

# REFERENDUM UPDATE: ONE YEAR LATER

## From Vision to Reality

On March 11, 2025, the Lawrence Township community made a powerful statement about its commitment to students, schools, and the future by approving a \$98 million referendum. One year later, we pause to reflect and remind the public why the referendum was needed, what it is making possible, and where we are headed over the next five plus years.

### Why a Referendum?

The referendum was driven by a clear, long-term goal: to meet our growing student needs, modernize educational practices, and align our district with the New Jersey Department of Education recommended grade-bands.

Beginning in the 2029–2030 school year, third grade will move to Lawrence Intermediate School, and sixth grade will move to Lawrence Middle School. This shift will transform Lawrence Intermediate School into an upper elementary school serving grades 3–5 and expand Lawrence Middle School into a true middle school model educating grades 6–8. This model supports both academic growth and social-emotional development at critical stages of learning.

### What the Referendum Is Funding

The \$98 million referendum supports a comprehensive set of construction and renovation projects, including a new classroom wing at Lawrence Middle School, an “all-school” gymnasium specially designed for community use, an expanded cafeteria, a fully renovated auditorium, an outdoor learning courtyard, and a new turf athletic field replacing an aging grass field with poor drainage to safely support an additional grade level in school athletics.

### Where We Are Now

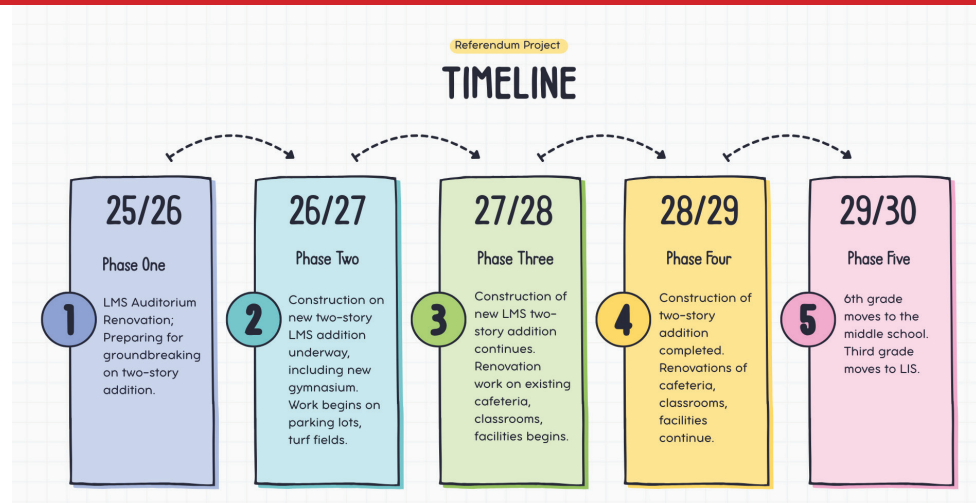
Phase One of this work, the full and complete renovation of the Lawrence Middle School auditorium, is already fully underway. This project represents a visible and exciting first step in bringing the referendum plan to life and will result in a modernized space that supports student performances, assemblies, and community events, starting as early as next school year.

### What's Still to Come

Over the next five years, construction, taking place in phases, will continue as the district prepares for the 2029–2030 school year transition. Each step will be carefully planned to minimize disruption while ensuring our schools are ready to meet the needs of future learners. Lawrence Township Public Schools will continue to hold Community Conversations and Information Sessions to keep the community informed and involved in all referendum projects every step of the way.

The referendum was a promise to our students today and to generations to come. One year later, that promise is becoming reality, thanks to a community that believes in investing in strong schools and a strong future for Lawrence Township.

Did you know? You can follow along with the Lawrence Middle School auditorium renovation on our website. Each week, a new construction field report is posted with current photos of the project. We invite you to check it out and see the progress for yourself.



## Community Conversation Highlights Grade-Level Restructuring and School Improvements

On February 18, families, community members, and stakeholders gathered in the Lawrence High School Library for a meaningful community conversation focused on the future of Lawrence Township Public Schools. The evening centered on current and upcoming renovations and expansions at Lawrence Middle School (LMS), and how these projects will support districtwide grade-level restructuring in the future.

Representatives from Higley Construction and FVHD Architects shared detailed updates on work already underway, including the long-anticipated renovated LMS auditorium, and future significant building upgrades including a new wing at LMS. They also discussed how the projects will improve traffic flow, parking, accessibility, and learning environments for all students, including those with special needs.

Families asked many thoughtful and insightful questions throughout the evening. Much of the discussion focused on how grade-level restructuring will affect current students, (e.g. what grades children will be in by the time construction is complete, and which schools they will attend once the new structure is in place). School and district administrators were able to address these questions directly, helping families better understand the long-term vision and timeline, with full implementation anticipated in the 2029-2030 school year.

The conversation reflected years of careful planning, collaboration, and community support. With these projects, Lawrence Township Public Schools is moving into alignment with best practices and state recommendations, creating spaces and structures intentionally designed for how students learn and grow at each stage.

This work is about more than buildings. It's about investing in a strong future for Lawrence schools and ensuring that our students have the environments they need to thrive for generations to come.

