



# REFERENDUM 220

Our Kids. Our Community. Our Future.

## **Q: How was this plan developed?**

**A:** To achieve the improvements needed in our schools, our community collaborated on a plan for the future of our district. Hundreds of community members collaborated on this two-year community-driven process, ultimately leading to the development of a master plan for our schools called Blueprint 220. Based on this \$600 million plan, we placed a \$185 million referendum question on the 2019 ballot, which the community narrowly voted down while making it clear they wished to see changes. We listened to the community's feedback, lowering the referendum's cost by nearly \$40 million. This new \$147 million referendum will appear on the March 17, 2020 ballot.

## **If successful, this referendum would:**

- **Improve Safety & Security at Our Schools**
- **Better Prepare Our Students for their Bright Futures**
- **Protect the Community's Investment in Our Buildings**

We will be able to significantly improve safety and security at our schools by eliminating mobile classrooms, enhancing exterior building security, upgrading safety in interior classrooms and hallways, and improving traffic flow. We will better prepare our students for their futures by creating dedicated STEM labs, modernizing our students' learning environments, providing additional physical education and wellness spaces, and updating educational and community spaces for arts and athletics. We will protect the community's investment in our buildings by repairing and renovating our aging building conditions at all schools, including heating, air conditioning, electrical, plumbing, roofs, and windows.

## **Q: How will the referendum lead to lower taxes?**

**A:** With our previous bond debt being paid off, we have a unique opportunity to fund these investments while lowering property taxes. Currently the average homeowner in the district pays approximately \$602 per year for referendum debt from the previous capital campaign in the late 1990s. As that debt rolls off in 2020 and 2021, property taxes will go down. The cost of the current referendum is approximately \$527 per year, which means that if the public approves this referendum their property taxes will decrease an average of \$75 per year while still providing additional funding to improve our schools.

**Q: Why is the referendum necessary?**

A: Our buildings are showing their age. Many choose to live in our communities because of our excellent school district, with our schools being a key contributor to the value of their homes. With this comes an expectation that our schools continue achieving and our facilities be maintained at a high level. But it has been 20 years since any of our buildings have seen significant renovations, and many are aging, including Barrington High School which reached 70 years old in 2019.

The time to invest in our schools is now. Our buildings continue to age and costs continue to rise. In fact, all our construction costs went up over 5% just since last year's referendum. If we defer these projects any longer, we will be able to do even less with the same amount of funding, which does not meet our community's directive of fiscal responsibility. To continue providing a 21st century education for our students while improving our property values and maintaining our thriving communities, we must continue to strive for excellence.

**Q: How old are our school buildings?**

**A:**

- **BHS:** Built in 1949
- **Grove Avenue Elementary:** Built in 1953
- **Sunny Hill Elementary:** Built in 1954
- **BMS-Station:** Built in 1966
- **Hough Street School:** Built in 1967
- **Arnett C. Lines Elementary:** Built in 1969
- **BMS-Prairie:** Built in 1992
- **Barbara B. Rose Elementary:** Built in 1998
- **North Barrington Elementary:** Built in 1998
- **Countryside Elementary:** Built in 2002
- **Roslyn Road Elementary:** Built in 2002
- **Barrington Early Learning Center:** Built in 2010

**Q: Why aren't reserves being used to fund these projects?**

A: Barrington 220 is one of the most fiscally responsible school districts in Illinois. One tenet of our fiscal responsibility is maintaining an appropriate fund balance. Our current fund balance is approximately 30% of our annual expenditures, which is within our Board Policy that targets between 25%-40% of our budgeted expenditures. Unlike many districts that levy additional taxes to their residents to build up a reserve fund balance to pay for infrastructure needs so they never have to go to referendum, our Board maintains a conservative fund

balance, therefore, large facility investments must be approved by the community via referendum.

Our residents entrust us with significant resources, and they expect us to use those resources as conservatively as possible. That is why our Board and administration are extremely diligent about keeping our administrative spending low so we can direct as much money as possible into our classrooms. In fact, our administrative costs are less than half the state average. We've streamlined operations, and significantly increased our energy efficiency. This allows our district to have the 2nd lowest tax rate of all peer school districts. We are one of only 93 school districts nationwide to achieve a AAA bond rating from S&P, a designation we've maintained the past 11 years, and we are in our 22nd consecutive year with a balanced budget. We maintain an appropriate operating fund balance and never deficit spend. Our fiscal responsibility has earned Barrington 220 the highest financial rating from the State of Illinois.

**Q: Will bonds approved by the referendum be used to cover salaries and benefits?**

**A:** Bonds will only be used to fund needed infrastructure projects. By law, these funds must only be used for that purpose because referendum language is legally binding. We will continue to fund salaries and benefits out of our standard operating budget. Any funds approved by the community for their schools will be 100% invested in improving our school infrastructure.

**Q: When was the last time Barrington 220 passed a referendum to upgrade facilities?**

**A:** The last time any of our schools saw significant building renovations was about 20 years ago. In the late 90s the community approved a series of referendums to reinvest in every school in the district and build new buildings at Barbara B. Rose, Roslyn Road, Countryside and North Barrington Elementary schools. To do this, voters approved more than \$115 million worth of bonds which are set to be paid off in 2020 and 2021.

The last successful referendum for Barrington 220 was passed in April 2007. The \$4.4 million was used to rebuild the stadium at Barrington High School. Today the stadium is a popular gathering place in the community, used year-round for P.E. classes, middle and high school athletics, community fitness, and by community youth organizations.

**Q: If the referendum is approved, when will construction begin?**

**A:** After a successful referendum on March 17, 2020, the district would immediately begin working with its architects and engineers to develop detailed project plans and drawings. Construction would likely begin in the late spring of 2021 and would happen in phases over

several years. Every effort would be made to complete construction during the summer in a way that minimizes the impact while students are in attendance.