

FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Fairfax County, Virginia

Bond

Referendum

 **Facts**

Election Day is Tuesday, November 3, 2009.

▶ VOTING INFORMATION

A school bond referendum will be on the general election ballot **Tuesday, November 3, 2009**. Polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Residents of Fairfax County may vote if they are 18 years of age or older on Election Day and have registered to vote 29 days prior to the elections (by October 5, 2009, at 5 p.m.).

For more information about registering or voting, call **703-222-0776** or go online at **www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eb**.

▶ WHAT IS A BOND?

The sale of municipal bonds is a form of long-term borrowing that spreads the cost of major capital improvements over the years facilities are used. This method of financing ensures that current and future users help pay for the improvements.

▶ WHY ARE BONDS NEEDED?

The building and renovation of schools are not financed through the school system's operating funds, but through bonds. Similar to an individual or a family obtaining a mortgage on a residence to spread the cost of home buying over a number of years, bonds spread the cost of major capital improvements over a number of years.

If approved, these bonds will probably be sold to large investment banking syndicates that will have to competitively bid for them. Once bought, they are typically resold to financial institutions, which then sell them to investors.

▶ WHY A REFERENDUM?

The law requires that voters approve bonds since they are a future obligation for taxpayers. As long as debt service costs do not increase significantly as a percentage of combined general fund disbursements, the county's bonded debt will not be a contributing factor to any increase in local taxes.

▶ HOW WILL PASSAGE AFFECT THE COUNTY'S BOND RATING?

Of the nation's more than 3,000 counties, Fairfax is among only 22 that have the highest credit rating possible for a local government:

- Aaa from Moody's Investors Service.
- AAA from Standard & Poor's.
- AAA rating from Fitch Investors Service.

Because of these ratings, Fairfax County's bonds always sell at exceptionally low interest rates.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors controls all county bond sales within financial guidelines drawn to ensure that the coveted triple-A bond ratings are not jeopardized.

▶ WHICH SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS ARE INCLUDED IN THE 2009 BOND?

New Construction

New Middle School: South County	\$ 50,000,000
NEW CONSTRUCTION SUBTOTAL	\$ 50,000,000

Capacity Enhancement

(Additions and other modifications)

Crestwood Elementary School	\$ 4,150,000
Cunningham Park Elementary School	\$ 3,455,000
Kings Park Elementary School	\$ 5,662,000
Lynbrook Elementary School	\$ 4,784,000
Spring Hill Elementary School	\$ 6,333,000
Springfield Estates Elementary School	\$ 3,225,000
West Springfield Elementary School	\$ 3,929,000
Woodley Hills Elementary School	\$ 4,955,000
Whitman Middle School	\$ 4,264,000
CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT SUBTOTAL	\$ 40,757,000

Renovation

Middle School Renovation

Sandburg (Planning Only)	\$ 2,501,000
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High School Renovation

Marshall	\$ 101,822,000
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RENOVATION SUBTOTAL	\$ 104,323,000
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MODULAR RELOCATIONS	\$ 9,750,000
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Infrastructure Management

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Upgrades	\$ 3,250,000
Roof Replacement	\$ 11,250,000
Athletic Infrastructure	\$ 3,250,000
HVAC Replacement	\$ 5,750,000
Security Enhancements	\$ 1,500,000
Asphalt Paving	\$ 1,250,000

INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT SUBTOTAL	\$ 26,250,000
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Project Subtotal	\$ 231,080,000
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Bond Cost	\$ 1,500,000
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REFERENDUM TOTAL	\$ 232,580,000
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▶ HOW WERE THE PROJECTS SELECTED?

Each year, the School Board and staff members work with the community to develop an updated five-year capital improvement program (CIP) for schools. To develop the CIP, the school system assesses changes in expected enrollments, academic programs, and facility conditions to determine priorities for new construction, renovations, and other capital facility projects. The School Board then evaluates the affordability of these school needs against other countywide requirements to determine how many of the highest priority school projects should be included in the bond proposal.

Several factors were considered in determining which schools to include in this year's bond referendum, including:

- Sustained high enrollment and/or growth experienced in the past several years.
- Continued need for temporary classrooms.
- Schools located in high growth areas as defined by the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan.
- Strong growth at the kindergarten and primary grade levels.
- Demographic characteristics.

▶ WHO USES OUR SCHOOLS?

Students and citizens use Fairfax County schools. Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) works with the Fairfax County Office of Community and Recreation Services and with the Park Authority to ensure that school facilities and athletic fields are available to the public after school hours. The following are examples of how school buildings are used.

Students

During the school year, approximately 169,000 students use FCPS facilities daily for academic and extracurricular activities.

Community

Most of the public meeting places available in the county are FCPS facilities. In many cases, these facilities are provided free of charge to organizations such as homeowners associations, 4-H, scouting groups, county employee organizations, and cultural and civic groups. In addition:

- More than 2,000 organizations used school facilities last year.
- 161 schools are used as polling places for general elections.
- 135 schools serve as sites for Fairfax County's School Age Child Care (SACC) program.
- FCPS Office of Food and Nutrition Services provides some 192,000 senior citizen meals annually at 37 school sites.
- 95 religious and cultural organizations used FCPS facilities for regularly scheduled activities last year.

Recreation

The Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services is the largest "outside" user of FCPS facilities. The result is an outstanding recreation program at minimum cost to Fairfax County taxpayers. For example:

- Last year, more than 250,000 individuals participated in recreation activities—the vast majority using FCPS facilities.
- Community groups used 242 school gymnasium courts during the past year for recreational basketball, volleyball, and other indoor activities.
- 532 school athletic fields, representing 62 percent of all the fields available in the county, were used in last year's recreation program.
- Eight schools were used as teen centers during the school year.

Park Authority

More than 26,447 citizens attended classes, camps, and Rec-PAC programs run by the Park Authority in FCPS facilities last year.

Adult and Community Education

Enrollment in FCPS Office of Adult and Community Education classes totaled 69,773 last year.

▶ WHY ADD MORE CLASSROOMS AND MODULAR UNITS?

Recent significant increases in student enrollment have pushed some schools well beyond capacity. These increases have been due to demographic, economic, and other factors that will likely continue to affect enrollment in FCPS for the next five years.

Construction money is included in the bond for a **new middle school in the south county area**.

In addition, nine capacity enhancement projects are included in the bond for:

- Crestwood Elementary School
- Cunningham Park Elementary School
- Kings Park Elementary School
- Lynbrook Elementary School
- Spring Hill Elementary School
- Springfield Estates Elementary School
- West Springfield Elementary School
- Woodley Hills Elementary School
- Whitman Middle School

The new construction, renovations, and additions will allow for the relocation of six modular additions. Modular units are factory-built structures that include conventional-size classrooms that are wired and equipped to accommodate technology requirements and therefore meet current educational specifications. They can be installed in half the time and realize a 50 to 60 percent cost savings over conventional structures.

▶ WHY RENOVATE OUR SCHOOLS?

The School Board is committed to protecting the community's investment in schools and other buildings, which have a combined present value approaching \$4.5 billion.

Not only do these facilities wear out over time, but they also become outdated, both technologically and instructionally. FCPS, therefore, renovates its schools to ensure that students, countywide, have effective and efficient learning environments.

Funding for the renovation at **Marshall High School** is included in the bond.

Fairfax County public schools are expected to be usable for 20 to 25 years from the date of construction. Renovations undertaken at the end of that period extend the useful life of the school building another 20 years. Renovations also help to relieve crowding by providing spaces for required small-group and specialized instruction. Schools are renovated in a sequence determined by published rankings of priority need. These priorities are established by independent professional assessments of each school's physical condition.

Examples of the other completed renovation improvements include: upgrading basic systems such as heating, air conditioning, lighting, and plumbing; remodeling media centers; upgrading science and technology laboratories; refurbishing general classrooms; upgrading wiring for cable television and computers; and providing upgraded furnishings and equipment, where appropriate.

▶ WHY INCLUDE FUNDING FOR PLANNING?

The 2009 school bond referendum also includes planning money for renovation at **Sandburg Middle School**. Putting funds for project planning into one bond issue and actual construction money into a later bond issue allows timely implementation of the projects without committing the county's bonding authority for construction costs earlier than necessary. Some projects need added time for land acquisition; other projects may require complicated construction designs or lengthy government approval procedures. With preplanning, such complicated projects can be completed earlier than they otherwise would have been had planning and construction been authorized concurrently.

▶ WHAT WILL THE INFRASTRUCTURE COMPONENT ACCOMPLISH FOR SCHOOLS?

Although our schools are maintained in an exceptional manner, there are many components that do not have a life cycle capable of lasting 20 or more years between construction and a renovation. The infrastructure component is dedicated to these essential elements of the facilities in order to maintain them in a safe manner. The primary funding is devoted to the two most critical aspects of a school—the mechanical system and roofing. In addition, funding includes Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades, the replacement of sound and fire alarm systems, parking lot asphalt repair, security enhancement, and athletic infrastructure replacement.

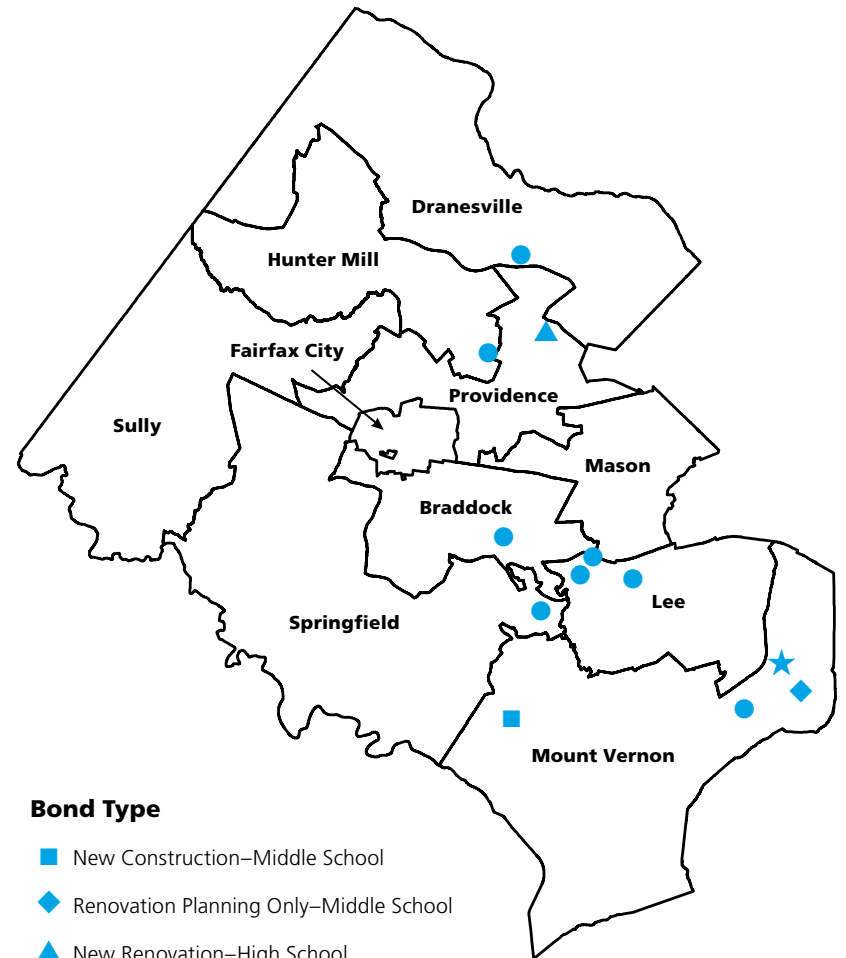
▶ ARE THERE OTHER REQUIREMENTS?

The cost of providing staff members to maintain quality control over contractor work on all projects funded by this bond proposal is included in the contractor's bonded costs. The estimated expense to underwrite and issue bonds is reflected in the bond referendum total as well.

▶ HOW WILL PASSAGE AFFECT YOUR TAX RATE?

If approved, the bonds will be sold when needed to meet cash requirements for projects included in this referendum. To ensure that Fairfax County's coveted triple-A bond ratings are not jeopardized, the Board of Supervisors' financial guidelines provide that the annual cost of the county's debt service (principal and interest payments) be no greater than ten percent of annual combined general fund disbursements. The Board of Supervisors also maintains the county's net long-term debt at, or below, three percent of the total market value of taxable property in the county. As long as debt service costs do not increase significantly as a percentage of combined general fund disbursements, the county's bonded debt will not be a contributing factor to any increase in local taxes.

Bond Referendum 2009



Bond Type

- New Construction—Middle School
- ◆ Renovation Planning Only—Middle School
- ▲ New Renovation—High School
- Capacity Enhancement—Elementary School
- ★ Capacity Enhancement—Middle School

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Student Representative

To find out more about the bond referendum, you may go to the Fairfax County Public Schools web site at www.fcps.edu or call the FCPS Department of Communications and Community Outreach at **571-423-1200**.

BondReferendumFacts