

# North Penn High School expansion appears to get veto from voters

[R thereporteronline.com/2024/01/16/north-penn-high-school-expansion-appears-to-get-veto-from-voters](https://thereporteronline.com/2024/01/16/north-penn-high-school-expansion-appears-to-get-veto-from-voters)

Dan Sokil

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A “Vote Yes” election sign stands in the snow outside the Montgomery Township community and recreation center on Tuesday, Jan. 16 2024, with a “Vote No” sign in the background. (Photo by Jonathan Kassa)



By [Dan Sokil](#) | [dsokil@thereporteronline.com](mailto:dsokil@thereporteronline.com) | The Reporter  
January 16, 2024 at 10:51 p.m.

And the winner is...not official, but looking like “No.”

Early results Tuesday night had the No votes prevailing in the North Penn School District’s voter referendum on funding an expansion of North Penn High School. As of 10:30 p.m., county officials reported unofficial totals of 10,790 votes against the borrowing, versus 7,844 votes in favor.

School board members mobilized across the district to make the case for a “Yes” vote, which would authorize \$97 million in borrowing needed for a proposed expansion of the high school. Throughout the year, board members and district administrators gave public

presentations and tours highlighting the various failures and needs of the current high school, and presented to the community on the reasons to move roughly 1,000 ninth graders from the district's three middle schools to the high school.

District officials and consultants have estimated a \$403 million price tag for a renovation that would add classroom space for 1,000 ninth graders to move to the high school complex if the referendum passes, and if the referendum fails, district officials have proposed a \$236 million renovation meant to update the utilities through the school, but with minimal expansion. One question appeared on the ballot Tuesday: "Shall debt in the sum of \$97,318,376 dollars for the purpose of financing new construction that includes space for ninth grade students to be educated on campus and renovations of North Penn High School be authorized to be incurred as debt approved by the electors?"



Expanded hallways and concourses within North Penn High School, with the current view shown alongside, as shown during a community forum on planned renovations on Tuesday, Dec. 5 2023. (Screenshot of NPTV video)

North Penn staff also presented several Facebook Live streams to answer questions from community members ahead of the Jan. 16 vote, and letters to the editor advocating both for and against the referendum can be found under the "Opinion" header on TheReporterOnline.com.

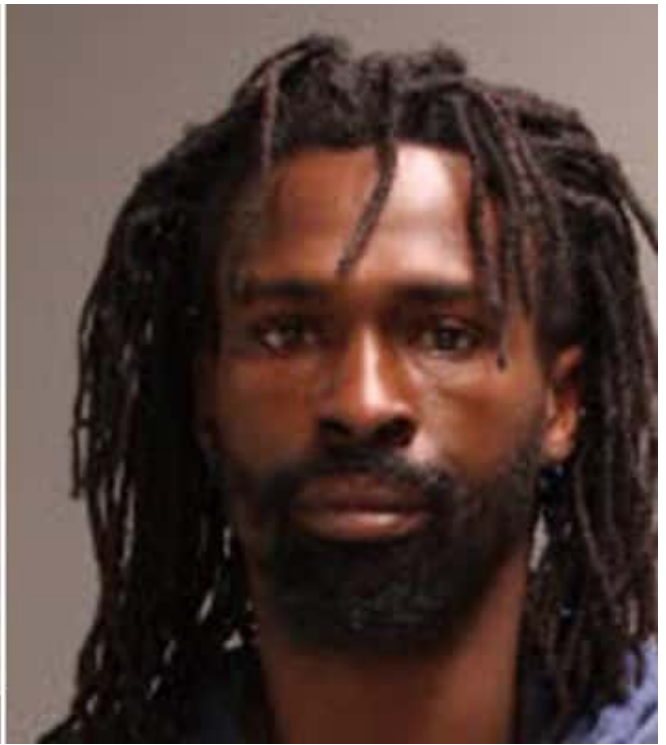
In a first round of votes posted around 8:40 p.m. Tuesday, county officials reported a margin of one vote, with totals of 3,470 votes for yes to 3,469 votes for no among the 6,939 mail-in and absentee ballots counted first. At that time, the county reported that 201 absentee and mail ballots were pending evaluation, and no in-person votes had been counted. Unofficial

Bucks County totals reported a total of 141 voters registered for the referendum, and an even 50-50 split with 11 voters choosing each option, for a roughly 15% turnout rate as of just after 9 p.m.

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A later batch of votes reported by the county at 9:39 p.m. had the No votes well ahead, with a total of 6,318 votes against compared to 5,217 votes for the expansion. That total of 11,559 votes represented 20 of 47 precincts and just under 16% turnout across the district, with 225 mail-in and absentees still pending evaluation and results still unofficial as of Tuesday night. A later update in Bucks went the other way: by 10 p.m. the Yes votes were ahead in Bucks by a margin of 14 votes to 11.

A 10:21 p.m. update had the margin of No votes even wider. The unofficial county report put No ahead by 10,790 votes to 7,844 for Yes, with mail-in ballots favoring the Yes answer by 36 total votes, but election day totals running against the referendum by a margin of 2,982, with 47 out of 47 precincts in the district counted, and roughly 26% turnout.

The screenshot displays a table with the following data:

	Assessed Home Value:		\$150,000	
	Implied Market Value:		\$423,000	
	Millage Rate [2]	Annual Increase (Mills) for Debt Service	Estimated Annual Increase	Estimated Cumulative Increase
Current [1]	29.6365			
2024-25	29.6365			
2025-26	29.9589	0.3224	\$48	\$48
2026-27	29.9589			\$48
2027-28	30.3953			\$48
2028-29	31.2577	0.4364	\$65	\$114
2030-31	31.7601	0.8624	\$129	\$243
2031-32	31.7601	0.5024	\$75	\$319
2032-33	31.7601			\$319
Through 2049	31.7601			\$319
2049-50	31.7601			\$319
2050-51	31.0907	(0.6694)	(\$100)	\$218
2051-52	30.8084	(0.2823)	(\$42)	\$176
Through 2055	30.8084			\$176
Current Annual Real Estate Tax ("RET")			\$4,445	
Est. maximum RET from Financing Plan [2]			\$4,764	
Est. Taxpayer Impact from Financing Plan [2]			\$7,794	

Below the table are three video feeds showing participants in a Facebook Live stream.

North Penn CFO Steve Skrocki (left), Superintendent Todd Bauer and Coordinator of Communications Media Bob Gillmer discuss a chart of proposed tax increases needed to pay for an expansion of North Penn High School during a Facebook Live stream on Dec. 6, 2023. (Screenshot of NPTV video)

According to voter registration statistics posted beforehand by Montgomery County's Department of Voter Services, the total number of registered voters in the district was just under 73,000, with just over 34,000 of that total being registered as Democrats, just over 26,000 Republicans, and roughly 8,500 of no affiliation, just over 2,000 as nonpartisan and just over 700 independents. Broken down by municipality, the county reported a total of 1,983 voters in Hatfield Borough; 11,397 in Lansdale Borough; 2,480 in North Wales Borough, and in townships the registered voter counts were 12,540 in Hatfield; 19,199 in Montgomery; 13,247 in Towamencin and 12,130 in Upper Gwynedd, but no breakdown by municipality was available as of Tuesday night.



Precincts Reported: 47 of 47 (100.00%)  
 Registered Voters: 18,658 of 72,976 (25.57%)  
 Ballots Cast: 18,658

## North Penn School District Referendum (Vote for 1)

Precincts Reported: 47 of 47 (100.00%)

		Election Day	Mail-in	Provisional	Total	
Times Cast		11,524	7,134	0	18,658 / 72,976	25.57%
Candidate	Party	Election Day	Mail-in	Provisional	Total	
Yes		4,271	3,573	0	7,844	
No		7,253	3,537	0	10,790	
Total Votes		11,524	7,110	0	18,634	
		Election Day	Mail-in	Provisional	Total	
Unresolved Write-In		0	0	0	0	

Unofficial vote totals posted by Montgomery County on Tuesday night, Jan. 16, 2024, showed a margin of 10,790 voting “No” against and 7,844 voting “Yes” in a referendum on funding an expansion of North Penn High School. (Screenshot of Montcopa website)

District staff said they had no official plans to communicate on the results until Wednesday, but that could change, and the school board next meets at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 18, at the district Educational Services Center, 401 E. Hancock St. in Lansdale. For more information visit [www.NPenn.org](http://www.NPenn.org) and for more on the high school renovations visit [www.ReimagineNPHS.org](http://www.ReimagineNPHS.org).