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### Why is the district proposing to renovate all of the elementary buildings at one time, rather than in a one-by-one manner?

District leaders studied the option of a slower-paced construction schedule, which would require multiple votes and take place over a much longer period of time. There are two significant barriers to this option. First, a longer construction schedule would result in higher projected costs due to anticipated cost escalation and inefficiencies in construction purchasing and bidding. That would likely eliminate our ability to deliver the project without increasing school taxes. The Board believes that the ability to capture the combined financial advantages of the project made for a compelling reason to do all of the work at one time. Second, our leadership is committed to providing the advantages of renovated facilities to as many of our elementary-age students as soon as possible. A longer schedule would not only delay this implementation; it would mean that some elementary students would benefit, while others might miss out, an inherent unfairness that the district seeks to avoid.

### What happens to the students and staff of the buildings when construction is under way?

In four of the five schools, it is likely that classrooms will need to be temporarily relocated either within the building or in other buildings. We are researching building use alternatives (moving grades, and/or offsite locations). As we did with Pine Grove, we will develop logistics

for the relocation of students during the construction process. At this point, no logistics plan or construction schedule has been developed (this won't be done until, and if, the bond is approved by voters and plans are submitted to the NY State Education Department). But parents and staff can expect to be involved in this process. Our recent successful history with this process (through the Pine Grove construction period) should assure parents that instruction and safety will not be compromised!

### How was the project budget developed, and who is acting in the district's interest to ensure that the project is delivered on-time and within the budget?

The budget was developed by ESM's architect and the district's construction manager based on experience with regional school construction costs, similar projects, knowledge of the contractor and bidding community, and projections for the construction marketplace over the next several years. Ultimately, once the projects are approved by the State, the construction manager will provide on-site representation to ensure that the project is delivered on time and within budget.

### How were priorities for renovation developed in each of the buildings?

The process for arriving at a scope of work in each building was collaborative.

Guiding the process was the district's 2018-23 strategic plan, which outlines the need for alignment between the instructional environments and the innovations and outcomes we seek to deliver. Principals and staff members know their buildings well, and thus were closely involved in developing priorities. Parents shared their aspirations for the instructional spaces. Our district leadership team ensured that infrastructure needs identified were included.

### Do we have a projection for when construction might begin?

If the project is approved, the next step will be for the architects to begin drafting plans, which ultimately are approved by the State Education Department. It is estimated that the earliest construction could take place would be during the 2019-2020 school year.

### I have additional questions. Who can I talk to learn more about the project?

If you have children in a specific building or buildings, we encourage you to talk directly to the principals of those buildings. Otherwise, you are welcome to call the Office of the Executive Director of School Business Administration (315-434-3004).

## VOTING INFORMATION

**POLL LOCATION:** ESM Central High School

**HOURS:** Noon - 9:00 p.m.

**WHO CAN VOTE?:** To be eligible to vote, you must be a citizen of the United States, 18 years of age or older, and an ESM district resident for at least 30 days.

No prior registration is required.

**ABSENTEE BALLOTS:** Ballots must be returned to the district office by mail by 5:00 p.m. on 12/4/18 or hand delivered by 5:00 p.m. on 12/11/18.



# Elementary Bond Vote December 11

## **NO TAX INCREASE** for Renovations & Upgrades to All Pre-k – 5 Schools

ESM Central School District voters will head to the polls on December 11 to cast their ballots on a \$49.8 million bond issue known as 'Our Elementary Objective.'

The plan – developed over more than two years – focuses on safety, learning and integrity improvements at Park Hill, Woodland, Minoa, Fremont and, to a much lesser extent, East Syracuse Elementary (ESE), which is a relatively new building. **Approval will not increase school taxes.**

Beginning with the construction of ESE in 2002, the district created and executed a long-range vision of school building improvements. The voting community has supported major renovation, expansion and modernization of the high school, integration of 'Safe and Sound' security and infrastructure improvements, and the complete renovation and expansion of Pine Grove. The ESM Strategic Plan has provided the framework for guiding the decisions to create alignment between instructional goals and the learning environments to support student learning at all levels.

From a generational perspective, *Our Elementary Objective* is the remaining challenge to creating a continuity of instructional experience for all students from Pre-k through graduation.

The project is driven largely by the **age of the buildings, basic infrastructure that has exceeded its useful life, safety provisions,**

level will undergo comprehensive rehabilitation. ESE will receive modest upgrades because it is (relatively) new. Areas of emphasis:

- *Student Safety and Security*
- *Improved and New Indoor Learning Spaces*
- *New Outdoor Learning/Play Spaces*
- *Better Student Flow/Circulation*
- *Upgraded Technology*
- *Upgraded and New Building Systems*

These improvements fall into three general categories: building SAFETY, student LEARNING and INTEGRITY of the physical structures. Specific projects are identified inside this brochure.

Community engagement has been ongoing throughout the development process. The Elementary Objective will complete the continuum of learning environments in the ESM Central School District, which is recognized throughout the region as a leader in innovative learning models and environments.



East Syracuse Minoa Central School District

**instructional space improvements and innovative indoor/outdoor learning spaces.** Other than ESE, our Pre-k to 5 schools range in age from 50-80 years. The project was also significantly guided by our 2018-23 strategic plan to align the quality and design of our learning environments with an emphasis on learning, innovation and safety.

Four of our five schools at this



# How We Developed the Project

A comprehensive project like *Our Elementary Objective* takes the involvement of many people just to get it to the stage of a community vote.

Nearly three years ago, the district's architects mapped out the conditions of each of the five schools as a baseline. These professionals identified the building systems that had exceeded their useful life, the spaces that no longer conformed to State Education Department code, and those areas that – mostly due to advanced age – no longer represented modern instructional environments, or safety-first design.

Following this, ESM's principals began meeting with their staff members to focus on instructional needs. For example, at Woodland, the lack of classroom walls – a quaint product of 50 years ago – was not conducive to instruction in the 21st century. How, they discussed, should these changes be realized? ESM stakeholders were asked to provide their input on current building realities and to define their aspirations for success in learning.

District leaders and the architectural team then set about creating conceptual plans that could be open to further dialogue with the Board of Education, staff and the larger community. Over time, these plans were refined and then presented to the larger public through small group meetings. The business office worked with the architect, construction manager and the State Education Department to develop the most efficient and cost-effective way of delivering the project.

On October 22, the Board adopted the resolution to move forward with the vote. If approved, there is a lengthy process of design development, State Education Department approval, local bidding and, most importantly, student logistics, before construction can begin. The earliest any type of construction could take place would be during the 2019-20 school year.

# SAFETY, LEARNING, INTEGRITY

*Our Elementary Objective* is defined by these three concepts: **Safety, Learning, Integrity**. And as you read what is anticipated for each of our schools, you will understand why we have grouped them in this manner:



*The entrances to our elementary schools will be upgraded to provide enhanced safety. Vestibules will be created for visitors before they can gain access to the building, and security systems will be improved.*



*Woodland's instructional environment will be updated by creating classrooms with walls, replacing the open plan concept now in place. Other schools will see similar upgrades to instructional space, including new classrooms.*



*Basic building systems, like leaky roofs that have exceeded their useful life, will be replaced.*

## A Look at the Work

### WOODLAND ELEMENTARY

- Site circulation upgrades including new parent drop-off (SAFETY)
- Secure main entry/main office renovations (SAFETY)
- Addition to create a large group learning space (LEARNING)
- Building renovation: adding walls to classrooms areas (LEARNING)
- Replacement of floors, ceilings, building systems and technology (INTEGRITY)
- Outdoor learning/play upgrades (LEARNING)
- Library Media Center/STEM Center renovations (LEARNING)
- Music/Band and Art Room renovations (LEARNING)
- Cafeteria Renovations (SAFETY and INTEGRITY)

### PARK HILL SCHOOL

- New bus loop and parent drop-off (SAFETY)
- Secure main entry/main office renovations (SAFETY)
- Classroom and corridor renovations (LEARNING)
- Replacement of floors, ceilings, building systems and technology (INTEGRITY)
- Outdoor learning/play upgrades (LEARNING)
- Renovation to active small and large active play areas (LEARNING)
- Creation of additional special education and therapy spaces (LEARNING)

### EAST SYRACUSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Secure main entry/main office renovations (SAFETY)
- Door hardware replacement (INTEGRITY)
- Outdoor learning/play upgrades (LEARNING)
- Acoustical upgrades in Cafeteria (INTEGRITY)
- New stair for better circulation around building (SAFETY, INTEGRITY)

### FREMONT ELEMENTARY and MINOA ELEMENTARY

- Site circulation upgrades including additional parking (SAFETY)
- Secure main entry/main office renovations (SAFETY)
- Addition to gymnasium to create a large group gathering space (LEARNING)
- Classroom and corridor renovations (INTEGRITY)
- Replacement of floors, ceilings, building systems and technology (INTEGRITY)
- Outdoor learning/play upgrades (LEARNING)
- Library Media Center/STEM Center renovations (LEARNING)
- Music/Band and Art Room renovations (LEARNING)
- Cafeteria Renovations (SAFETY and INTEGRITY)

# NO TAX INCREASE for Residents

**Achieving *Our Elementary Objective* without increasing taxes has been the goal of the project since its inception almost three years ago. Voters authorized the establishment of a capital project fund, and the mindset of district leaders was to create a budget to achieve our goals without burdening taxpayers.**

## Here's how the district is able to achieve a 'no tax increase' project:

- The budget that the Board of Education is asking voters to approve for *Our Elementary Objective* is \$49.8 million. This budget includes all costs for the project, including general administration, professional fees, project contingencies, and anticipated escalation.
- The project cannot, by law, exceed the amount that voters approve. That's because voter authorization for the project allows the district to sell bonds to fund it. The district can't sell more bonds than the amount approved by voters.
- The big contribution comes from state aid. **About 70 cents of every dollar spent on the project will be reimbursed to the district through New York State building aid.** All districts around the state receive building aid based upon the relative wealth of their district and the project type. We are working very closely with the State Education Department to maximize funding for this project, which is an enormous amount of money coming into our community.
- The remaining quarter of the project would be funded in two ways: first, through the use of a voter-created capital project fund that can hold up to \$10 million. This is money already on-hand. Savings that have been generated each year from efficient operation of the annual budget have been put into this reserve fund to use for this project. Finally, we plan to take advantage of retiring debt. This gives the district the ability to replace old debt with new debt that does not exceed the existing amount, therefore incurring no additional level of taxation.