



Ardsley Union Free School District

Challenging Minds Building Character Inspiring Excellence

SPECIAL NEWSLETTER EDITION: A GUIDE TO THE ARDSLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET VOTE, BOND PROPOSAL AND CAPITAL RESERVE FUND REFERENDUM

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR BOARD OF EDUCATION

On Tuesday, May 16, 2017, the community will be voting on four distinct items: **the Capital Improvement Bond Proposal, the Establishment of a Capital Reserve Fund, the 2017-2018 School Budget, and two Board of Education seats.** This special edition newsletter is designed to help the community understand the rationale and impact of the budget, bond and reserve fund proposals.



Nicole Minore, Frank Hariton, Steve Kastin, Matt Bonney, George Holt

**VOTE ON
MAY 16, 2017**

**POLLS OPEN
6 A.M. TO 10 A.M. AND
2 P.M. TO 9 P.M.**

**ARDSLEY HIGH SCHOOL
CAFETERIA**

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BOND PROPOSAL IN PLAIN ENGLISH

Will you allow the district to replace a current bond and spend up to \$20 million with no additional costs to taxpayers? This replacement bond would allow us to install alternative energy systems to reduce costs, to expand and update our STEM classrooms and equipment, to preserve our facilities and to increase safety, as well as several other interior projects.

❖ CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BOND PROPOSAL:

The Ardsley Board of Education and the District’s administration are committed to providing facilities that are high quality, safe, and create an environment conducive to learning. In order to support the high standards for teaching and learning set forth in our strategic plan and to expand STEM curriculum in all three schools, we need to redesign classroom workspaces and provide the technical equipment necessary for advanced learning. Much like we maintain our homes, we must continue to preserve and maintain our facilities and update portions of our infrastructure such as roofs, elevators, and heating and ventilation systems. With energy bills rising by double-digits year after year, it is also important that we look at solutions to control increasing energy costs. This year, we are asking our community to vote on replacing a bond which is being retired with a new \$20 million capital improvement plan to help us achieve these goals. **This new bond will replace an existing bond; therefore will be NO additional costs to taxpayers by approving this proposal.**

DEFINING THE PROJECT SCOPE: The scope of the project is broken down into three basic categories: facilities preservation/maintenance and safety; strategic plan-STEM curriculum support; and energy efficiency/alternative energy.

- **FACILITIES PRESERVATION/MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY:** Two years ago, with the support of the community, we began many significant repairs to our facilities that required immediate attention. Select sidewalks have been replaced, portions of building exteriors and interiors have been repaired, and certain infrastructure projects were initiated. Although a lot has been accomplished, there is still more to do in order to maintain our facilities and keep our learning environments safe.
- **STRATEGIC PLAN-STEM CURRICULUM SUPPORT:** Our current five-year strategic plan calls for expanding our STEM curriculum in all three schools. It is important that the physical space/design of our classrooms and media centers support a focus on providing engaging experiences and creating collaborative workspaces for both our students and faculty. Engineering classes require dedicated “dirty spaces” or “shops” where students can build and implement engineering projects. In addition to the redesign of various classrooms, supplementary equipment is needed for growing programs such as MakerSpace, Computer Science and Project Lead the Way™ to include more grades and new learning units.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BOND PROPOSAL (CONTINUED)

- ENERGY EFFICIENCY/ALTERNATIVE ENERGY:** Reducing energy costs is an important factor in planning the financial stability of our schools for the years ahead. Over the past two years, we have explored many alternative energy approaches and believe that investments in solar power and microturbines will help us control rising energy costs. They will also provide an example for students to learn about energy conservation and sustainability. The anticipated savings in operating expenses would fund these investments over time, making them financially responsible solutions. For more information on these energy initiatives, please visit our website, www.ardsleyschools.org. Scroll down to the middle of the home page to the “District News” section and click on the “Noteworthy News – Greening our Energy Supply” article.

FINANCING STRATEGY: We have evaluated funding options for these projects and have determined that issuing a replacement bond is the best fiscal choice as there will be NO additional cost to tax payers. The following tables provide breakdowns of the total proposed expenditure by school and by project type. If the community approves the bond on May 16th, the District will submit its plans to the state for approval. Once approved, a bond or notes will be issued and work will commence based on building priorities. **Since this bond proposal replaces an existing bond and using a conservative interest rate model, there is NO additional cost to taxpayers.**



Solar panels absorb the sun's rays as a source of energy for generating electricity or heating.



Microturbines are powered by natural gas and supply both electricity and ambient heat.

SUMMARY OF BOND PROPOSAL BY PROJECT CATEGORY

Facilities Preservation and Maintenance	\$11,920,901
Safety	\$2,472,294
Strategic Plan - STEM	\$3,514,556
Energy Efficiency / Alternative Energy	\$2,092,249
TOTAL	\$20,000,000

VOTER ELIGIBILITY AND ABSENTEE BALLOTS

In order to vote, you must be a registered voter who is at least 18 years of age, a citizen of the US, and a resident of the Ardsley School District for a period of 30 days or more. If you are not available to vote in person you can complete an absentee ballot application available to registered voters by coming to the District Office between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by downloading a copy from our website www.ardsleyschools.org. The form is located in the ‘District Clerk’ section under the ‘Board of Education’ tab. In order for your vote to be counted, it must be received in the Office of the District Clerk by 5:00 p.m. on May 16th.

Please account for mailing time or bring it to the office.

Bond Proposal Summary by School

(Please visit website www.ardsleyschools.org for more details. Select the “Budget Information” section under the “District Info” tab)

ARDSLEY HIGH SCHOOL	\$7,557,747
Site Utilities (eliminate fuel oil tank)	\$93,000
Pavement Repairs (repairs to roadways, sidewalks, curbs, and rear parking lot steps)	\$1,116,093
Structure and Exterior Closure (replace roof, library skylight, and masonry repairs)	\$3,745,420
Interior Spaces and Components (replace stair railings, elevator, flooring, upgrades for STEM classroom, and media center renovation)	\$1,841,462
Heating, Ventilation, Mechanical & Plumbing (replace heating and domestic water valves)	\$64,356
Alternative Energy & Resource Conservation Measures (Cogeneration, including but not limited to solar and microturbines)	\$697,416
ARDSLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL	\$7,140,432
Site Utilities (eliminate fuel oil tank)	\$68,200
Pavement Repairs (repairs to roadways, sidewalks, and curbs)	\$168,268
Electronic Sign (install electronic sign at the Ashford Avenue entrance, a joint project with the village and the SAYF coalition)	\$65,720
Structure and Exterior Closure (replace roof, library skylight, install entrance canopy, and masonry repairs)	\$3,933,627
Interior Spaces and Components (replace gymnasium dividing wall, seating in large group instruction room, renovation of main office, scoreboard, flooring, and upgrades for STEM and media center renovation)	\$2,207,200
Alternative Energy & Resource Conservation Measures (Cogeneration, including but not limited to solar and microturbines)	\$697,417
CONCORD ROAD SCHOOL	\$5,301,821
Pavement Repairs (repairs to roadways, sidewalks, and curbs)	\$881,032
Structure and Exterior Closure (replace roof, paint building panels, and masonry repairs)	\$1,958,456
Interior Spaces and Components (refinish gym floor, replace gym sound system, flooring, and upgrades for STEM)	\$668,756
Heating, Ventilation, Mechanical & Plumbing (upgrade exhaust system and replace heating and domestic water valves)	\$1,096,160
Alternative Energy & Resource Conservation Measures (Cogeneration, including but not limited to solar and microturbines)	\$697,417
TOTAL	\$20,000,000

BELOW ARE EXAMPLES OF CAPITAL PROJECTS THAT ADDRESSED ONLY CRITICAL ISSUES OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS.

THE NEW BOND WILL ALLOW US TO CONTINUE UPGRADING DECAYING INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPROVE SAFETY THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT.



Replaced deteriorated sidewalks and added handicap ramp in rear of AMS



Before and After: CRS stairs



Added a new walkway at AHS



Before and After: AMS lockers



Before and After: New interior and exterior doors



Before and After: Stage curtains and rigging at AMS and AHS



EXAMPLES OF SIGNIFICANT NEW PROJECTS INCLUDED IN THE CURRENT BOND PROPOSAL



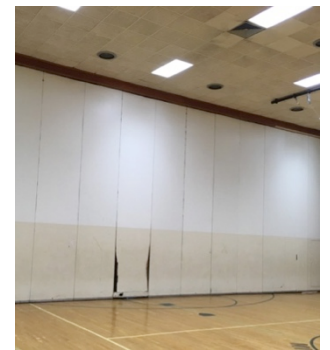
Roofs and skylights in all three schools (from left to right AHS, AMS and CRS)



Roadways at AHS and CRS



Replace heating and water valves at CRS



Dividing wall and scoreboard at AMS



Green Energy: Solar and microturbines

❖ ESTABLISH A CAPITAL RESERVE FUND:

On May 16th, the community will vote on the establishment of a capital reserve fund. By approving this referendum, the community is in effect allowing the district to set up a savings account to be used for both planned and unplanned future capital projects. The fund will have a zero balance at its inception. Money would only be added to the capital reserve fund if there were a surplus at the end of any school year. For example, if at the beginning of a school year we anticipate high heating costs but we experience a warmer winter, the money saved on heating could be deposited into our capital reserve fund. If there is no surplus at the end of the school year then no money is added to the fund. In this manner, the fund can be used to offset future brick and mortar construction and renovation of district facilities. It is important to note that any future capital projects funded through this capital reserve fund will also require approval of the district voters.

FAQ:

Will my taxes go up due to the establishment of a capital reserve fund?

No, taxes would not increase due to the establishment of a capital reserve fund. The fund only accrues a balance if there is a surplus of money at the end of the District's fiscal year.

Why establish a capital reserve fund now?

There is much uncertainty as to how school districts will receive future state and federal funding in numerous areas, including building aid. In addition, there is also uncertainty in our future facility needs based on new housing developments such as Rivertowns Square, the Water Wheel Condominiums and other single-family home developments. This will allow the District to put aside funds for areas of potential need.

❖ BUDGET PROPOSAL:

At the board meeting on April 18th, the Ardsley Board of Education formally adopted the 2017-2018 school year budget and is seeking the community’s approval on May 16, 2017. This budget is a result of a process that began in January and has involved the administration, the Board of Education and the community.

The proposed budget for the 2017-2018 school year totals \$67,505,261 representing a 1.75% year-to-year budget increase. The proposed budget maintains all present programs, increases services at CRS, and adds class sections at AMS and AHS and a guidance coordinator at AHS.

The District continues to focus on prudent fiscal management. Initiatives such as Quad Village Transportation continue to expand and annual renegotiation of vendor contracts are diligently performed. A lower employer contribution rate for the retirement system along with a higher staff contribution rate for health insurance have helped us both increase alternate sources of revenue and reduce specific costs.

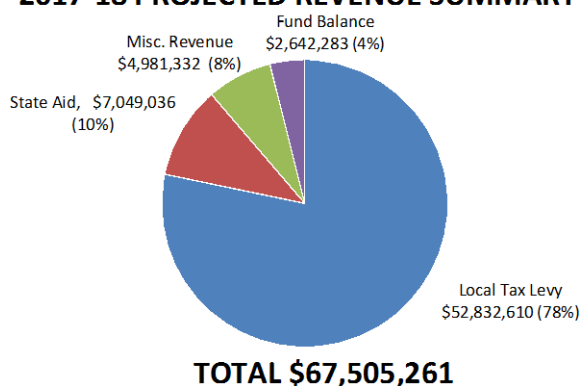
Ardsley continues to be a top-ranked district with student performance being among the highest in the county. We have a dedicated team of administrators and teachers who continue to deliver the high academic standards our community demands while embracing innovation to meet the changing needs of our students.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BUDGET PROPOSAL:

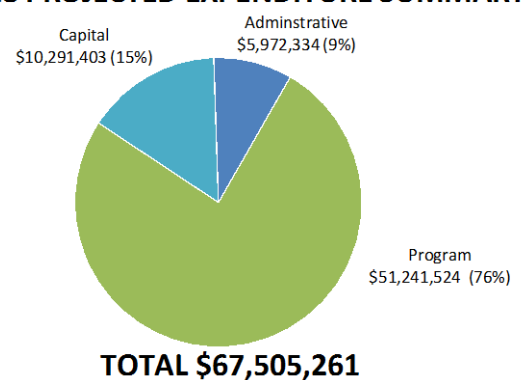
- Maintains all present programs, offerings and class sizes;
- Adds additional sections in science, English, and social studies at AMS and AHS; a Literacy Coach at CRS and an ENL teacher to be shared by CRS and AMS;
- Increases STEM opportunities for all students K-12 including the expansion of Project Lead the Way™;
- **The proposed budget falls below the 2.52% Tax Levy Cap allowable for Ardsley by the state.**

If the community does not approve the school budget on May 16th, State law provides that the Board of Education can, if it wishes, resubmit the same or a different budget to the community for approval one more time by funding a second vote. If the second budget is also rejected or if the Board of Education decides not to resubmit the budget for a second vote, the school will operate on a contingency budget. A contingency budget would require that Ardsley make reductions totaling over \$1,303,398 from the proposed budget.

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM 2017-18 PROJECTED REVENUE SUMMARY



HOW THE MONEY WILL BE SPENT 2017-18 PROJECTED EXPENDITURE SUMMARY



SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET NOTICE

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2016-17 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2017-18 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2017-18 School Year *										
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 66,343,702	\$ 67,505,261	\$ 66,201,863										
Increase/Decrease for the 2017-18 School Year		\$ 1,161,559	\$-141,839										
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		1.75 %	-0.21%										
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.26 %											
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount													
	\$ 51,533,827	\$ 52,832,610											
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable													
	-	-											
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **													
	-	-											
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy													
	-	-											
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)													
	\$ 51,533,827	\$ 52,832,610	\$51,533,827										
F. Total Permissible Exclusions													
	\$ 2,228,301	\$ 2,295,297											
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions													
	\$ 49,305,526	\$ 50,537,313											
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D)													
	\$ 49,305,526	\$ 50,537,313											
I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **													
	\$ -	\$ -											
Administrative Component													
	\$ 5,907,704	\$ 5,972,334	\$ 5,945,175										
Program Component													
	\$ 50,455,652	\$ 51,241,524	\$ 49,965,286										
Capital Component													
	\$ 9,980,346	\$ 10,291,403	\$ 10,291,402										
<p>* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2017-18 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.</p> <p>If the District goes to a contingency budget, all equipment expenses, additional programs and proposed staffing would not be included in the budget in the amount of \$1,303,398.</p>													
<p>** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Description</th> <th style="text-align: right;">Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Proposition # 2: Establish Capital Reserve Fund</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$10,000,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Proposition # 3: Bond Project (at no additional cost to taxpayers)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$20,000,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Description	Amount	Proposition # 2: Establish Capital Reserve Fund	\$10,000,000	Proposition # 3: Bond Project (at no additional cost to taxpayers)	\$20,000,000				
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Proposition # 2: Establish Capital Reserve Fund	\$10,000,000												
Proposition # 3: Bond Project (at no additional cost to taxpayers)	\$20,000,000												

NOTE: Please submit an electronic version (Word or PDF) of this completed form to: emsamgts@nysed.gov

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2017-18 School Year \$2,072
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The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2017-2018 by the qualified voters of the Ardsley Union Free School District, Westchester County, New York, will be held at Ardsley High School in said district on Tuesday, May 16, 2017 between the hours of 6:00 am and 10:00am and 2:00pm and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the Ardsley High School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting machine.

1. The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

❖ SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS:

There are two positions available for election this year. **Mr. George Holt**, a current member of our school board and a parent of both a tenth and eleventh grader, is seeking reelection. **Hrishi Karthikeyan**, a parent of a first and third grader, and **Pam Epstein**, a parent of a ninth and twelfth grader, are seeking election as new board members. Many thanks to **Dr. Steve Kastin** for his dedicated service on the Ardsley School Board since 2008.

ARDSLEY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Ardsley: A Great Place to Learn

- Six AHS students achieved finalist standing in the **2017 National Merit Scholarship Program**;
- Seventy-two AHS juniors were inducted into the **National Honor Society**;
- Twenty-six **AHS DECA** club members placed 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th in state-level competitions. Four students advanced to the DECA International Career Development Conference;
- The **AMS Math Counts** team placed third in the regionals. One Ardsley student will be one of only four students representing NYS on the national level;
- Six **AP Biology** students attended a Robotic Surgery Workshop at White Plains Hospital;
- **AHS Science Olympiad** team took first place in the Lower Hudson Valley Regional Competition and two students were awarded gold for their Robot Arm at the **NYS High School Regional Science Olympiad** competition;
- Six AHS students and one AMS student earned Gold and/or Silver Key Awards in the **Scholastic Writing Competition**;
- Over 30 students' **artwork** was shown at Pace University, the Atria Woodlands, Concordia College, and the Katonah Museum;
- Over 40 students from all three schools have participated in **NYSSMA All-State Festivals, Bands, Orchestras and Choruses**;
- **National Gold Medal in Journalism** was awarded to an AHS senior in the 2017 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards ceremony;
- **AHS Three-Year Science Research** students entered 18 projects into the Westchester-Rockland Junior Science and Humanities Symposium competition. Fifteen were recognized with Best in Category or special awards;
- Two Science Research students were awarded the **Acorda Scientific Excellence Award**, five qualified for the **National Genius Olympiad** and two others for **ISWEEP**;
- **AHS Select Chorus** sang the national anthem at the Westchester Knicks game and has been chosen to perform at Saint Patrick' Cathedral this spring;
- Student athletes on the **Girls Varsity Track Team** were awarded league championship titles in three events and represented Ardsley in the state championship;
- **Girls Varsity Swim Team** placed 4th overall in the Section 1/Conference 2 competition winning first, second and third place medals;
- **Ardsley Cheerleaders** placed first in the coed divisions in Cheer Utopia and third in the John Jay competition;
- The **Girls Varsity Volleyball Team and Boys Football Team** took Ardsley to the semi-final playoffs.