

February 9, 2022

Dear Friends, Colleagues and Community Members:

We are eager to engage with you concerning possible facility improvements at all five Winnetka Public Schools.

In 2019, voters in The Winnetka Public Schools District 36 turned down a \$90.6 million referendum. Many taxpayers thought the funding proposal and the tax impact were both too large. District residents were also concerned about the proposed closure of The Skokie School.

To craft a new funding proposal, District 36 revamped its approach. The District hired a new architecture firm that is more familiar with the District's school facilities, assembled a 23-member citizen task force to vet multiple funding proposals, and kept fiscal stewardship at the forefront of all discussions.

After many months of planning, District 36 is considering returning to the ballot this fall with a new, downsized proposal. The District is confident that the new proposal more effectively balances the needs of Winnetka's students and schools with what our taxpayers want and would pay for. Many important improvements have been made to the original request, including:

- Reducing the size of the proposal by \$31.2 million (or about 35%) to \$59.4 million
- Decreasing the estimated annual tax impact from \$1,352 to \$832,* a reduction of \$520 (for a \$1 million home)
- Keeping The Skokie School open to continue to serve 5th and 6th graders, investing \$12.3 million in critical facility repairs and upgrades
- Eliminating \$36 million from Carleton Washburne's facility plan, mostly related to The Skokie School remaining open
- Focusing bond proceeds primarily on maintenance, repairs and critical upgrades

District 36 believes this is the right time to return to the ballot, for a variety of reasons. Borrowing costs are near historic lows. The District has no outstanding debt, and taxes associated with the 2007 Referendum have ended. And given construction inflation, the longer the District waits to address its most pressing facility needs, the more it will cost. However, no action will be taken until we hear from you, our taxpayers.

While the proposal has been downsized, there are still many anticipated benefits:

- Making District 36's schools healthier, safer and more secure, including upgrading HVAC systems to improve air quality, air flow and temperature control
- Improving Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility for students, staff and visitors
- Improving energy efficiency
- Extending the useful life of existing facilities and reducing costly emergency repairs
- Better meeting the needs of working parents and their children by creating multipurpose spaces to efficiently host lunch and address before- and after-school childcare
- Adding a new gym at Crow Island and a multipurpose room/cafeteria at Hubbard Woods that can be used to address the District's unmet facility needs as well as provide availability for community events and meetings

The decision to place a referendum on the November 2022 ballot will be made this summer, providing time for additional community input. In the coming weeks and months, District 36 will be hosting informational open houses, small group presentations and webinars. A community opinion survey will also be mailed to each household within the District. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

* Assumes multiple bond issuances totaling \$59.4 million, with rates 50 to 100 basis points higher than current rates.

Enclosed are additional details regarding the new funding proposal. Supporting information—including dates, times and locations of community outreach meetings—is also available on the District’s website at winnetka36.org/2022proposal. You may also link to this information via the following QR code.



2022 Proposal / Overview
www.winnetka36.org

We look forward to hearing your thoughts and recommendations. Thank you in advance.

Respectfully,


Dawn Livingston
School Board President


Dr. Trisha Kocanda
Superintendent of Schools

P.S. District 36 remains committed to educational excellence and fiscal responsibility. The new proposal being considered is \$31.2 million less than the 2019 ask. Voter-approved funding would be focused primarily on maintenance, repairs and critical upgrades. We are excited about the current plan and would welcome the opportunity to further discuss it with you.

If you’d like to discuss the proposal in person, please contact us at your convenience.

You may also arrange for a District 36 representative to make a presentation to a civic, business or other organization that is interested in learning more about the new funding proposal. Please contact Dr. Trisha Kocanda at (847) 446-9400 or trishakocanda@winnetka36.org.