



TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Tonawanda School Community:

As we approach the annual public vote on the district expenditure plan for the 2023-2024 school year, please see the listing of frequently asked questions below that include factual information and important aspects of this budgetary process.

This public referendum will include a proposition on the proposed budget, the proposed sale of Mullen Elementary School, and the candidates running for the three vacant terms to serve on the Board of Education. **This vote will take place on Tuesday, May 16 from 11am – 8pm at the High School Wellness Gymnasium.**

FAQ's – District Budget/Expenditure Plan

- **When is the district required to begin making debt payments on the new school?**
A: The new Tonawanda Elementary School will be completed in September 2023. The first debt payment on this capital project is due this year. The local share of this debt payment will be part of the scheduled school tax payment due in the fall of this year.
- **Why is the proposed tax increase for the 23-24 school budget 4.16%?**
A: The proposed tax increase for the district budget for next year is UNDER the NYS tax cap for our district. Approximately 2.74% of the proposed tax increase is for scheduled operations and related expenses of educating children as our state and country combat record inflation. Another 1.42% of the proposed tax increase is directly related to the first debt payment for the new Tonawanda Elementary School.
- **Is the District Budget under the tax cap? What does that mean for me?**
A: YES. Our 2023-2024 budget, again, adheres to the New York State requirements aligning to the property tax cap. All taxpayers that are eligible for the NYS STAR property tax exemption will continue receiving this rebate and taxpayers will receive either a check or a reduction on their school tax bill.
- **When is the annual budget vote? What can I vote on?**
A: Our budget vote will take place on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 from 11am to 8pm at the High School Wellness Gym located at 600 Fletcher Street. There will be plenty of parking available in the main lot near the athletic stadium. Voters will have the

opportunity to vote on the district expenditure limit (“budget”) for 2023-2024, consider the opportunity to sell Mullen Elementary School for \$850,000, and vote on three candidates to serve on the Board of Education.

FAQ’s – Capital Project

- **Is the TONA2020: Elementary School Consolidation Capital Project on time and on budget?**
A: YES, this project is on time. YES, this project is on budget.
- **When is the new school opening?**
A: We anticipate welcoming students to the new school on the opening day of student attendance, Wednesday, September 6, 2023. Our school calendar for the 2023-2024 school year can be found here: [2023-2024 District Calendar](#)
- **What grade levels will be attending the new Tonawanda Elementary School?**
A: All students in grades UPK - 5 will be attending the new school in September.
- **When will I know more about school times, procedures, student/teacher assignments, and other related information?**
A: We will continue to share this information with our parents/guardians when these decisions and procedures have been finalized. The public can follow our progress on our district website here: [TONA2020](#) and new Tonawanda Elementary School website here: [Tonawanda Elementary School](#).
- **Will the public have an opportunity to visit Mullen, Riverview, and the new Tonawanda Elementary School?**
A: YES. The district plans to collaborate with the Historical Society of the Tonawanda’s to offer tours of Mullen and Riverview Elementary Schools as we approach the summer season. Additionally, we plan to host public tours of the new school later in the fall season.

FAQ’s – Proposed Sale of Mullen Elementary School

- **What are the details of the proposed sale of Mullen?**
A: The Board of Education has approved the sale of Mullen Elementary School to Child and Family Services of Erie County for \$850,000, subject to approval by the public and satisfaction of other contingencies.
- **What will Child and Family Services of Erie County do with the building?**
A: Child and Family Services of Erie County plans to operate a Stanley G. Falk School in the Mullen building. This program will serve students in the elementary grades.
- **Who will attend the Stanley G. Falk School at the Mullen Elementary School site?**
A: This program will serve students with special needs from many surrounding school districts, including our students from Tonawanda, which will arrive by small bus

transportation each day. This program does NOT host afterschool, athletic, or evening activities (excluding an open house and parent/teacher conferences, etc.).

- **What services and programming will take place at the Stanley G. Falk School at Mullen?**

A: The Stanley G. Falk School provides educational programming for students who have special learning, social, and emotional needs. Students receive instruction in highly structured classroom settings. The highly qualified staff provide students with the academic, social, and behavioral supports necessary for meeting commencement requirements. Stanley G. Falk School operates on a twelve-month basis, which includes a six-week extended school year program similar to a traditional summer school schedule.

- **What will happen to the playground?**

A: It is expected that the Stanley G. Falk School will maintain the current playground.

- **Why is the sale and purchase price important to taxpayers?**

A: Our district owes nearly \$550,000 in debt on Mullen School from previous capital projects. Following the payment of required associated fees, we expect to realize approximately \$200,000 in proceeds from this sale.

- **What will this district do with the proceeds from the sale of Mullen Elementary School?**

A: The proceeds of this sale are required by NYS legislation to be added to our debt reserve account to make payments on current debt and debt from future capital work at the Middle/High School. This will reduce future tax impacts on our community.

- **What happens if the public votes down the proposed sale?**

A: Should this offer for purchase of Mullen School NOT be approved by the voters on May 16, 2023, the district would be responsible for the carrying costs (liability, insurance, maintenance, energy, etc.), as high as \$4,000 per month, until the building is eventually approved for sale.

- **Can I learn more about this process and the Child and Family Services organization?**

A: YES. Please visit our website at <https://www.tonawandacsd.org/page/tona-2020> to learn more about the capital project, the sale of Mullen Elementary School, and a presentation from the Stanley G. Falk School. We will hold a community forum regarding this proposed sale on Wednesday, May 10, 2023 at 6pm inside the High School Auditorium.

- **What will happen to Riverview School?**

A: We continue to market and promote the sale of Riverview School to interested parties.