

Capital Reserve Proposition Questions & Answers

What is a Capital Reserve Proposition?

In 2015, the District established a voter-approved Capital Reserve to begin to save for the replacement of Meszaros field and the Oley track once they reached their expected lifespan as well as to address future capital needs. Over the past several years, the District has been adding funds to the Capital Reserve for the purpose of addressing capital needs such as upgrading facilities or making major repairs. Funds are added when we end the year with a surplus (expenditures lower than revenue). These funds can only be spent on capital repairs or projects following approval by the community. A separate proposition must be placed before voters with the amount that the District can then utilize for stated capital needs.

When will this vote occur?

The proposition to utilize the Capital Reserve will be on the **May 20, 2025** ballot, along with the 2025-26 District Budget and Board of Education Trustee candidates. Adding the proposition to our annual budget vote and trustee election is more cost-efficient than holding a separate vote.

Will this proposition result in tax increases for residents?

No. This spending will come strictly from the funds set aside in the Capital Reserve and will not impact the tax levy or tax rate. There is no borrowing associated with using the funds in the Reserve.

What is the amount in the reserve?

As of June 30, 2024, the amount of the Capital Reserve is \$4,034,571. When the 2024-25 fiscal year ends, it is likely that more surplus funds will be added to the reserve, but those funds would not be available for this proposition.

What is the amount of the proposition for voter approval?

The proposition will be in the amount of \$3,950,000.

What capital projects will the proposition authorize?

With this proposition, the District is asking voters to approve use of the Reserve for the following capital needs:

- Replacement of the Meszaros Turf Field
- Resurfacing the Peter Oley Track
- Addition of "Dark Sky" compliant Field Lights on Meszaros Field
- Paving and refurbishment of the Dows Lane Basketball Court and Peaceful Play area
- Paving the Middle School Basketball Court
- Removal of outdated casework (cabinetry) in many High School classrooms
- Renovation of a student restroom at the High School
- Concrete repairs District-wide
- Window replacements at the Middle School for safety purposes (ground level)

Will additional projects be added to the proposal after the May 20th vote?

No. Once a Capital Reserve Proposition has been approved by voters, it is final, and no projects that were not initially included in the proposal will be incorporated. This ensures that the scope, budget, and planning remain consistent with the original submission communicated to voters.

Is it guaranteed that all the work listed above will be completed?

No. The project amount will be limited to \$3,950,000, the amount in the proposition. We have done our best to estimate the costs to do all of the work listed above, but until we can get final plans completed and approved by the State Education Department and the work is bid, we can only rely on estimates. Per NYS Education Law, until voters approve capital spending, the design work is limited to determining the scope of the work and estimating the costs. The true architectural and construction design work detail begins after the vote.

Why can't we just budget for these projects in our General Fund budget?

The cost of these projects is too large to include in the General Fund budget. Each year, we do include funds for both routine maintenance and building improvements. However, when the projects cost over \$100,000, it is not feasible for the budget to support this spending, as it would then take away funding from our instructional programs.

Can this money be spent on instruction?

No. Funds in the Capital Reserve can only be used for capital expenditures. The General Fund is the primary source of funds for instruction.

How will the broader community benefit from this project?

The "Peaceful Playground" and basketball court at Dows, along with the IMS basketball court, will be open for community use outside of school hours. In addition, games under the lights at Meszaros Field will not only build school spirit, but also bring the community together as spectators to support our athletes. .

Why does the turf and track need to be replaced? They look like they are in good condition.

Turf and track surfaces have an approximate 10 year life. We are witnessing tears more frequently now and have had to make several repairs to the track surface. The safety of a field can't be guaranteed after the 10 year lifespan even with proper maintenance.

Will we replace the turf with the exact same turf?

Once the proposition is approved, we will explore various turf options with our architects and engineers. Since we put in the turf with organic infill in 2016, there are newer options available, including ones that don't require infill. We are committed to the community that we will not use a rubber infill.

How will the current turf be disposed of?

We have researched an option to have our turf recycled upon removal. This will result in an additional cost, but confirms our commitment to sustainable practices when possible.

Why do we want to add lights to Meszaros Field?

Lighting extends field availability into the evening, effectively doubling the hours for events. This includes Friday or Saturday night competitions, enhancing community engagement during the regular season, as well as ongoing homecoming events for field hockey, football, and soccer. Additionally, it allows for "Light Up the Night" events, similar to homecoming, for spring sports such as flag football, lacrosse, and track and field. This would allow all athletes to experience playing under the lights, while also providing increased opportunities for Irvington youth and recreational programs and greater flexibility for scheduling.

Will the Field Lights light up the whole neighborhood?

No, the technology in use today is far superior to previous field lights. These LED lights on four 80 foot poles are extremely targeted and only light the field and a very small area (~150 feet) surrounding the field. Our intention is to comply with Dark Sky standards.

Will the lights be on 24/7?

No. In general, the use of lights will end by 9:30 pm on weeknights and 10:00 pm weekends. If the proposition is approved, the Board will incorporate parameters around use into the District's Facilities Use Policy.

Will the addition of lights result in the District continually renting the field to outside agencies?

The primary purpose of lighting Meszaros Field is to benefit the Irvington Athletic program and Irvington-based recreational programs.

Are we using all of the District's reserves?

No. The District has \$17 million dollars (an amount that adheres to State guidance) in total reserves across 8 different reserve accounts, all with specific purposes, including \$4 million in the Capital Reserve. There are adequate reserve funds should an unexpected expense arise. In addition, the Capital Reserve will be built up again using budget surplus in future years until this reserve expires in 2030 or is again approved by voters after that time.

Are lights common on athletic fields across the area?

New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) Section I includes schools located in Westchester, Rockland, Putnam and parts of Dutchess Counties. Currently, 87% of school districts that are part of Section I have or will have lights in the near future.

Will the lights be on 24/7?

No. Currently most games start by 7:00 pm or earlier and are over by 8:30 pm, but there is discussion within Section I athletics for some games to start later. Given that uncertainty, we require the flexibility to be able to host home games without the limitations of daylight, as needed. Additionally, there are occasions when weather or other delays may warrant the need for extended use of lights. In terms of parameters, it is anticipated that lights would be on until 9:30 pm on Monday-Thursday and 10:00 pm Friday and Saturday only if needed. Lights may only be used in the months of August, September, October, November, March, April and May. Please see [the link to a sample five week fall schedule](#) for further information regarding the scale of use.

What about amplified sound?

The PA system that is currently used for events, would only be allowed to be used for Irvington school events, not practices. No outside groups will be permitted to use the PA system..

Will there be a policy on field light usage?

Yes. If the proposition passes, the Board will amend the existing [Facilities Use Policy](#) to include parameters before installation of field lights occurs.

When will the work be completed?

After a successful vote, the District will work with its architects to create the specifications to submit to the State Education Department, so we can receive not only the necessary building permits but –eventually– state aid on projects that are aidable. This will take several months. Our best estimate is for work to commence in the Summer of 2026. It is possible that once we have permits and can bid out the work, some of the work might be able to be done over a break period. We will look to minimize construction cost, which also means grouping similar work together, such as all the paving and concrete repair, to get a favorable bid.

Does the District need to have an Environmental Assessment performed?

The District is required to conduct a State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) in which licensed professionals are engaged and complete the review. The Board adopted a resolution accepting the results of that review on March 25, 2025.

What is the difference between spending from the Reserve and a Capital Bond project?

When the funds are taken from the Reserve, no borrowing is necessary and thus, this proposition will have no tax impact. When the voters approve a bond project, the source of funds to complete the capital work will come from bonds that the District will have to secure and then make principal and interest payments over the next 15-30 years. This can have a tax implication for taxpayers.

Will the District still need a Capital Bond project in the future?

Presumably yes, when there are other large infrastructure needs. At some point, our roofs will need to be replaced along with aging HVAC equipment. There may be other energy projects that we need to undertake, for example, to comply with the Electric Bus mandate. Additionally, if there are plans to change any of our instructional spaces, typically a bond project is needed to address these needs.

What happens if we need funds for unanticipated repairs to facilities?

It should be noted that the District plans ahead with an ongoing list of needs to minimize unexpected costs. However, if unanticipated repairs were necessary, depending on the cost and timing of the repairs, the District can look to use budgeted funds, which would entail a shift of resources or use the Undesignated Fund Balance. Additionally, we will continue to replenish the Capital Reserve when possible, for this purpose and for future needs.

Where can I address my questions?

Please email your questions to budget@irvingtonschools.org