



Capital Projects are the most affordable way for School Districts to address high-cost repairs, improve safety and security, and make improvements. Let me explain why.

In order to address some of our more serious needs such as replacing outdated and faulty wiring, collapsed pipes, or worrisome underground fuel tanks, without placing the entire burden on the District and community members, the State sets aside tax dollars for District's to use for these types of capital projects. There are requirements set forth by the State Education Department to access such funds. If the funds are not used by our School District, they are given to other School Districts – it does not go back into the pockets of tax payers. The State encourages Districts to set up a Capital Project Reserve, which is like a savings account to offset the amount the State doesn't pay. Once funds are placed in the Capital Project Reserve, there are restrictions placed on the District for its use. Capital Project Reserves can only be used for capital projects.

In March 2013 I posed this question to District Residents:

If your house needed major repairs, which was not in your budget, and the State offered to use tax dollars already collected from you, me and every other New York State tax payer, to pay almost 90% of those repairs, would you turn down the offer? Or, would you tell the State to give the money to someone else to use?

The answer to this question from District Residents was heard loud and clear and the Capital Project Committee couldn't have been more pleased. Please accept my appreciation for your overwhelming support (352 *yes* to 77 *no* votes) on April 9, 2013, because Red Jacket Schools is now in the midst of the Capital Project you approved to address many of the safety/facility improvement needs we have within our District.

Currently, the State will pay for approximately 88.8% of our 3.1 million dollar capital project and our District has the remaining portion of the balance (approximately 11%) set aside. Therefore, this capital project will not and has not resulted in any additional cost to tax payers.

The goal of this capital project is to maintain and improve the integrity of our educational program, ensure our facilities are safe, secure, efficient and up to date. The primary focus of this project is to repair broken plumbing, faulty wiring, improve HVAC efficiency and upgrade safety and security.

Todd LaBarr and Thom Frederick (local resident) from Watch Dog are providing the District with enhanced clerk services. They meet regularly with our team consisting of head of maintenance, Mike Roddenbery, head mechanic Jim Cheasman, SEI Design Group architects Gian-Paul Piane and Melissa Zeh-Gross, all the contractors and me to make sure the project is on schedule with targeted completion by the end of September.

You may recall the capital project includes updating our 1963 auditorium lighting technology, our nearly 50 year old circuit breaker boxes, outdated heating and cooling control systems, two nearly 50 year old bathrooms, site work improvements, outdated gasoline pump and pump reader system, fuel tank replacements, upgrading our security cameras, lighting and technology cabling. We have also included updating our electric in the auxiliary gym, which will allow us to place our existing fitness equipment into the gym and further update the space. The bids for this project came in lower than expected, allowing us to potentially purchase an updated, digital school sign for the front of our school. This purchase, however, will only be made if the project remains under budget.

Again, my sincere thanks to all our students, community members, Rotarians, Lions Club members, Public Library and Friends of the Library, our staff, the Board of Education and Capital Project Committee Members for working together to support education, taking the time to understand our safety/facility needs and promoting and believing in the integrity of our mission.