

the  
great  
plains

# Shenendehowa

Central Schools

## Residents to vote October 24 on \$10 million capital project

*Project addresses health and safety facility needs, provides WiFi access in all school buildings and an improved physical fitness center for all high school students—impact on the average tax bill is less than a couple of dollars per year.*

On October 24th, residents will be asked to vote on a \$10,072,663 capital project that will have a net impact of 0.03% over 15 years on the tax rate. This means that a home assessed at \$250,000 will pay an additional \$1.49 per year...or 12 cents per month.

The reason that this project will have a minimal increase on the tax bill is a combination of debt refinancing, use of a capital reserve fund and state aid.

The project includes:

- Address high-priority health and safety needs identified in the 5-year facility plan, such as:

### Financial Information:

Total cost of the project	\$10,072,663
LESS- Savings from refinancing of existing debt	<u>-\$5,130,560</u>
Balance	\$4,942,103
LESS- Use of capital reserve to reduce amount to be borrowed:	<u>-\$2,334,577</u>
Balance:	\$2,607,526
LESS- State building aid reimbursement @ 67.7%:	<u>-\$1,765,295</u>
Net local impact on the budget paid over 15 years:	\$842,231

- o Upgrading off-site backup and disaster recovery capacity (i.e., emergency generators).
- o Replacing original pipe-fittings that are leaking.
- o Upgrading fire alarm control panels.
- o Replacing remaining original exhaust fans.

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## The Common Core Standards: a new road map for learning

Creating a system in which all students, no matter where they live, are equally prepared for success in college and the workforce is no easy task.

One of the more revolutionary changes the New York State Education Department has recently made is the adoption of the National Common Core State Standards (CCSS).



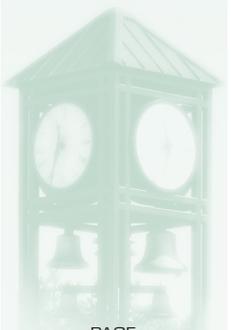
NYSED Commissioner John King looks on as Shen teacher Rebecca Lemieur demonstrates the iPad to her third-grade class, part of a project being piloted at Orenda.

The standards provide a clear and consistent understanding of what students are expected to learn and are designed to be rigorous and relevant to the real world. They were developed using the highest, most effective models from states across the country and countries around the world so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society--maintaining America's competitive edge.

Standards do not tell teachers how to teach, but they do outline the knowledge and skills their students should have so that they can build the best lessons for their classrooms. They ensure more consistent exposure to materials and learning experiences through curriculum, instruction, and teacher preparation for student learning.

The transition and implementation of the new Math and English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core State Standards are mandated this year by the state.

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*Common Core, continued from 1*

“At Shen, teachers are in the process of planning lessons that are aligned with the Common Core. Our goal is to ensure each student experiences intellectual engagement in the classroom. This type of learning requires students to think deeply, work collaboratively to solve complex problems, and apply their learning,” says Elizabeth Wood, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

Here is an overview of what the standards will mean for all students:

**ELA Common Core**

The ELA standards require certain critical content for all students, including: classic myths and stories from around the world, America’s Founding Documents, foundational American literature, and Shakespeare.

The standards expect that students will grow their vocabularies through a mix of conversations, direct instruction, and reading. They require that students gain, evaluate, and present increasingly complex information, ideas, and evidence through reading, writing, listening and speaking.

In reading, the standards increase the complexity of what students must be able to read and comprehend so that students advancing through the grades are able to gain more from what they read. Students are expected to build knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspective by reading a diverse array of classic and contemporary literature as well as challenging informational texts.

In writing, students must be able to write logical arguments, information-



*Shatekon second graders are fascinated by the emergence of a Monarch Butterfly from its chrysalis!*

al/explanatory texts and narratives using research, sound reasoning and evidence.

**Mathematics**

In math, it’ll be more about understanding the material and less about memorizing formulas.

This means even math tests could include writing portions in which students will have to explain their answers.

In elementary mathematics, the standards lay a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals. Taken together, these elements support a student’s ability to learn and apply more demanding math concepts and procedures at the secondary level.

The middle school and high school standards call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges; they prepare students to think and reason mathematically.

The standards in math focus on developing a depth of knowledge, understanding and ability to apply mathematics in real life situations, rather than piling topic upon topic.

The mathematical progressions outlined in the common core are sequential and based on evidence of best practices. They are research based and designed to ensure college and career readiness at an internationally competitive level.

**Parents as partners**

There are many things that parents can do to help their children practice what they learn. The National PTA has developed parent guides that include:

- Key items that children should be learning in English language arts and mathematics in each grade, once the standards are fully implemented.
- Activities that parents can do at home to support their child’s learning.
- Methods for helping parents build stronger relationships with their child’s teacher.
- Tips for planning for college and career (high school only).

The guides can be found by going to the following web page:

<http://www.pta.org/4996.htm>

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*Elizabeth Wood,  
Assistant Superintendent*



*Shen High School students collaborated with local businesses to design and build a pedestrian bridge that will span Lock 19 on the Erie Canal in Vischer Ferry. GE Energy, SMRT Design Firm, Turner Construction, Curtis Lumber and Momentive Performance were all partners on this project along with the Town of Clifton Park and the Southern Saratoga Chamber of Commerce.*



## Navigating the new teacher/principal evaluation regulation

The new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) legislation in New York was developed to improve the state’s educational system and support the professional growth of educators in the state, thus leading to better student achievement.

It requires an annual performance evaluation of teachers and principals. It provides a more uniform framework to evaluate teachers and principals, while also allowing districts to customize some areas of review.

The evaluation system measures teacher and principal effectiveness based on a 100-point scale that is converted into one of four categories referred to as the HEDI scale— Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, and Ineffective. Educators in the bottom two categories will be required to participate in improvement plans.

In calculating the totals:

- 60 points are based on classroom observations - all teachers must be observed at least two times per year, including one announced classroom

observation (with a pre- and a post-conference) and one unannounced classroom observation (with a post-conference).

- 40 points are based on student growth and achievement broken down into two, 20-point scores:

**First 20 points** - For ELA/math teachers in grades 4-8, the state will provide a score based on student progress on state exams. All other teachers must develop Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). Growth is measured by administering a pre-assessment at the beginning of the year to collect baseline data and an end-of-course assessment given to measure student growth over time. “These assessments should not create anxiety or concern among students who will be completing them,” said Elizabeth Wood, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. “They are truly intended to gather data so that we can work to improve

our instruction and ultimately the performance of students in our classes.”

**Second 20 points** - Pupil performance on a locally selected measures of student learning (which must be approved by the state). Local school districts have many options to determine this score, including using state test scores, an assessment from NYSED’s List of Approved Assessments, or the use of a district- or school-created assessment that is rigorous and comparable across classrooms in the same grade/subject or in the same program in a school district.

“While this regulation is ultimately focused on the right thing, promoting professional growth to improve student achievement, it will put tremendous stress on the entire system,” said Superintendent L. Oliver Robinson. “We need to ensure that these changes are implemented smoothly and the focus remains where it belongs...on the students.”

“We need to ensure that we continue to support our staff to ensure that these changes are implemented smoothly and the focus remains where it belongs... on the students.”

*Dr. L. Oliver Robinson,  
Superintendent*



*Capital Project Vote October 24, 2012,  
continued from 1*

- o Replacing chimney caps with stainless steel.
- o Replacing deteriorated freezers in cafeteria.
- o Abating ceiling and providing new suspended ceiling system.
- o Repairing roof leaks and replace damaged ceilings.
- o Replacing original boilers.
- o Replacing roof exhaust fans.
- o Rebuilding interior kitchen grease traps.
- o Removing exterior asbestos wall cladding.
- o Replacing elevator cab and controls.
- Comprehensive WiFi capacity in every building on campus, as well as physical education outdoor space. This will enable students to use personal electronics in classrooms to enhance the instructional program.
- Creation of a multi-level physical fitness space by reconstructing the existing wrestling and weight room areas with improved ventilation. This will make the space more user-friendly so that all high school students, not just athletes, feel comfortable using it to get active and stay fit during and outside of school hours.

The vote will be held on October 24, 2012. Polls are open in the Gowana gym from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Residents to vote October 24 on \$10 million capital project that addresses priority health and safety facility needs, provides WiFi access in all school buildings and an improved physical fitness center for all students. The impact on the average tax bill is less than a couple of dollars per year.

**What is on the ballot?**

Residents will vote on a \$10,072,663 Capital Project that will have a net impact of 0.03% over 15 years on the tax rate. This means that a home assessed at \$250,000 will pay an additional \$1.49 per year.

**When/where is the vote?**

Tuesday, October 24, 2012

7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Gowana Middle School Gym

**Who can vote?**

You are eligible to vote if you are a U.S. citizen, 18 years or older and have been a Shenendehowa district resident for at least 30 days prior to the vote. No preregistration is required. Official personal identification with photo is required. It is a crime to falsify votes (i.e., voting twice, false identification).

**Can't get to the polls?**

Absentee ballots may be used by any resident who will not be available to come to the campus to vote. They are available at the district office, 5 Chelsea Place, Clifton Park. For information, call the district clerk at 881-0623. By law, absentee ballots are mailed to any resident who is disabled. If you are disabled and did not receive one, please call the district clerk's office. Ballots must be returned to the district clerk no later than 5 p.m. on October 24, 2012.

**Directions to the polls**

Gowana Middle School is located on Shen's main campus. Enter the campus using the Route 146 entrance, bear left. Gowana is on the right.