

LIVINGSTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Referendum Bulletin

December 2005



Tuesday, December 13, 2005
Polls Open: 1:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Vote at your regular polling place, shown in the sample ballot you receive from the County

If you don't know where to vote, call the Township at 973 992-5000 or the Board of Education at 973 535-8000 ext 8002

On December 13 voters in Livingston are asked to go the polls to take part in a special election regarding a proposal “. . .(a) to provide for the construction of additions, renovations and alterations at Livingston High School, including acquisition and installation of furnishings and equipment and site work; (b) to appropriate therefore \$51,521,069, including a \$10,295,683 State grant for which the school district is eligible. . .”

Highlights of the Proposed Plan

- Add approximately 95,000 new square feet to Livingston High School and renovate about 68,000 square feet
- Provide a new science wing with 14 classrooms; an applied technology lab; additional classrooms in every department; a new gymnasium with physical education stations and team rooms; a second TV studio; expanded music rooms and an expanded student cafeteria
- The new gymnasium provides a place to bring the entire LHS community together for activities or security and will be incorporated into the Township Emergency Operating Plan
- Actual construction is estimated to take 18 months beginning June 2007 with completion by January 2009
- Estimated cost: \$51,521,069

Reasons for the Proposed Referendum

There has been a 32% increase in student population at Livingston High School since the 1990-1991 school year. By 2008-2009, this increase is estimated to be 44%. By 2013, it is estimated to be 67%. As these enrollment figures show:

- 1990-1991: 1,196 students
- 2000-2001: 1,413 students
- 2003-2004: 1,538 students
- 2004-2005: 1,578 students
- 2008-2009: 1,727 students (anticipated)
- 2013-2014: 2,000 students (anticipated)

1,586 students currently attend Livingston High School, which has a functional capacity (total square feet divided by 151 square feet per student) of 1,413 students. Because of these numbers, room utilization at Livingston High School is at 98%. The State guideline recommendation is 83%.

Did you know? Livingston is a comprehensive high school that offers a full range of programs from technical to academic where students of all ability levels are afforded the opportunity to achieve.

What the Overcrowding Means

The overcrowded high school results in congested hallways and stairways; larger class sizes; students turned away from courses; limited ability to improve course offerings; the lack of space for instructional technology; lunch periods as early as 10:12 am and as late as 1:52 pm; lack of meeting spaces; lack of athletic and physical education facilities; lack of space for testing; lack of parking space and inadequate storage. For example:

- *Algebra 2* sections were closed due to space constraints, and some math classes have 31 students. The referendum would increase the number of mathematics classrooms, as well as the number of English and social studies classrooms, from 10 to 12. The science department, which has a number of older, small rooms, including two without water and lab tables, will gain 14 new state of the art rooms. The existing 12 science classrooms will be renovated and used for other subjects.
- Present facilities do not accommodate the number of students requesting TV Production and Digital Imaging courses; between 40 and 60 students per year are closed out and freshmen and seniors are barred from Basic TV. The proposal will provide two additional classroom spaces and an additional TV studio.
- The State mandates that students take physical education each year of their high school experience. Currently there are 30-40 students per gym class; the optimal size for learning and safety is 24. The new gym would increase the number of physical education stations from five to eight, thus freeing the auxiliary gym for the two TV studios and two digital imaging classrooms described above.

- The proposal adds 4,200 square feet to the music rooms. Since the music wing was completed in 1990, there has been a huge increase in student participation in:
 - Band: from 80–165 students
 - Chorus: from 100–130 students
 - Orchestra: from 45–140 students
- Technology will gain two classrooms, enabling students to do major design and building projects.
- 84% of LHS students take a world language. This department, along with the business and health departments, will gain additional classroom space. . There will be several “flex” rooms that can be scheduled as needed. . The referendum will also enable the Career Internship Program for classified students to expand.
- The auditorium will gain new lighting and seating and acoustical improvement.

Did you know? Livingston High School has nine class periods. Adding two rooms, for example, enables the high school to provide 2 x 9, or 18 new sections.

How the Projected Cost of the LHS Construction/Renovation Project was Determined

New construction is calculated at an average of \$265 per square foot: \$265 x 95,000 square feet = \$25.2 million. Line items (lockers, science room built-in equipment, gym equipment) are expected to be \$1.5 million.

Renovation is calculated at an average of \$135 per square foot: \$135 x 68,000 square feet = \$9.2 million. Line items (capital upgrades e.g. ventilators, boilers, fire alarm, asbestos contingency) are expected to be \$1.9 million.

Site Construction is calculated at \$4.4 million, including relocation of football field and track and site work on new construction areas including parking and foundation work.

Other (Soft) Costs \$4.8 million includes architect, construction manager, engineering, environmental specialist, traffic/parking consultant and security consultant fees; \$4.5 million is reserved for contingency fees for unanticipated costs.

TOTAL: \$51.5 million – and please note:

- We are eligible for, and may receive, a grant from the State for \$10.3 million to offset the actual amount we need to borrow.
- These are estimated costs based on projections.
- Anticipated construction costs will take place 1 ½ years from now.

Did you know? Senior citizens may check their eligibility for the State of New Jersey "Senior Freeze" property tax relief program by visiting www.livingston.org or calling 973 535-8000 ext. 8036 for a paper copy.

WHAT WE ARE ASKING IN THE REFERENDUM

is the **right to borrow** \$51.5 million. We will borrow only what the actual bids dictate. The cost of the project cannot exceed \$51.5 million. If the bids come in lower, we will borrow less. If the grant is issued, we will be allowed to borrow up to \$41.3 million.

The 1999 Referendum for construction and renovations to the elementary and middle schools allowed the district to borrow \$24.15 million – but the amount that we actually borrowed was approximately \$18.5 million, which lowered the anticipated tax impact.

COST TO THE PROPERTY OWNER

Assuming an interest rate of 4.875% and a one percent increase in ratables, the cost of the referendum for the “average” house assessed at \$75,000 would be approximately \$252 per year with a 25 year bond and no State grant money. There is no tax impact until the money is actually borrowed.

The State Education Department has determined that Livingston is eligible for a \$10.3 million grant if the state replenishes the school construction fund. If we receive our eligible grant money, a 25-year bond would cost the owner of an average home about **\$202 per year**. The table below shows the projected average annual tax impact over the life of a bond on a house assessed at \$75,000 (look at your tax bill to find out your assessment).

	Without grant	With grant
20 year bond	\$290	\$232
25 year bond	\$252	\$202
30 year bond	\$228	\$183
35 year bond	\$212	\$170

Visit www.livingston.org or call 973 535-8000 ext 8036 for a chart that shows the average costs for houses assessed at higher and lower amounts.

TENTATIVE TIMELINE

- December 2005 – December 2006: Design phase
- June/July 2006: Expand North parking lot
- January 2007–April 2007: Bid, State approvals
- By June 2007: Construction begins
- By August 2007: Field and bleachers relocated
- By September 2008: Gym/science wings operational
- By January 2009: Construction completed, including interior renovations
- The Construction Schedule will be posted at LHS and at the Board office

Did you know? Approximately 70% of our students participate in the more than 40 clubs at LHS serving cultural, academic and social programs.

Did you know? Approximately 52% of the LHS student body participates in sports.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Have there been any alternatives to the current plan?

Numerous plans were considered over a lengthy period by the FUSE (Facility Use Student Enrollment) Committee, including constructing a new high school and moving the football field to another location. All the plans had pros and cons that were carefully examined.

The proposed new high school would require additional construction time, estimated at 36-42 months; would displace the existing football field; and would not add significant parking. Its cost is estimated at \$125 million plus the cost of land for a new football field.

How long have you been working on the plan?

FUSE was formed at the conclusion of the 1999 referendum that provided additions and renovations to the K-8 schools to identify space and room needs of the high school and address them over the foreseeable future.

Has the community been involved?

The FUSE Committee membership included Board members, school administration and staff, Town officials, parents, students and community members.

The Board of Education held numerous public presentations, several of which were televised, and included two joint meetings with the Town Council to explore the various plans.

How will the Class of 2010, currently in Grade 8, fare during the high school construction and renovation?

There will be no construction during the 2006-2007 school year when these students are freshmen. Since high school enrollment for that year is anticipated to modestly increase by 32-40 students, we have contingency plans in place in the event we need to open up additional classroom sections.

When these students are sophomores in 2007-2008, construction will be done on the exterior only as the new buildings – the gym and science wing – are constructed. There will be no interior construction that year.

When these students are juniors in 2008-2009, they will begin taking classes in the new science rooms, freeing up the former science rooms for renovation.

Between the end of June 2008 and January 2009, there will be interior renovations at LHS. It is anticipated that these renovations will cause minimal disruption to the students and faculty, and *that the students will experience interior renovation work for approximately 5 months of their four year education at LHS.*

As seniors in 2009-2010, this will be the first class to spend their entire senior year in the renovated, expanded high school.

Are you looking further into the future or will you be thinking about construction again in 2010? Was enough space provided to each elementary school during the 1999 Referendum?

We have thought about the future and are building for 2000 students in 2013. This referendum includes about 6,000 square feet that is unassigned class space and could become five or six classrooms.

Our demographic study, which is monitored regularly, shows that enrollment on the elementary level is not increasing as quickly as in the past.

For example, the current kindergarten has fewer than 400 students, and the study expects that the 2006-2007 kindergarten will also contain fewer than 400 students. In recent years, grade level enrollments averaged 430.

By making minor modifications to school assignments, we have been able to free up elementary spaces. The 1999 Referendum provided that every elementary school would have classroom space, plus computer, music and art rooms, and 7 SGI (small group instruction) rooms.

As of today it is anticipated that we may even reduce classroom sections in the elementary schools when we complete the budget for 2006-2007. Some spaces not designated for classrooms – music, and computer and SGI rooms – that have been used for classrooms can be returned to their intended usage.

Why is the football field being moved? Can any parts be re-used?

To provide land for the new gymnasium, the entire field is being relocated 30 yards north/northeast of its current location. When construction is complete, there will again be an outside track. The question of whether it will be cost effective to re-use the turf will be reviewed prior to actual construction.

How does this plan address the parking issue?

The plan includes an increase in parking on the site.

How can the current overcrowding in the halls at LHS be dealt with?

The construction provides a 40% increase in square footage, including square footage in corridors in the new science wing and along the new gym that will dissipate the number of students over more passageways. Some lockers can be moved to the new, wider hallways.

What about trailers?

Use of trailers will be reviewed, but they can only be used as a temporary solution as part of the construction referendum. Right now we do not anticipate a need for trailers to accommodate any lost space.

How many classrooms will we gain?

We are gaining an average of two classrooms per department: 19 classrooms plus four unassigned rooms of approximately 6,000 square feet = 23 new classrooms.

Why do we need to offer AP and elective classes? How will the new addition affect the “average” student?

Smaller class size as well as additional academic and elective opportunities such as TV Studio and Robotics provide opportunities for all students.

LHS has a sterling reputation among colleges and universities. Providing AP and elective classes enhances our reputation as well as local real estate values. LHS has been recognized at the State level, by the Middle States accrediting body, and the Federal Blue Ribbon program because of the quality and diversity of its academic program.

Will the construction have any effect on traffic at LHS?

We will add new parking spaces by expanding the North parking lot, and work with the town for additional parking. A traffic engineer will advise us on traffic flow and staging to minimize disruptions.

How many more teachers and staff will be needed to accommodate the expansion?

By 2008-2009, we estimate needing between 16-20 new teachers. The additional staff will be hired on a gradual basis. Some have already been hired due to increased enrollment.

Why can't we go back to a grade 10-12 high school and move the 9th grade to Heritage?

This would create enormous difficulties with academic and athletic offerings and would still require additional construction.

Will additional classes be provided as a result of this construction? Are such amenities as a weight room, dance studio and increase in gym size necessary?

Yes, to the extent that we have unhoused students and need to provide space to accommodate them. Our functional capacity is 1,413 and we have nearly 1,600 students today. Additional instructional space is greatly needed to continue to grow and challenge students in all disciplines at all levels. These classes are not amenities, they are educational opportunities.

One hundred percent of the floor space in the new gym will be used for physical education instruction. Adding the bleachers which will seat 1,200 provides LHS with a competition gym and allows other uses such as large group instruction, assemblies, pep rallies, graduation and other educational programs.

What will be done to make the building handicapped accessible?

The building is now handicapped accessible. There will be elevators in the new gym and the new science wing. The school will meet all handicapped requirements.

What are the options if the referendum does not pass?

Some of the options, unfortunately, may include larger class sizes, limited offerings, staggered or split schedules, reduced extracurricular and co-curricular sports and activities, and restrictions on faculty meetings, staff development and teacher availability after school.



Livingston Board Of Education
11 Foxcroft Drive
Livingston, NJ 07039
973 535-8000

VOTE IN THE LIVINGSTON HIGH SCHOOL
SPECIAL SCHOOL ELECTION
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2005
POLLS OPEN 1:00 PM – 9:00 PM

RESIDENTIAL
POSTAL PATRON LOCAL

Livingston Board of Education: President, Sheri Goldberg • Vice President, Doree Kesselbrenner •
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*For more information: Visit www.livingston.org - Email lhsreferendum@livingston.org - Call 973 535-8000 ext 8036
View the television program about the referendum on TV34. To borrow a VHS or DVD copy, call 973 535-8000 ext 8036.*