

\$66.5M in school improvement projects approved by Wall voters

WALL

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District officials said that \$20 million of state aid will be contributed to the improvements.

The elections board notes that the results remain unofficial until mail-in ballots to be received by the Board of Elections up to six days after close of the polls are counted, provided they were post-marked on Election Day.

IMPROVEMENTS

The referendum will provide widespread renovation to a lot of aging systems in Wall schools, including the HVAC systems and roofing of buildings.

Many of the replacements will be getting schools up to code, such as the implementation of handrails for people with disabilities and more modern fire alarm systems.

Improvements also consider the aesthetic and practical

benefits to renovating Wall Schools, many of which were built decades ago.

Updated classrooms can better facilitate the newer technology and modern learning techniques that have emerged since they were first built.

Presentations at the Wall Board of Education [BOE] meeting in November showed pictures of outdated classrooms and bathrooms in various states of disrepair, encouraging voters to approve the referendum.

It was also mentioned that the layout of schools have shifted over time, with additions and changes in classroom use slowly rendering rooms out of touch with their purpose.

The approved referendum will modernize bathrooms and locker rooms, as well as improve student learning space with updated features.

The importance of system wide repairs to the inner

workings were also discussed at the BOE meeting.

Expiring warranties and out-of-date systems risk frequent repair costs, which can be avoided by making the investment in updated features.

COSTS

With both questions passing, the state will provide \$20 million towards the improvements, lowering the cost to Wall residents.

Without such state aid, "100% of the costs of these must-do items would come from the ... regular budget," the district asserted in a statement issued before Tuesday's vote.

The Board of Education promoted the referendum as a way to take advantage of the "economy of scale," as doing the replacements at once saves additional money on labor and material costs.

Doing the repairs slowly over time also risks systems failing before they are replaced, meaning sudden costs could arise unexpectedly.

The investment of the intended HVAC repairs can also save the district money due to increased efficiency, lowering energy costs.

It was estimated that if question 1 and 2 passed, the tax rate would increase by about \$5 dollars a month for the average Wall household.



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