

FAQ - Proposition 2: Expenditure of Capital Reserve Funds

The District has included a budget proposition to use a combination of reserves and grant funds to upgrade classroom doors. As part of the previously approved Phase 1 construction projects, the District will replace classroom doors District-wide. Recently a door product became available that offers not only intruder-resistance, but also firearm-resistance with a remotely controlled locking mechanism.

Syosset has instituted several layered security measures including entry vestibules and visitor management systems; additional security guards and a director of security; surveillance cameras; and perimeter access control. No security measure can prevent every imaginable scenario. However, the proposal is designed to harden the last line of defense in an “active shooter” scenario – the classroom door.

Public approval is required to use a combination of an existing fund balance, reserves and state grant funds to pay for the cost difference of the upgraded doors. Detailed specifications on the doors cannot be provided to the public in the interest of security. Since any security measure has limitations, providing specific information could expose potential vulnerabilities. Syosset is continually working with its security consultant to identify and implement robust security measures to provide a safe and secure environment for its students and staff.

This FAQ document has been provided to the community with information regarding the proposal to inform residents as they make their decision.

FIREARM-RESISTANT DOORS

What specific advantages do the upgraded classroom doors offer over the original doors proposed as part of the Phase 2 capital construction work?

The proposed doors offer two important security advantages over the doors originally approved.

- Upgrade classroom door specification from “intruder resistant” to “firearm resistant”.
- Upgrade to a remotely controlled locking system similar to technology in use in many school districts now.

Will the doors be added to common areas, such as cafeterias and libraries, as well as classrooms?

In accordance with the recommendation of the District’s security consultant, the upgraded doors will only be used for classrooms.

Do the doors require regular maintenance and or inspection?

Built-in hardware and software indicators monitor the system and will provide an alert if service is required. The District will operate and maintain the doors according to the manufacturer specifications, and regular testing and inspection will take place.

REMOTE LOCKS

Will the remotely controlled locking mechanism prevent doors being opened from the inside if necessary, for example for egress from a secondary emergency?

The doors comply with State Education Department fire regulations, which require all door locks to be operable from within the classroom to permit egress to the hallway. The lock must be operable with a single hand for both locking and unlocking, and the status of the door (locked/unlocked) must be visible from across the room.

Will the remotely controlled locking mechanism impact the function of exterior windows?

No. The windows will operate independently of the classroom doors. Once the air conditioning capital project is complete, classroom windows will remain locked at all times. Similar to the doors, the windows must remain able to be unlocked for egress, if necessary.

How is the remotely controlled locking system protected from unauthorized access?

Communication with the locks is through a dedicated, encrypted system. The system is in use in many school districts currently and Syosset would adopt any updates as needed.

How is the remotely controlled locking system activated?

The system can be activated by authorized users within the building.

OTHER QUESTIONS ON PROPOSITION 2

Can the new doors improve the safety of hallways in an emergency?

Any safeguard to prevent students from being locked out would be in the form of protocols for teachers to follow. For instance, sweeping the hallway before closing their doors. Changing the door itself will not alter these protocols.

How much will be left in the Reserves once the project is completed?

The District has a number of reserve funds for various purposes. For this capital project, the District would use the funds in the two reserves designated for capital purposes.

- The 2014 Capital Reserve has been used for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 construction projects. The existing balance of approximately \$940,000 would be used for the door project.
- The 2018 Security Reserve has a current balance of \$2 million, which would be applied to this project. The Security Reserve was authorized for a total amount of \$5 million, thus the District is permitted to place up to an additional \$3 million more in the Security Reserve and withdraw it for a future project with voter approval.

Assistant Superintendent for Business, Dr. Patricia Rufo, presented an overview of the District's reserves in the March 2019 budget presentation. That presentation can be found here: [March 2019 Budget Presentation](#) (see pages 15 through 18 for the reserve overview).

If the Proposition fails, what will happen?

If Proposition 2 is not approved by voters, the District will move forward with intruder-resistant doors as specified in the voter-approved Phase I project.

OTHER SECURITY RELATED QUESTIONS**What measures are being taken to secure commons areas such as cafeterias, gymnasiums and auditoriums?**

During school hours, security personnel are always present in the buildings. In addition to a guard stationed at the main entrance, there is a mobile guard responsible for patrolling the building. Protocols are in place to ensure the safety of students in common areas. All exterior doors remain locked from the outside and there are surveillance cameras throughout the buildings.

Are any changes to the windows contemplated as part of this project?

Proposition 2 encompasses the reinforced doors and wireless locks. No other security measures are being proposed in this proposition.

The District has undertaken a measured and comprehensive approach to ensuring the safety and well-being of the students, staff and community. Working with the District Director of Security, security consultants, architects and engineers, and the Nassau County Police Department, we have implemented a multi-layered approach to provide a secure environment with a planned progression of security enhancements. Many of these enhancements have already been put into place and work will begin this summer on several more. The next layer being proposed includes more heavily reinforced classroom doors.

The District has implemented the following security enhancements over the last two school years:

- New visitor management system which requires all guests to provide a government-issued photo ID and wear a visitor badge while inside the building.
- All staff required to wear chip-enabled "smart badges".
- Syosset High School students required to wear student ID badges and scan in through the visitor management system.
- Security vestibules at all schools with interlocking doors that create a mantrap prior to entry (SHS to be complete summer 2019).
- Enclosed student walkways at South Grove and SHS (to be completed this summer).
- Glass corridor walls replaced with security- and fire-rated corridor walls.
- Perimeter fencing.
- Alarm panel upgrades.
- Exterior doors controlled by card reader (smart chip technology).
- Outdoor signaling system (strobe lights) to indicate lock-out or lock-down conditions.
- New surveillance system infrastructure.
- Addition of a full-time Director of Security.
- New drill procedures developed in conjunction with Director of Security.
- Doubled the number of security guards, evening and weekend shifts added.

- RAVE Panic Button live in all schools.
- Anonymous tip line sponsored by Sandy Hook Promise, which included training for secondary students on recognizing concerning behavior and reporting that behavior appropriately.
- Addition of a school psychologist and social worker beginning with the 2018-19 school year.
- Installation of air conditioning and gym exhaust fans to eliminate the need for window units and opening windows (project to begin summer 2019).
- District signed a memorandum of understanding for ADAS, a system which will permit NCPD to view the District surveillance cameras during an emergency.

Proposed as part of the 2019-2020 Budget:

- Addition of part-time security guards with law enforcement experience.
- Allocation for additional security equipment including vehicles and additional interior cameras and upgrades to existing cameras
- Addition of a psychologist/social worker at the high school and a board-certified behavior analyst for the elementary schools beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.

The District's security plan includes both public and confidential initiatives, and there is a limit to how much information can be shared with the public without potentially compromising the security measures being undertaken. Therefore, the District cannot provide detailed information on the capabilities and functionality of each security measure and by law, building-level security plans and procedures must not be publicly disclosed. Syosset CSD has taken a very muscular approach to implementing security enhancements holistically, implementing a plan that incorporates facilities, staffing, protocols, and student support. School security is an ongoing focus and the District will continually look to advance its capabilities in a fiscally responsible manner.