

THE TORNADO TIMES

October/November 2017

Poland Central School Capital Project 2020 - Where is it?

Our school district is undertaking its largest capital project in many years. Last May, the voters of our district approved our normal school budget as well as two additional budget propositions (additional projects that need funding). The 2017-2018 school budget that was passed has increased taxes by 0% because there is a surplus of funds (money left over) from the previous years. The two additional budget propositions that were passed contain some massive changes to our school.

Our school will be constructing a new gym; converting the “Walker Auditorium into a dedicated auditorium and presentation space;” making improvements to our libraries; renovating music and art rooms; constructing a vestibule (lobby/entrance) at the main entrance where the buses load and unload; improving and renovating our boilers (that heat the school) and the heating system overall; renovating student bathrooms; constructing a track and soccer field “including bleachers and expanded parking” on the land to be purchased that is behind the tennis courts; “relocating music, band and chorus classrooms to make better use of the auditorium;” “relocating the teaching kitchen;” among a few others.

Contents

Capital Project
1

Technology
2

Student Life
3

Jokes & Memes
6

Entertainment
7

Mr Cuthbertson's
Corner
12

Continued on Page 9

Technology



Chromebooks At Home?

Technology plays a huge role in how we get things done in school. Many class assignments are turned in with technology like Chromebooks. The question is how can we use this tech at home. Mr. Gogol, more well known as the technology god, told me that, at the latest, Chromebooks are hoped to be available by January for all students to take home and use. This will be a huge help to the 30-40 student who have no form of technology at home to use at all. The Chromebooks, of which you will be able to take home, will be the newer black models that are now available in most classes. The target is for all students in grades 9-12 to have a Chromebook to take home.

A problem that comes up is these Chromebooks are especially internet dependent. For the students that do not have access to this technology at home, most likely do not have internet access either. A solution to this problem would be the distribution of Verizon Wi-Fi hotspots which would allow you to access the internet through a USB.

Though there still is a problem with that getting internet if you are in a dead zone with no cell tower coverage. Solutions to this problem are being worked on in order to allow every student the opportunity to have internet on a Chromebook.

Parents do have the option to opt out of this program if they feel that they can trust their children to not destroy them. The school gets these Chromebooks between \$175-\$180. The school would hold you responsible if they were damaged by neglect though there may be some room if it was completely an accident. These incidents will be handled case by case and repaired through BOCES. Ideally, students would charge these Chromebooks overnight and be able to use them the next day in school. There will be charging stations around the school like Mr. Gagnon's room but overnight charging is preferred. Even though you could use these computers on your own Wi-Fi, all the school filters will still be in place.

Continued on page 5

Student Life

The Stresses of Homecoming

Have you ever felt like the stress of life was consuming you? You may have had an increase in stress due to homecoming and spirit week and even felt alone during this stressful week, but don't worry, you weren't. In a recent survey that I conducted through google forms 90% of the people surveyed at Poland Central School in grades 9-12 are stressed out about the pressures of homecoming and spirit week, on top of normal school pressure like tests and quizzes (because teachers still had to cover their material). Of course, when asked what stresses them out the most, spirit week or homecoming the majority of students surveyed said homecoming So how does one limit the stresses of finding the perfect outfit or asking a date while still maintaining acceptable grades? Well, maybe some of these things that your peers do will help you: listening to music, thinking of exciting things, scrolling through memes, playing sports, talking to your parents, art, and friends among other physical activities or mindless activities.

Of the people asked in this survey 74.1% of them are not currently active members of student council. This means that they weren't stressed about setting up, planning or taking down pep rally and/or homecoming, so their responses apply to the general populace of the school.

Also, keep in mind for the next dance or social event are that if you don't have a date, you are not alone; 50% of the people who filled out this survey did not have a date or weren't sure if they had one at the time the survey was administered. As far as outfit challenges, 45% of the people surveyed had anywhere from a difficult to an extremely difficult time finding the perfect outfit. As far as solutions go to this problem, it depends on what you value more: time or looking your best. Also knowing what you are looking for in an outfit can help to limit the time spent searching. 35.7% of the people surveyed spent about one hour getting ready, definitely a reasonable amount of time.

Continued on Page 5

(Image credit to Poland Central School Instagram)



OLWEUS Talks: Tolerance **Within the Generations**

So much of the world's problems are blamed on the Millennials. Millennials are apparently lazy, entitled, and even the cause for the unemployment rate in America. The older generations specifically target teenagers when such topics come up. However, what they do not realize is that most teenagers can't even be considered Millennials! Most people born after the year 1997, are considered part of the Generation Z.

Teenagers are faced with more backlash as the years pass. A huge argument? The generation spend the most time using technology, to the point of addiction. While this is a valid argument, technology and the internet is not getting in the way of most daily activities.

According to a study performed by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, the generations who read the most for either their education or for fun, is the Millennials or Generation Z, having been included in the same age range in the study. They accounted for the 86% of the population studied to have read a book in the last 12 months. Generations such as the Baby Boomers should be proud of this fact, that their successors are educating themselves in such a way.

Even if the new generations show characteristics that the elders do not agree with, this doesn't mean that they should criticize. Instead, they should listen to their ideas, not necessarily agree with them.

The Generation Z has also been deemed more money efficient, a general 67% claiming they would go online to get coupons versus paying full price at a store. Gen Z also has been estimated to have high numbers of the population to go straight into the workforce, opting for cheaper, and more convenient form of higher education, online schooling. Growing up in the modern world has its drawbacks, however. Gen Z grew up in the digital age, where every bit of information is at their fingertips. This fact has resulted in the generation being less focused than their predecessors. Social media is thought to be the cause. Having updates constantly from their phones, or other devices, has made them impatient. Studies also show, that of all the living generations in the United States, Gen Z are the most pessimistic, especially when it comes to politics and economic standing. Generation Z of America have a very negative outlook on the future.

It is estimated that Gen Z will soon surpass the Millennials with the highest percentage of mental health disorders in the world, and the negative look on the youth by older generations may be contributing. This negativity should be altered, perhaps to positivity. After all, Gen Z has a lot going for it.

Continued on Page 5

Chromebooks at Home? **(cont.)**

At the start, Chromebooks being able to be signed out with Mrs. Zyma overnight. We soon should be assigned our own Chromebook. This hopefully will help the 30-40 students who have no access to the computers or internet at their home. This is a great step forward as Poland becomes more technologically advanced and should set an example for schools in the area to set foot within the ever changing technological landscape.

-Devin Draper

The Stresses of Homecoming **(cont.)**

Life in high school alone can be extremely stressful, but throwing in a dance that costs the average person around \$100 dollars makes for an interesting night and week. Sadly, there is no foolproof way to rid your yourself of all stress, but you can utilize the help of the adults in the building, take some of the solutions that other high school students used mentioned above or just worry about what you can control in life, remember that everyone has stress and you are never alone. With these thoughts in mind you should be able to get through everything, especially the stress of homecoming week.

-Gabrielle Stemmer

OLWEUS Talks: Tolerance **Within the Generations**

It is Generation Z that holds the future of society in their hands. With the changing times, it would be so much easier if all the generations got along. Perhaps the older generations should practice the act of tolerance more often. Tolerance does not mean agreeing with what others have to say, but rather acknowledging that others' opinions are valid. Instead of pointing fingers, they should work together to change the world in a more positive way.

-Ashley Lynch



New Additions to the Tornadoes

This month's highlighted new faculty member is Ms. Kinney. Ms. Kinney is the teacher who has filled Mr. Smith's spot as the physics, chemistry and forensics teacher. Previously before teaching at Poland, Ms. Kinney had various teaching jobs at Schenectady High School, Doane Stuart School, Mexico High School, tutored privately and even a penitentiary, so some rowdy teenagers are no issue to her at this point. When it comes to science, she has had a lifelong passion for it. Her favorite scientist, hands down, is Nikola Tesla. This is mainly because he has developed so many technologies and broke so much ground, such as being the true inventor of the radio and developing radar, but is often discredited to his findings and inventions. When it comes to the sciences, her main interests lie within particle physics and astrophysics. Outside of the sciences she has many other hobbies and interests, which surprised me, as I was under the belief that teachers only participated in and discussed in the subject or subjects they taught. When she isn't overseeing chemical reactions and demonstrating the laws of physics, you can find her hiking, dabbling in photography, traveling, painting or reading. Welcome aboard, Ms. Kinney!



Memes & Jokes Compiled by Sarah Ahles

**Q: Why didn't
the skeleton
go to the
Halloween
party?**



**A: Because he didn't
have any BODY to go
with!**

me september 30th vs. october 1st



Entertainment

It

Come For the Clown, Stay For, Well, the Clown

October: that lovely time of the year where people across the country embrace fear and horrific folklore and romanticize it for a month until it is inevitably looked down upon to dress up as Superman for no apparent reason yet again. Truly a cruel and unjust world we live in. Anyway, October, coincidentally, is the time where Hollywood pushes out plenty of horror movies that can be compared to a dumpster that had recently caught fire. But alas, a movie in particular managed to avoid this dreaded month for horror films and remain on top for a considerable amount of time, that movie being *It*. *It* was one of the year's most anticipated romps of the year that horror fans eagerly awaited since the first trailer dropped in the beginning of the year. *It* would be released in mid-September and fans of the source material, a lengthy novel written by Stephen King that is the equivalent to roughly 1.3 copies of *Harry Potter* and the *Order of the Phoenix* in pages, would put the film at number one in the Box Office gross count for an entire month. Was the movie worth the anticipation, though?

The film revolves around a group of kids in the town of Derry, Maine who go on go against an evil entity that shapeshifts into a clown in order to terrorize children within the town during 1989, which is a relief because if the film took place in the modern day it's just be a bunch of kids Googling "how to get rid of clown living in sewer." But I digress, going back to the kids, they are honestly the main problem of the film. It's not that the actors who play these kids are doing a bad job. They're honestly better actors than a lot of fully competent adults are, quite frankly, and the way the characters are written in the film are fantastic, they're very believable. The problem really is that you don't have that emotional attachment to most of the characters in the way that you should with a film like this. This is a horror flick, and when the characters are in distress, the audience should begin to feel worried for the characters. But, in my humble opinion, this cannot be achieved if the audience isn't emotionally attached to the characters.

Continued on Page 8

It Review (cont.)

Now, onto what really made it the number one movie for entire month: Pennywise the Dancing Clown. Pennywise, played by Bill Skarsgard, gives this movie the life it needs. He is a larger-than-life presence that you can't help but be glued to every time he is on screen. From Pennywise's creepy smile to the disturbing way he carries himself, this character truly was the driving force of the film. When Pennywise was on screen, I always got excited because I knew something good was about to happen. Well, not good in the sense of a resolution to the main characters' conflict, as his presence often meant inevitable doom, he was just fun to watch. Skarsgard hits his performance out of the park, topping James McAvoy's portrayal as Kevin Crumb in *Split* for my personal favorite performance of the year.

The last topic I want to get into is if you can honestly consider this a true horror film. Sure, this does have the elements of horror films. There's an overpowered villain, multiple unqualified main characters and the creepy setting of a sewer, but I just didn't find it scary.

This film reminded me of *Stranger Things* in that a lot of disturbing or scary things happened on screen, but those scenes rarely provoked fear from me in the same way a film like, say, *Halloween* often does. The lack of fear doesn't make the film bad, it just goes to show that we as a society have evolved and become more and more exposed to certain elements and tried tropes of the horror genre that this film quickly goes from a horror movie to a thriller within the first forty minutes.

It has got a lot of good things going on for it. The villain is fantastic, the entire film is acted well and the writing is superb. The film was well worth the anticipation and more than makes up for the awful miniseries that was based on the same source material as this movie that came out in 1990. There honestly isn't much else to say other than here's hoping we don't have to wait another twenty-seven years for the sequel that's set to release in the future.

-Dominic Altamura



Capital Project (cont.)

This is a very large project and a lot of students and parents, including myself, came back to school this year with the same, simple question: “Where is it?” Where’s the new gym, the new track, the new renovations? This project is much larger than what one summer can do and has been being worked on through the summer into this school year. At this moment, the project is in its initial “design phase,” with architects and engineers coming to our school and making measurements and very detailed designs as to what will be built at our school. This is not an easy task and it takes a lot of detail and a lot of time. At this point, Mrs. Dutton (our superintendent) and Mr. Hess (our business manager) are hoping to share this information with the public by the end of the calendar year and some by the November board meeting next month. The project is moving along in a very timely manner. Sure, it is true that we do not have a new gym and track built within 4 months of the budget propositions being passed, but these changes will be worth the wait.

Once these designs are submitted they will be reviewed by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) to get approval. The NYSED takes a fair amount of time to approve projects, especially a larger project like this one. Our school will also be purchasing the nine acres of land behind the tennis courts to construct the track on within the coming months. At this time it’s estimated that the official construction of this project will start in the summer of 2018 and that the project will be completed in full by 2020. There is a lot to be done to get a large project like this off the ground, let alone to finish. The process will take time, but at this point it is being done in a very timely and effective manner.

Being a large project, many citizens in our district had and still have concerns about the the cost of the project. The project will cost \$12,122,500, which, to put it simply, is a lot of money. And yet, the budget for this project was done very well and yields the best results for the taxpayer without raising taxes an incredible amount. The additional taxes for this project for a home with a market value of \$100,000 are \$15.82 per year with no exemptions, \$11.08 per year with a Star Exemption, and \$5.57 per year with an Enhanced Star Exemption. The school taxes in our district are based off of how much your home is assessed (evaluated) for, so the taxes won’t be the same for everyone. If one person owns a house assessed to be worth \$100,000 and another person owns a house assessed to be worth \$200,000, the person with the more expensive home (worth \$200,000, in this example), will pay more. In this example, the person with the house worth \$200,000 will pay double what the person with the house worth \$100,000 will pay.



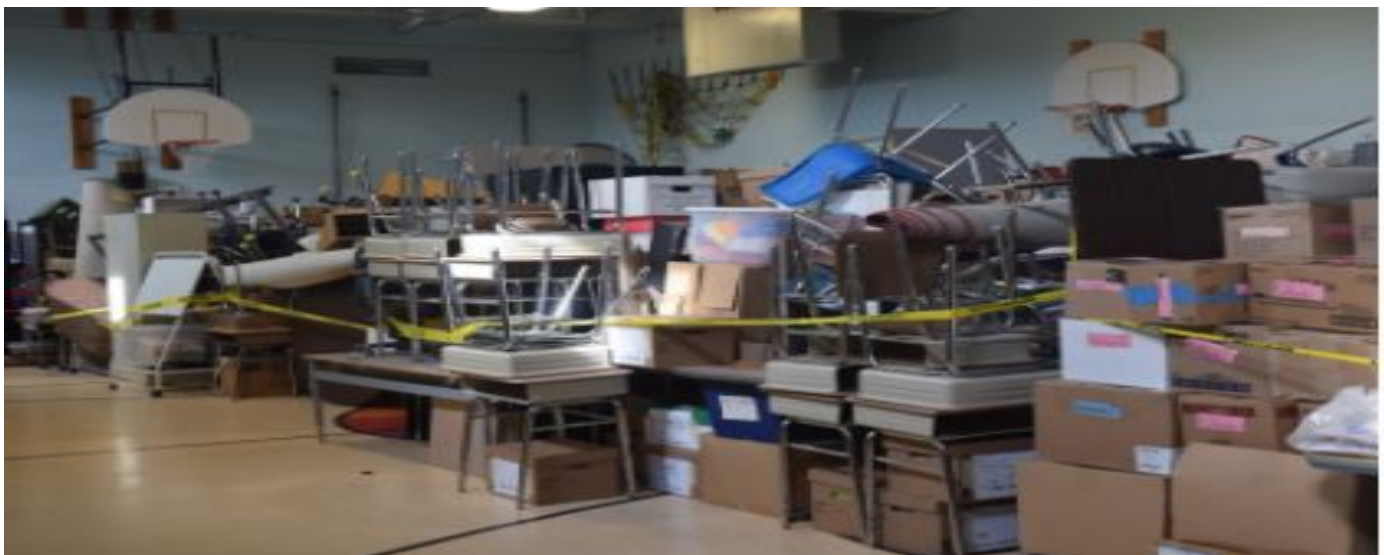
The Capital Project 2020's initial gym, auditorium, vestibule, and track layouts.

Sadly, the taxes just get more complex from here. The “Star Exemption” in New York State is given to taxpayers who make less than \$500,000 and is only given to their “primary” residence (where they live). So, a person who lives in our district and makes \$40,000 a year gets the Star Exemption, which allows them to pay less in taxes. Camps and vacant pieces of land, on the other hand, do not qualify for the exemption because they are “secondary” residences, not “primary,” because no one is living at them.

As if it couldn’t get any more complex, some taxpayers also qualify for the “Enhanced Star Exemption, meaning if they are 65 and over and live in our district they’ll pay even less in taxes. It is very important to talk to your family members about where they fall when it comes to these taxes and make sure that they know how much they’ll be paying under these new budget proposals.

The local taxes for this project were able to be lowered with the use of “State Aid Payments”(New York State Building Aid), re-allocating money that was used to pay for our 2000 project, and using \$400,000 already build into our budget to go towards this project. With this very smart and responsible way of budgeting, the cost to the taxpayer for this capital project was lowered drastically to where it is today. The project will be fully paid off by 2033 and around \$85,000 to \$90,000 per year will have to be raised through an increase of taxes to pay for the project. This results in an increase in taxes of \$11.08 per year with a Star Exemption for a home with a market value of \$100,000. It is still a tax increase, but it was done very responsibly to make sure the taxpayer wasn’t excessively burdened by the taxes and will get in return a very large project that will improve our school district.

Mrs. Dutton said very candidly (straightforwardly), about the cost of the project, that she was even surprised at the cost and how low it was, while also emphasizing that any additional cost to the taxpayer is very important and must be done responsibly. Throughout the process of creating this capital project, Mrs. Dutton saw it as an opportunity for the community and worked very hard to make and present a project that would benefit the community that she deeply cares about. She was excited for the idea and understood and understands the price tag attached and worked with many others, including Mr. Hess, to create a plan that was affordable and fiscally responsible, a plan that would have enthusiasm and support from the community, and one that offered the community an opportunity to do something that can bring pride and enthusiasm to our school.



This project has been done in a timely manner, is fiscally responsible, and has given our district an opportunity for something new, big, and better. The new gym, auditorium, and track get a lot of attention, but it's also worth mentioning the many less headline making changes. The old hot water burner is being replaced, the oil tank is being replaced, the burners on all three burners are being replaced, and new software is being put in to increase the efficiency of our school's heating system and improve on the cost of fuel to the taxpayer. In the long run this will save money for our school. Over this past summer some smaller projects were accomplished. Elementary classrooms were renovated, which included asbestos removal and new floors being put in. Some rooms had their cabinets renovated and new furniture added(see photos). These improvements have updated and improved the elementary and our school.

Overall, the capital project will benefit our school and our community very positively. It's budget is fiscally responsible and the project is being done in a timely manner. It will take time to see this large project constructed and finished. Even for the students like myself, who will have graduated from Poland by the time it is built, the facilities to be built are ones we can take pride in and use in the future. And for the parents, and future parents, who will be deciding where to settle down, raise a family, and send their children to school, this capital project brings additional reasons to choose Poland Central School. And in the meantime, we'll just have to wait patiently. Seeing this capital project finished will be well worth the wait.

-Kyle Delano



Elementary floor before being renovated.



Concrete is prepared.



Elementary floor after being renovated.

Mr. Cuthbertson's Corner

I would like to commend Dominic Altamura and the other contributing students at Poland Central School for keeping the publication of the Tornado Times going for the 2017-2018 school year. Our hope is that through this publication we can inform the student body of important news, share relevant stories and provide a media for students to demonstrate and highlight the creative talents of the great student body here at PCS.

As the principal of students Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade, I get to see a vast range of learners in action each day. I see those students just starting their academic careers learning the basics of the alphabet and numbers. I also see those students getting ready to transition into the next phase of their lives by completing college applications, or preparing to enter the workforce or military. Our goal here at Poland is to give our students the tools to be successful everyday.

With that being said, each month I would like to share some insights as well on topics that I feel are relevant to our school's climate and culture. This month I would like to talk about the first P in the district's mission statement of Developing Prepared, Productive and Proud Students. Being prepared is a fundamental quality that I feel is often overlooked and even disregarded by many people, in particular students. Preparedness is a skill that many students don't fully grasp until later on in their school experience. Teachers and administrators will often identify a correlation between students that struggle academically and their ability to organize themselves and being prepared for class. These students spend their time focused on looking for resources or gathering materials instead of being engaged in learning.

I relate being prepared to time, and as we all know time is the one thing in our lives that we can not get back, and we can't make more of it. Essentially time wasted is life wasted. Spending a little time to organize or prepare for your day will go a long way in making you successful in life!