
What building projects are being considered?

After months of studying the building needs of the school district, the Board of Education has narrowed its focus to these areas of need for a potential building project vote Dec. 9:

- ✓ Replacement of elementary school roofs and 10-year-old computer and telephone network servers as well as a host of maintenance improvements at all six schools;
- ✓ Renovation of 30-year-old science, technology and family and consumer science rooms at the middle school and 50-year-old technology classrooms at the high school;
- ✓ Replacement of the running track, which can not now be used for competitions, and installation of a multi-sport artificial/synthetic field to replace the current football field. The artificial field would allow the remaining grass fields to “rest” and be replenished;
- ✓ Enclosure of the now “open” middle school library to improve learning and security;
- ✓ Construction of a new high school library because of increased use. That space would be renovated into an art gallery and art classrooms relocated there;
- ✓ Install a demonstration solar project at one of the schools that would generate electricity, thereby reducing electric costs.

Where did these options come from?

They came from four major sources:

- ✓ Facilities Committee report and athletic fields study from 2005;
- ✓ Five-year facilities plan projections required by the state;
- ✓ Building conditions survey required by the state;
- ✓ Community forums in June.

When would the vote be held?

The Board of Education is considering Tuesday, Dec. 9, as a tentative community voting date.

How long would a project take?

From the date of the vote, it generally takes 18-24 months for the architects to develop specific plans and receive state Education Department approval.

When would this project break ground?

Based on the tentative voting date of Dec. 9, it is expected that the project would not get underway much before the summer of 2010.

**Check out
ScotiaGlennvilleSchools.org for
more project information.**

Why do we need to do another building project?

The last project was in 1999 – 10 years ago. When construction bids came in too high then, \$1 million was cut from the project. Those deleted items – like renovating middle school science labs, high school technology classrooms and repairing the running track – have not gone away. They have become worse and other needs have come to light.

What about building aid?

By doing a building project, most of these items will be eligible for state building aid. Athletic field work will not receive state aid; however, aid from building renovations and construction can be used for the “site” or field work.

The state will reimburse the school district – at a rate of 81 cents for every \$1 – over a period of years. The remaining 19 cents from every \$1 will be paid through taxes over several years. However, the district expects to pay off previous borrowing during that time, so taxes would not necessarily be increased to pay for these entire costs.

S-G is also eligible for \$934,000 in state EXCEL funding (*see below*) which, by combining that funding with building aid, will cover about \$4.2 million to pay for projects like roofs, maintenance items and network server upgrades. *That \$4.2 million would be at no local cost.*

Is EXCEL funding from the state budget?

EXCEL (EXpanding our Childrens Education and Learning) funding is available to all New York school districts. It is not part of the state budget; it is money the state Dormitory Authority has been authorized to borrow on behalf of all school districts.

What is the total project cost and the effect on taxes?

A very rough estimate of the total cost is \$17 to \$20 million. Until prices and state aid figures are known, it is impossible to estimate a tax impact.

As mentioned earlier, \$4.2 million of a project would not impact taxes at all by using EXCEL and building aid. The remainder would be financed and repaid over a 15- or 20-year period. State aid would follow during the same period.

How much does the district spend on maintenance?

The district has budgeted \$2.4 million during this school year for maintenance and grounds expenses and upkeep. That is 5.2 percent of the district's \$45.9 million budget. That includes custodial work in the buildings, grounds upkeep, painting and general upkeep of the district's six school buildings, District Office and bus garage.

Have other schools done solar energy projects?

Other area schools are doing or will do solar demonstration projects. The Ichabod Crane School District in Columbia County plans to put solar panels on one building – a buildings and grounds office – to test the technology. Recent state legislation allows schools and others to sell self-generated electricity, such as through solar or wind power, back to public utilities.

How is Scotia-Glenville's student enrollment?

Like other school districts, total enrollment has declined slightly over the past few years. Initial enrollment numbers for 2008-09 show that total district enrollment is down 67 students from last year and is now 2,793.

While secondary (gr. 6-12) enrollment has declined slightly over the past few years, elementary enrollment has been steady or increased slightly. In September 2005, there were 1,172 students in kindergarten to grade 5; in September 2008, there are 1,186.

Despite the slight changes in enrollment over the past few years, the building needs have not changed. Enrollment would *only* be an issue if new classrooms were being constructed. *No new classrooms will be built.*

Building for Tomorrow

Community to be asked to consider a school renovation project on Tuesday, Dec. 9

Unlike other area school districts, Scotia-Glenville takes a conservative approach to building and renovation projects. While others may present building proposals every few years, Scotia-Glenville has never done that.

The last construction and renovation project was in 1999, a project that was downsized because of higher-than-expected construction costs.

In order for the Board of Education to consider a renovation project – in light of the already high costs of education – the building needs would have to be considerable. They would have to be ones that hinder instruction, limit student opportunities or potential or are health and safety concerns.

Once these types of needs are identified, it would be irresponsible to ignore them.

As more information is developed this fall, it will be shared with the community through forums, backpack information and at ScotiaGlenvilleSchools.org.