

Press Release

District Approves Project

Malone, NY, February 11, 2009: The Malone Central School District approved a revised capital project at last night's school board meeting. Since the vote in December, the Facilities Committee has been busy working with the architects and engineers from CSArch to prepare a plan for a renovation and addition project to the Malone Middle School, and renovation only project at Flanders, and St. Joseph's. Minor renovations will also be done to Davis Elementary, Franklin Academy High School and the bus garage. "We can't turn our backs on the students. The students of this district deserve the best learning environment we can provide while making it affordable to the taxpayers. We heard from many taxpayers that voted "no" in December who said they supported renovations but not new construction right now due to the uncertain economy," said Derek Sprague, Facilities Committee member. The project will address many serious concerns outlined in the District's 2005 Building Condition Survey. The project will concentrate on many of the health, safety, and infrastructure items that were listed in the report as unsatisfactory, and the renovations will have a positive impact on the learning environment for the students in those schools.

The Middle School renovations and addition are the same as the original project voted on last December. The renovations will include many improvements like heating, ventilation, electrical, and plumbing upgrades. In addition to the internal improvements, enhanced traffic circulation will be included to make it safer for the students, classrooms will be added and reconfigured to meet State Education standards and the cafeteria will be expanded which could add 40 minutes of instructional time per day. As part of the expanded cafeteria, the main entrance to the school will be reconfigured to enhance the building's security.

The St. Joseph's project will include improvements to the heating, ventilation, electrical, and plumbing systems. Building accessibility will be addressed, toilet rooms renovated and doors and hardware will be replaced. Site paving and sidewalks will be restored.

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The Flanders project will include improvements to the heating, ventilation, electrical, and plumbing systems in addition to replacing the roof, new doors and hardware and improving the parking lot and paving. Flanders School was constructed in 1922.

Davis Elementary school renovations will be the same as originally proposed last fall. They include improvements to the heating and ventilation systems, improved site circulation, the addition of a voice amplification system to improve learning, and reconfiguring the main entrance to enhance the security of the building.

Some minor renovations will also be done to the District's bus garage fueling station to remedy a problem with the fuel storage system that was cited by the DEC.

Minor work will be done to the existing soccer and baseball fields at Franklin Academy to improve the playing conditions on both.

"Basically the improvements to the Middle School and Davis Elementary School remain the same as originally proposed, but it is evident, with the state of the economy, that our students may be in Flanders and St. Joes' schools longer than anticipated. Therefore, the Committee is recommending that more renovations in those two schools be done to address the health, safety, and infrastructure issues outlined in the 2005 Building Condition Survey," stated Sprague. The renovations are also expected to save the District over \$65,000 annually in energy. These savings will go directly into improving educational programs for the students.

The total cost of the project for all four schools is \$29.2 million. The state aid is 94.7%. However, since the Middle School needs more work than can be aided by the NYS Education Department aid formula, the District will have to pay for some of the work without aid. The District will use \$1.8 million in Excel Aid to reduce the total local share. The District feels the renovations and addition to the Middle School are warranted, as the building hasn't had any significant improvements in over 30 years.

Because of the high percentage of state reimbursement, the total local share is \$2.65 million. The Middle School renovation and addition comprises over 92 percent of the local taxpayer share. Only \$200,000 is the local share for the renovations at Flanders, St. Joes, Davis, FA and the bus garage. The local share for a \$50,000 house (assessed value) is \$3-4 per year for 15 years with Senior Star being \$0 per household. For a \$100,000 house (assessed value) the rate would be \$11-12 per year for 15 years with Senior Star being \$6-7 per household. For a \$150,000 house (assessed value) the increase to taxes would be \$20-21 per year for 15 years with Senior Star being \$14-\$15 per household. The rates are a little more per year than the original project because renovation projects can only be bonded over 15 years, not 30 years like new construction.

The vote for the renovations project is scheduled for Tuesday April 7th. The next school board meeting is scheduled for February 24th at St. Joes. A public hearing about the project will be held on March 24th at 7:00 p.m. in the Middle School auditorium.

If the project is approved in April, construction is expected to begin in the late summer of 2010. "This community has supported education for over 200 years. We are hopeful that the taxpayers will support this renovation project. This project will mean a lot to the students of this community and create a 21st century learning environment. A project of this size will pour millions of dollars into the Malone economy in the form of jobs, services and supplies purchased", stated Sprague.