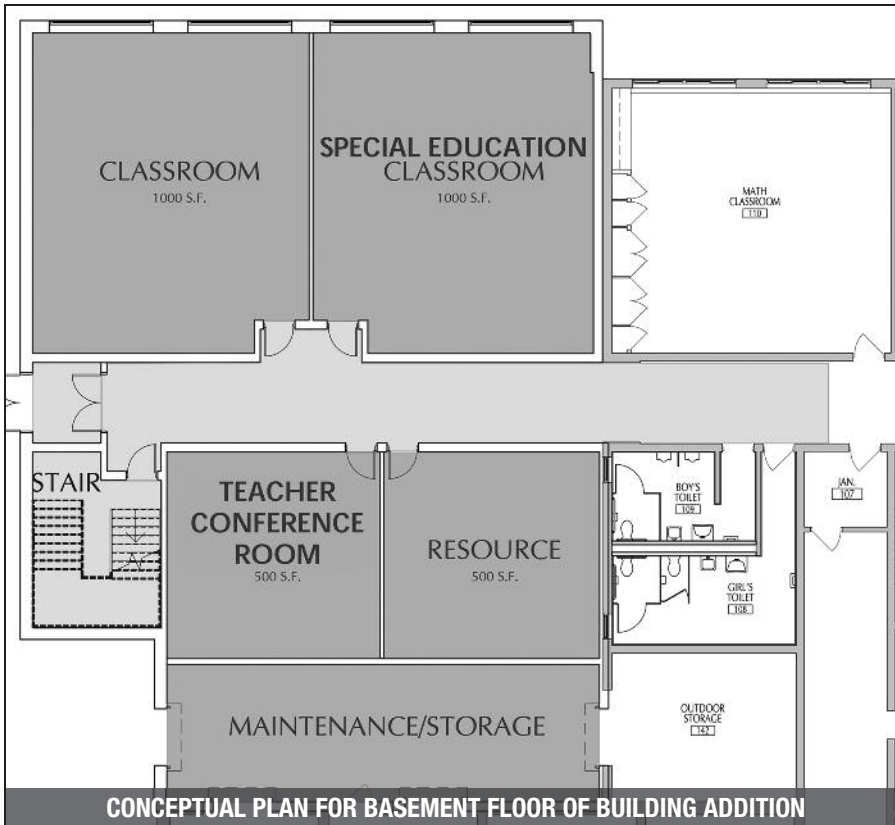
School safety would be improved with additional smoke detectors, an upgraded fire alarm panel and updated building-wide security upgrades. Additional video cameras would also be installed in stairwells.

Other infrastructure improvements would include plumbing drainage system upgrades, better lighting, increased phone system capacity and enhanced ventilation. The school's grounds would also be improved with a walking/fitness trail around the campus and other site improvements.

Features of the Capital Project

- Two classrooms for Pre-K Program
- Two classrooms for general instruction
- Stage area connected to gym
- Renovated music instruction area
- Walking/fitness trail around campus
- Rebuild school sign
- Upgraded gym ventilation including air conditioning
- Refinished gym floor
- Upgraded information technology/internet access
- Upgraded building-wide security system
- Security cameras in stairwells
- Updated fire alarm control panel
- Additional smoke detectors
- Solar panels on school roof (at no cost)
- Improved phone system
- Lighting upgrades
- Ventilation improvements
- Plumbing upgrades





School Enrollment Increasing

As part of the planning for the Capital Project, the district had an Enrollment Projection/Demographic Study completed to provide historical, current and future enrollment data.

Wynantskill Union Free School District's current enrollment in grades K-8 is 323 students. The district has seen enrollment grow in each of the past two years.

By examining data such as live births within the school district, households with children moving into the district and enrollment of students in non-public schools, the Enrollment Projection/Demographic Study projects continued enrollment growth.

A mid-range projection projects the district could have as many as 400 K-8 students by the 2019-20 school year.

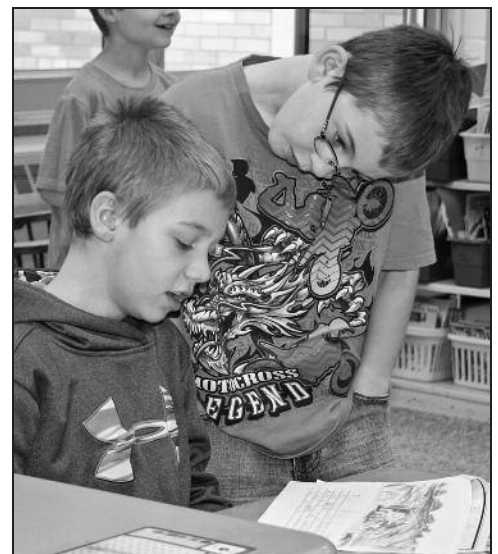
District to Pursue Solar Panels at No Cost

In conjunction with the Capital Project, Wynantskill UFSD plans to explore a lease agreement with a company to have solar panels installed on the school roof at no cost to the district.

School districts across the state have increasingly turned to such agreements as a way to reduce electricity costs by using a renewable energy source. In the past couple years, Schodack Central School District and Brunswick (Brittonkill) Central School District in Rensselaer County have both had solar panels installed on their roofs.

Solar panels are installed at no cost to districts through lease agreements with companies who own, install and maintain the photovoltaic systems. In exchange, the companies sell the energy the solar panels create back to the district for less than what National Grid would charge.

The solar panel systems typically do not provide all the electricity a school needs. But they do provide cost savings to school districts while also modeling how green energy can be used.



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Voter Information:

When and where is the vote?

Tuesday, December 2
12:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Gardner-Dickinson School Band Room

Who is eligible to vote?

Anyone who is a U.S. citizen, 18 years or older, and is a resident of the Wynantskill Union Free School District for at least 30 days prior to the vote.

How can I vote by absentee ballot?

District residents who are unable to go to the polls on Dec. 2 can cast their votes by absentee ballot. To request an application for an absentee ballot, please call the District Office at 283-4600 ext. 14.

All completed ballots must be received by the District Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on Dec. 2.

What if I have questions?

The district website, www.wynantskillufsd.org, has additional Capital Project information. You can also call the District Office at 283-4600 ext. 14.