

## Two weeks and one more rally before the P.C. school bond vote

By Casey Watts, Reporter Thursday, March 16, 2017 1:00 AM

The Port Chester Board of Education and former Bond Advisory Committee members hosted a presentation and a question/answer session at the Port Chester Middle School on Wednesday, March 8 in an effort to answer any lingering questions about the upcoming \$79.95M capital project. The Port Chester High School Jazz Ensemble, directed by Mike Miceli, also played at the beginning and the end of the lecture while a few seniors improvised solos.



A lot of information was repeated, such as the scope of the project and what will be done if the public passes the bond, but Superintendent Dr. Edward Kliszus reminded everyone

that enrollment is probably going to be higher than the demographers' predictions and that this is a need-based undertaking.

"It's a community-based project," he said. "Smaller class sizes improve student outcomes. More class offerings lead to more engaged leaders, which leads to improved graduation rates and high college acceptances."

The superintendent revealed that in the 2016-17 school year, 95 percent of the seniors are headed off to college and a majority of them are going to four-year schools. He then threw out a food-for-thought question to the audience: if this capital project was approved by the voters, could that number rise to 100 percent?

Assistant Superintendent for Business Maura McAward delivered some good news on the project: the allowable aided expense has risen from 66.4 percent to 66.9 percent, which means a small increase in the amount of state aid the capital project is eligible to receive. While it is not a big increase, McAward said it is a good sign that the reimbursement rate is still on the rise.

The Port Chester High School Jazz Ensemble, directed by Mike Miceli, broke up Wednesday, March 8's capital project presentation with some swinging tunes. Here is senior Eli Taylor-Lemire improvising a solo on the alto-saxophone. Casey Watts|Westmore News

The last speakers were former members of the BAC and current members of the Port Chester Partnership for Schools and Community group. They broke down the project to discuss why they made certain decisions, such as asking the Board of Education to approve a recommendation that included three gyms, why they decided to improve the elementary schools instead of moving a grade to the middle school or creating a ninth grade academy and why they kept the Early Learning Center. It all boiled down to keeping the focus on neighborhood schools and giving the kids the space they need to eat and have gym during the same periods.

The last Port Chester Capital Project presentation will take place on Thursday, March 23 at Port Chester High School at 6:30 p.m. The high school and middle school marching bands will be performing at a rally outside the school connected to the event.

Polls will be open on Tuesday, March 28 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the Port Chester Middle School gym.