Dear District Residents,

For the past year, the Rhinebeck Central School District Board of Education and BoE Facilities Committee have been involved in a comprehensive study of our buildings and grounds to determine and prioritize needed repairs, renovations, and upgrades. Our students, faculty, staff, administration, and Board are very proud of our schools. We want to maintain the facilities in the best possible condition to provide a safe learning environment for our children and staff for years to come.

It has been 12 years since District residents were last asked to approve additional taxpayer spending on our school facilities. Costs for expenses such as roof repair and window replacement simply cannot be included in our annual budget. Prudent stewardship of District properties calls for infrastructure investment on a periodic basis. By proposing the work as a capital project, the District will receive significant reimbursement via state aid, whereas if we were to do it through the budget process, we would not receive any such reimbursement. With current tax levy restrictions limiting our ability to raise additional funds, we are compelled to put forth a bond referendum for your approval to keep our students warm, safe and dry.

This capital project, totaling $12,089,160, will include reconstruction of portions of District buildings, much-needed site work, and targeted updating of classroom facilities. The project also includes funding for a generator at the Rhinebeck High School/Bulkeley Middle School for the purposes of public safety. This building has been designated by the American Red Cross as an emergency relief center for Rhinebeck residents, and without a generator, the building would have limited usefulness to the community as a shelter in case of a protracted power outage.

This newsletter serves as an overview of the project. We encourage you to review detailed information on the District website at www.capitalproject.rhinebeckcsd.org. Please come to the Bulkeley Middle School cafeteria on Tuesday, December 6, 2016 from 2:00pm to 9:00pm to vote on this proposal—and remind your friends and neighbors to do the same.

If you have additional questions, don’t hesitate to contact District Administrators Joseph Phelan or Tom Burnell (ph) 871-5520, or any member of the Board of Education. We encourage you to join us at one or more of these facilities presentations:

- Thursday, 11/17 “Coffee with the Board” - 9am at CLS or 7pm at BMS/RHS
- Saturday, 11/19 Facilities Walkthrough - 9:30am beginning at CLS
- Monday, 11/21 Facilities Walkthrough - 4pm beginning at CLS
- Tuesday, 11/22 Capital Project Referendum Presentation - 7pm at BMS/RHS
- Tuesday, 12/6 Capital Project Referendum Vote - BMS Cafe 2:00-9:00pm

Sincerely,

The Rhinebeck CSD Board of Education

For complete details of the Capital Project Referendum, please visit the District website at www.capitalproject.rhinebeckcsd.org
Rhinebeck CSD Reaches Out to Community for Facilities Input

A state-required Building Condition Survey was conducted in the summer of 2015 which prioritized areas of necessary repairs and improvements at both Rhinebeck campuses. The Board of Education invited the community to participate in a Community Facilities Taskforce (CFT) to review the scope of work identified. The committee consisted of ten community members, many of whom are professionals in the building trades. In conjunction with members of the BoE, key administrators, and the District’s design and construction professionals, the volunteer group of stakeholders met on three separate evenings in September and October to review identified needs, visit the school district’s facilities to view those needs first-hand, and make recommendations for addressing those needs to the Board of Education. Some participants were new to the District, while others had already seen their children through their K-12 years in Rhinebeck. All expressed a deep commitment to maintaining "warm, safe, and dry" facilities for students in RCSD's schools.

Robust conversation emerged as the CFT did its work. Projected budgets, along with data outlining the average increase in property taxes for the median homeowner in Rhinebeck, were vetted and thoroughly discussed. CFT members also acknowledged that, due to the retiring of previous debt, this would be the right moment to seek voter approval for funding of such a capital project. Clear consensus emerged when members affirmed the wisdom of sound investment in the district’s physical environment. The recommendation was brought before the full Board of Education at their October 18th meeting and was unanimously approved.

Educational Excellence

- The College Board designated 33 Rhinebeck High School students as AP Scholars in 2016
- RHS named as a "Rewards School" for 2015-16 by the New York State Education Department for the 3rd year in a row; BMS received the distinction for the first time.
- RHS chosen as one of only two Dutchess County Schools to make Newsweek's 2016 List of Top 500 High Schools in the United States
- RHS again named to the Washington Post's List of "America's Most Challenging High Schools"
- RHS designated one of the "Best High Schools" in NYS and the Nation by US News & World Report
What are you planning to do in this project?
This project is expected to address needs in 5 areas: (1) health/safety/security, (2) energy efficiency: roofs/windows/doors/lighting, (3) building infrastructure, (4) educational space, and (5) exterior/fields/sitework. See the scope of work posted on the district’s website for detailed information at www.capitalproject.rhinebeckcsd.org.

When will the project begin? How long will it take?
If the voters approve the referendum on December 6, work will begin immediately to generate drawings, gain State Education Department approvals, bid, and award the job. We anticipate that construction will begin during the summer of 2018 and end within two years.

Can the district just pay for the work on this project through its regular budget?
Your Board of Education believes it would benefit the taxpayers to do the work through a capital project rather than the annual budget process, for several reasons. First, New York State limits the increase in the tax levy from one year’s budget to the next to 2% with some adjustments, or the consumer price index, whichever is less. Under that formula, it would be impossible to do even a portion of the work without either exceeding the tax cap (requiring 60% approval of the voters in the District) or slashing educational programs and services. Second, if the District does the work through a capital project, it will be reimbursed by New York State at a rate of 36.8% on the state “aidable” items. Most of the work we are planning is “aidable.” However, if the work was paid for from the regular budget, the District would not be reimbursed. Ultimately, to maintain our facilities, this project will save taxpayers money in the long run.

I hear that most of the work will be maintenance-type work. Hasn’t the district been maintaining the buildings all along?
The District does ongoing, routine maintenance work every year. The proposed work is not “routine maintenance” but, instead, is a collection of medium to large-sized projects that fall outside the definition of routine maintenance. For example, the District plans to re-coat portions of the roof on Rhinebeck High School to extend the expiring warranty. This is a specialized job that requires State Education Department approval (because it is being done on a public school building) and could not have been done as part of its routine maintenance of the building. As an additional example, the curtain walls (the walls of windows) at the front and back of CLS are almost 50 years old, dating back to when the building was first built. Over time, the frames have worn out, elements have separated, and they leak both air and water. The District’s staff has done maintenance on the curtain walls over the years, but at this point, it’s more cost-effective and energy efficient to replace them with modern elements than to try to continue repairing half-century old window walls.

Can I find out about how much this will cost me as a taxpayer before the vote?
Yes you can. Go to www.capitalproject.rhinebeckcsd.org and click on the button marked “Calculator.” You’ll need to know the assessed value of your home or property which can be found on your most recent tax bill. Bear in mind that the figure you get from the calculator will be approximate. We’ve estimated the interest rate the District will borrow for construction, but the actual rate will be determined once the project is approved by the voters and we are ready to borrow. This is another reason for this project to be undertaken now, while interest rates are low.

For more FAQs, please visit www.capitalproject.rhinebeckcsd.org

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Median Home Assessment with STAR Exemption: $252,920
Numbers based on an 18 year maturity schedule

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- “A Book’s Journey” allows 4th graders to work with local authors and publishers
- 8th grade Citizen Scientists partner with Bard College
- The RHS Spring Musical engages over 90 students annually
- “Collective Imagination” art exhibit highlighted K-12 student artwork at Montgomery Row
- Rhinebeck Hawks consistently and successfully pursue post-season athletic competition

Educational Excellence
RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

Voter Eligibility: Any persons registered with the Dutchess County Board of Elections are eligible to vote in this vote. Any qualified voter may register to vote, either with Dutchess County Board of Elections or with the District. The District has “walk-in” registration during regular school business hours, from 9am - 4pm on days when school is in session at the District Clerk's Office at 48 Knollwood Rd, Rhinebeck NY or the Business Office at 45 North Park Rd, Rhinebeck, NY. In order to register, individuals must provide proof of residence, which may include one or more of the following items at the District’s discretion: driver’s license with picture, non-driver identification card with picture, passport, lease agreement, deed plus utility bill, and/or redacted copy of income tax return. Persons wishing to register with the District to be eligible to vote on December 6, 2016 must be registered by December 5, 2016. A qualified voter is someone who is a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years of age and who has resided in the District during the 30 days immediately preceding the vote. The residence in the District must be the individual's primary place of residence or domicile, not a weekend residence.

Absentee Ballots: Applications for absentee ballots for the vote may be obtained at the office of the District Clerk [48 Knollwood Rd, Rhinebeck, NY]. The application must be received by the District Clerk at least seven (7) days prior to the vote (November 30, 2016) if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or the day before the