

QUESTIONS ASKED BY THE COMMUNITY

PROJECT SCOPE

Q: The proposal is presented under two categories "Infrastructure and Safety upgrades" and "Physical Education, Athletics and Community". Why isn't this divided into at least two proposals on the ballot? Or even project by project? I feel many community members would vote positively for very necessary building safety upgrades because they believe in the educational mission and quality of our schools. However, with a single proposal, they are more likely to vote "no" overall because of the \$6.6M price tag for athletics upgrades.

A: The district strongly believes that all aspects of the proposed project are critical. The "athletic upgrades" are not just for athletics facilities. These are also classroom spaces for our physical education classes. The maintenance and upgrades for those areas are just as critical to student learning and safety. The track and the HS gymnasium could also be categorized under "Infrastructure and Safety". If the track is not replaced, it will not be a safe space for students. The refinishing of the gymnasium floor is a maintenance activity necessary to maintain the quality of the floor and ultimately extend its useful life.

Q: Why does the track need to be replaced?

A: The original track was installed in 1997. It is now 25+ years old. There are many unsafe conditions including worn areas, holes, raised lips, and cracking surfaces. These conditions are risks for our PE students, athletics, and the community members who utilize the track. A review of the track was done in 2016 and there was a recommendation to do a complete track replacement by 2020. Due to the financial impact, the district was only able to do a resurfacing of lane 1 in 2020.

Q: What other districts in our region have an 8 lane track?

A: Dryden, Trumansburg, Odessa Montour, Waverly, Whitney Point 2024, Newark Valley, Tioga, Moravia in 2024

Q: Can our facilities support expanded meets as a result of an 8 lane track?

A: Parking will be improved and increased at SOBUS as part of this project. 65 to 75 spaces will be added to the lot. There is also additional parking in the Elementary School Lots. Bathrooms are already available at SOBUS field.

Q: What is the purpose of adding and improving parking at SOBUS?

A: In addition to providing additional parking for expanded usage at SOBUS per the question above, there are also safety conditions with the current lot that need to be addressed. The current lot is in disrepair with an aging base and paving infrastructure and concerns around storm water drainage. There is already a shortage of parking – cars are parking in the grass and along the road (illegally!). Entering and exiting the lot is treacherous at times, and driving along Brickyard Rd during an event, especially in the evening, is particularly unsafe.

Q: What is wrong with the current lighting at SOBUS?

A: The current lighting system was installed in 1997 and is past its useful life. The bulbs are outdated and difficult to procure. While the current lighting does still work (missing bulbs aside), we know that it could cease working at any time. Since it is expensive to replace the fixtures, that cost needs to be part of a capital project, and it makes sense to include that now instead of waiting 3 to 4 years after they break. We will not be adding new poles or replacing the wiring. We will be adding more efficient, longer lasting LED bulbs.

Q: Currently an old freight trailer is used for storage at the track and football field. Where in the plan is storage addressed to eliminate this eyesore?

A: While replacing this trailer is not part of the capital project vote, we are looking at different options to provide appropriate storage such as a larger storage shed that would be done outside of this project.

Q: Why isn't the district addressing the transportation building with regards to the electric bus mandate? [Governor Hochul: 100% of School Buses will be Electric by 2035](#)
In her January 2022 State of the State agenda, New York Governor Kathy Hochul established a goal of making all new school bus purchases zero-emission vehicles by 2027, with all school buses being zero emission by 2035. The stated purpose was to “improve air quality for New York State’s children while also working toward [the state’s] Climate Act goals.”ⁱⁱⁱ.

A: Hochul announced on January 5th, 2022 that the state would provide aid for installing electric bus infrastructure, including the purchase and lease of buses and their charging equipment. Funding for this transition will come from the American Rescue Plan, the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act, the Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, the Volkswagen Clean Air Act Settlement, and the New York Truck Voucher Incentive Program (NYTVIP).

The district is also looking to collaborate with TST BOCES and other school districts in the area to apply for funding and tackle the overwhelming logistical challenges as a region.

FINANCING

Q: What is the tax impact?

A: This project will be phased in over 2 years: 2025-26 and 2026-27. The debt will also be phased in and borrowed over the course of 2 years rather. Below is the total impact over the course of those 2 years based on various home values (assessment increases are also included – more information can be found on our website). Once the debt fully hits the tax levy, it remains stable for the life of the bond (15 years total).

Home Value	Phase 1 of Project 2025-26	Phase 2 of Project 2026-27	Total
100k	\$47.01	\$15.77	\$62.78
200k	94.02	31.55	125.56
500k	235.05	78.85	313.90
900k	423.09	141.93	565.02

We feel it is also important to note that historically, the district has kept the tax rate stable over the past 5 years. In fact, the tax rate for the current year is lower than it was in 2018-19. While the district does not control assessments or inflation, we do work hard to maintain a stable tax rate for our community.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Overall Change
Tax Rate	\$20.7434	20.8834	21.1157	21.0627	20.4800	-.254
% Increase		.67%	1.11%	-.25%	-2.77%	-1.22%

Q: What happens if the amount of the actual project turns out to be much higher than the proposed estimates? Does a “yes” vote cap the total expenditure at \$16M?

A: Total expenses of the project cannot be higher than the amount voters approve (\$16.8m). If the lowest responsible bids come in higher than the total amount approved, we have to reject the bid.

Q: What happens if the project is under budget?

A: Any funding that is not expensed for a project is then transferred into the Debt Service Fund for the district. Monies from this fund are used to support the local share of outstanding debt each year in the annual budget.

Q: For reference, can you provide the costs of the previous two capital campaign projects? — both the estimated costs before the votes and the actual costs of the projects.

Recent Projects	Project Vote	Actual Expenses	Capital Reserve	Debt Borrowed
2020 Project	\$7,317,400	\$6,920,586	2,470,586	4,450,000
2018 Project	\$4,950,000	\$4,657,329	\$1,800,000	\$2,740,000

For both the 2018 project and the 2020 project, there was no impact on the tax payer (a 0% tax increase!). The use of capital reserves and retiring debt offset any new local share.

2018 and 2020 Project Impacts					
Year	Local Share	2018 Project Local Share	2020 Project Local Share	Total New Local Share	Net Change
2017-18	\$791,521			\$791,521	
2018-19	\$688,330			\$688,330	-\$103,191
2019-20	\$736,827	\$70,370		\$807,197	\$118,867
2020-21	\$509,933	\$66,576		\$576,509	-\$230,688
2021-22	\$567,082	\$27,734	\$64,650	\$659,466	\$82,957
2022-23	\$488,439	\$22,738	\$132,855	\$644,032	-\$15,434
2023-24	\$488,357	\$27,238	\$124,341	\$639,936	-\$4,096
2024-25	\$499,447		\$123,091	\$622,538	-\$17,398
			TOTAL NET IMPACT		-\$168,983

Q: We’ve been given an estimate for how much our taxes will go up in year one (2025), but what can we expect in subsequent years in terms of tax increases related to this project?

A: Once the debt is added to the district budget, the local share required by the district remains stable for that bond over the course of the debt obligation (15 years). We have shown the impact for both years 1 and 2 as we anticipate phasing in the debt over 2025-26 and 2026-27.

Q: The district received federal stimulus funding in response to COVID. What specific expenditures did the district use these funds for? Were any of the funds used for HVAC?

A: Plan for federal stimulus spending can be found on our website. There were very specific guidelines from both the USDE and NYSED. HVAC was considered, but ultimately funds were put directly towards improving student learning, instituting COVID protocols, and COVID testing.

SYNTHETIC TURF:

Q: What other districts in our region have synthetic turf?

A: Homer, Owego-Apalachin, Dryden, Groton, Ithaca, Edison, Waverly, Watkins Glen, Skaneateles, Oneonta, Moravia (2024), Whitney Point (2024), Fulton, Post season play at TC3. Eight out of 12 opponents for soccer (plus TC3) and 8 out of 9 opponents for football. When we are looking to play competitively against teams and we know that games will be on synthetic turf, we bus our students to other facilities, such as Ithaca, TC3, or Wells, so that the students can practice on synthetic turf prior to competition. While often times there is no cost for using the fields, there IS a cost associated with the transportation of students – fuel, labor, and wear and tear on the bus. The time it takes to transport students also cuts into their practice times.

Q: What is included in the budget for turf? Filtration? Type of base?

A: The estimated amount in the project scope is a conservative number that allows for the inclusion of items (such as a filtration system) that are determined to be needed throughout the design phase of the project. The overall design phase takes 4 to 6 months and is a costly endeavor that doesn't happen until the voters approve the project.

Q: What is the lifespan of a typical turf field? What happens at the end of the lifespan?

A: On average 10 to 12 years depending on use and maintenance, but the newer turf is lasting longer. When it does need to be replaced, it is a carpet replacement only, not a full replacement. The base can be reused. With that in mind, the district will be able to set aside funding to plan for this replacement.

Q: Are the components of a turf field recyclable?

A: Yes. The infill can be collected, screened, and re-used and can save as much as \$50,000 that would otherwise be spent on new infill. The carpet itself can be both re-purposed and recycled, or a combination thereof. This is often pre-arranged with whatever turf vendor is selected and can be part of the vendor selection process and embedded in the bidding requirements.

Q: What are the advantages of a synthetic turf field?

A: Synthetic turf will allow for increased usage. We currently have all PE students on the field during the school year PreK through 12. We have HS football, both girls and boys soccer, and the Lansing Recreation Department’s robust football program all using the field in the fall as well. At times we are unable to use the field due to overuse, muddy conditions, and weather conditions preventing staff from lining the fields as needed. We can also expand usage in the spring to allow baseball and softball teams to practice outside sooner.

Q: What are the concerns around the health and safety of students? Are the materials used safe?

A: There is a lot of information and research around the health concerns regarding synthetic turf, but most claims have been debunked. The district has shared links for the community to review, including the NYS DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation) and NYS DOH (Department of Health). A table from the NYS DOH article is included below. These can all be found on the website. lansingschools.org/capitalproject

Q: Are injuries more or less significant on synthetic turf?

A: For public school districts, synthetic turf is a safe option with regards to impact. Because it requires less maintenance, schools are better able to maintain the safety rating for field “give” upon impact (called the G-max rating). Public schools do not have the budget to maintain a natural turf field to the same levels as colleges and professional sports teams.

NYS Dept. of Health information summary:

Health Concern	Finding
Heat stress	Surface temperatures on crumb-rubber infilled synthetic turf fields can reach levels of discomfort and may contribute to heat stress. This warrants consideration when making decisions about installing and using a synthetic turf field. While watering synthetic turf may briefly reduce surface temperatures, a number of factors may influence its effectiveness. People using these fields should be advised to remain hydrated and to seek relief from the heat in shaded areas.
Injury	Overall, studies have found no consistent differences in injury rates between natural and crumb-rubber infilled synthetic turf.
Infection	Skin cuts and abrasions that may result from contact with athletic fields (natural and synthetic turf) are susceptible to infection. Athletes and others developing skin abrasions should clean the wounds and seek prompt medical

	attention. Athletes should avoid sharing equipment, razors, towels, soap and other objects with others, because these items can spread germs.
Latex allergy	NYSDOH is not aware of cases of latex allergy resulting from contact with crumb rubber or synthetic turf fields.
Chemical exposures	Results from numerous studies suggest that the potential for chemical exposures from crumb rubber in synthetic turf is low; further studies by the federal government and California are underway to fill data gaps and decrease uncertainties.
Cancer	Analyses in California and Washington State have not found support for cancer associations with artificial turf field use; various exposure and risk assessments do not support a cancer risk.

Q: What are the maintenance costs associated with a synthetic turf field?

A: There is minimal maintenance needed – no mowing, line painting, seeding, aerating. The field will need to be raked on scheduled basis. A full cost comparison can also be found on the website.