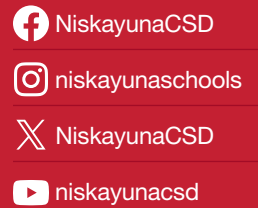




# YOUR | CAPITAL PROJECT 2024 SCHOOLS



A rendering of the proposed cafeteria layout at Van Antwerp Middle School. |

## Our Schools. Our Future.

### Modernizing Spaces to Enhance the Student Experience

On Tuesday, **February 13**, voters will head to the polls to decide on a \$47.17 million capital project. This is the second of three planned capital project referenda (2021, 2024, 2027) to modernize and renovate our eight school campuses. The district has created a long-term plan to invest in periodic renovations and improvements to address infrastructure needs and enhance learning spaces, while also working with fiscal advisors to minimize the tax impact on our community.

If approved, the 2024 capital project would provide funding to make substantial **expansions and renovations to Van Antwerp Middle School**, including a cafeteria and classroom addition (\$25.3 million); **modernization and upgrades at all five elementary schools** with a focus on community areas like cafeterias, gyms, library media centers and the most outdated classrooms (\$20.4 million); as well as **high-priority infrastructure work at Niskayuna High School** including the replacement of the paneling system on the exterior wall of the auditorium (\$1.5 million).

The proposed tax increase (0.85%) would equate to \$42.75/year (per \$300k market value).

If approved, the proposed projects will further the work that began following voter approval of the 2021 referendum. Those projects focused largely on the high school athletic complex, the classroom addition and renovations at Iroquois Middle School (the first phase in our middle-level reconfiguration) and other infrastructure improvements at our elementary schools. The district prioritized that work in the first

#### Project at-a-Glance

**Vote Feb. 13, 2024**  
at Niskayuna High School  
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

CAPITAL PROJECT TOTAL

**\$47,173,350**

ESTIMATED TAX IMPACT

**0.85%**

ESTIMATED TAX INCREASE  
(HOME WITH \$300K MARKET VALUE)

**\$42.75/year**  
**\$3.56/month**

STATE AID REIMBURSEMENT

**68% of**  
**overall cost**

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NISKAYUNA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Middle Level Reconfiguration

## Modernizing Van Antwerp

If approved, the 2024 capital project will provide the funding needed to transform Van Antwerp (VA) into a grade 5-6 campus as part of the district's planned middle level grade reconfiguration. Once complete, the reconfiguration will serve all Niskayuna students in grades 5-6 at VA and all students in grades 7-8 at Iroquois.

In this project we propose expanding and improving our VA campus as follows:

- Constructing a new, larger cafeteria with natural light
- Constructing new classrooms and a flexible project room in the second floor of the addition
- Renovating the wing occupied by district office staff to create 11 new classrooms
- Creating a new library media center and music ensemble classrooms



A rendering of the flexible project room at VA, featuring more collaborative workspaces and greater technological capabilities.

- Improving building accessibility and traffic flow and reducing elevation changes in the building
- Upgrading building systems including electrical, HVAC and plumbing

If this referendum is approved, the work at VA will be completed using funds from the 2021 referendum (\$7-\$8 million) and the 2024 referendum (\$25.23 million).

We anticipate construction at VA will commence in spring/summer 2025 and be completed in phases over the next three years.

### Why is middle school reconfiguration necessary and important?

Niskayuna educators see the new configuration as a unified middle school program on two campuses. The benefits teachers have identified include:

- Increased capacity to serve anticipated growth in class sizes
- An enhanced academic experience for fifth graders that includes world languages and other middle school offerings
- Expanded potential for accelerated courses for eighth grade students.
- More opportunities for teacher/student collaboration
- An equitable experience for all Niskayuna students

### When will the new middle level reconfiguration take effect?

It is projected that Iroquois will house all students in grades 7-8 at the start of the 2026-27 school year. Van Antwerp will serve all 5th and 6th grade students beginning at the start of the 2028-29 school year.

## Progress at Iroquois Middle School

The addition at Iroquois, approved in the 2021 capital project, is quickly taking shape. The structure will eventually house 20 classrooms and additional support spaces.

The exterior metal panel installation is in progress. First floor leveling and moisture mitigation have been completed and flooring installation is ongoing. Casework and cabinetry has been delivered and installation is underway in the new science rooms and other classrooms in the addition.

New fire alarm panel testing was completed in early January and permanent staircases are now accessible. New student bathrooms are being constructed in the areas previously occupied by 2nd floor science classrooms.

Once work on the addition is complete, our focus will turn to classroom renovations throughout the remainder of the building to result in bright and modern learning spaces with new flooring, finishes and fixtures.

We anticipate all work at Iroquois (construction and renovation) will be completed by early 2026.



A look inside a brand new team classroom in the addition.

round of projects because it largely concerned safety and functionality of our campuses.

Our goal in the 2024 capital project is to create modern, inviting spaces that foster collaboration, connection and community amongst students, faculty and staff. We are also prioritizing the work needed to complete our middle level reconfiguration. The details of that work will be explained in this newsletter.

We encourage you to visit our website or reach out to us at [TheFuture@niskayschools.org](mailto:TheFuture@niskayschools.org) with your questions.

We are committed to providing our students with world-class educational programming and facilities. This project, if approved, is a positive step forward toward that goal.

## NHS Infrastructure Improvements

Another component of the proposed capital project focuses on high-priority infrastructure improvements at Niskayuna High School. This includes the exterior wall of the auditorium, which is original to the late 1950s construction of the building. A new exterior wall system will be constructed as water penetration is evident inside the auditorium. The auditorium serves as an important gathering space for students, faculty and staff from across the district, as well as the community. If approved, the capital project will provide the funding needed to replace the wall system and protect the auditorium as the central performing arts space in the district.



Rust, warping and sealant gaps evident in the tile on the exterior wall of the auditorium.

## Elementary School Projects

In “walk-throughs” of our elementary schools, 2024 Capital Project Committee members concluded that common areas such as cafeterias, library media centers and gymnasiums were dated and lacked functionality. Most of these spaces have not been updated in several decades.

The district’s goal is to make common areas more welcoming and modern. Across our five elementary campuses, work will include:

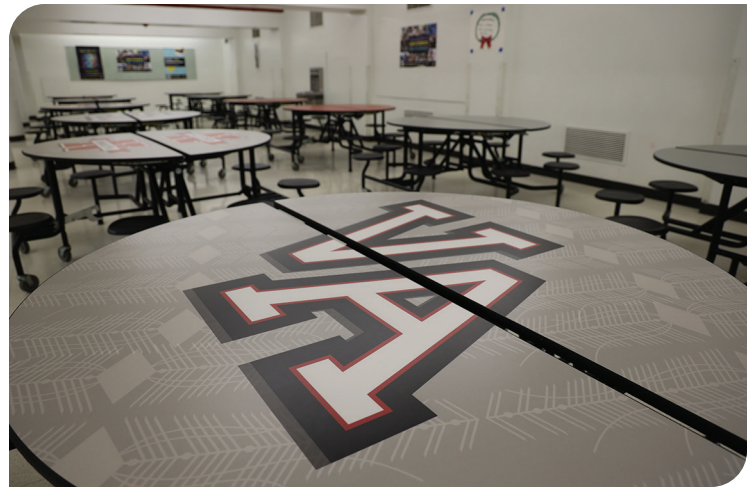
- Renovation of cafeterias: installation of air conditioning, new lighting, flooring, and audiovisual technology
- Renovation of library media centers: lighting upgrades, new flooring, additional shelving and storage, and fresh paint
- Renovation of gymnasiums: lighting upgrades, equipment replacement (e.g. basketball hoops and wall mats), ceiling improvements, and audiovisual technology for assemblies and presentations
- Targeted modernization of the oldest, most outdated classrooms in each building
- Playground improvements

The elementary school work would be completed in phases beginning in summer 2025.



Even with all the lights on, the cafeteria at Hillside feels dark and uninviting. The 2024 capital project looks to upgrade cafeterias with modern lighting, flooring and fixtures (example image inset).

**RIGHT** The current VA cafeteria setup provides little natural daylight, cramped table arrangement and its often used as a connection from one side of the building to the other during lunch.



**ABOVE** Through this project, the VA plumbing system will be updated and bathrooms will be renovated with new fixtures and finishes.

## Previewing proposed areas of improvement

Our Schools. Our Future.

**BELOW** Neither of the two elevators at VA service all three floors of the building, forcing people to use both in order to access every floor.



**ABOVE** The interior wall of the high school auditorium is showing signs of water damage. Audience members can see the impacted areas from their seats. The exterior wall panel system installed in the 1950s no longer performs as an effective weather barrier and will be replaced if the project is approved.



**LEFT** A look inside Hillside Elementary School's library, which will be updated with new lighting, floors, storage fixtures and fresh paint in the 2024 capital project.

**BELOW** The Glenclyff Elementary School cafeteria floor has multiple tiles that are chipped and missing. This project includes elementary cafeteria renovations such as new flooring and lighting systems.



**ABOVE** Aspects of the Craig Elementary School gymnasium, among others in the district, have not been updated for multiple generations. If approved, the project would refresh dated gyms, including potential audiovisual technology.



**LEFT** Several pieces of playground equipment districtwide are in disrepair, as seen here at Hillside. Planned work in the 2024 capital project would address needed repairs at all elementary school campuses.

# Related Projects

## District Administrative Offices Relocation

In order to create capacity for all students in grades 5-6 at VA (see page 2 for details), we must move our district offices so those spaces can be converted to 11 classrooms. Last spring, district leaders solicited information from local commercial property owners and realtors as part of this process.

The district has identified Highbridge Development as its partner for a new district office, and is in negotiations to develop office space for lease at 1430 Balltown Road for use as our administrative offices. We anticipate the space will be renovated and ready for use by fall of 2024.

The funding for this lease will come from the general fund and is not included in the proposed 2024 referendum.

## Gatehouse at NHS

We are thrilled to announce the community fundraising group “Niskayuna Stadium Entryway Project” has reached the donation target to begin construction on a gatehouse building at the entry to the track and turf field.

The gatehouse, which is not included in the capital project, will house a ticket booth, athletic storage and restrooms. Donations are still being accepted and pavers are being sold to help cover project costs. The district is deeply appreciative of the support in making this exciting addition to the new facility a reality.



! A digital mock-up of the proposed gatehouse design.



## 2024 Capital Project Committee Voices

| We asked: Why now?



“Our schools were built in a different time and the needs in education, the needs of our students have evolved over time, but the buildings have not. They look very similar to the way they did when my kids attended elementary school in the 90s.”

**Ron Frank**

Community Member



“If we expect the best from our students and teachers, we have to provide an encouraging learning environment that allows them to focus on their studies. Some students need different types of instruction to succeed and therefore also need different spaces, accommodations and tools.”

**Ehasuyi Gomes**

Parent



“There’s an overdue need to update our elementary schools, particularly in our rapidly changing world. Implementing a scheduled maintenance cycle is not only responsible, it’s imperative to ensure necessary upgrades and maintenance occur.”

**Julie McDonald**

Teacher, Future Niskayuna Parent



# Capital Project Q&A

## Isn't the district in the middle of a capital project?

In planning for the current capital project, the district did extensive assessments of infrastructure and educational space needs. The result was a long-term plan that divided the work into three capital projects (2021, 2024, 2027). The goal of this referendum is to secure funding to make repairs and renovations while modernizing learning spaces for students, faculty and staff across the district. The multi-referendum approach minimizes the impact on the school budget and taxpayers by managing debt levels and maximizing state aid for school construction.

## The 2021 capital project included money for renovating Van Antwerp (VA). Why is more funding needed now?

The 2021 capital project included plans to address work needed at VA. However, the impact of inflation and

rising construction costs resulted in bids for the work at Iroquois MS being higher than projected pre-pandemic. As a result, completing the anticipated work at VA will require funding beyond what is available through the 2021 referendum. It is important to note that between \$7 million and \$8 million in funding is allocated in the 2021 capital project for work at Van Antwerp, which will help complete the proposed work.

## When will the new grade-level configuration take effect?

It is projected that Iroquois will be home to all students in grades 7-8 in the fall of 2026 and that VA would be home to all students in grade 5-6 beginning in the fall of 2028. Between those two school years, it is anticipated that all students in grade 6 would attend VA. Having a single grade level at Van Antwerp during this time will allow construction to continue in phases throughout the building while minimizing disruptions to educational programming.

## If bids for any aspect of the work come in over budget, how will it be handled?

If the proposal is approved, the district will send the community regular updates about the plan, including construction timelines, details about the work that is advancing or any adjustments due to budget/other factors. In the event a bid comes in higher than anticipated, the district would evaluate options and consider how to adapt and prioritize the overall budget for improvements.

## What happens if the proposal is not approved?

If the proposal is not approved, district leaders would use feedback from voters (including an exit survey being conducted the day of the vote) to help determine next steps and ultimately the next capital project proposal. Preserving and improving facilities for current and future students is a clear district priority. Voter-approved capital projects are the best way that school districts are able to leverage state aid to update facilities. Absent voter approval the proposed work is unlikely to move forward on the timeline proposed, and pressing facilities needs could have a greater impact on the general fund budget.



An example image of an updated library media center. If approved, all elementary libraries would see upgrades like new lighting, flooring, additional storage and fresh paint.



Scan the QR code to check out our Capital Project page on our website.

# Niskayuna

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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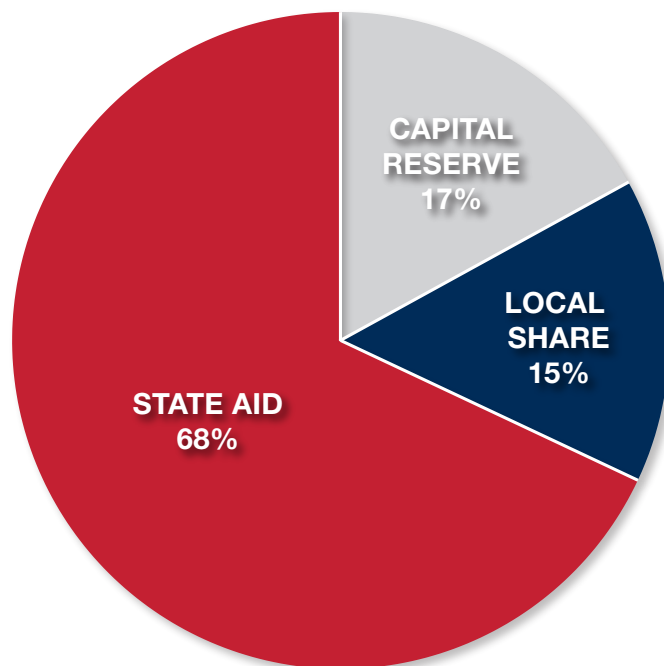
Matthew Petrin  
Director of Human Resources

# YOUR SCHOOLS

## I CAPITAL PROJECT 2024

EMPOWER • PERSEVERE • INNOVATE • CONNECT

## 2024 Capital Project Revenue Sources



## Vote Feb. 13, 2024

at Niskayuna High School  
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

### Voting by absentee or early mail ballots

Anyone who would like to vote via absentee or early mail ballot can do so by submitting an application to District Clerk Cynthia Gagnon, [cgagnon@niskayschools.org](mailto:cgagnon@niskayschools.org) or (518) 377-4666, ext. 4. Applications can be accessed by using the QR code below or by requesting a copy from Mrs. Gagnon.

Applications must be submitted at least seven days prior to the vote if ballots are mailed.

Absentee and early mail ballots must be received by 5:00 p.m. on the date of the vote.

