



BRIARCLIFF MANOR UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

45 Ingham Road, Briarcliff Manor, New York 10510

October 24, 2018

Dear Briarcliff Community:

At the September 13, 2018 meeting, the Briarcliff Manor Board of Education passed a resolution to place before the voters of the School District a proposition for the partial reconstruction of and additions to District buildings, as well as certain infrastructure work. **The purpose of this letter is to provide an explanation of the scope of the project and to inform you as to how to obtain more information regarding the financial implications of this project. A public vote will be held on December 13, 2018.**

The History - On August 3, 2016, the Board of Education established the Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC) to study the educational facility and infrastructure needs of our District. This committee of 18 people represented multiple constituency groups comprising parents, residents without school-aged children, retirees and those actively employed, as well as teachers, administrators, Briarcliff Parent Teacher Association (BPTA), Briarcliff Manor Education Foundation (BMEF) and Board of Education representation. The District issued a request for proposal (RFP) for an architectural firm to assist in the assessment of the District's capital needs and in the development of a strategic plan for addressing those needs. KG+D Architectural firm was selected. On April 12, 2018, after 18 months of exploration, presentations, tours, focus group discussions and deliberations, the LRPC presented a report of its findings and recommendations to the Board of Education. The LRPC presented the Board of Education with a proposal in the form of a bonded capital project.

The Overview - Before making its decision, the Board reviewed extensive documentation from KG+D Architects and the LRPC. The physical status of our schools was discussed in meetings with community and school-related organizations and stakeholder groups representing the various constituencies in Briarcliff. **Based upon the input received, the scope of the work is centered on four goals: (1) to promote the health, safety and security of students and staff, (2) to support next generation learning at BHS and BMS, (3) to provide performance and flexible use space at Todd, and (4) to address certain high priority infrastructure needs as determined in the District's most recent *Building Conditions Survey*.**

We encourage you to regularly visit the school website, www.briarcliffschools.org/capital-project for the most up-to-date and detailed information, but here are some of the specifics:

- **Promoting Safety and Security** - The proposed plan calls for districtwide improvements to our security infrastructure allowing for cameras, emergency communications and other equipment that will, for example, enable lockdown capability to be installed at the high school, middle school and Todd. It also addresses security through environmental design. In other words, placement of the most-visited facilities at the front of schools close to administrative and security personnel or placed at the school's exterior where it can be effectively cordoned off from the rest of the building. For example, the new Guidance and College Conference Suite would be located near the school's front entrance for easy parent and visitor access, while preventing access to other parts of the building.
- **Promoting Health** – Beyond establishing educational facilities that are brighter, cleaner, and free from impediments, the goal is to create a healthier school environment. At Todd, this means improvements and additions to educational facilities that will assist in meeting state mandates in physical education and active play. This includes the ability to allow for recess during the school day regardless of the weather and other educational events and activities taking place in the existing gymnasium. At BHS, the project will introduce natural light into interior rooms and spaces. Two new state-of-the-art science classrooms would be created from four existing windowless rooms. This renovation would be similar to the successful remodeling of an interior science classroom a few years ago, providing access to contemporary science labs for all BHS students.

- **Supporting Next Generation Learning** - Student resources including the Maresca Center, the Library, and Guidance offices would be modernized and reconfigured more logically to increase accessibility to students, staff, and parents. At BHS, the Library Media Center would be transformed into an interactive, cloud-based learning environment and collaboration space to facilitate current instructional strategies with the goal to ensure desired student outcomes. The upgraded Guidance and College Conference Suite will include a waiting room and space for group and private interviews, including interviews with college recruiters.
- **Transforming and Reconfiguring Outdated Spaces** – BMS and BHS share a campus so many of the upgrades would be utilized by both schools. Notably, the Music and Performing Arts renovations are shared between the schools and both will benefit. Also included is the elimination of closets and the conversion of office space for educational supports. Now that every student has access to a school laptop, one of the computer labs can be repurposed to a Maker Space for hands-on, interactive and collaborative learning. At Todd, the project calls for the consolidation of our administrative offices on one side of the building with the other side creating a suite for nursing and student support services. In addition, unutilized interior courtyard spaces at Todd will be converted into usable outdoor learning spaces.
- **Creating Performance and Flexible Use Space at Todd Elementary** - Plans call for repurposing the existing space as flexible performance and indoor recess space and constructing a new facility with adequate space for two teaching stations and a full-sized playing surface for athletic events. In line with the District's commitment to improving security for areas that draw outside visitors, the new space will be placed along the exterior of the school building and would be open for community use outside of school hours.
- **High-Priority Infrastructure Projects District-wide** - Over the past several years, we have deferred construction on significant maintenance and improvement projects to coincide with the 2019 retirement of debt. These projects include creating new Writing and Math labs, renovating cafeteria serving area to allow for improved food prep, hot and cold meal selections, repaving degraded parking lots and sidewalks, replacing roofs which, according to the Architects, have reached the end of life for each school building, electrical upgrades, and installation of interior security doors.

Will it increase taxes? The maximum debt authorized by this referendum (vote) to pay for the capital project would be \$33.95 million. Fortunately, it is estimated that New York State will provide building aid that would support approximately 23% of the debt costs. The District's current debt obligations will be declining beginning in 2020. **The timing of the proposed project with declining current debt means this project's debt issuance will not result in increased taxes.** More detail on the debt issuance assumptions used can be found on the District's website – www.briarcliffschools.org/capital-project.

We are grateful to everyone who participated in our group meetings and have enjoyed discussing this project with various stakeholder groups. We look forward to sharing more information with you in the coming weeks. **You are encouraged to visit the District website as we continue to update information, add to our list of frequently asked questions and provide a complete list of community meetings and gatherings at which the Capital Project will be discussed - www.briarcliffschools.org/capital-project.**

To sign up for emails regarding this project, please go to <http://www.briarcliffschools.org/community/resident-email-sign-up>.

Sincerely,



Dr. James Kaishian
Superintendent of Schools



Mrs. Jennifer Rosen
President, Board of Education

Important to Note: Voting will take place at Todd Elementary School on Thursday, December 13th from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. You must be registered to vote. If you are a resident of the Briarcliff Manor School District for 30 days before December 13th, a U.S. Citizen and at least 18 years old, you can register or obtain an absentee ballot by contacting the District Clerk at JBrockett@briarcliffschools.org, or by calling 914-432-8103. You can stop by the District Office Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. or register with the Westchester County Board of Elections.