

# 2026 Proposed Capital Project

## Stakeholder Question and Answer

### Onondaga Central School District

## Project Background:

After careful review of the recent 5-year building conditions report prepared by our architects, the Board of Education and Facilities Committee strongly believes we cannot delay in putting forward a new capital project. We are writing this letter to make you aware of the **No Tax Increase Project** we are proposing.

The \$15.6 million project we are putting forward to the voters on March 20th, includes the work described in the brochure and newsletter. That includes all the original furnishings, fixtures and equipment, architectural fees, site improvements, and all other costs incidental to such work. The proposed project includes:

- Reconstruction, renovation and construction improvements and upgrades to the Rockwell Elementary School, Wheeler Elementary School, Onondaga Junior/Senior High School, Industrial Arts Building with Instructional Greenhouse addition and the Transportation Center/Bus Garage.

These renovation and construction proposals include, but are not limited to:

- Electrical and mechanical improvements, HVAC and plumbing replacement and upgrades, masonry replacement and repairs, ADA accessibility improvements, addition of air conditioning in certain locations, fire alarm and security upgrades, boiler plant replacement and repairs in certain locations, select roof replacements, select paving replacement, interior and exterior improvements, renovation of school kitchens and replacement of kitchen equipment, athletic field and playground improvements with the addition of exterior lighting at the Wheeler Elementary basketball court and playground, and asbestos abatement as needed.

Additionally, site work and electric service at the Transportation Center associated with electric charging stations for NYS Mandated Zero-Emission.

We are excited to get this work done for our students.

#### **Board of Education:**

Maggie Mahoney, President

Michael Kobasa, Vice President

Noelle Relles

Tara Carter-Lettsome

Kyle Kolwaite

Laurel Bennett

Nathaniel Brown

Rob Price, Superintendent

# 2026 Proposed Capital Project Stakeholder Question and Answer Onondaga Central School District

## Question: When and where is the vote?

Vote - March 20, 2024 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

- Rockwell Elementary School Cafeteria
- Jr./Sr. High School Cafeteria Lobby

## Question: What work is being done at each building?

- **Bus Garage**
  - Roof Improvements
  - HVAC Upgrades
  - Fire Alarm/CO Detection Systems
  - Electrical Upgrades for EV Bus Charging
- **Rockwell Elementary**
  - Boiler Replacement
  - Kitchen Equipment Improvements
  - Main Office Renovations
  - Masonry/Sidewalk Restoration
  - Exterior Stair Improvements
  - Structural Upgrades
  - HVAC Replacements/Upgrades
- **Wheeler Elementary**
  - Boiler Replacement
  - Kitchen Renovations and Equipment
  - Gymnasium Partition Replacement
  - Masonry Restoration/Repairs
  - Roof Improvements
  - Pump House Demolition
  - HVAC, Electrical, and Plumbing Replacements/Upgrades
  - Fire Alarm Upgrades
  - Exterior Lighting Additions
  - Site Drainage Improvements
  - Concrete Sidewalk Repairs

# 2026 Proposed Capital Project Stakeholder Question and Answer Onondaga Central School District

- **Jr./Sr. High School Boiler Replacement**
  - Boiler Replacement
  - Kitchen Renovations and Equipment Improvements
  - Roof Improvements
  - Athletic Field Repairs (Varsity Baseball & Modified Softball)
  - Exterior Stairs Replacement
  - Digital Sign Replacement
  - HVAC, Electrical, and Plumbing Replacements/Upgrades
  - Fire Alarm and Emergency Lighting Additions
- **Industrial Arts Building**
  - Wood Shop Renovation
  - Metal Shop Renovation
  - Classroom Renovations
  - Greenhouse Addition

## **Question: How do I get an absentee ballot application?**

Contact the district office at 315-552-5001 between February 20th and March 13th.

## **Question: What are the project's costs?**

\$ 15.6 million Project Cost

\$ 2.175 million of the District Capital Reserves and other funds are Included in the Project

## **Question: How was the project developed?**

- Facilities Committee
- Architect, Engineer, Construction Management Team
- Board of Education Representation
- Administration
- Community Members
- Design Team
- Long Range Planning

# 2026 Proposed Capital Project

## Stakeholder Question and Answer

### Onondaga Central School District

- Toured Facilities
- Analysis of Building Condition Survey and Comprehensive Long Range Plan

#### **Question: Why do a project now?**

- Our completed Building Conditions Survey identified over \$40.8 million in needed renovations.
- The district is making the most financially prudent decision, for the taxpayers, by making renovations now. If we wait and something identified needs to be repaired, the work would not be eligible for Building Aid.
- Wise (stewardship) management of district (resources) reserves
- No increase on taxes when utilizing retiring debt and capital reserves
- Keep debt service level - a management technique to minimize the impact on taxpayers resulting from future building conditions and renovations and to eliminate fluctuations in the district's budget.

#### **Question: How is there no tax increase from this project?**

#### **Answer:**

- The timing of the project coincides with retiring district debt due to the fact the current debt is already a budgetary line item in the district's budget.
- There is no additional tax increase to the district, a portion of taxes paid to the state by district taxpayers for capital projects are being secured for Onondaga Central through this project versus money going to other districts in the state. It is a way to get back what Onondaga Central residents have paid to the state for use in our community and school district.
- The project will not require us to increase our debt service payments due to the fact that we are replacing retiring debt with the new debt that we are already paying.

# 2026 Proposed Capital Project

## Stakeholder Question and Answer

### Onondaga Central School District

**Question:** If the project is really no tax increase, then why does the proposition use language about levying taxes?

**Answer:** A proposition cannot be worded to say no tax increase when asking for bond authorization. Under NYS law, bonds must be backed by the taxing authority of the School District without regard to other sources of funds that may be available to pay the bonds such as State building aid. The requirement is to protect the bond investor from the risk that other sources of payment may not materialize.

**Question:** When are Community Meetings?

**Answer:**

February 27, 2024, Rockwell Elementary School Cafeteria (see the district's webpage for the recording of the presentation)

March 7, 2024 Navarino FD 7:00-8:00 PM

March 12, 2024 Jr/Sr High School Cafeteria, 5:30-6:30 PM

**Question:** Wheeler has a partition included in the project, is that for the small gym or the large gym?

**Answer:** The small gym. It gives us the option to divide the space into two learning spaces and maintain flexibility.

**Question:** There are fire alarms included in the project at Wheeler, but the fire alarms were just done in the last project. What is the useful life of the fire alarm system?

**Answer:** The fire alarm devices included in this project are due to changes in code. These are new devices needed in the main office area to address changes to building code since the last project.

# 2026 Proposed Capital Project

## Stakeholder Question and Answer

### Onondaga Central School District

**Question:** How will the technology needs for the Industrial Arts building be addressed? Are they included in the project with respect to equipment such as Smart and/or Promethean Boards?

**Answer:** The current classroom technology in the Industrial Arts building is part of the technology lease budget. The current equipment that is not up for replacement at this time will be reinstalled and then replaced in alignment with the current technology plan.

**Question:** Can the area handle the power needed at this time for electrical upgrades needed at the bus garage? Big businesses in the area are struggling to get power, have these conversations taken place?

**Answer:** Right now, there is not enough power to electrify the entire bus fleet and additional power would be required from the Lords Hill power station. The District has met with National Grid to have these conversations. National Grid provided information on the need to upgrade the substation at Lords Hill and bring the electricity to the bus garage that will be sufficient enough to charge up to 30 buses.

**Question:** The district intends to fund 14% of the project using capital reserves, are these funds guaranteed?

**Answer:** The District was authorized to fund a capital reserve. These funds may only be utilized for the purpose of capital expenditures and will be utilized to fund a portion of this project to offset the need for a tax increase.

# 2026 Proposed Capital Project Stakeholder Question and Answer Onondaga Central School District

**Question:** What would be the impact on taxes by not doing a capital project?

**Answer:** Not doing a project would be a \$.038 per \$1,000 full value decrease based on 23/24. It is important to note that if the tax levy falls (decreases), then a tax increase would be needed when a project is eventually done.