

Depew Union Free School District

Capital Project 2021

Frequently Asked Questions

1.) Why does Proposition 2 (CAYUGA HEIGHTS AUDITORIUM ADDITION PROJECT) have to pass before Proposition 3 (DISTRICT-WIDE Air Conditioning Project)?

When proposals and final propositions are considered for Capital Projects, the key decision-making factors are focused on the overall impact that they will have on our students and an analysis of the cost benefit. When considering the priority placement of the three propositions for the Capital Project 2021; Proposition 1 (DISTRICT FACILITIES UPGRADES PROJECT) is related to numerous health and safety items that were not able to be addressed in Capital Project 2016 and are now in need of being addressed; Proposition 2 (CAYUGA HEIGHTS AUDITORIUM ADDITION PROJECT) will become an integral space for the entire District and utilized on a daily basis by our elementary students and rates high in a cost benefit analysis; Proposition 3 (DISTRICT-WIDE Air Conditioning Project) would only be utilized in a very narrow window of time (very beginning and very end of the school year) and has a much lower cost benefit analysis.

2.) How will my school taxes be affected by this project?

The total cost of the project and the amount of the referendum is \$34,700,000. The District currently receives state building aid of 84% and has a targeted capital reserve fund of \$2.5 million. This is the right time to seek approval of the capital project, and monies from the district capital reserve fund, Federal Stimulus funds and other monies will allow the district to present the project with only a \$0.27 per thousand local tax impact if all three propositions are approved by voters.

3.) Isn't this all taxpayer money?

Yes, it is all taxpayer money. However, by authorizing this project, voters can ensure that the State taxpayer money is spent in the Depew schools to benefit our students. It is a way for us to get back some of our income taxes and apply them to local projects and purposes that are supported by the local residents. If we don't use this method, the tax dollars that we have already sent to Albany do not return to our community. Instead, another school district or community will be investing our dollars in their approved projects.

4.) Why don't we handle these improvements in a regular budget, instead of putting them up for a vote in a capital project?

In New York State, project referendum is the most effective option financially for any school district. Depew currently receives 84% in building aid for a project. Why is that? Because the state recognized several decades ago that school buildings and school infrastructures across the state had fallen below standard or were even in serious disrepair. Increased building aid was established as an incentive for school communities everywhere in the state to design and approve modernization projects.

5.) Who sits on Facilities Improvement Team (FIT) board and how do they get on that board?

There are representatives from all constituencies. Students, Parents, Support Staff, Teachers, Administrators, Board of Education members, Architects and Project Managers. Individuals are asked to serve on the team, due to their involvement within the District and/or the overall impact that they may have on the discussions around a key part of the Capital Project.

6.) Why isn't the first floor of Middle School a high priority for AC?

The District is only able to utilize \$1,700,000 in a Federal Stimulus grant toward the total cost of Proposition 3, which is in total \$9,800,000; therefore, we needed to prioritize all of the spaces within the District to be considered for air conditioning.

7.) Where will the Outdoor learning shelters be located and what is the cost?

These outdoor learning spaces will be located in close proximity to each one of the three buildings. The exact locations are still being determined. The estimated cost for each space is \$87,000. The Outdoor learning shelters are within Proposition 1.

8.) Is the district accessing fed/state funding for 100% removal of underground storage tanks?

When considering all projects, the District accesses all Federal and/or State funding sources, in order to limit the impact on our local taxpayers as much as possible.

9.) Is there any chance of the funds drying up before projects are completed.

No, the District has designated \$2.5 million of its Capital Project Reserve, \$1.7 million in a Federal Stimulus grant and then 84% in New York State Building Aid.

10.) Location of new auditorium at Cayuga - Why would you put it in the front of the school where there are classrooms? Wouldn't that block in other classrooms? What about the noise level for classes there?

The space in and around the Cayuga Heights Elementary School is very limited for an addition of this size. We are replacing the two classrooms that are being displaced, along with bathrooms. Furthermore, we needed to consider outside access to this space, including the availability of proximal parking. Other classrooms would not be blocked in and noise will be very limited, as sound proofing solutions will be utilized.