

Midland Park Board of Education Referendum Fact Sheet

Introduction

A public referendum has been scheduled for Tuesday, **September 30, 2014**. To provide information and to address residents' concerns and questions, the district has developed this fact sheet. The fact sheet will be updated as needed to keep all information current.

The Midland Park Board of Education welcomes your questions and/or comments via email, or in person.

Web site: <http://midlandparkschools.k12.nj.us>
E-mail: Referendum@mpsnj.org

District Overview

The Midland Park School District has long been recognized for its excellent schools, earning New Jersey Department of Education Best Practices, Star School, and Blue Ribbon awards over the past 20 years. The district is committed to building on this strong foundation of excellence while maintaining its other successful programs, including athletics, fine and performing arts, a multi-year elementary character education initiative, and a community service-oriented Student Senate at the secondary level.

The district has sharpened its focus in implementing improvements to benefit all students. As recommended by NJDOE timelines, district curriculum is appropriately aligned with the Common Core State Standards and Twenty-First Century learning initiatives. A middle school honors program in Mathematics and Language Arts has been re-established, and Midland Park's Junior/Senior High School has attained noteworthy academic success in recent years, and was recently named to the College Board's AP Honor Roll.

In addition to the efforts of administrators and staff, Midland Park is fortunate to benefit from strong community involvement which further enhances the bedrock of its educational programs. The Parent-Teacher Associations, Sports Boosters, Performing Arts Parents Association, Midland Park Public Education Foundation, and other community groups work collaboratively with staff as critical partners in the education process. The ongoing philanthropic efforts of this myriad of community volunteers demonstrate ongoing support for schools and district.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Q1. What is a bond referendum?

A bond referendum seeks public approval for the financing of major school construction projects. The referendum will specify the amount of money to be raised. If approved, bonds are issued and are typically paid back over a period of 15 to 30 years. Under current state education funding provisions, the BOE will seek debt service aid from the state. If approved, this will mean that the state will pay a percentage of annual payments to bond holders, thus saving money for our local taxpayers.

Q2. When will the Midland Park Board of Education referendum take place?

Voters will be asked to cast ballots on Tuesday, September 30, 2014.
Polls will be open from 2pm to 9pm

Districts 1, 2, and 4- Midland Park Fire House, 45 Witte Drive
District 3- Midland Park Public Library, 250 Godwin Avenue
District 5- Nativity Church- O'Connell Hall, 315 Prospect Street

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Q3. What prompted the district to explore a possible referendum?

The renovations and repairs needed at the district's three school buildings are becoming critical in that temporary fixes are no longer cost efficient. The buildings need repair in order to prevent further damage from the elements and normal wear and tear and will save money by reducing usage costs with energy efficient materials. The district wants to take advantage of the state's offer of debt service to pay for almost 25 percent of the total costs. If the referendum were to fail, the debt service aid does not apply.

Q4. Why is the referendum being held in September?

There are several reasons why the Board of Education has chosen to move forward at this time. The reasons are as follows:

- the need to address aging infrastructure and to prevent further deterioration and repair costs;
- to secure maximum amount of state funding through debt service aid;
- to fund the balance of project with interest rates still near historic lows and;
- September 30, 2014 (the last Tuesday in September) is one of the legal dates approved by the State to hold a referendum.

Q5. What does the proposed referendum project include?

All schools:

- Replacing all exterior windows.
- Replacing older heating controls with direct digital controls
- Replacing classroom unit ventilators with new heating and ventilation units.
- Replacing ceiling systems with newer suspended acoustical ceilings
- Replacing lighting fixtures with newer, high output, efficient light fixtures.
- Replacing electrical service entrance equipment and branch panels.
- Replacing original switchgear in some schools and backup generator at high school
- Replace existing HVAC Controls equipment.
- Replacing corridor/classroom/exterior doors
- Replacing non-barrier free hardware with new compliant hardware.
- Provide the ability for "lockdown" at each classroom and instructional space.
- Evaluate existing toilet rooms and determine the appropriate toilets for barrier-free compliance.
- Replace toilet partitions and fixtures as required.
- Provide infra-red flushers and faucets for energy conservation.
- Remove and replace deteriorated flooring systems.
- Evaluate each condition and provide either new floor overlay, or complete removal and replacement.

Highland School

- Replacing boiler systems including pumps, hot water heaters and controls with high efficiency and backup systems

Junior/Senior High School

Auditorium

Renovating and upgrading finishes and infrastructure including:

- New seating
- Upgrading house lighting, electrical and mechanical systems

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- New stage refinishing and stage curtains.

**Junior/Senior High School
Field**

- Replacing the previously removed seating system with code compliant, barrier free seating;
- Install an integrated press box will provide a controlled area for viewing and commentating on games and activities; and
- New synthetic track surface and lane markings;

Note: Temporary bleachers will be relocated to other fields in the district once the more permanent replacement is installed at the stadium.

Q6. What is the exact wording of the bond proposal?

The Board of Education of the Borough of Midland Park in the County of Bergen, New Jersey is authorized (a) to undertake various improvements and renovations to the Midland Park High School and Highland Avenue/Godwin Elementary School, including the acquisition and installation of equipment and any necessary site work; (b) to appropriate \$11,509,807 for such improvements funded, in part, by grants from the State of New Jersey in the amount of \$2,859,807 and from funds allocated from the Board of Education's capital reserve account in the amount of \$150,000; (c) to issue bonds of the School District in the principal amount of \$8,500,000; and (d) to transfer local share funds between the school facilities projects.

The final eligible costs for the proposed improvements approved by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education are \$7,149,518 (\$4,003,265 allocated to Midland Park High School and \$3,146,253 allocated to Highland Avenue/Godwin Elementary School. The proposed improvements include \$4,360,289 (\$2,035,268 allocated to Midland Park High School and \$2,325,021 allocated to Highland Avenue/Godwin Elementary School) for project costs that are not eligible for State support under the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act.

Q7. If approved on September 30, when will these construction projects commence and when will they be completed?

Construction would be phased to allow for the completion of many of the projects during the summer of 2015 - remaining projects would continue either into the school year or be planned for the summer of 2016 according to material and equipment lead times and with the least disruption to students, staff or school operations

Mid-October 2014

Anticipated Mid-February 2015 and 2016*

Anticipated Mid April 2015 and 2016*

Develop Construction Documents

Public Bidding

Bid Awards

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Q8. What is this referendum going to cost me?

Based upon the \$11,509,807 requested referendum amount, state grants would cover \$2,859,807, the board's capital reserve account would cover \$150,000 and the bond issued would be \$8,500,000. The tax impact on the average assessed home (\$392,000) in Midland Park would be about \$218 per year.

Total Referendum Amount	State Grants	Capital Reserve	Midland Park Share	Annual Cost*	Monthly* Cost
\$11,509,807	-\$2,859,807	-\$150,000	\$8,500,000	\$218.78	\$18.23

*These costs are based on anticipated **20-year bonds**, the average assessed home (\$392,000) and an estimated interest rate of 3.5 percent per annum.

- Home assessed at \$300,000 dollars would be \$13.95/month
- Home assessed at \$400,000 dollars would be \$18.60/month
- Home assessed at \$500,000 dollars would be \$23.25/month

Q9. What is a ROD Grant and how will it help the district?

A ROD Grant is funding for the project from the state based on eligible costs. The state determines eligible costs by reviewing the proposed project submitted by the district.

Q10. What is the difference between this referendum and the referendum proposed in December 2012?

The current referendum is identical to the referendum proposed in 2012 with the following exceptions:

- From a scope of work perspective – all of the projects included in 2012 are included with the exception of those that the Board has had no choice but to complete out of capital budget – these include:
 - \$2,326,512 of roofing work at all three schools
 - \$344,732 of parking/driveway paving work at all three schools
 - \$23,725 of masonry repointing and repairs at Highland School
 - \$16,330 of clock system replacements at the High School
- From a financial perspective – in addition to the value of the work noted above having been removed from the referendum, the budget estimates have been adjusted:
 - to account for inflation, material and labor increase over the past two years
 - to include 40% of ROD Grant funding on all ELIGIBLE scope – totaling \$2,859,807

Q11. What are the estimated cost savings of the proposed plan with more energy efficient building systems etc?

While there will be significant efficiency and operational savings achieved with the replacement of the building systems, and while we have provided an estimate of cost

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savings associated with the work; it is difficult to quantify the savings until all systems have been implemented.

It should also be noted that the cost of implementation of many of the items outweigh the savings associated with that particular item wherein the payback would extend out decades.

- For example: lighting and lighting controls which have a payback of approximately 15 years.

Q12. What other capital improvement or repair projects has the Board undertaken since December 2012 and how were these projects funded?

- \$2,326,512 of roofing work at all three schools
- \$344,732 of parking/driveway paving work at all three schools
- \$23,725 of masonry repointing and repairs at Highland School
- \$16,330 of clock system replacements at the High School

Q13. Can more money be spent than the amount approved in the question?

No. The cost of the referendum projects cannot exceed the amount approved by the voters.

The referendum project costs include required contingencies to address unforeseen conditions and construction issues that arise during renovation projects of this magnitude.

Q14. What if the project bids come in lower than the amount approved in the question?

In the event that the bids of all of the projects being proposed come in lower than expected resulting in a surplus, there are two alternatives available to the Board:

1. If, for any given project, any alternate bids were initially requested but rejected due to proposed costs, the Board has the option of reviewing those alternates again to determine if they should be approved in light of the fact that other projects came in lower than budgeted.
2. The Board has the option of returning the unused portion of the funds to the public, (i.e. paying down the initial bonds)

TAX PROGRAMS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Q15. Are there programs available for senior citizens to offset the tax increases of a proposed referendum?

Property Tax Reimbursement Eligibility Requirements
<http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/ptr/eligibility.shtml>

You may be eligible for a reimbursement of the difference between the amount of property taxes you paid for the base year (the year you first became eligible) and the amount paid for the year for which you are applying for a reimbursement if you met **all**

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the following requirements for the base year and for each succeeding year, up to and including the year for which you are claiming the reimbursement.

1. You are age 65 or older or receiving Federal Social Security disability benefits; and
2. You have lived in New Jersey continuously for at least the last 10 years, as either a homeowner or a renter; and
3. You have owned and lived in your home (or have leased a site in a mobile home park on which you have placed a manufactured or mobile home that you own) for at least the last three years; and
4. You have paid the full amount of property taxes (or site fees if you are a mobile home owner) that were due on your home for the base year and for each succeeding year, up to and including the year for which you are claiming the reimbursement; and
5. You meet the income limits for the base year and for each succeeding year, up to and including the year for which you are claiming the reimbursement.

Residents applying for the 2013 reimbursement must have total income for 2012 that is \$82,880 or less and for 2013 that is \$70,000* or less. These limits apply regardless of marital/civil union status. However, applicants who are married or in a civil union must report combined income of both spouses/CU partners.

If your residence is in a multiple-unit building that you own, and the building has more than four units, you are not eligible for a property tax reimbursement. You are also not eligible if the building has four units or less but more than one commercial unit.

Q16. How can I register to vote or use a mail-in (absentee) ballot?

Voter registration forms are available online at <http://www.state.nj.us/state/elections/voting-information-voter-registration-forms.html>, in each of the district's schools main offices, or at the Bergen County Board of Elections in Somerville. The registration form must be received by the county board of elections no later than September 9, 2014.

You can register to vote if:

- You are a United States citizen
- You will be 18 years of age by the next election
- You will be a resident of the county 30 days before the election
- You are NOT currently serving a sentence, probation or parole because of a felony conviction

Registration Deadline: 21 days before an election

Mail-in or absentee ballots are available online at <http://www.state.nj.us/state/elections/voting-information-vote-by-mail.html>, or in each of the district's schools main offices or at the Bergen County Board of Elections in Hackensack. The application for the mail-in ballot must be received by the county board of elections no later than September 21, 2014.

Q17. Where can I get more information?

- Look for information sent through the mail, including a **special referendum newsletter**.

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- Attend **Board of Education meetings** and/or presentations throughout the community. Attend a **special referendum open house**. District officials, architect and bond attorney will be available to answer residents' questions. **Monday, September 8th, 7:30 pm, Highland School Media Center or Tuesday, September 23rd, 7:30 pm, Highland School Media Center**
- Visit the district's **Web site** at <http://midlandparkschools.k12.nj.us>
- If after attending a public meeting or reviewing the web site you have a question, please e-mail . In order to receive a response all inquiries must include your full name, address and e-mail address.
- Watch for periodic updates or coverage in the *Bergen Record*
- Speak to members of the Board of Education about the plan details.