

**School District Responses to  
LWVS School Bond Study Committee Questions Raised  
at Board of Education Meetings May 22 –November 6, 2017**

*The School District Administration delivered via email  
the following written responses (in blue)*

**May 22**

**1)** We requested information on District investment in each school building from 2000.

*LWVS Committee Note: The Administration responded in the District's [Frequently Asked Questions on the Proposed 2017 Bond & Facilities Master Plan](#) document posted on the [Facilities & Grounds](#) page of the District website:*

**All Capital Work including Bonds (since 2000)**

	<b>EW</b>	<b>FM</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>HC</b>	<b>QR</b>	<b>SMS</b>	<b>SHS</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8.62MM</b>	<b>\$7.05MM</b>	<b>\$4.87MM</b>	<b>\$9.86MM</b>	<b>\$18.19M M</b>	<b>\$38.06MM</b>	<b>\$50.51MM</b>
<b>Percent of Total</b>	<b>6.29%</b>	<b>5.14%</b>	<b>3.55%</b>	<b>7.19%</b>	<b>13.26%</b>	<b>30.09%</b>	<b>37.74%</b>

**2)** How does the proposed new dining “Commons” at the Middle School fit with the existing House structure and the developmental rationale upon which it is based?

*The House structure is a socio-instructional approach that clusters smaller groups of students and teachers together over a longer period of time. The proposed “Commons” was gathering and learning space for larger groups. These do not conflict instructionally or philosophically. Students spend much of their time in their respective Houses, but also come together in other ways on a regular basis.*

**3)** What is the comparative long-term cost/benefit of Greenacres renovation vs. a new school?

*See July 6<sup>th</sup> meeting presentation.*

**4)** Aside from “efficiency” and “equity” as rationales, what is the educational philosophy behind the proposed changes? And how does proposal relate to 21<sup>st</sup> c. learning imperatives?

*A traditional education in a progressive fashion is the hallmark of a Scarsdale education at all levels. Likewise SET 2.0 with a focus on innovation, doing, and globalization impacts all of our students. Instructional approaches that include hands on, multi-disciplinary work; collaboration; and active learning are particularly important for elementary students. For a full list of values and educational philosophy guiding this work, please see the building “Charges” presented in the Aug. 24<sup>th</sup> BOE meetings.*

**5)** What was the input of the building committees, including teachers, in the process to date?

*All the building reports are posted on the webpage. Input has been extensive.*

**6)** Regarding the online survey, will those without children in schools have opportunity for input?

*Surveys are open to the full community when applicable and possible.*

## **June 12**

**1)** What was the process from the start of the “pause” back in Fall 2016 through February 2017? Who was involved? What was reviewed? What decisions were made? When will a report that summarizes these activities be available to the community?

*I think this has all been clearly outlined as recaps in all of our meetings since we hired our new architects BBS. Is there some particular question related to the process? Every report and update is on our District's webpage.*

**2)** Who were the individual building experts who contributed to the BBS team's understanding of the “conflicts to the goals of our educational programs, and the student, teacher, and parent experience” at each school? Were students, teachers and parents consulted as part of this process?

*Yes, students, teachers, administrators, and parents were all interviewed by BBS.*

When will there be reports documenting this process and the results?

*The District does not document our process in reports as you suggest. Instead, it is much more iterative. They are documented in Board agenda items, proposals, discussions (minutes from BOE meetings), presentations, work products (i.e. architectural plans), revisions, and the like. A close and careful look at artifacts on the webpage should provided the timeline, decision-making at any particular time in the process, and progress which I believe you are seeking here.*

**3)** At this preliminary stage, what was the process that led to the determination that Greenacres School should be renovated with additions rather than building a new school?

*The architects made this recommendation to administration and the BOE.*

When, and by whom, was the decision made to direct the architects to propose only one option for Greenacres School?

*The architects were not directed to bring one proposal. They were asked to share their recommendation(s). Based on the condition of the school, renovation is the only that made sense to them.*

Since the charge detailed in the RFP was to consider either renovation or replacement, when will the public be shown the analysis that led to the May 22nd recommendation to renovate and add to the existing building?

*They did not provide an analysis that you describe here. They only identified one recommendation, so they did not do an analysis against something they were recommending. They clarified in their presentation that, in their professional opinion, there was no need for a new school.*

**4)** How many on-line surveys did the District issue? What were the response and non-response rates? How will the survey responses, including comments, be reliably and

validly used? And can all the comments be published so the community can see the full range of comments and concerns raised by members of the community so far?

**5)** Moving forward, what are the District's plans for communication with, outreach to, and engagement of both the Greenacres School community and the Scarsdale District community at large?

*Same as always: written communications, Board Meetings, public comments, surveys for solicitation of feedback, Building and District committees, answering questions from citizens and community groups, being available to anyone with issues or concerns...*

**6)** What educational philosophy and specific pedagogical goals informed the Spatial Analysis of the various school buildings and classrooms? To what extent will the current recommendations achieve optimal teaching and learning environments for all our children? What scholarly research will be used to define the criteria, and what examples of 21<sup>st</sup> century elementary school design will serve as the models, by which the community can assess the value of what will be achieved with the bond proposal?

*I think we addressed the first portion in a question above. In terms of scholarly research, while there is a place for this in our work, Scarsdale is recognized as a national exemplar. This coupled with our unique older facilities and strong sense of autonomy has resulted in process that focuses on what works best for our community. The value will come from the understanding that this has been a collective process, highly informed by the school community, those who know the school and its needs best.*

**7)** We also want to note that we saw the recommendation to move the Middle School Choice Program into the main Middle School building. Will the District set up a separate process to inform and engage the Scarsdale District Community on this change, as well as the other recommendations for the Middle School?

*This has been tabled at this point.*

**8)** Regarding the recommendations for the High School, what consideration was given to the work that had been done by the High School Building Committee that was in place just prior to the 2014 bond? There were other recommendations for infrastructure work to be done that included instrumental music spaces and the auditorium. Will these recent recommendations be folded in to the Facility Wide Assessment?

*These issues were included as part of the Building Condition Survey.*

### **June 20 Public Forum (am)**

**1)** Why was the Middle school and High school work identified on May 22 deferred and who was involved in that decision?

*The scope was narrowed through a consensus process that included District personnel and the BOE. Meghan is the new MS principal and needed/wanted to time to study issues more carefully. Ken is working through transition of people and spaces and was not ready to commit to some of the initial proposals.*

**2)** What rationale and decision making process was used to determine that each elementary school needed a new space with a kitchen?

*Kevin discussed this in the July 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. It arose out of common need that arose at each school regarding lunchtime gathering space, food delivery at each school, and lack of multipurpose space. Moreover, in most elementary schools the lunch program has been served voluntarily through PTAs. This is problematic in terms of liability and sustainability issues.*

## **July 6**

**1)** When will you make public the corrected financial analysis comparing the long-range costs of a Greenacres renovation vs. a new building?

***LWVS Committee Note:** Following the July 6<sup>th</sup> School Board meeting, Mr. Matthey made corrections to his analysis in the [Administrative Rationale and Recommendation for the 2017 Bond Proposal](#) document (pp. 10-13) posted on the [Facilities & Grounds](#) page of the District website.*

**2)** When can we see a side-by-side comparative analysis of the benefits of a Greenacres renovation vs. a new building? It is our understanding that the question of whether a particular investment is worth it to the community is cost-value equation.

*This was not a requested report by the BOE, so it does not exist.*

**3)** While it's clear that the quality of our teachers is the most important factor in our children's education, we are surprised to learn that the "model program" that was a meaningful benchmark in prior Greenacres building committee work involving our faculty is now being disparaged. Can you please clarify?

*I am unclear how it was disparaged? It was clarified that it was a square foot metric, which it primarily was, not a model program with respect to educational philosophy or pedagogy. Some people, especially those not involved in past conversations, were confused by the terminology.*

**4)** In your decision to move forward today, what methods, information and criteria did you use to evaluate the level of community buy-in and support for the current proposal and scope of the bond that we learned about at today's meeting? What challenges do you see in achieving community buy-in for your decision between now and mid-December and what is your process for meeting those challenges to ensure community support?

*The methods are the same as those outlined above in terms of feedback. It is a little early to talk about community wide buy in. We are still in the process of using extensive feedback and data to develop and refine our proposals. Once this work is complete, we will focus on educating the broader community on the full scope of the bond, so people understand the need to support Greenacres, as a standalone project, and major life safety and security issues at our other schools.*

**5)** Who is to be part of the logistical process over the summer? Does it include faculty?

*As explained in the July 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, much of the summer work was with our architects, construction manager, SEQRA consultants, and Municipal Finance Specialists. Staff was involved as needed for questions, concerns, and issues, depending on the topic.*

## **August 11**

### **1) Bond vote schedule.**

- a. What is the justification for holding a bond vote in 2017?  
*It is a balance between delivering on a promise made to the Greenacres and other school communities (who feel they have been waiting for progress), and following a solid process for project development and refinement, and gathering District-wide support for all of the work being proposed.*
- b. What are the consequences, if any, of scheduling a bond vote in 2018?  
*Potential risks include delaying much needed healthy and safety work (including roofs and boilers), increased costs, higher finance rates, debt service implications, and unknown variables regarding the annual budget.*

### **2) School, parent, and community input.**

- a. What is the Board's charge to the newly reformed Greenacres Building Committee?  
*Please see handouts for the August 24<sup>th</sup> BOE Meeting.*
- b. What will be the Board's timeline for public comment on a bond proposal before and after it is finalized?  
*Each regular and special meeting from now until the Board of Education approves the bond proposition, which is currently scheduled for mid-October.*
- c. What will be the Board's timeline for public comment on a draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Greenacres School project?  
*Please see handouts for the August 24<sup>th</sup> BOE Meeting.*

### **3) Greenacres School Renovation/Expansion.**

- a. We've seen two different numbers for the target population for planning purposes: 415 and 385. What is the Board's target population for Greenacres School renovation/expansion?  
*As was shared in the "Factors for Consideration & Recommendation of GA scope of work in Proposed 2017 Bond," our projected enrollment for the '17-'18 school year is 374, which an actual enrollment of 363 at this moment. We project the numbers to actually decrease over time as the aforementioned document details.*
- b. Does the planned number of classrooms consider the possibility of class breaks?  
*Yes, there are variations each year with grade sessions staying flat, increasing, or decreasing. Classroom configurations change every year to accommodate these changes.*
- c. What benchmarking, including site visits to other elementary schools, comparisons with area, national and/or international K-5 facilities, and/or

research of 21<sup>st</sup> century physical learning environments, is informing the Board's goals for a future school?

*All of the above to various degrees.*

- d. What is the list of items identified as Greenacres infrastructure needs that will not be addressed in an upcoming bond and their total projected cost?

*There were a number of discrepancies between KGD's initial Building Conditions survey and those completed by BBS. So, there are a number of items they identified, which are not included. As mentioned early, even though the rating system goes to five, the District has prioritized primarily one's and two's for inclusion in this proposed bond.*

- e. If not included as part of the bond proposal, what additional work, at what projected total cost, will still be needed to fully Air Condition the school? Will the proposed ventilation system be adaptable to Air Conditioning?

*We have not talked about fully air-conditioned schools, but rather the potential to air condition instructional spaces. Please see the presentations from the July 6 BOE Meeting.*

#### **4) Other District building needs.**

- a. What criteria are being used to determine which District facilities infrastructure needs will be addressed in a bond? Building Conditions Survey for each school, building committees, and PTC and District security concerns.

*See 3.D. The rationale for life-safety issues are the same.*

- b. What explains the change in BBS Architect's total cost calculation for Priority 1 and Priority 2 infrastructure work between May 22 and June 22? [Please See "LWVS School Bond Study Committee Comparison of District-wide Facilities Infrastructure Needs & Costs" chart below.]

*They did a further refinement of the scope and had to make some additions (air handlers at Fox Meadow and Edgewood) that had been overlooked by KGD.*

- c. Does the Board intend to allocate the National School Boards Association's recommended target of 2% of total school budget to major maintenance for the next 15 years?

*There has not been a discussion of this to date.*

- d. When, and through what source of funding, will the spatial needs identified for the other elementary schools be addressed?

*This is still under discussion.*

- e. When will spatial needs at the Middle and High School be clarified?

*This is still under discussion.*

- 5) Bond scope.** Given that borrowing rates remain historically favorable and the list of facilities projects is long, what other factors did the Board consider in analyzing debt capacity? Can that analysis be made available to public?

*This analysis of long-term debt capacity has not been done at this time. Our focus has been on completing work from the 2014 bond and preparing for the 2017 bond.*

**LWVS School Bond Study Committee**  
**Comparison of District-wide Facilities Infrastructure Needs and Costs**

	<b>District 2015 Building Conditions Survey Submitted to NYSED In 2016</b>	<b>BBS Architects District-Wide Facilities Analysis (5/22/17) (6/12/17)</b>
<b>Overall Assessment of District facilities</b>	“Buildings district wide are well maintained. Minimal high priority work identified.”	“Buildings are well-maintained”
<b>Priority 1 Definition</b>	“Urgent work required for life safety or to prevent imminent damage to facility.”	<b>1A:</b> “Required to assure health & safety. Mandated by law, regulation, or code, with compliance required by District.” <b>1B:</b> “Recommended to assure health and safety” or “to upgrade/remediate conditions that pre-exist current law, reg. or code.”
<b>Priority 2 Definition</b>	“Health & safety work required by current Building Code or to remedy unsatisfactory conditions”	“Restore progressive deterioration of structural and other major components or systems. Reduces risk of injury and/or damage to facility.”
<b>Total cost estimate for District-wide Priority 1 items</b>	\$26,907	<b>(5/22)</b> 1A: “10.0% total costs” <b>(5/22)</b> 1B: “01.6% total costs” <b>(6/12)</b> \$14,994,472
<b>Total cost estimate for District-wide Priority 2 items</b>	\$5,057,577	\$8,243,181
<b>Sum of District- wide Priority 1 &amp; 2 Costs</b>	\$5,084,484 = “High Priority Work”	<b>(5/22)</b> 11.6% of total costs* <b>(6/12)</b> \$23,237,653
<b>Total Cost for all District-wide Priority Work</b>	\$70,329,385	\$91,612,916

\* 11.6% of \$91,612,916 = \$10,627,098

**September 11**

*See separate document of LWVS Committee Questions and Administration responses.*

**November 6**

**1)** Are the collective recommendations of the 2016 Building Committees, 2017 Greenacres Building Committee and 2017 District-wide Facilities Committee representative of the views of the community?

*We believe so, yes. The GA building Committee has staff, parents, and community members that were self- and building- selected, chosen by PTA leadership, and chosen by GNA leadership, respectively. The District-wide Committee has staff, parents, and community members. These positions by self- and District- selected, and by open application from the community at large.*

· If so, will the School Board be incorporating these committee recommendations into their decisions on the bond?

*All committee recommendations will be considered. The Board will select those that they support as Board Members and stewards of community resources.*

· If not, how is the School Board determining what are the shared views of the community on the various aspects of the bond proposal?

**2)** Regarding elementary school lunch service and space:

a) How has the School Board determined whether a cafeteria and kitchen with the potential for a hot lunch program is a shared value and top priority of the Greenacres school community?

*The recommendation came from our architects after touring the facilities and speaking with both building and District staff. It is also in line with the PTC/PTA who view the current volunteer program as unsustainable.*

b) How are other elementary school communities' values and priorities regarding lunch service, and other spatial needs, being factored into bond decisions?

*The specific discussions around lunch service and related spatial needs were raised at the end of last school year, with the acknowledgement by both the District and PTC about the need for the District to take over this service. This year's conversations are about how this transition will take place, starting as early as next year. Except for Greenacres, plans are being developed based on the premise of creating a lunch program based on each building's current configurations. In other words, for the majority of our elementary schools, lunch programs will be considered without kitchen and large serving areas.*

**3)** Concerning the Greenacres Learning Commons:

a) In what ways will David Loertscher's definition of a library "Learning Commons" be adapted to function in the proposed location and design of the Greenacres cafeteria space?

*The Learning Commons concept can be adapted to fit the proposed location and design of the Greenacres cafeteria space by providing additional space for both Project Learning and Discovery Learning, two key elements of the Elementary Learning Commons concept. Now that students and teachers are using wireless mobile technologies, virtual*

*access to the both the internet and the specific resources of the school library, including an impressive array of research databases, is available.*

*In the latest architectural drawing for the Greenacres Library, Computer Lab, and Maker Space provide three distinct spaces for such work, which will serve one class in each of these designated spaces. The opportunity for a Cafeteria/Learning Commons space provides more expansive space for a variety of uses such as, multiple classes on the same grade level to work together, buddy classes (two different grades) to meet together, and a large presentation space for authentic assessments.*

*Importantly, the Cafeteria/Learning Commons also relieves pressure on other larger spaces within the building that currently exist. In essence, this will enable teachers to utilize these spaces in ways that reflect learning commons principles because they will be more available for instructional activities due to the relief of pressure on these spaces.*

b) What specific examples of instructional uses and activities do you foresee taking place in the proposed Learning Commons when it is not being utilized for lunch? And can you provide a sample daily schedule of those planned activities?

*See above. Teachers would sign up to bring classes to the Learning Commons when not used for the lunch cycle. An approximation of the availability of this space for “Learning Commons” activities might look like the schedule below. Time slots are flexible and could be combined or reduced, depending on need.*

<i>8:50-9:40</i>	<i>Activity #1</i>
<i>9:40-10:30</i>	<i>Activity #2</i>
<i>10:30-11:20</i>	<i>Activity #3</i>
<i>11:20-1:15</i>	<i>Closed for Lunch</i>
<i>1:15-2:05</i>	<i>Activity #4</i>
<i>2:05-3:00</i>	<i>Activity #5</i>

4) How much of the existing Greenacres library space will be renovated, and what 21<sup>st</sup> century learning goals will those renovations address?

*The renovation provides the adjacencies needed for library, computer lab, and maker space to provide a learning environment rich in opportunities for Discovery Learning, Project Learning, and Traditional Learning, The new design coupled with wireless internet access and mobile devices supports collaborative, participatory learning.*

5) Regarding proposed Greenacres classrooms:

a) How do proposed new classrooms and the makeover of existing classrooms provide the right amount of classroom space to achieve the District’s educational goals?

*It is not a question of square footage. It is about what happens in the space. The educational vision is for flexible space, moveable furniture, and enough storage on wall shelves and cabinets to maximize floor space to accommodate active learning experiences for students.*

b) How will the bond resolution prioritize spending for new 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom furniture at Greenacres? And what are the plans for providing new flexible and moveable furniture in other schools?

*In recent years teachers and administrators have begun to study the advantages of providing different types of furniture in classroom. Moveable and flexible furniture is part of that study along with the implementation of different type of storage and smartboard type technologies. Many of the school buildings have already piloted these classrooms but we are truly in the early stages of this process. While many of the classrooms are being renovated as part of the changing of floorplans (enlarging spaces etc.) at Greenacres, the remaining classrooms would also be brought to a 21st century standard. This Scarsdale standard will be established from the work of a District-wide committee of teachers and administrators. The results of their work will be used to assist in the transformation of District-wide classrooms over time as future budgets or funding sources allow.*

6) How will the proposed Greenacres renovation and expansion affect students' physical access to the outdoor learning environment? And are there plans to develop outdoor learning spaces?

*Physical access to the outdoor learning environment will be enhanced with the new expansion. A new building entrance/exit on Huntington in addition to the current entrance will give easy access to the Greenacres Playground and green spaces from the new Learning Commons/Cafeteria space and Grades 4 & 5. In addition, funds have been allocated to develop outdoor learning spaces in what is now a mostly under-utilized Greenacres Courtyard.*

7) What is the basis for the School Board's decision on whether or not to engage in a formal, independent study of Greenacres related traffic issues, including the proposal for parking along Huntington and its impact on student safety?

*The Board has not asked for an independent study of Greenacres related to traffic issues at this point. It could be raised as part of the SEQRA process; however, it needs to be remembered that most of our schools struggle with traffic issues. This is not unique to Greenacres. Moreover, construction is a temporary issue, and traffic will need to be managed during this time, day to day depending on school and construction needs. In the long term, we have experienced declining enrollment, and, according to our demographer, this trend will continue. With less children and families, there should be a natural easing of congestion.*

8) What are the School Board's fiscal assumptions when deciding such key questions as (a) what to include in the bond, as opposed to the operating budget, and (b) what is the appropriate amount for the District borrow for facilities work at this time?

*The District's vetted study of its facilities, based on the work of architects, engineers, consultants, committees and staff identified close to \$100 million in improvements (including Greenacres). Items identified for the Bond were largely based on the*

*complexity of the work identified, lifespan of identified items, efficiencies gained by undertaking similar work and cost. The work identified in the draft scope of the project maintains tax neutrality ( a guiding factor as set forth by the Board). Future currently identified work will be folded into future operational budgets as funding allows.*

**9)** What is the definition of “Priority 1” facilities items, and how does it differ from the definitions of “Priority 1A and 1B” items?

*The Priority 1 items under architectural are all Priority 1A items. As we did not have any 1B items under architectural, we showed all of the items as Priority 1, and did not use the 1A or 1B designation. Therefore, all Priority 1 items are considered Priority 1A.*

**10)** Which items in the Greenacres Building Committee recommendations represent additional costs since the September iteration of the bond proposal, and which items and costs were already in the proposal prior to those committee recommendations?

*All Greenacres Building Committee recommendations are above and beyond what was the original base scope of the Greenacres project. Additional monitoring activities and modulars are beyond the scope of past Scarsdale projects.*