

GREATER EGG HARBOR REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT



LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Greater Egg Harbor Regional High School District has identified the need for a third high school. Since 2001, the district has been closely monitoring demographic projections, current enrollment, and existing facility conditions in its two existing schools, Oakcrest High School and Absegami High School. Through a long-range facility planning process required by the New Jersey State Department of Education, the district identified a shortage of classrooms and core facilities not adequate to accommodate existing and projected enrollment. As a result of this careful planning and analysis, the state has agreed to contribute an unprecedented \$54,301,187 in state funding assistance for a new high school, which amounts to approximately 66.46 percent of the total project cost of \$81,710,636. It will never be cheaper for the district to build a new high school.

Cost to the Taxpayers:
\$27,409,449, or 33.54 percent

State funding:
\$54,301,187, or 66.46 percent

Total project cost: \$81,710,636

Recent changes to state laws suggest taxpayers and the district are at risk to lose this funding if the September 25 referendum is not successful. New legislation enacted August 6, 2007 changes the district's status as an over-55 (percentage of state aid received) district. The Schools Development Authority (formerly the Schools Construction Corporation) agreed to significantly fund the Greater Egg Harbor project based upon the over-55 classification. The district is protected from this change for now, but the SDA cannot guarantee availability of funding if the referendum does not pass. In the worst case scenario, the taxpayers of our community will be responsible to pay 78 percent or more than \$64 million of the \$81.7 million project.

Money issues aside, the primary concern for the board and the district is the children. The board of education believes the new high school, as proposed, is necessary to continue

to deliver a high-quality learning environment for the students of the constituent communities. The program and spaces proposed in the new high school are consistent with the district's other two high schools and reflect the existing and projected enrollment.

The district and the board have considered numerous issues, rules, regulations, and codes during this planning process. Many of these issues are addressed in the question and answer section of this newsletter. Please read this referendum newsletter carefully. If there are any questions, issues, or facts we have not addressed, we urge you to contact the board or district offices via phone or e-mail. All contact information is on the back page of this newsletter.

Your vote is important. Please vote on September 25.



Greater Egg Harbor Regional High School District Board of Education

VOTE.....
TUES., SEPTEMBER 25, 2007
2:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.

A LOOK INSIDE:

- p 2. Project scope and floor plans
- p 2-3. Frequently asked questions
- p 4. Voting information
- p 5. Project costs and tax impact
- P 6. Where to go for information

SCOPE OF WORK AND CONCEPT PLANS

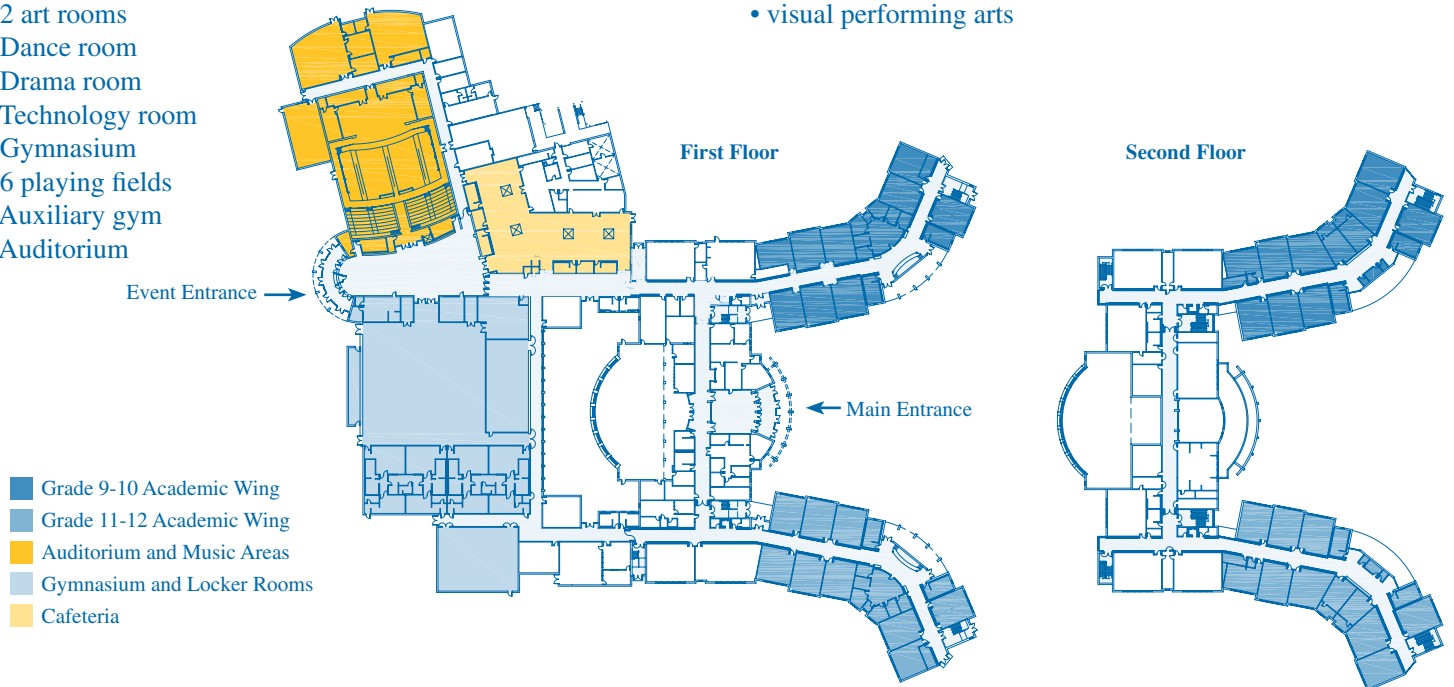


The proposed new high school plan includes the following academic and core curriculum spaces:

- 24 general classrooms
- 6 science labs
- 3 business classrooms
- 2 health classrooms
- 3 special education rooms
- 6 resource rooms
- 1 media center/library
- 1 family/consumer science room
- 2 music rooms
- 2 art rooms
- Dance room
- Drama room
- Technology room
- Gymnasium
- 6 playing fields
- Auxiliary gym
- Auditorium

Additionally, the district intends to create a magnet school program at the new high school; any student from the district may elect to study at the magnet school. Proposed disciplines being considered for the magnet school are as follows:

- environmental sciences
- engineering
- communication technologies
- computer technology
- visual performing arts



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q1. What is in this referendum for me?

The proposed new high school brings specific benefits to each constituent community and general benefits to the entire district.

Under the new A4 legislation, a third high school would allow both Galloway and Hamilton Townships to each form a K-12 comprehensive district. Egg Harbor City, Mullica, Port Republic, and possibly Washington Township would be able to form a regional K-12 district after a public vote.

For residents with students attending the K-8 schools in the constituent

districts, a new high school situated in Egg Harbor City is a direct benefit to residents of Egg Harbor City and Mullica Township, as students living in these communities will attend the new high school. Therefore, students from Egg Harbor City, and Hamilton, Galloway, and Mullica Townships will experience a return to the town school concept experienced in the primary and elementary grades. Furthermore, the rigorous and challenging educational, sports, and extracurricular programs offered in the district will be available to more students.

Students from Galloway and Hamilton Townships also will benefit from significant relief from the overcrowding that exists today at Oakcrest and Absegami. A third high school would open 500 seats at Oakcrest High School and up to 500 seats at Absegami High School which includes the magnet school, for a total student population of 1,000 students.

From another perspective, a new high school facility could facilitate community recreation and educational programs. In most communities,

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS CONT...

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there are limited facilities that can accommodate large groups of residents. The new school could be available for instruction (adult school or other), recreation, cultural and civic organizations, and events.

Q2. I have heard a rumor that the new high school will be filled to capacity when it opens. How long before additional facilities are required, or will this plan provide all the space necessary for the foreseeable future?

Based on current and projected student enrollment, it is quite possible the school will be at or near capacity when it opens in 2010. All school districts must comply with department of education regulations pertaining to facilities planning and are only allowed to complete enrollment projections for a period of five years. Funding assistance from the state is based upon those projections and a “demonstrated need” for the facilities. The state will not approve funding for projects that plan beyond a five-year period.

The board, working closely with the architect and a citizens task force committee, has carefully selected a building plan that can be expanded if additional classroom spaces are needed in the future. In a few years, as required, the district will request that a professional demographer conduct a revised demographic study. If, as expected, the



report reveals another increase in enrollment, the board will take the appropriate steps to submit another project application for a building addition to the department of education for review and funding.

Q3. Assuming the referendum passes on September 25, 2007, when will construction work begin, and when will it be completed?

If the proposed referendum passes in September 2007, construction work is expected to begin in the fall of 2008 and be completed during the summer of 2010.

Q4. What if the referendum fails?

If voters in the Greater Egg Harbor Regional constituent communities reject the referendum on September 25 and the proposed new high school is not authorized:

- State funding of 66.46 percent will be in jeopardy.
 - The significant funding commitment from the state (\$53,001,187) will be in jeopardy.
 - A \$1.3 million grant also will be threatened.
- Class sizes will continue to increase, affecting the quality of instruction.
- The board will have to consider other alternatives including the elimination of programs.
- The proposed high school site may no longer be available to the board for purchase.
- The district would be required to refile all permits and applications with various governmental agencies, including the Pinelands Commission.

If the referendum is defeated, the board of education would have to re-submit its project application again to the department of education seeking funding assistance. There would be increases in construction and materials costs thus negatively offsetting any funding assistance the state might still agree to provide. Lastly, any delay will surely negatively impact curriculum and instruction.



Q5. Are there programs available for senior citizens to offset the tax increases of a proposed referendum?

Under the Property Tax Reimbursement Program, eligible senior citizens and disabled persons are reimbursed by the state for the difference between the amount of local property taxes paid in the “base year” (the year they became eligible and first filed for the program) and the amount of property taxes paid for the reimbursement year. Residents applying for the 2006 reimbursement must have total income for 2005 that is less than \$41,972 for single applicants and \$51,466 (combined income) for married couples, and total income for 2006 that is less than \$43,693 for single applicants and \$53,576 (combined income) for married couples. For more information on the filing of the Property Tax Reimbursement, or to obtain an application, contact the New Jersey Property Tax Reimbursement Hotline at 1-800-882-6597. Information about the Program is also available on the Division of Taxation’s website at <http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/>.

Q6. Is the new high school going to be energy efficient?

The new high school will use a geothermal HVAC system. These systems reduce operating costs and increase efficiency. We expect a reduction in electrical usage as well as annual maintenance costs. The systems are environmentally friendly and exceed the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) points for sustainability and Green building design. Lastly, the system should provide an economic payback in seven years.



HOW WILL THE QUESTION BE WORDED ON THE BALLOT?

PROPOSAL FOR NEW HIGH SCHOOL

The Board of Education of the Greater Egg Harbor Regional High School District in the County of Atlantic, New Jersey is authorized (a) to acquire by purchase, gift, lease, or condemnation the following parcels of land in City of Egg Harbor in the County of Atlantic, New Jersey for the purpose of constructing a new high school thereon (*as indicated in the table*); (b) to undertake the construction of a new high school on the block and lot numbers identified in this Proposal; (c) to make the necessary onsite and offsite improvements and purchase the necessary equipment, fixtures, and furnishings; (d) to appropriate \$81,710,636, funded in part by the State of New Jersey pursuant to the requirements of the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act in the amount of \$53,001,187, and a grant from State of New Jersey's Property Tax Assistance and Community Development Grant Program in the amount of \$1,300,000 for land costs; and (e) to issue bonds of the

School District in the principal amount of \$27,409,449;

The final eligible cost for the new high school approved by the Commissioner of Education is \$79,478,905. This project includes \$2,231,731 of school facility construction elements in addition to the facilities efficiency standards developed by the Commissioner of Education or not otherwise eligible for State support pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-5(g).

INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT

If the Proposal is approved, the new high school will be financed in three parts: (i) the New Jersey Schools Development Authority will contribute \$53,001,187 toward the school as well as design and construct the school; (ii) a grant from the New Jersey's Property Tax Assistance and Community Development Grant Program in the amount of \$1,300,000 will finance a portion of the land costs; and (iii) the School District will issue bonds in the amount of \$27,409,449 to finance the new high school's remaining costs.

Block Nos.	Lot Numbers
16	1, 5.02, 8, 11.02, 16, 25.02, & 26.02
17	1, 16, 25.02, & 27.02
18	1, 9.02, 16, 17.02, & 18.02
19	1, 11, 13.02, 16, 22.02, 28.02 & 29.02
84	1, 7.02, 8.02, 16, 21.02, 22.02, 23.02, 27, 28.01, 28.02, 29.02, & 30
85	1 & 16
86	1, 16, 25, & 26
87	1 & 16
118	1, 16, & 29.02
119	1, 9, 10, 16, 18.02, 19, 20.02 & 21.02
120	1, 16, 18.01, & 18.02
121	1, 16, 26, & 27.02

WHERE DO I VOTE?

The regular school polling places in each constituent community will be open September 25, 2007 from 2:00 p.m.- 9:00 p.m.

City/Township	Ward and District	Polling Place
Egg Harbor City	1-1,1-2,1-3	Charles L. Spragg School
	2-1,2-2,2-3	Fanny D. Rittenberg School
Galloway Township	D-1,D-8,D-9,D-14	Smithville E.S.-37 Old Port Republic Rd.
	D-2,D-4, D-13	Germania Fire House-Cologne Ave.
	D-3, D-6	Arthur Rann School-8th Ave. Absecon Highlands
	D-5, D-7	Pomona E.S.-400 S. Genoa Ave.
	D-10, D-11, D-12	Roland Rogers E.S.-101 S. Reeds Ave.
Hamilton Township	D-1, D-5	Mays Landing Fire House-Mill St. & Reliance Ave.
	D-2	Laureldale Social Hall-Rte 50 & Orange St.
	D-3	Mizpah Fire House-DeHirsch & Sewell Mizpah
	D-4	Woodlands Club House-Woodlands Dr.
	D-6	New Weymouth Fire House-BHP, Weymouth
	D-7	Hess School Auditorium-Babcock Rd.
	D-8	Presbyterian Church- Main St. & Rte. 50
	D-9	Cologne Fire House-Cologne Ave.
	D-10	Victoria Crossing Club House-Victoria Dr.
	D-11	Oakcrest High School-1824 Dr. Dennis Foreman Dr.
	D-12	Mays Landing Rescue Squad-1404 Rte. 50
	Mullica Township	D-1, D-2, D-3



ESTIMATED COSTS AND TAX IMPACT

The total estimated cost for the proposed new high school is \$81,710,636. The NJ Schools Development Authority will fund 64.87 percent of this amount, or \$53,001,187, and a state grant will fund \$1,300,000, or 1.59 percent, **for a total state share of the project of 66.46 percent.**

The district's financial advisor has prepared estimates based on a commitment letter received from the state as follows:



Community	Assessment	Average Tax Rate Increase per \$100,000 Assessed Home Value	Average ANNUAL Tax Impact on Assessment of \$100,000	Average MONTHLY Tax Impact on Assessment of \$100,000
Egg Harbor City	\$100,000	\$0.0302	\$30.20	\$2.52
Galloway Township	\$100,000	\$0.0490	\$49.00	\$4.08
Hamilton Township	\$100,000	\$0.0506	\$50.60	\$4.22
Mullica Township	\$100,000	\$0.0522	\$52.20	\$4.35

Note: The estimates indicated above are based on the following assumptions: receiving nearly 67 percent funding from the state, a 25-year bond, and an interest rate of 4.6 percent. Interest rates are subject to the market conditions at the time of the sale of the bonds.

HOW WILL REFORM BILL A-4336/S-2796 AFFECT US IF THE REFERENDUM IS DEFEATED?



If the referendum fails on September 25, the district will be forced to renegotiate with the state. As a non-Abbott school district under the new law, Greater Egg Harbor Regional could expect to receive only \$18 million—just 22 percent of the entire project cost.

This would represent a financial blow to the taxpayers. If the September referendum does not pass, the price tag of the new school will skyrocket. Today's \$27* million referendum could rise to a staggering \$64 million in 2008. (*cost to the taxpayers after state share calculated)

1824 Dr. Dennis Foreman Drive, Mays Landing, NJ 08330
www.gehrhsd.net • www.absegami.net • www.oakcrest.net

Non-Profit
Organization
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Permit 39

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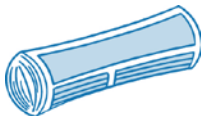
Special Thanks to:
Julie Hazard, Editor

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?



Call: Referendum information hotline
609-625-0657 ext. 2732

Read: Look for articles in your local and regional newspapers.



Attend: Board of education meetings and/or presentations throughout the communities. A complete presentation schedule is listed on the district website.



Click: www.gehrhsd.net
Please check periodically for updates.



GREATER EGG HARBOR REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT



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G R E A T H I G H S C H O O L S M A D E G R E A T E R