



# HUDSON CAPITAL PROJECT

## VOTE

**TUESDAY  
FEBRUARY 9  
12 – 9 P.M.**

### Polling Locations:

JLE School  
360 State St., Hudson

Greenport Pumper Co. #1  
216 Green St., Hudson

Claverack Fire House,  
67 State Rt. 23, Claverack

Stottville Firehouse, 6644  
Firehouse Rd., Hudson  
(behind Stockport Town Hall)

Livingston Town Hall, 119  
County Rt. 19, Livingston

**LEARNING**

**GROWING**

**ACHIEVING**

## CAPITAL PROJECT AIMS TO PLAN FOR FUTURE OF HCSD

On Tuesday, February 9, the Hudson City School District community will vote on the sale of the Claverack School, as well as a proposed Capital Project that seeks to improve academic programs, athletic fields, facilities and building efficiencies at all of the district’s school buildings.

The Capital Project aims to improve instruction and learning by reorganizing grades to make better use of space and shared resources. Looking ahead to the future of HCSD, the project plans to redistribute grade levels and gradually reduce to a two-campus district over the next several years.

Additionally, the proposed project would provide safer and more useful athletic facilities for school and community use. A standard 400-meter, all-weather track and multi-purpose turf athletic field facility would be constructed on the High School campus. A new baseball field would also be built at the High School.

The project also includes building upgrades and maintenance, plus the replacement of aging infrastructure items that are nearing the end of their useful life (as recommended by the mandatory 5-year Building Condition Survey performed in Summer 2015).

The cost of the project subject to voter approval is \$19.9 million. Due to maturing bonds and the district’s long-term vision, a larger project was proposed since it is more cost effective to

undertake a single large project rather than a series of smaller projects over time.

The timing of the project is designed to take advantage of retiring existing debt service, which means the district can borrow money at a low rate. Of the total cost, HCSD is able to put \$1.5 million cash down due to past budgetary savings. Approximately 71.4% of the project would be paid for with state building aid (which is funding provided to schools by New York State specifically for facility needs).

With 71.4% state aid reimbursement and retiring debt, **and an anticipated \$112,000 in annual savings from downsizing to two buildings**, the Capital Project is expected to have minimal impact on local taxes. The local property taxes are estimated to increase by approximately 6-16 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, equaling 6-16 dollars per year for a home valued at \$100,000 (dependent on STAR exemption).

“This is a future-focused Capital Project that fits into our Vision 2020 initiative,” explained Dr. Suttmeier, Superintendent of Schools. “Our short-term needs are to maintain the infrastructure and keep the schools functioning, but we must also consider our long-term goals so we can be better prepared for the future. The district and the Board of Education do not want to be shortsighted and address only the basic essentials.”

## Average Cost to Taxpayer: \$19,995,000 Capital Project

*Based on marginal increase for 2018-19 through 2028-29*

FULL HOME VALUE	SENIOR/STAR		WITH STAR		NO STAR	
	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly
\$100,000	\$6	\$0.47	\$11	\$0.94	\$16	\$1.35
\$150,000	14	1.14	19	1.62	24	2.02
\$200,000	22	1.82	27	2.29	32	2.70
\$250,000	30	2.49	36	2.97	40	3.37
\$300,000	38	3.16	44	3.64	49	4.04
\$350,000	46	3.84	52	4.31	57	4.72
\$400,000	54	4.51	60	4.99	65	5.39

### “Right-Sizing” the District

Over the last 10 years, the school-aged population within the district has decreased nearly 20% and it is projected to continue a downward trend over the next few years. Decreasing enrollment is a trend that has been seen by several districts, local and statewide.

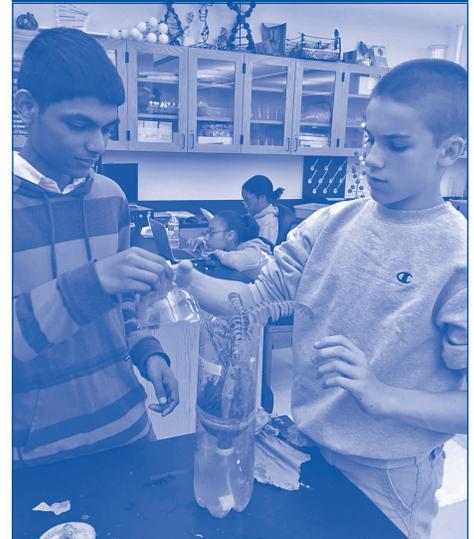
Similar to other school districts, HCSD is looking to downsize and consolidate into fewer school buildings in response to declining enrollment and as cost saving measures. By “right-sizing” our district, the district can save money in the long run so taxpayers don’t need to pay for any more space than they have to.

Based on the operational cost per square foot of space (approximately \$1.50/sq. ft.), the district would ultimately save about \$112,000 per year over time by reducing to two campuses. These savings could be used to support more learning opportunities for students.

Not only would consolidating to two campuses bring operational efficiency, it also has the potential to have a positive impact on student achievement.

### Benefits of Consolidating

- Operational cost savings
- Stronger instruction & more cross-grade collaboration
- Better preparation for future grades & secondary-level expectations
- Academic benefits of broader grade-spans & fewer school-to-school transitions



### Infrastructure and Energy Efficiency

- The project would replace aging infrastructure, such as gym lockers, bleachers, and outdated chiller units, which would modernize the schools.
- There would also be upgrades to become a more energy efficient district. The project would install energy efficient light fixtures in all school buildings and replace 12 rooftop energy recovery units. The energy management system for all buildings would also be upgraded.
- The windows in the original MCSIS building are over 20 years old and would be replaced with more energy efficient windows. New energy efficient windows and light fixtures would reduce energy costs and bring additional savings to the district over time.

## Educational Benefits of Grade Reorganization

Education research has shown that school-to-school transitions can be disruptive to the learning process and that stability in learning environments can lead to more positive educational outcomes.

One academic goal of the proposed Capital Project is to reduce the number of school transitions from three to two, which would also broaden the grade-spans. Broader grade-spans and fewer school-to-school transitions were shown to positively influence graduation rates and decrease drop-out rates.

Pending approval, Grade 6 would be relocated to existing space in the Junior High School starting September 2016. The only items that would need to be added are lockers. This would create a unified JHS that lines up with the Common Core grade band of 6-8, allowing the JHS to achieve grade-level alignment with the Common Core State Standards. There would be greater availability of shared resources to help strengthen instruction and learning, and teachers would have more opportunities to collaborate across this grade band.

An additional benefit of moving Grade 6 to the JHS is an added year of learning how to adjust to secondary-level expectations. “Coming to the Junior High from the Intermediate School requires students to be more responsible in getting to classes on time and staying organized. Many students really struggle and don’t know how to handle it,” expressed Junior High Principal Derek Reardon.

“Having the sixth grade transition to the Junior High will allow the staff to become more aligned and departmentalized and more slowly guide and prepare our students for what is required in seventh

and eighth grade as well as high school,” continued Mr. Reardon. “At the same time the Junior High will be able to build better relationships with both our students and their families with having them here for an extra year.”

The project includes classroom renovations to the Intermediate School in order to accommodate the needs of Grade 2, which would move from John L. Edwards Primary School to the Intermediate School (anticipated September 2017).

Moving Grade 2 from JLE to MCSIS would have similar academic advantages, in addition to easing traffic and parking congestion at the primary school. Teachers would be able to collaborate and share resources with the goal of better preparing students for Grade 3 and beyond.

“The new alignment will truly allow us to promote better use of curricular resources,” said Mark Brenneman, Principal of the Intermediate School. “Teachers and students would be able to work collaboratively with peers in the same academic bands.”

The project also calls for an 18,000 square foot addition to the Intermediate School to serve as the new “primary wing” for Grades Pre-K-1. It would be built to properly accommodate the physical and educational needs of our youngest learners. This change is not anticipated to occur before 2019 or 2020; therefore children currently enrolled in JLE will not be affected.

Additionally, two new “playscapes” are anticipated to be installed at MCSIS so that play equipment will be separate and age appropriate.

## Safer and More Useful Athletic Facilities

Our fields are generally worn out by mid-season, and the upgrades proposed include more efficient, durable playing surfaces to increase their access and availability to our school's athletic and physical education programs as well as the community. Varsity athletes and physical education classes would be able to play on the High School campus where the equipment is stored, reducing the need to transfer students and equipment between the schools.

This project would construct a standard, 400-meter track at the High School campus for school and community use. With a safe, durable track, students will have a place to practice and will be able to host home meets and not have to be transported to other districts for these purposes. The new track would be surfaced with a modern, resilient material that meets NYS Public High School Athletic Association standards and provides a safer running surface.

"Our students deserve to compete on the same quality playing fields as everybody else in the surrounding area, and our community deserves a safe exercise surface," said Antonio

Abitabile, High School Principal. "We are one of only a couple schools in New York State to have a cinder track and, because of it, we have not been able to host a home track meet in several years."

The track facility would include a multi-purpose turf field, bleachers, concession stand, press box, and lighting for night games and events. A new baseball field and bleachers would also be constructed on the High School campus.

This is not the first time HCSD has proposed modernizing its athletic facilities. "This project was originally started nearly 50 years ago when the high school was built," noted Mr. Abitabile. "It is time to complete it and bring our athletic facilities into the 21st century. As much as I enjoyed playing on John Barrett Field, the time has come to move all high school sports to our campus."

The wider track and fields would be able to host all fall and spring school outdoor sports, as well as physical education classes. It would also allow more field space for athletic teams to host home events and league and sectional championships. It may also

## Did You Know?

- Hudson is one of only two school districts in Columbia County that does not have a track that meets NY State Public High School Athletic Association standards.
- Last year, more than 50% of the student body (grades 7-12) participated in interscholastic sports.
- In the last 5 years, HHS has had 12 track athletes win 5 state championship titles.
- Many regional and state champion athletes at HHS cannot practice at their own school because of track and field conditions. Instead, they must practice on grass fields and be transported to other districts for "home" meets.

lead to the strengthening of our athletic program and more opportunities for students to receive athletic scholarships. This part of the project is anticipated to be completed for the 2017-18 school year.

## Questions and Answers

### What if enrollment starts to increase again? Would the district be equipped to handle that with just two buildings?

Yes. According to trend data, an increase in enrollment would not be a surge; rather it would likely occur as a steady increase over time. The current technology wing at MCSIS, which would be renovated to accommodate Grade 2, is built on a concrete slab. This means it can support a second story if necessary. The new primary wing would be constructed on a similar slab to maintain the possibility of adding a second story in the future if need be.

### How will grade reorganization affect transportation?

Because this project is in the developmental stages, the effects that grade reorganization will have on transportation are still being analyzed. The district is in the process of analyzing its current transportation routes to make sure our students are sufficiently serviced and there is minimal disruption to the transportation routine.

Additionally, the relocation of Grades PK-2 to MCSIS should not cause concern in terms of transportation since buses already have a wide student age range riding together (because bus routes operate based on location rather than individual school).

### What happens if the capital project does not pass?

As a school district, having some debt is actually a good thing. If the project is not approved, a declining debt service could result in a negative tax levy impact in the future. Like most public school districts, HCSD relies on state aid as well as a local share of taxes in

order to function. With a negative tax levy and the absence of debt service, the district could face cutting programs and staff due to its inability to ask for any local share to supplement what state aid it does receive to support our school district.

Additionally, there would still be critical issues that need to be addressed such as bus loop safety, worn out bleachers, energy efficiency, and insufficient athletic facilities.

### Is the district selling John L. Edwards Primary School? If so, what would happen to JLE if it is sold?

The sale of JLE is not included in the proposed capital project. Although the district is not currently selling the primary school, the future sale of JLE is a possibility as HCSD considers its long-term vision. If the district decides to sell the building and it is approved by the community, the future plans for the JLE building would be up to the buyers. Whatever revenue is received must and will be applied to existing debt service.

### How can I learn more about the Capital Project?

Visit our website ([www.hudsoncityschooldistrict.com](http://www.hudsoncityschooldistrict.com)) and click the Capital Project link for more frequently asked questions and images of the proposed floor plans and athletic facility.

There are Capital Project Conversations scheduled for the three Wednesdays prior to the vote (see the back of this newsletter for dates and locations).



**Hudson City School District**  
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[www.hudsoncityschooldistrict.com](http://www.hudsoncityschooldistrict.com)

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### INVITATION TO COMMUNITY FORUM

## Capital Project Community Conversations

If community members have additional questions about the Capital Project, they are encouraged to attend one of the following Capital Project Conversations in the JLE cafeteria:

**Wednesday, January 20 – 6:00 p.m.**

**Wednesday, January 27 – 6:00 p.m.**

**Wednesday, February 3 – 6:00 p.m.**

There will be opportunities to ask questions about the project and get answers from school leaders. Community members are also encouraged to visit [www.hudsoncityschooldistrict.com](http://www.hudsoncityschooldistrict.com) where there are more details along with opportunities to submit questions or provide feedback.

Residents can also call the District Office at 828-4360 Ext. 2101 to speak with Dr. Suttmeier about the project.

## Safety and Security

The project would address several safety concerns, including traffic patterns, deteriorating stairs behind MCSIS, failing baseball bleachers, and worn out bleachers in the High School gym (which were built in 1970, original to the HS building).

Currently the district is concerned with the traffic flow directly in front of the High School campus. At the Jr./Sr. High School, the bus loops and parking lots would be reconfigured to provide better traffic flow and increased separation between walkways and vehicle traffic to make arrival and dismissal times safer for pedestrians.

The construction of the track and relocation of the football and baseball fields to the High School campus will be safer for student athletes, as well as physical education classes. Its location at the High School means our track team will no longer have to be transported to other districts for practice and “home” meets. The new track will be made from modern materials that provide a safer running surface.

The relocation of Grade 2 to MCSIS (September 2017) will ease overflow and congestion at JLE, especially in terms of building versus parking/traffic capacity. The proposed relocation of Grades PK-1 to MCSIS would ease safety concerns over crossing issues currently experienced at the intersection of Carroll, State, and Fourth streets near JLE.