



Building Our ^{2ND} CENTURY II

CAPITAL PROJECT VOTE

2018
SPECIAL EDITION

Residents to decide on 21st-century instructional & infrastructure upgrades

Polls open Oct. 23 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., BH-BL High School Gym

Residents are being asked to go to the polls on Tuesday, Oct. 23 to vote on a proposed \$34 million capital project. The proposal would continue the improvements begun with the voter-approved 2013 capital project by remaining focused on upgrading and modernizing the district's aging facilities to meet today's learning needs.

If approved, the proposal would result in a one-time estimated tax levy increase of 1.62 percent which would be phased in over five years, totaling \$68. Much of the plan, approximately \$24 million, would be funded through state building aid. The estimated local cost would be \$9.17 million.



Middle school students Raegan Carney, Carly Sullivan, and Tristan Torres work together to solve math equations teacher Kodi Kibler displays on the high-definition whiteboard. Kibler controls the large-screen whiteboard, document camera, interactive projector, and computer from the SmartHub she stands behind in one of the school's recently updated classrooms. The Building Our 2nd Century II proposal includes plans to upgrade classrooms districtwide to ensure they meet 21st-century learning needs. (See page 2.)

“This proposal, roughly the same size as the 2013 project, will finish major work that has been identified as necessary to bring our buildings and classrooms up to an appropriate 21st-century level for our students.” — *Superintendent Patrick McGrath*

The proposal would fund 21 projects that the Board of Education has chosen as the district's most urgent needs based upon studies and recommendations from two Capital Project Committees. (See page 7.)

“We have made great progress in the past five years, but we have more work to do to transform our schools into 21st-century facilities,” says Superintendent Patrick McGrath. “This proposal, roughly the same size as the 2013 project, will finish major work that has been identified as necessary to bring our buildings and classrooms up to an appropriate 21st-century level for our students.”

In many ways this proposal is a continuation of the 2013 Building Our 2nd Century referendum, or part two of two, adds McGrath.

Project Highlights

The projects in the *Building Our 2nd Century II* proposal are aimed at modernizing and repairing the district's aging facilities. They are categorized into four areas: →

Continuation of 21st-Century Learning Needs
\$3.32 million (page 2)

O'Rourke Middle School Safety & Security and Classroom Improvements
\$6.22 million (page 3)

High School Auditorium Renovation
\$9.69 million (page 4)

Critical Infrastructure Improvements Districtwide, Including a New Transportation Building
\$14.85 million (page 5)

PROJECT at-a-glance

Capital Project total: **\$34,077,420**

Estimated local cost: **\$9.17 million**

Percentage of annual cost of project that will be paid by NYS building aid: **74%**

FUNDING SOURCES

- ▶ Estimated NYS building aid: **\$24 million**
- ▶ Sale of Jenkins Rd. land: **\$730,000**
- ▶ Pashley PTA track donation: **\$100,000**

Estimated impact on property tax levy: **1.62 percent**

Estimated tax increase for homeowners with a \$200,000 market-value home: **\$68** (before STAR & other exemptions) phased in over 5 years

Capital Project HIGHLIGHTS



Top: The Building Our 2nd Century II proposal includes plans for upgrading outdated classrooms districtwide, like the middle school classroom pictured above, to ensure they meet 21st-century learning needs. This includes new lighting, floors, ceilings and technology infrastructure upgrades to support today's learning devices such as high-definition interactive projectors, document cameras, and large screen white boards. It also includes the creation of flexible work spaces that allow students to collaborate, create, communicate, design, solve problems, and think critically.

Bottom: An outdated high school Family & Consumer Science (FACS) classroom, which is among some of the oldest, most outdated classrooms in the school. These rooms are in the original section of the high school, built in 1955, and have received very few upgrades over the years.



The projects included in the *Building Our 2nd Century II* proposal are a continuation of improvements that began in 2013 and have been identified as the most important to ensure that our school facilities remain safe, in good working condition, and are able to meet 21st-century learning needs. They are categorized into four areas and explained in detail on pages 2 through 5:

Continuation of 21st-Century Learning Needs *Estimated \$3.32 million for districtwide improvements*

Today's students are growing up and learning in a fast-paced, digitized world. Gone are the days of small classrooms with desks neatly lined in rows facing a chalkboard. Students now have information at their fingertips, are able to share and receive news as it is breaking, and can connect with people all around the world. And, they can do all of this through a hand-held device.

The 21st-century has, indeed, changed the way students are taught and how teachers teach. To meet the changing needs of students, today's teachers now must teach students how to access, sort, filter, and use the vast amount of information that could so easily inundate them. In order to do this, today's classroom spaces and technology must allow students to collaborate, communicate, design, create, invent, solve problems, and think critically.

While the 2013 referendum included classroom upgrades in several areas throughout the district, there are still many more classrooms and instructional spaces districtwide that need to be updated to support the instructional needs of 21st-century learners. The proposal includes:

- ▶ Renovating and upgrading outdated classrooms for 21st-century learning throughout the district (new lighting, floors, ceilings; flexible work spaces; electrical upgrades; technology infrastructure improvements; etc.).
- ▶ Reconstructing and modernizing the original Business and Family & Consumer Science classrooms at the high school, which are some of the oldest, most outdated classrooms in the school. (See image, left.)
- ▶ Renovating and upgrading the Pashley Elementary School Library Media Center.
- ▶ Renovating and upgrading Stevens Elementary School Gymnasium and repairing the partition wall.
- ▶ Installing a running/athletic track at Pashley Elementary School to replace the school's current dirt track. (The Pashley PTA is donating \$100,000 for the school's new track. Therefore, no local tax impact is anticipated for this project.)
- ▶ Replacing the cracked and damaged wall coverings and padding in the middle school's back gym.
- ▶ Renovating and upgrading the Charlton Heights Elementary School Gymnasium.
- ▶ Resurfacing the cracked and deteriorated tennis courts at the high school.

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Space in this newsletter is limited, so we hope you will also visit bhbl.org for more capital project information and to view more photos and videos.



Capital Project Highlights continued...

O'Rourke Middle School Safety & Security and Classroom Upgrades

Estimated \$6.22 million in renovations and new space

Safety & Security Improvements

Within the past several years, there have been many changes to BH-BL schools' physical safety and security features, such as the addition of secure vestibules, entryway cameras, swipe card entry systems, door alarms, and electronic door locks.

However, the current physical layout of the middle school entrance doesn't allow for a proper secure entry vestibule like the other four BH-BL schools. This safety and security inadequacy would be addressed by:

- ▶ Constructing a new main entrance

and lobby with a secure vestibule and upgraded locking system.

- ▶ Relocating the existing main office and guidance, social worker, nurse, and psychologist offices to renovated space closer to the new main entrance. (See floor plan below.)

- ▶ Renovating existing space for a conference room for parent meetings.

Classroom Improvements

- ▶ Relocating the makeshift special education rooms (currently in the space that will become the new entrance) to renovated and upgraded classrooms in the sixth-grade hallway.

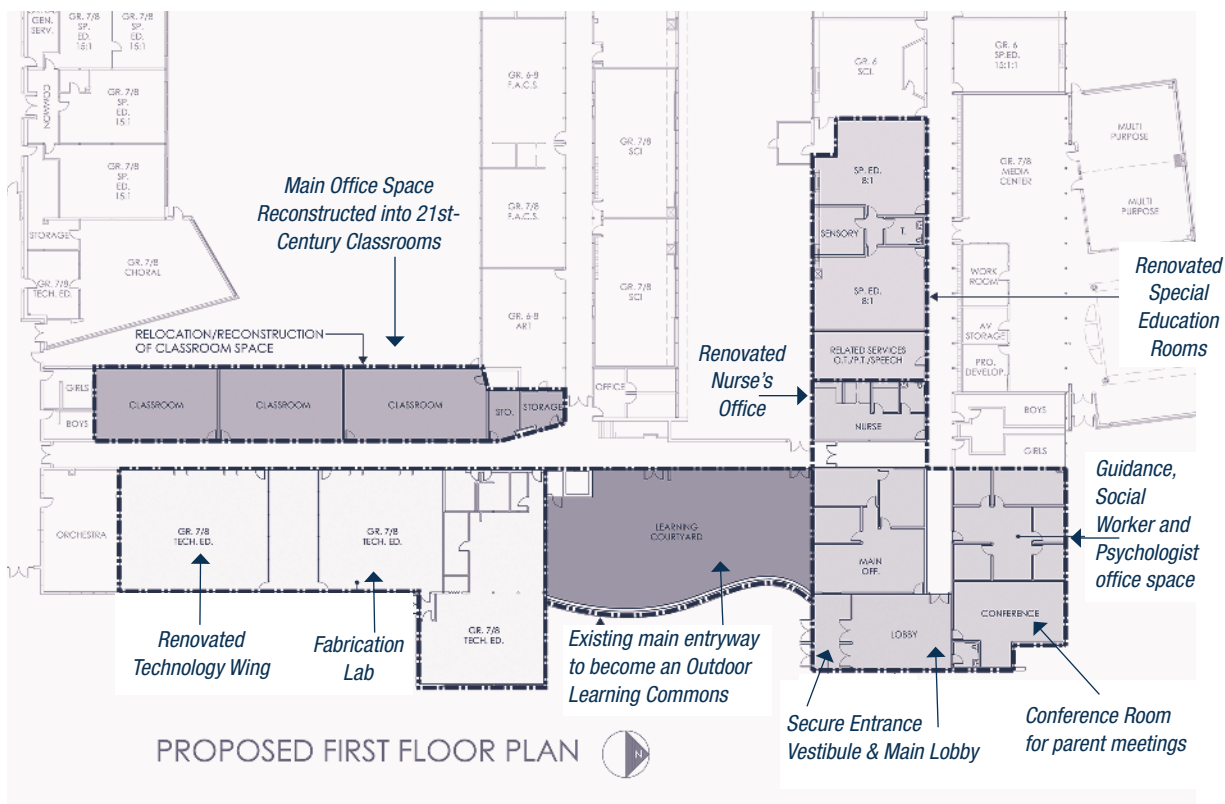
- ▶ Renovating the current main office space into 21st-century classrooms with improved lighting; flexible work space; and upgraded infrastructure/wiring to support modern-day teaching and learning technology.

- ▶ Renovating and updating the existing technology classrooms (i.e., metal and wood shops) that are the original rooms from 1960.

- ▶ Renovating the technology wing to include a modern-day fabrication lab where students transform their designs into products.

 [View photos at bhbl.org](#)

O'Rourke Middle School Proposed First Floor Plan



O'Rourke Middle School first floor plan include constructing a new main entrance with a secure entry vestibule and other safety features; relocating the school's main office and guidance, social worker, nurse, and psychologist offices; relocating the outdated special education rooms (currently in space that will become the main office) to newly renovated areas in the sixth-grade hallway; renovating the current main office space into 21st-century classrooms; and renovating/modernizing the out-of-date technology classrooms (metal and wood shops).

Public Forum, Oct. 10

The district will host a community forum to discuss the Building Our 2nd Century II Capital Project on **Wednesday, Oct. 10 at 7:30 p.m.** in the Spartan Center at BH-BL High School, 88 Lakehill Road.

If you are unable to attend in person, the forum will also be streamed live. A link will be available on the district's website, bhbl.org, just prior to the start of the forum.

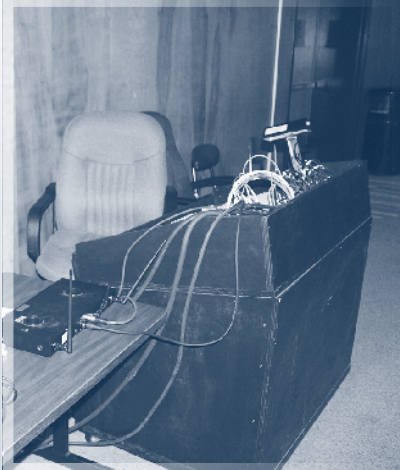
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Capital Project Highlights continued...

High School Auditorium Renovation Takes Center Stage in Proposal

Estimated \$9.96 million for extensive upgrades & expansion within existing space



The makeshift sound “booth” located at the back of the auditorium consists of an old table and a plywood podium that houses the sound panel.

The auditorium has been host to countless school and community events for the past 63 years. It has only received minor upgrades over the years. View full color photos of the auditorium at www.bhbl.org

Built in 1955, the BH-BL High School auditorium has spent more than six decades being host to countless school and community drama productions (and rehearsals), musical performances for *all* five schools, districtwide talent shows, assemblies, opening day celebrations, meetings,

community events and programs, award and induction ceremonies...and the list goes on and on.

The auditorium, in its heyday, was grand. But 63 years of wear and tear (with very few upgrades over the years) has left it in need of considerable upgrades and improvements.

The current space becomes overcrowded (and overheated) during performances and is too small to even accommodate the high school's student body.

“We are pushing maximum seating capacity at nearly all of our events,” explains Fine Arts Director Peter Giroux.

“Over the years, this space has truly become a district- and community-wide auditorium, and it’s simply too small and outdated for how we use it and how *much* we use it.”

The auditorium also has outdated sound and lighting systems, poor acoustics, a flaking ceiling, and a cracked and splintering stage floor.

The HVAC system in the auditorium is inadequate and in constant need of repair. Facilities Director Dan Diggins explains the unit is so outdated that replacement parts are no longer being manufactured. He has to search online auction websites, such as eBay, in hopes of finding spare parts.


Renovation Plans

The auditorium is slated for a complete renovation and expansion, within its existing footprint, to transform it into a state-of-the-art performance space for students and the community. This includes:

- ▶ Constructing a balcony to increase audience seating by nearly 15 percent to approximately 1,000 seats.
- ▶ Installing air conditioning.
- ▶ Installing new seats, carpets, house

lights, and ambient floor/aisle lights.

- ▶ Installing state-of-the-art audio and lighting systems.
- ▶ Constructing lighting and sound booths with cutting-edge technology to allow for live video streaming of concerts and productions.
- ▶ Installing a stage lighting gallery for better access to spotlights and other updated stage lighting features.
- ▶ Widening the stage opening for more usable stage space and greater visibility for the audience.
- ▶ Replacing the old stage curtain.
- ▶ Repairing the stage floor with more durable materials.
- ▶ Lengthening the orchestra pit by straightening the existing wall curve.
- ▶ Installing appropriate acoustical treatments.
- ▶ Heightening the fly space above the stage to allow for efficient scenery changes and set storage, and improving the quality and safety of the fly system (mechanism used to raise and lower stage scenery).

 **View a panoramic rendering of the proposed auditorium & a video at bhbl.org**



A stage view of the architectural rendering of the proposed auditorium. The increased seating, improved sound and lighting systems, and the addition of air conditioning would allow the district to host even more school and community events, and potentially generate revenue by renting the space to other organizations and groups for events such as the Suburban Council Music Festival, dance recitals, and more.

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Capital Project Highlights continued...

Districtwide Critical Infrastructure Needs, Including New Transportation Facility

Estimated \$14.85 million in upgrades, repairs and new space

Just like a home, district buildings get constant wear and tear, both outdoors from the sun and snow and indoors from daily activities. Multiply that wear and tear a hundred times and you'll have an idea of what happens to BH-BL's five schools, which serve anywhere from 400 to 1,200 active students plus staff daily.

BH-BL's buildings have become outdated in other ways too. People use more technology to learn, communicate, and share information so school infrastructure needs to keep pace as well.

The BH-BL tradition is to address these issues in five-year cycles—a process that began in 1983 as a way to identify, fix, and fund its most pressing infrastructure needs. The critical infrastructure improvements being proposed include:

- ▶ Replacing the oldest and most deteriorated areas of the district's 11 acres of roofing.
- ▶ Renovating bathrooms in the worst condition in all five schools.
- ▶ Renovating the high school girls locker room showers.
- ▶ Replacing outdated kitchen equipment districtwide.
- ▶ Replacing insufficient HVAC units in the high school gym and chorus room, and adding air conditioning in the chorus room.
- ▶ Replacing classroom asbestos floor tiles and damaged ceilings districtwide.

- ▶ Improving classroom electrical access, installing more outlets.
- ▶ Replacing old water piping and valves, upgrading hot water units.
- ▶ Replacing the main electrical switch gear at the middle school.
- ▶ Reconfiguring Charlton Heights front parking lot to allow for safer student drop-off and pick-up zones and additional visitor parking.

Transportation Building

A large part of the proposed critical infrastructure needs is the construction of a new transportation building (\$7.65 million). The existing facility was built in 1957 at a time when enrollment was one-third of what it is today and the district owned and serviced only 10 small buses. Today, the district maintains a 70-bus fleet to transport more than 3,100 students to and from school, field trips, athletic events, and more than two dozen other educational locations.

The transportation facility has a number of issues, including an insufficient number of service bays that are too narrow and short for today's buses, deteriorating vehicle maintenance pits and floors, and limited storage.

"Right now we are looking at a building that is in danger of becoming inadequate for the maintenance of our fleet," says Superintendent Patrick McGrath. "A recent study of our transportation service conducted by

an outside agency shows that we offer family-friendly, safe, and efficient busing services to our families. We want to ensure we have the means to continue to do that."

The new facility would be built on the current site and include six modern-day service bays with lifts, a training room for bus drivers, storage space for repair parts, and adequate space for the 107 members of the transportation department. The new building would also meet state and federal transportation regulations, which weren't required in 1957.

"When the Capital Project Committee toured the garage, I was shocked to learn our buses do not properly fit in the service bays and that much of the maintenance work is being done on the pavement outside," says James Ireland, a BH-BL parent and committee member. "This is really an inefficient way to work and impacts how quickly we get buses back on the road. Simply put, our 60-year-old bus garage does not provide the space or resources we need today. By investing in a new transportation facility, we are investing in the continued safety of our buses."

If approved, the maintenance building at Pashley Elementary School would be relocated to the current transportation facility and additional parking would be added at Pashley.



Above 1: A mechanic in the narrow work space in the existing bus garage.

Above 2: When the buses are raised on the service lifts they push into the ceiling tiles. The current bus garage ceilings are too low to accommodate today's buses.

Left: A rendering of the proposed transportation facility.



View more photos & a video of the bus garage at bhbl.org

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Questions & ANSWERS

"I've spent the past 13 years watching my children and their friends perform in the high school auditorium.

Some of my fondest memories were made in the auditorium. But, I also have memories of sitting in the audience with other parents as ceiling flakes scattered down on us. Or, at times, struggling to hear what is being said on stage.

Our auditorium is the central hub of enjoyment for the entire community, which is why it would be beneficial to transform it into a state-of-the-art performance space while state building aid will fund a majority of the cost. After all, there are still so many students and their parents and grandparents and community members who have yet to make memories in our auditorium." —

Amy Aldrich, parent and Capital Project Committee Member

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How will the proposed capital project affect my taxes?

School officials anticipate that approximately 95 percent of the *Building Our 2nd Century II* proposal will be eligible for New York state building aid, with nearly 74 percent of the cost of those aidable expenses (about \$24 million) scheduled to be reimbursed to the district by the state.

To further reduce the financial impact on local residents, the Board of Education will apply funds from the recent sale of Jenkins Road property (approximately \$730,000) toward the local share of the project. (Please note: The planned construction of new homes on this property will further decrease the tax impact on the local share.) Additionally, the Pashley PTA is donating \$100,000 to the district to be used to fund the entire estimated local share of installing a new running track at that school to replace the current dirt track.

It is estimated that after building aid, the local share of the proposal would be about \$9.17 million.

If approved, the capital project is estimated to have a 1.62 percent tax levy impact that would be phased in over five years and begin in the 2019-20 school year. For the owner of a home with a full market value of \$200,000, this would mean a tax increase of about \$68 in total, which would be phased in over five years. The estimated cost would be less for residents who are eligible for STAR or Enhanced STAR savings and/or qualify for other tax exemptions.



In the Pashley Elementary School library, staff place garbage pails on tables and tape plastic bags to the walls to catch water dripping from the ceiling. In other areas throughout the library the ceiling tiles, built-in counters, and walls are stained and damaged from repeated leaks. The carpets are worn and separating at the seams from overuse. The library renovations being proposed would include repairing the leaking roof, replacing carpeting, and installing new windows and air conditioning.

Average BH-BL tax rate increase below average inflation rate

When the Board of Education proposed the 2013 capital project to the community, it estimated it would increase the local levy by approximately 1 percent. School officials now have the benefit of looking back at the five years since voters approved the project to analyze exactly how the project affected local taxes.

The table to the right shows the actual tax levy and tax rate increases over the past five years. (Note: This is the *overall* actual tax rate for all district operations not just the 2013 referendum.)

The data shows that school officials were able to provide a high-quality education in significantly improved facilities with tax rate increases comparable to the rate of inflation. Even considering the impact of two low years of inflation rates in 2014 and 2015, the arithmetical average of inflation over the past five years is 1.72 percent versus BH-BL's average of 1.3 percent.

"This has been accomplished through fiscal discipline, efficiencies, and innovation," says Superintendent McGrath. "It is reasonable to consider this trend can continue over the next five years, enabling

TAX IMPACT HISTORY

Year	Tax Levy Increase	Average Tax Rate Increase
2014-2015	1.94%	1.16%
2015-2016	2.68%	1.95%
2016-2017	1.87%	0.15%
2017-2018	1.96%	1.46%
2018-2019	2.90%	1.80%

The tax levy is the total amount that a school district raises each year in taxes from all property owners. The tax rate is the amount of taxes paid for each \$1,000 of assessed property value.

the district to address the needs in the *Building Our 2nd Century II* proposal while minimizing the impact on the local taxpayer."

Questions & ANSWERS

How were these projects chosen?

The district embarked on its capital project planning process nearly two years ago. A committee comprised of internal staff and school leaders was formed to assess and conduct a year-long study of the district's facilities. Upon completion of the study, a second committee was formed and was comprised of more than 35 people, including community members, staff and students, who volunteered to meet twice a month for six months to review studies, tour district buildings, listen to presentations, ask questions, discuss what they learned and saw, prioritize project needs, and consider tax impact scenarios to help them put together a recommendation for the Board of Education. The committee ultimately chose projects they felt needed the most immediate attention to ensure that our school facilities remain safe, in good working condition, and are able to meet 21st-century learning needs. For a complete list of Capital Project Committee members, please visit the district website at www.bhbl.org.

What happens if the Building Our 2nd Century II proposal is not approved?

If the capital project is not approved by voters on Oct. 23, district officials would carefully review exit poll data to understand community concerns to determine whether or not to revise the plan and hold a second vote. Or, district officials can begin planning how best to incorporate certain projects into the general fund budget. It's important to note, however, that building items completed through the general budget are *not* eligible for state aid. This means the district would miss the opportunity for the state paying for \$24 million of the proposed \$34 million project. Furthermore, waiting to do this work won't make it go away. Instead,



An area of the O'Rourke Middle School roof that is scheduled for replacement in the proposed Building Our 2nd Century II Capital Project shows what can happen after nearly 20 years in our climate. Facilities Director Dan Diggins explains that the EPDM (rubber) roofing material has surpassed its useful life and become brittle. Some of the tiles have been removed in an effort to find and seal leaks in the underlayer. There are also weeds growing in the intersections between most tiles. Similar roofing concerns occur throughout the district.

delays could likely make repairs and upgrades more expensive.

Doesn't state building aid also come from taxpayers?

It is true that most state revenue comes from income and sales taxes paid by New York state residents and businesses. But these are taxes that all New Yorkers will be paying whether or not the capital project proposal is approved. And because BH-BL is seeing minimal increases in foundation aid, the district relies on building aid to fund upgrades and repairs to our aging facilities. The infrastructure and student learning needs are just as real at BH-BL as they are in other parts of the state. And BH-BL residents have just as much right to use state money to meet those needs—as long as the money is used wisely. This is one reason why the Capital Project Committee included so many residents: to ensure that the value and necessity of all proposed renovation projects has been carefully reviewed and prioritized by a number of community members.

Didn't we recently have a capital project vote?

The last capital project vote the district held was in 2013. The BH-BL tradition is to address building concerns in five-year cycles—a process that began in 1983 as a way to identify, fix, and pay for its most pressing infrastructure needs. The goal is to keep facilities in good working order by fixing small problems before they can grow into bigger, more expensive problems.

Are there tax savings?

The estimated tax impact for the proposed capital project is before STAR savings are applied. STAR is a New York state program that provides a discount on your school tax bill. The Basic STAR exemption is available on a homeowner's primary residence for anyone who owns and lives in his/her own home and earns less than \$500,000 a year. The Enhanced STAR exemption is available on the primary residence of taxpayers age 65 and older with yearly incomes below \$86,000.



Do you have other questions?

If after reading this newsletter you have other questions about the capital project, please contact Superintendent Patrick McGrath by email or phone at pmcgrath@bhbl.org or 518-399-9141, ext. 85002. There is also information at www.bhbl.org.



Exit Survey

Following the vote, residents will be asked to complete a voluntary and anonymous exit survey. This will help the board gather community feedback and help guide future capital project decisions. Both online and paper surveys will be available.

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Tara Mitchell, Editor*

Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake

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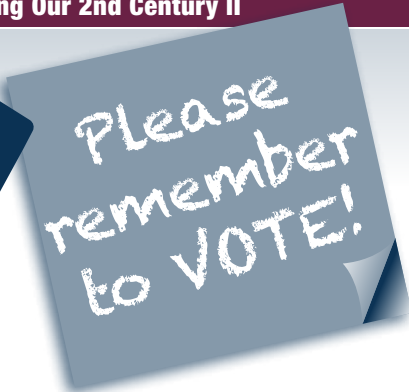
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Public meeting

The district will host a community forum to discuss the **Building Our 2nd Century II Capital Project on Wednesday, Oct. 10 at 7:30 p.m.** in the Spartan Center (former Red Room) at BH-BL High School, 88 Lakehill Road.

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**Tuesday, Oct. 23
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
High School Gym,
88 Lakehill Road,
Burnt Hills**

Residents to decide on 21st-century instructional & infrastructure upgrades, Oct. 23



More often than not, one can find BH-BL mechanic Bob Killeen working on the pavement outside of the bus garage—even in the rain or snow—because there are simply not enough service bays inside the bus garage. The current transportation facility was built in 1957 when the district owned and serviced 10 small buses. Today, that same bus garage services 100 vehicles—70 buses and 30 other district vehicles, such as maintenance trucks, trailers, tractors, etc. The bus garage has not been updated in more than 60 years and has become inadequate for the size of BH-BL's vehicle fleet.

👍 Voter Qualifications

All voters must be United States citizens, age 18 or older on election day, residents of the BH-BL school district for 30 days immediately prior to election day, and registered.

👍 Registering to Vote

You are already registered to vote on October 23 if you are registered with your county Board of Elections to vote in a general election.

👍 Absentee Ballots

Registered voters may vote by absentee ballot if they are unable to appear at the polling place on October 23.

To receive an absentee ballot, first fill out an application from Clerk of the Board Christopher Abdoo at the district office.

The completed application must be returned to Christopher Abdoo at least seven days before the election

if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or at least one day before the election if the ballot is to be picked up personally by the voter at the district office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Absentee ballots will be counted only if they are returned to the clerk of the board no later than 5 p.m. on vote day, October 23. For more information, contact Clerk of the Board Christopher Abdoo at 518-399-9141, ext. 85025.