



FEBRUARY 2020

Eastchester Eagle

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EASTCHESTER UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Information regarding the Safety, Security and Infrastructure Referendum will be available in Spanish upon request at the District Clerk's Office. Please contact Jeanette Messina at (914) 793-6130 ext. 4211.

La información sobre el Reférendum de Seguridad, Protección e Infraestructura estará disponible en español a pedido en la Oficina del Secretario del Distrito. Por favor, comuníquese con Jeanette Messina al (914) 793-6130 ext. 4211.

Dear Eastchester Families and Community Members:

On March 24, 2020, we are asking you to vote on a crucial issue facing our community: the safety and security of our students, faculty and staff. In order to assist you in making this important decision, we are providing you with detailed information that explains the scope of the project and answers some commonly asked questions.

Why this proposal?

Following the 2018 tragedy in Parkland, Florida, a number of community voices began inquiring about the safety and security of our school buildings. In response, Eastchester Schools prioritized an ongoing discussion with its security firm and local law enforcement, to benchmark current best practices for safe and secure school facilities. Following nearly two years of study, it became clear that while we have improved our emergency plans, increased training, expanded social-emotional support for students and hired a full-time School Resource Officer, our efforts are limited by facilities that were never designed for today's security needs. In response, the Eastchester Board of Education this fall crafted an initial plan for improving safety and security infrastructure. The plan was then refined with the assistance of an Advisory Committee comprised of 25 community stakeholders. We now present a comprehensive plan aimed at more effectively deterring and delaying an intruder from gaining access to our facilities.

What is the proposal?

The District seeks to implement \$19.6 million in safety and security improvements through architecture, technology and active security measures. These initiatives include, but are not limited to:

- Creating secure vestibules
- Strengthening intrusion detection
- Hardening interior and exterior doors and windows.

Next Steps

You are welcome you to join us at our remaining community meetings to learn more about the proposal on the following dates:

- Tuesday, March 10, 2020, Greenvale All-Purpose Room 7:00 pm
- Thursday, March 19, 2020, Waverly Cafeteria 7:00 pm

Visit the Eastchester Schools website at www.eastchesterschools.org for more information, or email the Board of Education at BOE@eufsdk12.org or Superintendent Rob Glass at rglass@eufsdk12.org.

Thank you in advance for your interest and input on this matter of profound importance.

Sincerely,

The Board of Education and
Administration of the Eastchester Union Free School District

SAFETY, SECURITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE BOND VOTE

March 24, 2020 ■ Poll Hours: 6:00am-9:00pm

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When will the issue be on the ballot, and what will be the cost of the bond?

A: The bond will be on the ballot on March 24, 2020. Here is the specific ballot language.

BOND PROPOSITION

YES NO

RESOLVED: (a) That the Board of Education of Eastchester Union Free School District, in the County of Westchester, New York (the "District"), is hereby authorized to construct safety, security and infrastructure improvements to all District school buildings, and to expend therefor an amount not to exceed \$19,600,000; (b) that a tax is hereby voted in the aggregate amount of not to exceed \$19,600,000 to finance such cost, such tax to be levied and collected in installments in such years and in such amounts as shall be determined by said Board of Education; and (c) that in anticipation of said tax, bonds of the District are hereby authorized to be issued in the aggregate principal amount of not to exceed \$19,600,000 and a tax is hereby voted to pay the interest on said bonds as the same shall become due and payable.

Q: How long is the bonding period, and how much will this bond cost the average homeowner?

A: The bond period is 15 years. The estimated cost to the average homeowner (assessed value of \$8,900) is an additional \$221 annually. We anticipate incurring the first debt payment in the 2023-2024 school year, which is when the debt for the Waverly addition and a \$1.5 million tax certiorari refund bond expires, so the actual increase will be partially offset by those retirements.

Q: What are the main elements of the safety and security infrastructure?

A: The elements fall into two categories -- 1) Architecture/Resilience and 2) Technology

■ Architecture/Resilience

- Provide single-point entrances, secure vestibules, and a dedicated security office at each school building
- Improve separation between public areas and instructional spaces
- Replace interior and exterior doors, door hardware and locks, and associated glazing
- Replace and upgrade selective exterior windows
- Improve exterior site light levels and coverage

■ Technology

- Update and expand on existing security systems, and provide new as required including:
 - Cameras to achieve 100% coverage
 - Intrusion detection, sensors and monitoring
 - Provide card access and universal door 'keying'
 - Upgrade paging system to mass notification and improve speech intelligibility
- Install emergency call stations

Q: Will each school in the District receive these safety and security infrastructure improvements?

A: Yes. Each building will receive improvements in the categories listed above. However, the amount of estimated spending per building will vary depending upon the existing conditions and needs at each school. Here are the preliminarily estimated amounts to be spent at each school site:

- MS/HS secure entrance/lobby \$1.9 M
- Eastchester High School \$4.3 M
- Eastchester Middle School \$2.6 M
- Anne Hutchinson School \$3.7 M
- Greenvale School \$4.2 M
- Waverly School \$2.9 M

Q: Should the bond pass, what is the estimated construction schedule?

A: Phase 1 - MS/HS

- SED submission/approval - September, 2020 - December, 2021
- Bid award - January, 2021
- Construction start - June, 2021
- Construction closeout - February, 2022

Phase 2 - Elementary Schools

- SED submission/approval - December 2020 - April 2021
- Bid award - November 2021
- Construction start - April 2022
- Construction closeout - January 2023

Q: Why is the MS/HS campus being addressed first in the schedule? They have had more recent construction than the elementary schools.

A: The lead time for materials and fabrication for the elementary scope of work is longer. The above schedule allows us to accomplish all of the work across the entire District more quickly.

Q: What was the process used to determine the scope of work? Was the community involved?

A: The school District has engaged professional architects and engineers as well as security and technology consultants in addition to the Eastchester Police Department to identify the most appropriate improvement options to render all our school buildings more secure. A range of options, costs and benefits were created, reviewed and refined by our Board of Education. Revised plans were then reviewed by a 25 member Advisory Committee of community stakeholders, who provided additional input.

Here is the specific group of team members involved:

- Eastchester UFSD - Administration, Board of Education Facilities Committee, Community Advisory Committee
- Eastchester Police Department
- Security Consultant - Altaris Consulting Group
- Architect/Engineer - MEMASI
- Technology Consultant - Building Technology Consulting (BTC)
- Construction Manager/Estimator - Arris Contracting Co.

Here is the specific timeline:

JUNE 2018 – MARCH 2019

- Architects/Engineers review of facilities, existing reports, and discussion with District team(s)

Frequently Asked Questions

- Building Technology Consulting (BTC) conducted security technology review including review of card readers, motion detectors and cameras, alarms, door contacts, paging horns, speakers, call buttons, door releases, panic buttons, lockdown indicator light strobe, etc.
 - Meetings with District and review of existing conditions and security report
 - Prepared scope of work and coordination for review by Arris Contracting
 - Finalized scope and submission to Arris for constructability and cost estimating; including:
 - Site visit to review existing conditions and coordination of scope of work
 - Verification of window replacements based on useful life, and doors and vision panels repair/replacement
 - Preparation of preliminary estimates
 - Meetings with Facilities Committee / Board of Education
- AUGUST 2019 – PRESENT 2020**
- Review of project with Dr. Glass and multiple Facilities Committee and Board of Education meetings
 - Additional analysis of scope or work
 - Community Advisory Committee meetings
 - Update cost estimate(s)
 - Board of Education Meeting to present final cost and scope of work

Q: What is the District doing to proactively promote social-emotional wellness in the school culture?

A: The District has a wide range of programming, curriculum and activities already in place. Many of these are too numerous and diffuse to describe because they have developed over time through the efforts of individual teachers and teacher teams at the classroom level. Recent District efforts to become more systematic in our support systems has resulted in training of staff in approaches such as DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy) and implementation of programs like Second Step. In addition, the Board of Education has increased counseling staff and has hired a Supervisor of K-12 Guidance. A complete list of schoolwide programming elements can be found on our website www.eastchesterschools.org. We will continue working with the community to build an ever more robust system of health and wellness support.

Q: How does the District respond to threats that come from students or others?

A: Administrators and counselors currently use elements of a threat assessment protocol to determine whether exhibited behavior represents a more serious threat, or whether a student may be on a pathway toward possibly increasing future violence. Using an objective interview protocol and involving health professionals and/or law enforcement as partners when needed, we are able to make better proactive decisions so that we can provide students with the support they need. More formal and comprehensive training in a nationally-recognized protocol model is now beginning at every school in Eastchester through the District's security consultant, Altaris.

Q: What is the District doing to continually improve and evolve its emergency response plans?

A: We have already acted to improve emergency plans, increase training, and expand social-emotional support for students. This fall, we hired a full-time School Resource Officer to form bonds with students and administrators and to identify any threats to safety.

Q: Does the District have emergency response plans at each school? Are these plans drilled and practiced?

A: An emergency response plan exists in all of our five school buildings. Each school participates in 12 drills annually, four of which are lockdown and eight of which are evacuation. Safety teams on both the District and school levels convene several times annually to review safety plans and suggest improvements. Our security consultant, Altaris, conducts staff training twice annually and provides unlimited consultation on an as needed basis. Our newly hired School Resource Officer (SRO) helps monitor drills and provides quality control feedback, in addition to randomly and actively monitoring the perimeter security of all five school buildings.

Q: How does spending all of this money really make students safer?

A: Proactive measures described above to promote student emotional wellness and conduct thorough threat assessments provide the first layer of defense. However, in the event of an incident, slowing down an intruder is critical. No ONE intervention provides an effective defense for all situations and a multi-layered approach saves time and reduces threats. Secure buildings prevent unauthorized entry and contact with occupants. Improved surveillance will aid our security officers to identify potential dangers and many security items rely on upgrading antiquated systems and components to be effective.

Q: How much of the project is addressing safety measures and how much is replacing standard infrastructure?

A: This is very difficult to accurately estimate, because many of the safety measures are intertwined with replacement of old windows, doors and other infrastructure. The best estimate is that roughly one half of the \$19.6 M involves necessary replacement of aging infrastructure to accomplish safety and security goals.

Q: Will this bond require any additional staff or any other ongoing operational costs?

A: This project was designed with existing levels of staffing in mind, and we do not anticipate the need to add any staffing. With that said, we are always evaluating and improving safety and security protocols, and it is always possible (with or without this project) that the District may, in the future, identify the need for additional staffing to enhance security. This must, of course, fit within our annual budget, which is brought to taxpayers for approval.

Q: Has the District prioritized the most critical elements of this project? Should the bond fail to pass, would the District be able to use these priorities to consider next steps?

A: Yes, one of the greatest benefits of all the study, analysis, and conversation throughout this process is that it has given the District a solid understanding of how the layering of systems works together. Our deeper understanding of the overarching concepts embedded in this plan will help us make sound "next step" decisions, regardless of the outcome of the March 24th bond referendum.



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Safety & Security Improvements Districtwide Through:

★ **Architecture** ★ ★ **Technology** ★ ★ **Active Security Measures** ★

Community Forums:

Tuesday, March 10th
Greenvale All-Purpose Room at 7:00pm


Thursday, March 19th
Waverly Cafeteria at 7:00pm

Community members are invited to attend ANY meeting

APPLICATION FOR ABSENTEE BALLOTS

**The Office of the District Clerk: 580 White Plains Road, Eastchester, New York
Or www.eastchesterschools.org**

**SCHOOL
BOND
VOTE**



Tuesday, March 24, 2020
Poll Hours: 6:00am – 9:00pm

Eastchester
Middle School
550 White Plains Road

235 Garth Road
(Garth Road Residents only)

