

Gowanda Central School District

10674 Prospect Street
Gowanda, NY 14070

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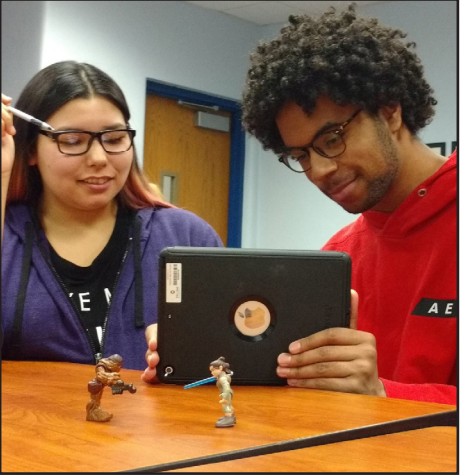
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The Proposed Two-Part
Capital Improvements Project

A Special Publication of the Gowanda Central School District

www.gowcsd.org November/December 2018 (716) 532-3325



Successful passage of the Proposed Two-Part Capital Improvements Project would bring approximately \$30 million in extensive campus-wide upgrades to the Gowanda Central School District. The upgrades focus on Safety, Health, Welfare, Student Programming and Experiences, Energy Efficiency, and Site Improvements. A public hearing is scheduled Thursday, December 6, 2018, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in the High School Auditorium. District residents are encouraged to vote Thursday, December 13, 2018, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the Middle School Library.

Cultivating connections with our children, our campus & our community

The Gowanda Central School District is the heart of our community. The care and education of our children is the core of our mission. On December 13, 2018, residents of Gowanda will have an opportunity to vote on the Proposed Two-Part Capital Improvements Project designed to address critical needs across our campus.

The project is based on the Building Condition Survey required by the New York State Education Department every 5 years to ensure we are planning for and maintaining the district's assets. The Proposed Two-Part Capital Improvements Project is designed to meet the needs of the five-year Building Condition Survey and an extensive staff survey conducted in 2015. This is a financially prudent project that addresses the most critical needs and

goals set by the Board of Education that would maximize available state aid while creating no increase in the tax levy.

This project addresses four key areas:

- Increasing safety, health and welfare needs throughout the district;
- Enhancing student programming and experiences;
- Improving energy efficiency;
- Making site improvements.

We are presenting the project in two parts. Proposition No. 1 (titled "Capital Improvements Project, 2018") at \$29,174,459 and Proposition No. 2 (titled "Synthetic Turf Athletics Fields Project, 2018," which is contingent on the passage of Proposition No. 1) at \$1,334,058. Should both propositions be approved, the total would be \$30,508,517. (Please see Figure 1, Page 2.)

More than \$50,000,000 in potential facilities, site and educational needs were identified in the Building Condition Survey. After reviewing and prioritizing the elements, we then narrowed the project scope to approximately \$30

million, which is the proposal being presented for public vote.

The Proposed Two-Part Capital Improvements Project would improve safety, keep our facilities in good working order for the upcoming generations, and provide ample space and amenities to ensure our children continue to grow, learn and thrive.

We encourage you to learn more about the details of this proposed project on our website and by attending the district's public hearing scheduled for Thursday, December 6, 2018, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in the high school auditorium. Displays with information about the Proposed Two-Part Capital Improvements Project will be set up in the lobbies or main entrances of all three schools by mid-November.

The Gowanda Central School District and its Board of Education are grateful to the community for its continued support and involvement in our future.

Sincerely,
Dr. Robert B. Anderson,
Superintendent of Schools
and Cynthia Sutherland,
President of the Board of Education

FAQ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Q: What are the plans for the Bus Garage?

A: The Bus Garage will receive a vehicle lift replacement along with lighting, heating and ventilation improvements.

Q: Is enrollment decreasing? If so, why should we vote yes with fewer students?

A: Over the next 10 years, our student population is predicted to decline by approximately 9%. Per NYSED, GCS enrollment projections based on revised current enrollment are:

2018-19: 1,119
2019-20: 1,097
2020-21: 1,074
2021-22: 1,047
2022-23: 1,045
2023-24: 1,029
2024-25: 1,029
2025-26: 1,030
2026-27: 1,022
2027-28: 1,019

However, the improvements included in the project address Health, Safety, Welfare, Programming, Energy Efficiency and Site Improvement needs for students, staff and visitors in all district buildings. The upgrades will make our schools better for current students and more appealing to new families potentially moving to our District.

TIMELINE

The Board of Education formally approved this project on October 3, 2018. A Thursday, December 13, 2018 vote is scheduled from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the Middle School Library.

UPON SUCCESSFUL PASSES:

Once a project is approved by the community, designed and engineered, the NYS Department of Education must approve the plan, which may take up to 42 weeks to obtain or expedited approval is possible. After approval, bids must be received for the project. Ideally, groundbreaking would take place during Spring/Summer 2020 and the entire project is slated for completion within two years. However, weather and other unanticipated events may delay this proposed timeline.

Q: Does the public have a say in what is done for the project or is it all decided by the District?

A: The scope of the project is determined by the Board of Education. The public shares its opinion by voting on the proposed project. After voter approval, various stakeholders will be invited to plan the specific design of the new construction.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Information about the Proposed Two-Part Capital Improvements Project will be on display in the High School, Middle School and Elementary School entrances by mid-November.

A Public Hearing will be held Thursday, December 6, 2018, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in the High School auditorium. District residents are encouraged to attend.

In case of a snow day, public voting for the Proposed Two-Part Capital Improvements Project will be held Friday, December 14, 2018.

More details and images are available on the Gowanda Central School District website. Click the Capital Project tab at the top of the www.gowcsd.org website homepage.

Q: Is the project "all or nothing" (e.g. turf and construction)?

The project is designed with two propositions. Proposition No. 1 at \$29,174,459 includes nearly the entire project scope. Proposition No. 2 at \$1,334,058 is a referendum on artificial turf - yes or no. Proposition No. 2 is contingent on Proposition No. 1 passing with voter approval.

Financial Summary of Proposition No. 1 & Proposition No. 2

Proposition No. 1, titled “Capital Improvements Project, 2018,” includes the following major building renovations: secure school entrances, energy efficiency improvements, Panther Drive Bridge repairs, Girls’ Softball Field lights (to be equitable with baseball), new drainage systems for both baseball and softball fields, tennis court repairs, and many other improvements.

Proposition No. 2, titled “Synthetic Turf Athletics Fields Project, 2018” is contingent on Proposition No. 1 passing. It allows voters to choose between the baseball and softball fields being covered with synthetic turf, or having grass covering in Proposition No. 1.

FIGURE 1

	Proposition No. 1: Capital Improvements Project, 2018 (Athletic fields improved with grass)	Proposition No. 2 (Contingent): Synthetic Turf Athletic Fields Project, 2018	If Propositon No. 2 passes (Prop. No. 1 + Prop. No. 2)
Project Cost	\$29,174,459	\$1,334,058	\$30,508,517
Native American Building Aid	\$5,834,892	\$226,335	\$6,061,227
NYS EXCEL AID	\$527,189	\$0	\$527,189
Regular Building Aid	\$21,142,378	\$817,723	\$21,960,101
Local Share of Project Is Paid for by Capital Reserve Contribution	<u>\$1,670,000</u>	<u>\$290,000</u>	<u>\$1,960,000</u>
Amount to be Covered in Taxes	\$0	\$0	\$0
Amount exceeding MCAs	\$0	\$202,383	\$202,383

Budget, Costs & Scope

Site Scope

- Replace/rebuild Panther Drive Bridge
- Campus pavement/sidewalk repairs
- Purchase of 10+ acres of land adjacent to Elementary School for baseball field extension
- Renovations to baseball/softball fields

Health, Safety & Welfare Scope

- Redesign all school entrances to create | secure entries district-wide
- Fire alarm upgrades district-wide
- Lavatory renovations at Middle School/High School
- Renovation of B wing classrooms at Elementary School
- Elementary School crawl space abatement
- Rooftop Unit replacement and masonry work at Bus Garage

Technology Scope

- Upgrade security cameras, fiber cabling and WiFi coverage district-wide
- Renovate technology classrooms to separate computer labs

Energy Efficiency Scope

- Create a climate-controlled environment throughout the district
- LED lighting upgrades district-wide and at Bus Garage



Successful passage of Proposition No. 1 and No. 2 of the Proposed Two-Part Capital Improvements Project would bring more than \$30 million in up-grades to Gowanda Central School District at no impact to the local tax levy.

from shop areas at the Middle School/High School

Frequently Asked Questions

PUBLIC VOTE
Thursday, December 13, 2018
8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Middle School Library

Q: When was Gowanda Central School District’s last Capital Improvements Project approved by voters?

A: Voters approved the project totalling \$6,821,593 in 2009 and work for the project was completed during the 2012-2013 school year.

Q: How was this proposed project developed?

A: The proposed project was developed based on critical needs identified in a Building Condition Survey completed in 2015. The proposed project addresses 4 key areas:
1) Increasing Safety, Health and Welfare needs throughout the district;
2) Enhancing Student Programming and Experiences;
3) Improving Energy Efficiency;
4) Making Site Improvements.

Q: Is everything from the Building Condition Survey included in this project?

A: The 2015 Building Condition Survey identified more than \$50 million in potential facilities, site and educational needs. The Board of Education, administration and Young + Wright Architectural of Buffalo, N.Y., have worked to prioritize immediate safety, welfare, health, programming, energy efficiency and site improvement needs.

Q: Why are there two propositions?

A: Successful passage of Proposition No. 1 allows the completion of Health, Safety, Welfare, Programming, Energy Efficiency and Site Improvement upgrades. Proposition No. 2 would replace the softball and baseball fields with artificial turf.

Q: Will this capital project increase my taxes now or in the future?

A: No. This project has 0% increase on the local tax levy. The project will be 100% paid for using a combination of NYS Building Aid, NYS EXCEL Aid, Native American Building Aid and Capital Reserve Fund. All NYS projects require local contribution or a “down payment.” This will be done by using a portion of the Capital Reserve Fund, established in 2009.

Q: What are reserve funds?

A: The State has provided a mechanism allowing Districts to “save” for future projects, acquisitions, and other allowable

purposes. Reserve funds provide a mechanism for legally saving money to finance all or part of future infrastructure, equipment, and other required needs. Reserve funds can also provide a degree of financial stability by reducing reliance on indebtedness to finance capital projects and acquisitions. In uncertain economic times, reserve funds can also provide officials with a budgetary option helping mitigate the need to cut services or to raise taxes. In good times, money not needed for current purposes can often be set aside in reserves for future use. Reserve funds are important for good financial management. The Capital Reserve Fund is a restricted fund ONLY to be used for capital improvement, new construction, acquisition, repair, and reconstruction requiring voter approval. The reserve fund money is used to provide the local share of any project and prevents the need to cut programs or raise taxes. The project requires no additional taxes to the community. The reserve fund is designed to be used. It is not designed to act as a perpetual savings account.

Q: Why don’t we spend the Capital Reserve Fund on academic programs?

A: The Capital Reserve Fund is specifically earmarked by law for capital improvement projects. It cannot be used for teacher salaries, programs, extracurricular activities, etc.

Q: Where does State Aid originate?

A: State Aid for public schools comes primarily from the State General Fund (approximately 78%) wherein the major revenue source is state taxes (e.g. income and sales). Of the balance of state support for public schools, approximately 10% comes from STAR and 12% comes from a Special Revenue Fund account supported by state lottery, video lottery terminal, and commercial gaming receipts. The Gowanda Central School District’s general fund budget is funded by 67% state and federal aid, 16% real property tax, and 17% county sales tax and miscellaneous other sources, including Native American tuition aid.

Q: Can the state default on the State Building Aid allocations?

A: Even during the Great Recession, NYS never made any formal attempt at stopping or hindering building aid. The more likely scenario would be the State creating caps on new projects as opposed to impacting existing approved projects.

Q: Is there an expenditure cap to this project? And if so, does it exceed the cap?

A: The State sets the maximum cost allowance (MCA) it will reimburse with building aid, commonly referred to as the “cap.” Proposition No. 1 does NOT exceed this “cap.” While Proposition No. 2 exceeds the MCA by approximately \$200,000; the cost is being covered by the existing Capital Reserve Fund.

Q: Please explain the concerns with our current entrances.

A: The High School and Elementary School entrances are nearly 50+ years old. These entrances were not designed for modern safety concerns and are not energy efficient. The Middle School entrance is more energy efficient, but does provide direct access to the building, causing security issues. The High School and Elementary School metal doors do not latch properly with fluctuating temperatures and are not energy efficient. The metal contracts/expands, requiring regular maintenance. The single set of doors open directly into the building allowing visitors complete access to the entire school complex without being forced to stop and register at a central, secure location.

Q: Why are we replacing the bridge?

A: The District owns Panther Drive Bridge. The NYS Department of Transportation placed a yellow structural flag on the bridge in October 2013. This bridge is a major District transportation route. The bridge handles school bus and school traffic on a daily basis, requiring the bridge to be structurally safe and sound. In addition, there is a lack of pedestrian-vehicular separation and the narrowness limits traffic flow. The road can be dangerous in the winter.

Q: Are pesticides used on artificial turf?

A: Pesticides are not used on public school fields or artificial turf. The use of pesticides is prohibited.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Athletic Site Improvements & the Difference Between Proposition No. 1 & Proposition No. 2

There are significant athletic site improvements included in Proposition No. 1, as outlined below. The baseball field and the softball field are in need of a full replacement of their surfaces to provide adequate underground drainage as well as concrete walks to improve accessibility for the disabled and elderly. Proposition No. 1 would recover the fields with natural grass, whereas Proposition No. 2, if passed, would recover the fields with syntetic turf, and have other improvements as outlined below.

FIGURE 4

	GRASS FIELDS	SYNTHETIC TURF
YEARS OF SERVICE*	15-20	15-20
MAINTENANCE COSTS*	\$23,000/year	\$7,500/year
BENEFITS	Good traction, regenerates itself, and prevents soil erosion	Increased outside Physical Education for all students, longer seasons for sports teams, and lower maintenance costs

*SOURCE: APPEL-OSBORNE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

● PROPOSITION No. 1: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT, 2018 (Athletic Fields Covered With Grass)

With the successful passage of Proposition No. 1, the boys' baseball field would see improved underground drainage and foul ball netting. The girls' softball field would receive lighting to make it Title IX compliant, improved underground drainage, and a third-base fence. Both fields would remain natural grass fields and have concrete walks to improve accessibility for the disabled and elderly.

Additionally, the district would purchase 10± acres of land adjacent to the Elementary School for extension of the baseball field and removal of the mound at the back of the field. This is the last parcel of contiguous, undeveloped land adjacent to the Elementary School.



TENNIS COURT REPAIRS

Our tennis courts show signs of significant wear and tear. Some of the cracks – they are virtual-ly fault lines – are so wide and long they may soon render the courts unusable as they pose poten-tial safety hazards to our students. These small problems turn into bigger issues with cracks growing and deepening as time passes.

● PROPOSITION No. 2 (contingent): SYNTHETIC TURF ATHLETIC FIELDS PROJECT, 2018

With the successful passage of Proposition No. 2, the boys' baseball field and the girls' softball field would be converted to artificial turf at a total additional cost of \$1,334,058. The cost of Proposition No. 2 includes not only the cost of the covering, but related site improvements (see above Proposition No. 1) as well as stone underlay, batting cages, stormwater management and water quality treatment.



Safety, Health & Welfare

The actual HS entrance



SAFETY, HEALTH & WELFARE
Benefits of expanding the district-wide security systems and entrances include total visual control of the parking areas and sidewalks near the schools prior to unlocking doors and granting access. Secure button access would be controlled at each individual reception area.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
All of our school buildings should have secure entrances with check-in points. Enhancing security at the entrances/exits is overdue. The structure was built in the 1960's and the entrance and lobby are original and outdated for today's needs. Additionally, one set of double doors is unusuable due to rust and deterioration.

MIDDLE SCHOOL
Although it is the newest entrance, visitors to Gowanda Middle School gain complete access to the building once inside the door. A remodeled vestibule will allow staff to greet visitors before granting access.

HIGH SCHOOL
The nondescript High School entrance lacks distinction. Once inside the door, visitors also have complete access to the High School as well as the Middle School because the buildings are connected. Adding a secure entrance will enhance security, energy efficiency and create a distinct entrance.

The designated High School entrance lacks a distinct entrance (shown left). Adding a secure and new entrance will enhance security, energy efficiency and create a distinct entrance.



Once inside Gowanda Elementary School, above, and the Gowanda Middle School, below, visitors have access to the entire building. Reconfigured entrances would enhance security.



A set of double doors are unusable due to significant rust and structural deterioration.



Highlights of the Proposed Two-Part Capital Improvements Project

PANTHER DRIVE BRIDGE
Panther Drive Bridge – a narrow span with one walkway – is the main access point to the district. It is HEAVILY used by students, staff and the community for pedestrian, car and bus traffic. Panther Bridge was “yellow-flagged” by the New York State Department of Transportation in 2013. According to a document titled “INSPECTION FLAGGING PROCEDURE FOR BRIDGES” on the DOT website, it is “a structural flag ... issued to report a potentially hazardous structural condition which, if left unattended, could become a clear and present danger.” You can plainly see in these images the significant crumbling rust, rotting wood and overall deterioration of Panther Bridge.

It has been well-documented over the past decade that aging bridges across our country are failing. Panther Drive Bridge is overdue for rehabilitation.

DISTRICTWIDE CLIMATE CONTROL
Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) units at the High School, Middle School and Elementary School are old and, in the case of the Bus Garage, beyond their life expectancy. Climate control district-wide could help ensure safety and improve learning conditions. While annual electric costs may increase, the district anticipates these costs could be offset by other energy efficiency savings. Additionally, use of air-conditioning would be limited because significant areas of the district already have air-conditioning and it will be used only when school is in session.

ENHANCING PROGRAMMING & EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS
New entrances will cause existing rooms to be relocated. At the Elementary School, classroom renovations are required to address increased social, emotional and academic needs of the student population. Class sizes have increased – two new Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten classes were added for the 2018-2019 academic year – and the classrooms are increasingly cramped. Adding a secure entrance at the Elementary School would necessitate the relocation and renovation of the



Panther Drive Bridge was identified by the New York State Department of Transportation in 2013 as having hazardous structural conditions that, if left unattended, could become a danger. The bridge is widely used by school buses and the community.



Main Office. HVAC Renovations – including climate control – are planned. During the warmer spring and fall months, some classrooms at the Elementary School, Middle School and High School have reached temperatures in the high 80’s and into the low 90’s. Heat and humidity at this level makes educating tough for our teachers

and learning difficult for our students. (See Figure 3, Page 5.)

- ENERGY EFFICIENCY**
- Lighting fixtures at Elementary, Middle and High schools will be replaced with energy efficient LED fixtures.
 - Secure entrances will prevent direct air exchange between outdoors and indoors, which can lead to rapid fluctuations in temperatures and inefficient use of existing heating/cooling systems.

- SAFETY, HEALTH & WELFARE**
- Secure entrances at the Elementary School, Middle School and High School due to safety concerns
 - Flooring and plumbing because of old fixtures and hazards
 - Panther Street Bridge presents a road/pedestrian hazard
 - Fire alarm system was installed in 2001 and is not current/up-to-date
 - Climate control issues present safety issues and poor learning conditions
 - Air handling/ventilation (bus): existing units not functioning properly
 - Replace existing vehicle lift and add generator for emergencies at the Bus Garage.

It's Getting Hot in Here:
Cramped, Outdated & Aging Facilities at GES



Gowanda Elementary School, on Aldrich Street, was built in the mid-1960's. Much of the building's amenities are original, such as the tiles, cabinetry, bubblers, HVAC and more. School windows are not permitted to be open for security purposes. The staff and students have been coping with the summer heat for the past couple of decades. Research suggests students perform poorly in excessively hot climates. (Please see chart below for a rundown of the temperatures recorded at GCS.)

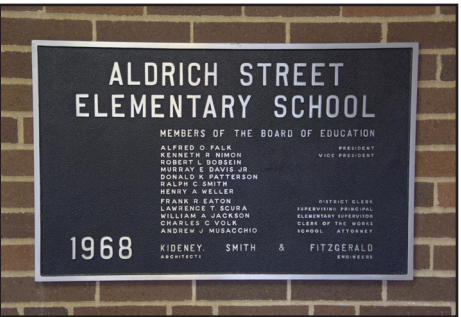


FIGURE 3

Rooms in the High, Middle & Elementary Schools	Outside temp at 11 a.m. is 84° F on Sept. 4, 2018	Outside temp at 11:15 a.m. is 95° F on Sept. 5, 2018
HS 210	84°	86°
HS 211	87°	89°
HS 212	85°	86°
HS 213	90°	91°
HS 214	85°	86°
MS 200	83°	85°
MS 202	81°	83°
MS 203	83°	85°
MS 204	81°	83°
MS 205	84°	83°
ES 158	81°	86°
ES 159	80°	82°
ES160	82°	83°
ES 161	81°	81°
ES 165	80°	82°

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

A qualified voter is one who is (1) a citizen of the United States of America, (2) 18 years of age or older, and (3) a resident within the Gowanda Central School District for a period of thirty (30) days preceding the special vote. The Gowanda Central School District may require all persons voting at the special vote to provide one form of proof of residency pursuant to Education Law §2018-c. Such form may include a driver’s license, a non-driver identification card, a utility bill, or a voter registration card. Upon offer of proof of residency, the School District may also require all persons offering to vote to provide their signature, printed name and address. (NOTE: Native Americans residing on the Seneca Nation Cattaraugus Territory and meeting all of the above qualifications [except those who are parents or guardians of students attending elementary or secondary school in another district] are eligible to vote pursuant to Education Law § 2012.)

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Applications for absentee ballots are available from the District Clerk. Special regulations govern absentee ballots. Contact Kathy Ferneza at (716) 532-3325, ext. 6300 for information.

- DEADLINES**
- December 6: Deadline for absentee ballot applications if ballot is to be mailed to the voter.
 - December 12: Deadline for absentee ballot applications if ballot is to be picked up by the voter.
 - December 13: at 5 p.m.: Deadline for absentee ballots to be received by the District Clerk.