

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Building a Brighter Future: Hackensack Board of Education Moves Forward with Plans for a New School and Major District-Wide Facilities Upgrades**

**HACKENSACK, NJ** – On Tuesday evening, the Hackensack Board of Education presented to the public a resolution, which includes the proposal that will be submitted to the voters at a special school district election on January 22, 2019. The resolution bringing forth a referendum for district-wide facilities renovations, alterations, and a new school was approved unanimously by the Board with a vote of 7–0.

The Board is seeking voter approval, via a ballot question, for comprehensive upgrades and improvements to school facilities throughout the District, including construction of a new school building that will service students in grades 7, 8, and 9. This project will include a parking garage servicing the current high school, and the proposed new school, along with renovations, alterations, security vestibules and air conditioning for all schools.

If approved, this referendum would allow the District to accomplish the following goals:

#### **Address overcrowding at all District schools**

The district's enrollment continues to grow. Currently we service 5,822 students, a figure that represents an increase of approximately 1,000 students since the 2007-2008 school year. Most district schools are at or nearing capacity and the construction of the new building will alleviate overcrowding at all district schools, providing for a long term solution to our growing enrollment.

#### **Improve School Security**

Security is critical to keeping students and faculty safe, and is a priority for this proposed referendum. Vestibules provide additional protection by adding a secured space where visitors enter and sign in before gaining access to the building.

#### **Renovate/Improve Existing Schools**

Many of our district schools were built nearly a century ago when educational needs were vastly different. The proposed referendum will allow for much needed building upgrades, including HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning) in classrooms, increased parking, drop off areas, more efficient boilers, new windows, as well as improvements to bathrooms, electrical systems, classrooms, and playgrounds.

#### **Expand Preschool Education Opportunities:**

Studies have shown the students who attend preschool perform better throughout their school careers. As such, the district has made it a priority to expand preschool education. Currently the district rents space from the Archdiocese of Newark due to overcrowding in the elementary schools. This referendum will move preschool classes back to neighborhood schools, allow us to expand the number of four-year-old classes,

and eliminate the need for a yearly rental/maintenance cost for a non-district owned property.

**Provide for a 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy**

The new building will provide for a 9<sup>th</sup> grade Academy, whose focus will be to better transition students to a high school experience that prepares them for the increasing competition of attending competitive four-year colleges and the demanding job market.

This effort is part of a long-range facilities plan that includes other upgrades that will be addressed through capital reserve funds. But despite yearly budgeting for ongoing maintenance, like with many other districts across the State, the needs of school facilities in Hackensack are far too great to address without additional funding. In order to make the major facilities updates that are needed district-wide, the District will need the support of all Hackensack residents on January 22, 2019.

The total estimated cost for construction of district-wide upgrades including new construction, renovations, alterations, and heating/cooling upgrades is \$169,904,226. The approved State aid for the new construction came in at the maximum level of 14%, while the maximum of 40% was also received for alterations and HVAC upgrades. However, aid for renovations came in slightly under 40% due to inclusion of the high school field house in this category, which is not eligible for funding, according to State guidelines. Overall, State aid will off-set the cost of the total project by 24.36%, or \$41,388,670.

The breakdown of the State aid the District will receive is as follows:

<b>Referendum Work</b>	<b>Bond</b>	<b>State Aid Percentage</b>
New Construction	\$101,572,500	14.05%
Alterations	\$17,581,829	40%
Renovations	\$17,397,163	38.82%
HVAC Upgrades	\$33,352,735	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$169,904,226</b>	<b>24.36%</b>

Based on the average assessed home value of \$245,431, the proposed bond referendum translates into an average tax impact of \$308.66 per year.

More information about the project can be found at: <https://hpsreferendum.com>