TONA2020: Elementary School Improvement & Consolidation Project
Sustaining our future by investing in our learning environment for students, staff & community

Dear Community Members,

On October 22, 2019, residents of the Tonawanda City School District will have an opportunity to vote on an Elementary School Improvement and Consolidation Project that is designed to address the final phase of the TONA2020 initiative. This project addresses critical facilities needs in our three elementary schools, instructional programming space, and current emerging school safety protocols. The project scope is based on a number of factors, including the New York State mandated Building Condition Survey, citing numerous reconstruction and replacement needs at all three elementary school facilities.

The TONA2020 initiative has included purposeful research and study regarding the future of our school district. Previous phases have been supported to provide a beautiful stadium and sports complex shared by our student athletes and community members, performing arts instructional space, and central offices attached to the high school. This final phase of the initiative focuses on our elementary education facilities.

Facilities studies have concluded that our three aging elementary schools would only become much more expensive to maintain and remain functional in coming years. Instead of spending taxpayer dollars on three elementary school facilities that all require significant improvements to remain usable, the TONA2020 committee has unanimously recommended an elementary school consolidation plan. This plan will address our increasing facility needs and allow our district to improve and advance our educational programs, provide necessary services, and meet the needs of all students in a permanent tax cap era.

The consolidation plan we are proposing to district residents would close the Mullen and Riverview schools and include a significant school upgrade at Fletcher Elementary. This plan ensures that all elementary students would benefit from increased and improved space in a 21st Century educational facility.

The time is now neighbors! Student achievement and safety is our focus. This is a challenging time to be proposing this type of work. However, providing this proactive plan for the future is the best way to achieve the goals of this project: being responsible to taxpayers, investing in student learning, and paving the way for future sustainability in a conservative manner. We hope you will agree that this work is essential to the program and needed for our students, our district, and our community.

There is a great story to be told and exciting improvements are on the horizon for all of our children. We know how much pride this community has in the Tonawanda City School District. Capital projects like this one help our facilities continue to serve as an outstanding community resource and to improve the conditions under which our children work, learn, and grow. We encourage you to review this information, attend upcoming public information meetings, and learn more about the project on our website.

The Tonawanda City School District and the Board of Education thank you for your continued involvement in our future. We now need and appreciate your vote on October 22, 2019.

Go Warriors!

Timothy A. Oldenburg, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

Ms. Heather Sternin
Board of Education President

Project Focus

- Student Achievement and Support
- Consolidate and Improve Our Aging Facilities for Sustainability
- School Safety
- A Conservative and Responsible Vision for our Taxpayers

Information Meetings

- Fletcher Elementary
  September 24, 6:00 p.m.
- Mullen Elementary
  September 26, 6:00 p.m.
- Riverview Elementary
  September 30, 6:00 p.m.

Public Referendum

Tuesday, October 22, 2019
7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
High School Wellness Gym
600 Fletcher Street
Key Scope Items

The Elementary School Improvement & Consolidation Project proposal is the culmination of years of planning and evaluation by a committee including district representatives, community members, and consultants. Our goal is to provide students with a 21st Century education by improving our facilities and optimizing operational efficiencies with a consolidated and modernized elementary school. This plan will provide a safe, secure, and improved learning environment for our student body through a fiscally conservative and responsible approach for our taxpayers. The work will include the following key scope items:

1. Renovations:
   - Art & music
   - Kitchen & cafeteria
   - Classrooms
   - Technology infrastructure
   - Roof replacement
   - Auditorium

2. Two-story additions:
   - Covered entry
   - Art & music
   - Classrooms
   - Support / storage
   - Gym & locker rooms
   - Main office / health office
   - Fitness & OT / PT
   - Media center
   - STEAM classrooms
   - Restrooms

3. New expanded bus loop

4. New staff parking, visitor parking, and parent drop-off loop

5. Dual main entry to main office area
   - Secure student entrance (walkers / busers)
   - Secure student / visitors entrance (student walkers and vehicle drop-off)

6. New play field area

7. New primary age playground (ADA accessible)

8. New intermediate age playground (ADA accessible)

9. Receiving and deliveries

10. Areas to be demolished

---

Project Financing

The Elementary School Improvement & Consolidation Project would be funded mainly by available State Building Aid, including a one-time additional cost allowance allocation of $12.9 million to be provided by the State Education Department, and available District funds. The remaining "local share" would be financed through the local tax levy. To pass, the proposed project must be approved by 60% or more of the eligible voters at the time of the vote.

Total Project Cost: $53,469,266

Remaining Local Share 28%
State Building Aid 61%
District Funds 11%

Average Annual Taxpayer Cost Per $108,000 Home (Assessed Value)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enhanced STAR with Veterans Exemption</th>
<th>Enhanced STAR</th>
<th>Basic STAR with Veterans Exemption</th>
<th>Basic STAR</th>
<th>No Exemptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$40.06</td>
<td>$47.27</td>
<td>$86.61</td>
<td>$93.83</td>
<td>$129.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

EXISTING FLETCHER ELEMENTARY SITE PLAN

NEW FLETCHER ELEMENTARY SITE PLAN
Frequently Asked Questions

What is the total cost of this proposed project and how will it affect my taxes?
The total cost of the proposed Elementary School Improvement & Consolidation Project is $53,469,266. The project will be paid for by a combination of State Building Aid and available District funds, with the remaining local share to be financed through the local tax levy. The specific amount applied to each household’s tax bill will depend on the home’s assessed value, STAR designation, and veterans exemption.

Why don’t we just upgrade our current buildings and make repairs?
Upgrading each of our three current elementary buildings would require over $65 million in needed work to improve all three aging facilities (which does not include contemporary safety upgrades). This is not a sustainable model for a responsible school district in a permanent tax cap era.

How long will the construction phase of this project take?
Significant construction is planned to begin in the summer of 2021. This project is expected to be completed and prepared for students and staff to begin the start of the school year in the fall of 2023.

What if this project doesn’t achieve 60% voter approval from the community and fails?
A failed capital project vote from the community would still require significant improvements and maintenance at each of our three current elementary buildings. This would cost our community more in taxes over time—not only due to loss of the one-time additional state aid cost allowance, but also due to the state-mandated 2015 building condition survey that requires over $65 million dollars in work that would still need to be done at all three of our aging elementary schools. Plus, our additional need for programmatic spaces to meet the diverse needs of our students would require building expansions estimated to cost an additional $20 million at EACH of the three elementary buildings.

How much NYS aid and financial support is allocated for this project?
The total amount of NYS aid for this project is $37,888,852. This NYS aid amount includes $12,901,815 assigned to this project after the district successfully lobbied for and was awarded a one-time cost allowance allocation of additional state aid. This special allowance is only available for this consolidation project and could NOT be allocated to our district for any other project.

Why do this now?
There are many reasons to initiate this final phase of TONA2020. We are striving to be responsible and conservative to our taxpayers while working to meet the changing needs of our students, school safety, and community support. The newly consolidated facility would not require significant repair or replacement for many years. We are taking proactive steps to be a sustainable organization in a permanent tax-cap era.

What will happen to the Riverview and Mullen Schools?
The Riverview and Mullen schools will be closed for student attendance in June 2023. Our district has an extremely successful record of transitioning school buildings and other properties to new owners that are good stewards and neighbors in our community.

Has this project been studied by a committee including community members?
The TONA2020 project has had many phases and has been studied often. The Long-Range Plan Report 2005, the Staffing Study 2005, the Facilities Task Force Recommendation 2010, and the Long-Range Planning Committee (TONA2020) updates are all available on our website. Each of these internal and external studies recommends that a consolidated elementary campus is best suited for our students, families, staff, and community. **Our most recent TONA2020 committee, including numerous community members, unanimously recommended this project to the Board of Education to consider sending to the community for approval.**

How Was the Plan Developed?
The proposed Elementary School Improvement & Consolidation Project is the culmination of nearly 15 years of meticulous analysis, planning, and fine-tuning. This measured approach was led by a committee of district representatives, community members, consultants, and stakeholders, all of whom are deeply committed to the welfare of our facilities, our students, and our taxpayer community.

---

### Timeline:

- **October 22, 2019** Referendum
- **2020** Construction begins
- **Summer 2023** Riverview and Mullen close after the end of the school year
- **Fall 2023** Fletcher Elementary opens for all UPK-5 students on first day of 2023-24 school year

- **2005** Long-Range Plan
- **2007** Staffing Study
- **2008** Facilities Plan
- **2009** Review of Collaborative Options for Functions & Facilities
- **2010** Facilities Task Force Recommendation
- **2013** Long-Range Forum
- **2015**
  - 2015 Building Condition Survey
  - SED efficiency & aidability meeting
- **2016**
  - TONA2020 preliminary design developed
- **2017-18** Scope and design further refined
- **2019**
  - Board of Education review & approval
- **2020**
  - SED Review & Approval
- **Fletcher Elementary opens for all UPK-5 students on first day of 2023-24 school year**
Detailed information about the proposed TONA2020 project is available through the following resources:

**In your mailbox:** A copy of this informational newsletter has been mailed to all district households

**In the community:** Public information meetings with opportunities to learn more about the project and ask questions will be held on the dates listed above

**In the schools:** Information and handouts about the proposed project will be available in school lobbies

**Online:** www.tonawandacsd.org