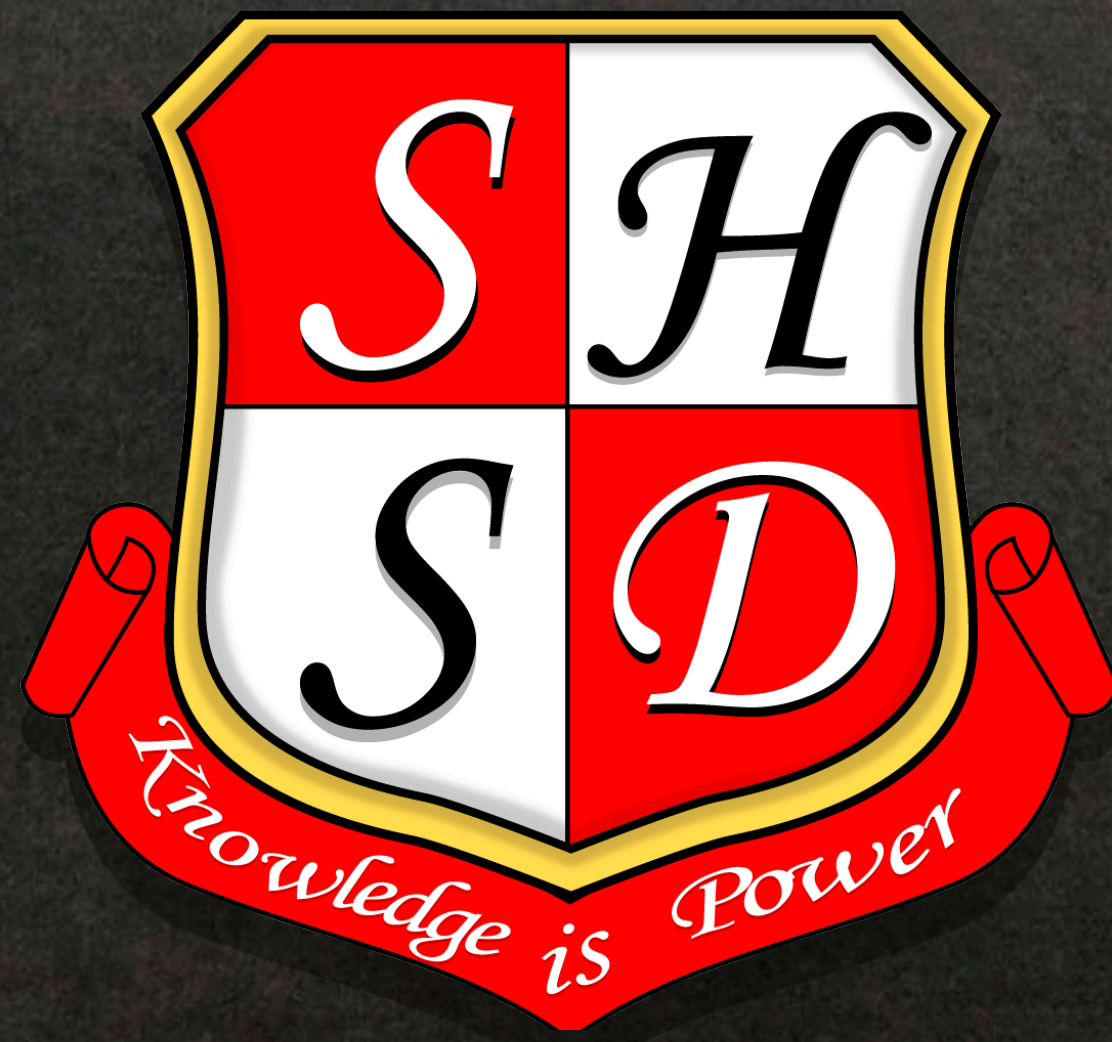


» MARCH 2026 REFERENDUM DISTRICT-WIDE FACILITIES RENOVATION PROGRAM

 SOLUTIONS
ARCHITECTURE
FRANK A. MESSINEO • AIA

Upgrading Our Facilities to Support Our Educational Programs



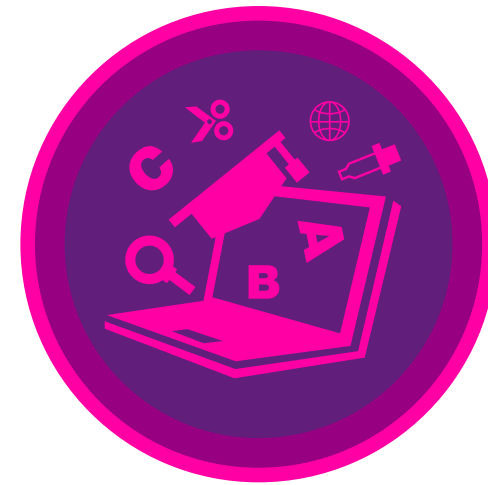
QUICK REFERENCES



THE DISTRICT LEADERSHIP SOUGHT TO..

- » Work with the Architect, school administration and staff to **IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE** needed facility improvements.
- » Consider ways to **IMPROVE** existing school facilities with projects that ensure safe and functional schools.
- » Consider ways to **IMPROVE** the student experiences with projects that directly impact students.
- » Consider ways to make the recommended improvements while taking advantage of **DEBT SERVICE ROLLING OFF**, so that there would be a **NET NEUTRAL TAX IMPACT** for all Somerset Hills Communities.

» REFERENDUM PRIORITIES



ENHANCED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- » Educational programs drive the need to update facilities that support the academic, social, emotional, wellness and creative opportunities available to them.



STUDENT & STAFF SAFETY

- » It is crucial to ensure that our schools have physical security systems to protect our students & staff.



KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH OPERATIONS

- » So much of what keeps school facilities running smoothly is the condition of the systems and infrastructure “behind the scenes.” The roofing, windows, heating systems, tech network, and much more are at the core of keeping a building running. Although they go unnoticed in day to day use, it is crucial to keep these systems in good condition.

» WHAT WE ARE PROPOSING



The Somerset Hills School District is requesting funding for a District-wide facilities renovation program to include **EDUCATIONAL CLASSROOM RENOVATION PROJECTS AS WELL AS CAPITAL RENOVATION PROJECTS AND SECURITY UPGRADES** via a Referendum Vote on March 10th, 2026.

» WHY NOW?



- » In spite of the 2% tax levy cap, the Board of Education and Administration have successfully addressed many facility needs within the operating budget.
- » We are dealing with aging schools:
(AVG. AGE = 59 YEARS OLD)
- » Some with original roofing systems, doors, and other infrastructure items that have reached the end of their life expectancy.

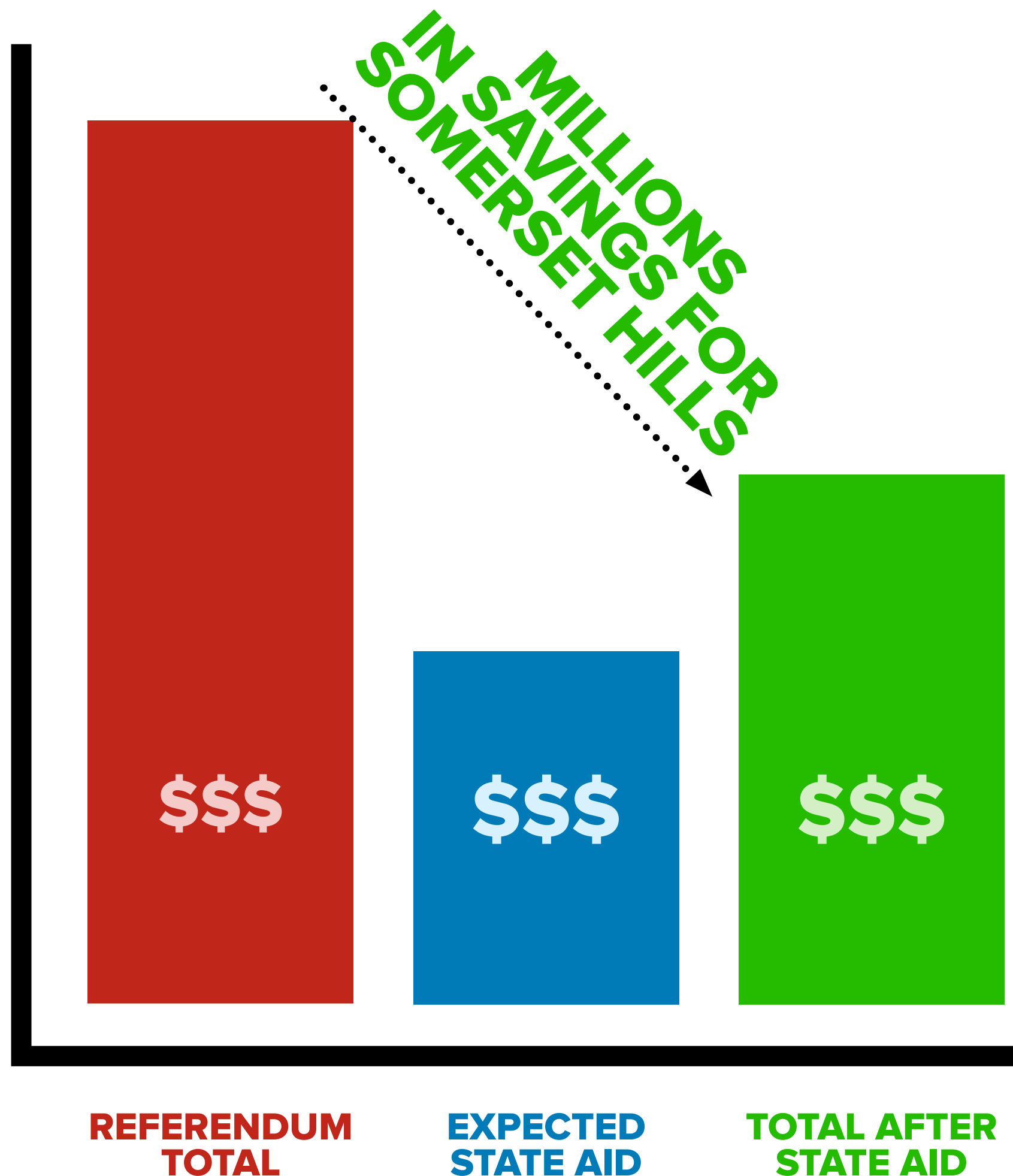
WE NEED TO DO MORE...

»» WHY NOW?



- » The District has **EXPIRING DEBT** which will result in a “**Net Neutral Tax Impact**” or **Zero increase**.
- » Current **INTEREST RATES** have stabilized and we want to secure the lowest rate possible.
- » By allowing the school District to finance these substantial facilities improvements over many years, the cost is spread over the many generations who will use the facilities.

» WHY NOW?



CURRENT DEBT SERVICE PAYMENTS WILL BE ENDING IN MARCH OF 2026

This will offset the new debt being assumed under the targeted March 2026 Referendum.

STATE AID IS AVAILABLE!

- » Financial assistance from the state
- » **UP TO 34% SAVINGS** on projects
 - Must be funded through a **REFERENDUM**
 - Must be tied to **EDUCATION OR MAINTENANCE**
- » Debt Service Aid from the state helps to pay down the bond and this helps reduce the impact on the taxpayer.

THE PROCESS

» HOW DID WE GET HERE?

SUMMER 2024 FACILITIES EVALUATION

The District commissioned Solutions Architecture to provide a District-wide facilities audit. Representatives from Solutions Architecture and our Consultant Engineers, met with the Administration and visited each school to 3-D Scan the buildings, review, evaluate and identify facilities improvements that needed to be entertained.

NOV. 2024 - JAN 2025 EVALUATE NEEDS

The District began exploring a potential referendum to address projects identified in the Facilities Audit while considering retiring debt service. Solutions Architecture met with administration, the superintendent, and staff to assess educational needs and evaluate classroom renovations aimed at improving efficiency and providing critical upgrades.

FEBRUARY 2025 PREPARATION

Solutions Architecture prepared conceptual designs for classroom and other educational renovations and established budgets associated with the projects that considered taking advantage of the 34% in Debt Service Aid and the Debt Service Roll Off.

FEBRUARY 2025 ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The completed, DISTRICT-WIDE FACILITIES AUDIT is presented to the Administration and Board, the recommendations were reviewed and discussed. The report identified an order of magnitude of some \$75.7MM worth of Educational & Capital improvements for the (4) buildings.

MARCH - MAY 2025 FINALIZE DOE SUBMISSION

SA secured District/ Board approval for the projects while addressing financial considerations to ensure a community-supported referendum. SA also prepared DOE applications to maximize eligible debt service aid and is awaiting approval of the educational and capital project plans.

» RECENT DISTRICT PROJECTS



THE DISTRICT CONTINUES TO COMPLETE PROJECTS OUT OF CAPITAL RESERVE:



- Media Center Renovations at the High School
- Performing Arts Center: Lighting & Sound Upgrades
- Synthetic Turf Field at the High School Stadium
- Running Track and Field Events Upgrades
- Athletic Sports Lighting
- Lower Field Renovation
- Tennis Court Upgrades / Resurfacing

***Unfortunately, the District cannot complete a significant amount of work out of their capital budget and still stay below the 2% cap.**

PROJECTED COSTS

» PROJECTED COSTS: RENOVATIONS / UPGRADES

REFERENDUM BUDGET BREAKDOWN

PROJECT	TOTAL PROJECT COST	DEBT SERVICE AID	FINAL COST AFTER DEBT SERVICE AID
BERNARDS HS RENOVATIONS	\$ 21,962,755	\$ 7,467,337	\$ 14,495,418
BERNARDSVILLE MS RENOVATIONS	\$ 6,834,941	\$ 2,318,780	\$ 4,516,161
BEDWELL ES - RENOV / ADDITIONS	\$ 9,226,561	\$ 2,792,670	\$ 6,433,891
TOTAL - REFERENDUM	\$ 38,024,257	\$ 12,578,787	\$25,445,470

33.08% DEBT SERVICE AID PENDING

ESTIMATED TAX IMPACT

» TAX IMPACT SHOULD REFERENDUM PASS...

CAPITAL & EDUCATIONAL RENOVATIONS

Including classroom renovations and alterations as well as facilities Infrastructure projects like roofing and security enhancements.

CURRENT DEBT SERVICE PAYMENTS DECLINE AFTER MARCH OF 2026

THESE PROJECT COSTS REPLACE THOSE DEBT SERVICE PAYMENT REDUCTIONS

AVG. ASSESSED HOME
(\$975,586)

AVG. ASSESSED HOME
(\$1,293,740)

AVG. ASSESSED HOME
(\$956,693)

TOTAL PROJECT COST:
\$ 38,024,257
STATE AID:
\$ 12,578,787
=
\$25,445,470

BERNARDSVILLE BOROUGH

CURRENT TAX IMPACT WILL NOT INCREASE

FAR HILLS BOROUGH

CURRENT TAX IMPACT WILL NOT INCREASE

PEAPACK-GLADSTONE BOROUGH

CURRENT TAX IMPACT WILL NOT INCREASE

- » The tax impacts have been calculated to assume a net neutral / zero increase scenario
- » *Current Debt Service Aid Calculations are estimated and subject to change during the DOE review process.*
- » Costs projections based upon a 4.00% interest rate over 20 years; costs may fluctuate slightly prior to vote.

»» WHAT DOES MY VOTE MEAN?

F.A.Q.



BOND PROPOSAL

TOTAL PROJECT COST:
\$ 38,024,257

STATE AID:
\$ 12,578,787
=
\$25,445,470

IF YOU VOTE

YES

NO

YOU GET

**Educational & Capital Projects at Somerset Hills School District
at no additional tax impact.**



Arts



Learning



Wellness



Safety



Operations

EXISTING FACILITIES REMAIN AS THEY ARE...



For further information and to keep updated on the District-Wide Facilities Renovation Program Referendum, please scan the QR Code to the left or visit the district website: www.shsd.org/about-us/referendum
Please send questions to: referendum@shsd.org

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