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Contributed Illustration

This architect's rendering shows what a proposed elementary school in Shenango Township would look like.

Shenango project to go before voters

By John K. Mazza
New Castle News

The Shenango Area School District will ask voters in November to approve a \$44.5 million construction project.

The school board adopted a resolution Monday to place a referendum on the ballot asking voter approval to increase the district's debt by \$44,505,000 to finance construction of a new elementary school and a high school auxiliary gym.

Property taxes would be increased by 4.1674 mills — phased in over a four-year period — to cover the cost, according to Superintendent Dr. Michael Schreck. The district's tax is currently 12.36 mills.

The tax increase would exceed the index set by the state Department of Education. Under state law, any tax increase above the index requires voter approval.

The millage would increase by .2044 mills in the first year, 1.315 mills in the second year, 1.4345 mills in the third and 1.2135 mills in the fourth.

Schreck said the median assessment for a residential property in the district is \$85,500. For that assessment, the proposed increase would raise taxes by a total of \$361 over a four-year period, Schreck said.



Contributed Illustration

The lobby of a proposed new Shenango Elementary School would look like this.

The school board plans to hold town hall meetings to discuss the project with residents on Sept. 28 and Oct. 7 in the elementary school gym. The district includes Shenango Township and South New Castle.

The new two-story elementary school would be connected to the high school, and the auxiliary gym would sit in between. The new structure would be constructed on the football practice field and baseball fields.

If voters approve the referendum, a contract for construction would be awarded in December 2016, according to a district fact sheet. The current timeline calls for the project to be completed in December 2018.

In explaining the benefits to be derived from the project, Schreck

said a total renovation of the elementary school, built in 1926, would exceed \$21 million.

The fact sheet says a new elementary school will be designed for the next generation of learning. It will include infrastructure to support modern technology, improved energy efficiency, safety and security enhancements and improvements to traffic flow and parking.

The project will give the high school a new full-sized auxiliary gym, expanded gym lobby and concession areas, an expanded weight room, a new fitness area, new locker and team rooms and the ability to schedule multiple sport practices and to host tournaments.

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