
Does the Dec. 16 renovation project include renovated classrooms and science labs, expanded libraries, a multi-sport field, new track and solar energy panels?

Yes – and more. After months of study, the Board of Education has approved a \$26.76 million renovation project that focuses on these areas:

- ✓ *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 and ventilation and lighting upgrades* in the 35-year-old science, technology and family and consumer science rooms at the middle school; and 50-year-old technology classrooms and A-wing art rooms at the high school;
- ✓ *Enclosure and 3,500-square-foot expansion* of the now “open” middle school library to improve learning and security;
- ✓ *A 3,200-square-foot expansion* of the high school library into the adjoining courtyard. Use of the library has climbed by 90 percent since 2004, topping 55,800 student visits in 2007.
- ✓ *Replacement* of the running track, which cannot now be used for competitions, and *installation* of a multi-sport artificial/synthetic field to replace the current football field. The artificial field would take pressure off of the remaining grass fields and allow them to “rest” and be replenished;
- ✓ *Installation of 200 solar panels*, which would generate electricity, on the roof of the Sacandaga Elementary School. The panels would reduce electric costs by an estimated \$10,000 to \$12,000 per year – 25 percent of the school’s electric bill.

The project would increase taxes by 1.9% – less than \$5 per month – by 2012?

Yes. The renovation project would increase taxes by an estimated maximum of 1.9 percent, phased in during the 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years.

On an assessment of \$160,000, the average in Scotia-Glenville, taxes would increase by a maximum of \$59.20 per year or \$4.93 per month based on the current tax rate. Again, that increase would be phased in during 2010, 2011 and be fully felt in 2012.

That increase would be reduced further by the state’s STAR school tax reduction program.

As well, with the current burst in new commercial and residential construction going on in Scotia-Glenville, the ultimate impact will likely *be less than 1.9 percent.*

The vote is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 16?

Yes. Voting will be held from *6 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, December 16 at the High School.*

A public hearing on the proposal is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Monday, *December 8*, at the Middle School.

How do we pay for these renovations?

With the economy in mind, the Board of Education has crafted a proposal and financial package that uses several sources of funding in order to lessen the burden on the community while receiving the biggest benefit.

The renovation project’s cost and interest would total \$37.6 million by 2026. That total would be paid by using:

- ✓ **\$27.5 million in state building aid** which, historically, is a social contract between the state and school districts and one that has not been reduced during tough state economic times. While this is still state

taxpayers’ money, the state offers building aid as an incentive for schools to keep buildings in repair. **Scotia-Glenville will receive 81 cents back on every \$1 that it spends for approved construction or renovations.** Building aid is repaid over 15 years for renovations.

- ✓ **\$935,000 in EXCEL** (*EX*anding our Children’s *E*ducation and *L*earning) **funding.** Available to all New York school districts, this funding 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. By combining the EXCEL funding with building aid, about \$5 million in projects can be done to pay for roofs, maintenance items and network server upgrades. **That \$5 million would be at no local cost.**

- ✓ **\$900,000 set aside in a special debt reserve account.** This money *can not* be used for the general budget but can *only* be used to reduce debt, such as the debt the district will incur for this project.

- ✓ The district plans to pursue **grants and other forms of non-tax funding** to help pay for the solar energy project at Sacandaga.

- ✓ **Interest on deposited funds and paying off other debt** will further reduce the need to rely on taxes.

- ✓ **\$7.3 million paid from school taxes between 2010 and 2026** to pay the local share of the project. That translates to a *maximum* total tax increase of 1.9 percent. The increase would be phased in over the 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years.

Less than 1.9 percent: It is possible that the project’s eventual tax rate impact will be less than 1.9 percent considering the developments – Lowe’s Home Improvement, Hampton Run and The Reserve apartments, Glenview Estates and Fortitech vitamin distribution center – under construction and planned in Scotia-Glenville.

Where did these proposals come from?

The proposals came from the: Facilities Committee report; five-year facilities plan projections required by the state; Building Conditions Survey (BCS) required by the state; Fraser Field Study; community forums in June; and comments from parents and community members.

Which students would be the first to benefit from these renovations?

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. Based on a Dec. 16 voting date, it is expected that the project would break ground by the summer of 2010.

Today's grade 4 students would likely be the first to use the new science labs, library and classrooms at the Middle School during the 2011-12 year. As well, current Middle School students would benefit from the High School classroom, library and athletic improvements.

I've heard about cuts to state aid?

How will that affect the Dec. 16 project?

While proposals to reduce "state aid" have been in the news, state leaders are referring to operating or "foundation aid." State government, even in the worst of times, has not gone back on promises to provide "building aid" once school projects are approved by the state.

Have other schools done solar projects?

Yes. Other area schools are doing or will do solar demonstration projects. The Ithaca 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 utilities.

Is Scotia-Glenville's enrollment stable?

Yes. Like other school districts, total enrollment has declined slightly over the past few years. 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 were 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 in the December 16 renovation proposal.*

What if the project were defeated on Dec. 16?

If the community does not support the Dec. 16 building renovation proposal, the district would likely attempt to make some of the improvements through annual school budgets and taxes.

However, if not included in a building project, the projects would *not* receive the 81 percent state aid reimbursement for that work.

The athletic field work is being largely covered by state aid because it is being packaged with building renovations in the December 16 proposal. On its own, the field work would not receive *any state aid reimbursement.*

Some of the improvements - mostly maintenance items and the technology upgrades - could be included under the special EXCEL funding. That would require community approval at a separate vote.

Preparing for Scotia-Glenville's Future



Community to consider a \$26.76 million school renovation project on Tuesday, December 16

Even in these difficult economic times and with the already high cost of public education, parents and community members should expect and hope that Scotia-Glenville is forward thinking and preparing for their children's and grandchildren's future.

The Board of Education, mindful of the financial burdens facing families today, has developed a responsible building project that renovates classroom and library spaces, saves electricity by using solar energy and catches up on maintenance needs at all six schools.

The renovation project would also upgrade the physical education/athletic facilities used by thousands of students and community members every year.

The school district uses creative financing methods – special EXCEL state aid and separate funding already set aside for the project – that lessen the need to rely on annual school taxes to pay for the project.

Because it takes 18-24 months to finalize designs and receive state approval, today's grade 4 students would likely be the first to see the full benefits of this project as grade 7 Middle School students in 2011-12.

Check out ScotiaGlenvilleSchools.org for more project information.