education news

an official publication of the Little Falls Township Public Schools

LITTLE FALLS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

December 2022

Vote set for Dec. 13 on reduced plan

A 50-member community committee helped develop the school improvement plan that's been submitted for vote on December 13. The trimmed-down plan is **$5.6 million LESS** than the one proposed in 2021.

It addresses the **facilities needs** of our aging buildings, deals with our **space crunch**, and calls for the **addition of instructional space** to meet the district's educational priorities. The plan costs the average home (assessment of $314,000) about $26 per month.

- **Security upgrades**
- **A library for School No. 2 (it doesn't have one now)**
- **Opportunity to offer free universal Pre-K**
- **More space for music and performing arts**
- **Heating and ventilation work**
- **More athletic opportunities**
- **Abatement and replacement of asbestos tiles**
- **Replacement of old floors districtwide**
- **Expanded cafeteria at School No. 1**

moving FORWARD

PLEASE WATCH

YouTube

Video about the plan:

https://youtu.be/yYICTc_Dj24

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The Plan

A look at the proposed work and the issues that it solves

1

School No. 1

Built 72 years ago

Cafeteria expansion

Addition of assembly area/ music & performing arts rooms

Multi-purpose room will have stage removed and be converted into full-size gym

Secure police substation

The School No. 1 addition allows the district to reconfigure and maximize space across all schools. This frees up five instructional areas at School No. 1, one at School No. 2, and one in School No. 3.

PROBLEM

School No. 1, our middle school, does not have the cafeteria space for an entire grade level to eat simultaneously; **students are forced to eat in 20-minute intervals.** Lunches begin at 10:30 a.m.

PROBLEM

The music program at School No. 1 has grown significantly since 2015. Now, about 40% of students participate in band or chorus – or both. Space is tight for rehearsals. Practice sometimes takes place in the multi-purpose room while physical education classes are in session literally inches away. The school improvement project provides more space for the expanding music program for this reason.

If the project moves forward, rehearsals would take place on the stage of a dedicated assembly space which would also be used for all grade-level programs, school-wide events, and the concerts and performances of the other district schools. (Currently, there is no room large enough to fit the school's population of more than 400 students and staff.) The space would also be available for use by community organizations.

In addition, the dedicated assembly area would provide better security: A separate entrance from outside would restrict access to the rest of the school building while performances are taking place.

PROBLEM

The multi-purpose room is **too small** to run ANY middle school interscholastic sports teams. This limits our athletic program and our phys ed program. In winter, the room is used simultaneously for phys ed, indoor recess, and music/performing arts practices.

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PROBLEM

Old floors are cracking and buckling in all schools – a serious safety concern. Some floors are comprised of vinyl **asbestos** tiles.

PROBLEM

Old doors are warping. Some date to the original construction of the buildings. Others have plexiglass windows which can be breached. Door replacement is an **important security measure**.

D

Districtwide

New class and hallway floors/ Removal of asbestos tiles

Replacement of aging interior doors with doors that are more intruder resistant

Heating & ventilation upgrades

PROBLEM

No classrooms for state-funded universal Pre-K.

Research shows that quality Pre-K programs provide children with an important educational foundation and improve academic success for years to come. The state offers money so districts can offer free universal Pre-K, but Little Falls cannot take advantage of this because of a lack of instructional space.

PROBLEM

School No. 2 does not have a library.

PROBLEM

No rooms are available at School No. 2 for music or art – teachers travel from class to class with carts of equipment. The music teacher works out of a closet.

2

School No. 2

Built 100 years ago

Addition of 8 Pre-K classrooms

Construction of a library

New kitchen & cafeteria

Interior renovations & finishes

Space for music and art instruction which currently do not have rooms

Q&A

How will the school improvement plan be paid for and what will it cost?

The cost of the proposed work will be financed at a low interest rate, and repayment will be spread out over a number of years. This minimizes the annual tax impact to homeowners. In principle, it's much like a low-interest home improvement loan.

The $29.5 million project will cost the average home (assessment of $314,000) about $26 per month. For a home assessed at $400,000, the cost will be about $33 per month. For a home assessed at $500,000, the cost will be about $41 per month.

Remember, there is a difference between market value and assessed value. Assessed value is used to determine a homeowner's property tax and is typically much less than the market value. Check your previous property tax bill to see your home's assessed value.

This project is $5.6 million less than the project proposed last year. What was cut?

The district worked with PSE&G to secure grant money that would pay for the replacement of boilers and other energy-inefficient infrastructure. As a result, these costs were removed from the project.

Also eliminated was an addition at School No. 3 for a space for small group instruction and hands-on activities.

What if I cannot vote on December 13?

Mail-in ballots are available through the county clerk's office.

What experience does the district's architect have?

The district is working with RSC Architects, an award-winning Hackensack firm that specializes in design for schools and colleges. RSC clients include Passaic Public Schools, Northern Valley Regional School District, Union City Public Schools, and the Bergen County Special Services School District, to name just a few.

VOTE
3–8 p.m.
Your local polling place

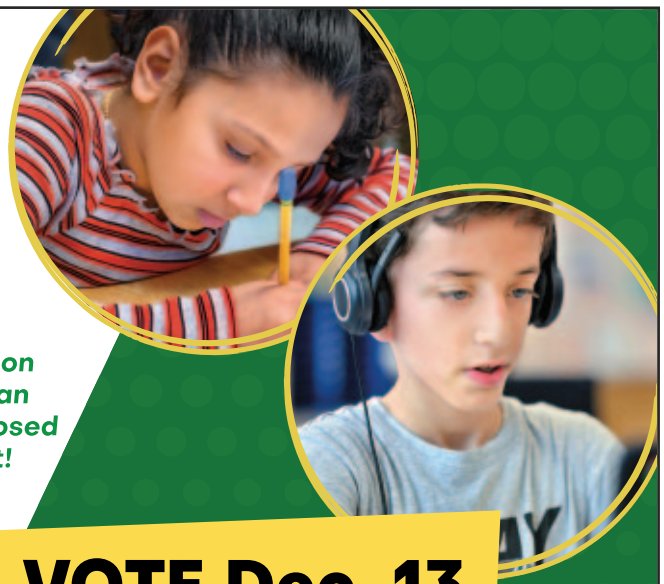
LEARN

about the **Little Falls School District's improvement plan** at our December 6 presentation:

December 6
School No. 1

Immediately after the 7 p.m. board of education meeting

$5.6 million LESS than 2021 proposed project!



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Your local polling place

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Michael K. Cravotta, editor • mkc@flight19media.com

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