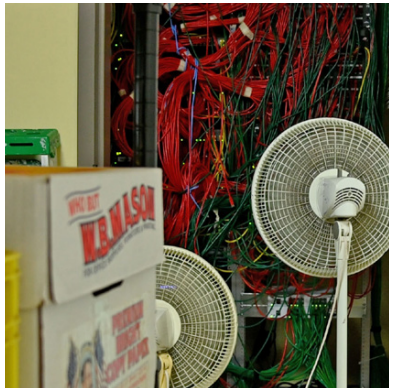
COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

2024 BOND



OUR TOWN, OUR SCHOOLS, OUR FUTURE

CHS 1975 | CMS COUGARS | MBS RESPECTFUL SAFE RESPONSIBLE | PORTERS POINT SCHOOL | UMS

csdbond.org

BUILDING FOR OUR FUTURE

$115 MILLION BOND PROPOSAL WILL ADDRESS THE URGENT INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS IN OUR SCHOOLS

Dear Colchester Community,

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our schools and our children. Your steadfast support over the years has empowered our educators to inspire and guide our students to success. Now, we face a critical moment, and we need to come together again to secure the future of our schools.

This November, the Colchester School Board is asking for your support on a $115 million bond proposal to address the urgent infrastructure needs of our schools. After community, committee, and expert engagement, we've planned substantial and necessary improvements across all five schools, with the most significant investments targeted at Union Memorial School (UMS), Porters Point School (PPS), and Colchester Middle School (CMS).

As a board, we approached this proposal with careful consideration for the tax burden it places on our community. Colchester consistently spends less than other districts in Chittenden County. Investing wisely remains at the core of our decision-making process. We unearthed hard questions and listened deeply as administration, facilities, teachers, families, students, community, and outside experts answered.

We are convinced that the work must be done now. Being proactive and tackling the project through a comprehensive district-wide plan will ensure we are being as effective and efficient as possible. In today's economic climate, we do not expect blind support. We also believe there will not be a better time to make these critical improvements and avoid higher costs down the road.

I encourage you to review this brochure and vote on Nov. 5. Your support will shape the future of our schools and the lives of our students for generations to come. This is our town. These are our schools. This is our future, and it depends on all of us.

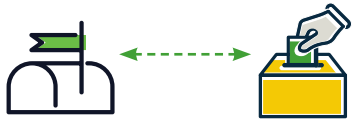
Sincerely,

Lindsey Cox

CHAIR, COLCHESTER SCHOOL BOARD

GO VOTE

Your vote matters!



Ballots will be mailed to all registered voters. Vote early or on Election Day, November 5, at Colchester H.S. from 7 am to 7 pm.

KEEPING UP WITH OUR STUDENT ENROLLMENT

2019-20	2144
2024-25	2202
2029-30	2322

FACILITIES PLANNING OVER THE PAST DECADE

2013

Long-term facilities committee created

2015

Early Education Center Committee created as a result of Act 166

2018

Research continues with facility assessments, traffic studies, septic tests, etc.

2020

Anticipated November ballot item paused due to COVID-19 impacts

2023

Planning efforts resume, including community engagement sessions

2024

Architects finalize floor plans and estimates

On Nov. 5, Colchester voters will consider a $115 million bond proposal to renovate, expand, and update the infrastructure of the schools in the district. This plan would allow the district to make critical and lasting updates for our town, our schools, and our future.

THE PROJECT SCOPE

The majority of the proposed bond will focus on Union Memorial School, Porters Point School, and Colchester Middle School. Over the last 70 years, UMS and PPS have undergone several additions and renovations to handle growing enrollment and an increase in required services, while CMS has never been renovated. Below is a snapshot of the work that is needed. The following pages give an overview of what the bond would fund and how it would impact taxes. For additional details, photos, and video of the project, visit our website csdbond.org

AGING INFRASTRUCTURE | Many of our schools are facing critical infrastructure issues. Some systems, such as plumbing, electrical, windows, and insulation, are still original to their construction over 60 years ago and have been deemed outdated or obsolete. Experts have confirmed these systems have reached the end of the useful life.

SAFETY & SECURITY | In addition to updating operating systems, the bond would increase accessibility and security. These school were built with narrow doorways and bathrooms that cannot accommodate mobility devices. They have main entry points that make visitor screening difficult, with poor lines of sight and a lack of proper emergency egress doors and automated sprinkler systems.

LEARNING SPACES | With enrollment in Colchester holding steady and even growing slightly, space has become increasingly limited and we are using every inch in our current facilities. This can take the form of teaching on carts or providing individual and small group instruction in hallways, vestibules, or closets.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION & RENOVATION HISTORY

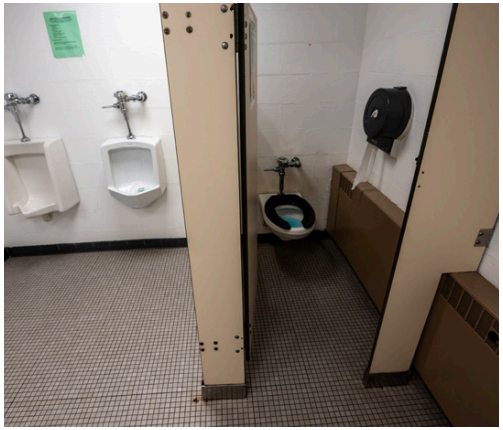
Union Memorial School (UMS)
- Built: 1954
- Renovations: 1969, 1988, 1989, 2000

Porters Point School (PPS)
- Built: 1956
- Renovations: 1980, 1989, 2000

Malletts Bay School (MBS)
- Built: 1962
- Renovation in 1999

Colchester Middle School (CMS)
- Built: 1968
- No renovations

Colchester High School (CHS)
- Built: 1974
- Renovations: Science labs in 2014, Performing arts center in 2016, Federal grant for bathrooms in 2023-24



» AGING PLUMBING AND A LACK OF ADA ACCESSIBILITY

» GYM CLASS IN THE CAFETERIA AT UMS

GRADES PREK–5 OVERVIEW

AGING INFRASTRUCTURE | SAFETY & SECURITY | LEARNING SPACES

The district's two K-2 schools, PPS and UMS, will undergo fairly identical renovations. Existing classrooms would be renovated, the building's mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems would undergo a complete overhaul, the oldest wings will be demolished and turned into expanded parking and bus loops, and a new two-story addition would be constructed. The addition would allow the preschool program to relocate to the K-2 schools, and that wing at MBS would be renovated into much-need space to provide student services.

PROPOSED UMS EXTERIOR

PROPOSED PPS ENTRANCE

PROPOSED UMS DESIGN

Note: due to space constraints, we have only shown the proposed UMS floorplan. The PPS plan will be very similar and can be viewed at **csdbond.org**.

Cafeteria and gym spaces will be separated with proper distance from classrooms for a more effective daily schedule with fewer noise disruptions.

The building would be brought up to current safety, fire, and energy code, including installing an automatic sprinkler system.

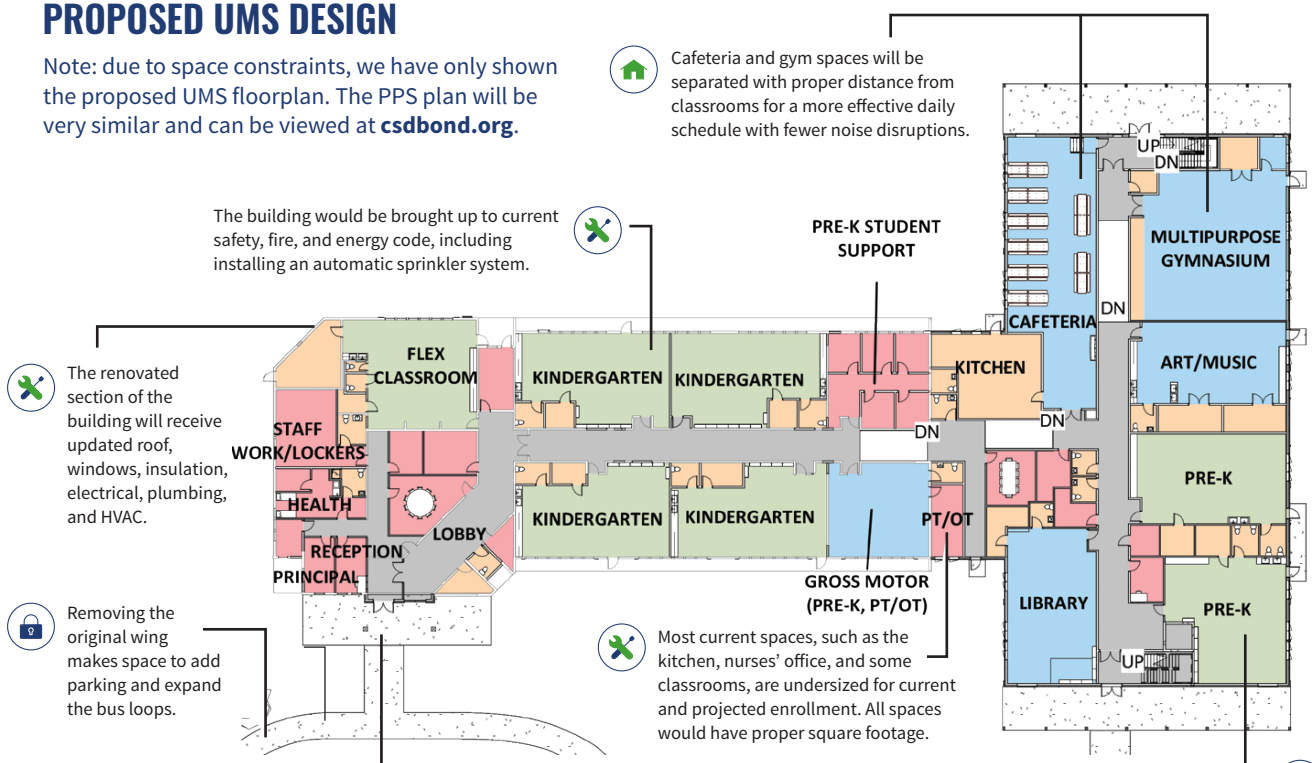
The renovated section of the building will receive updated roof, windows, insulation, electrical, plumbing, and HVAC.

Removing the original wing makes space to add parking and expand the bus loops.

New entrances are designed for security with adequate sightlines and visitor screening areas.

Most current spaces, such as the kitchen, nurses' office, and some classrooms, are undersized for current and projected enrollment. All spaces would have proper square footage.

Preschoolers will be relocated to join their age-alike peers and free up much-needed space at MBS.

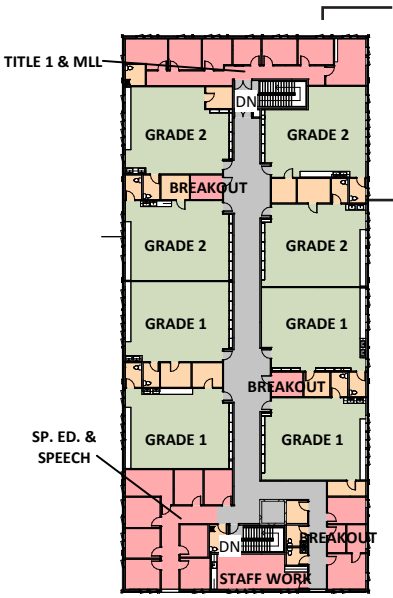


1st Floor

Dedicated space to provide learning intervention and support to students, rather than using hallways and closets.

The entire building, including classrooms, bathrooms, hallways and group spaces, would be made handicap accessible.

The new addition will have a basement for storage and mechanical systems.



2nd Floor

GRADES 6–12 OVERVIEW

AGING INFRASTRUCTURE | SAFETY & SECURITY | LEARNING SPACES

At CMS, the building will see an overhaul of the layout, including classroom spaces and multi-purpose spaces like the cafeteria and gymnasium. The U-shaped building design will be connected to create a square, making the existing courtyard internal and creating a better flow around the building. The main entry will be relocated to the front of the building. Additional classrooms will be added to support several subjects currently being taught from a mobile cart. At CHS, the roof will be replaced, and we will address the boilers and windows if possible.

PROPOSED CMS ENTRANCE

PROPOSED CMS EXTERIOR

PROPOSED CMS DESIGN

The entire building will receive updated electrical, plumbing, and HVAC.

Stairwells would be brought up to code by adding direct egress doors.

The new design encloses the courtyard, allowing students to safely access the space for learning and community events.

The gym will be relocated to the front of the building and expanded to accommodate whole-school gatherings.

Dedicated storage spaces for learning materials and equipment would be added.

The cafeteria and kitchen would be enlarged and updated.

The new entrance would be at the front of the building. The current U-shaped building makes it difficult for visitors to locate the entrance and allows too much access to the school prior to screening.

Additional parking would be added at both MBS and CMS.

1st Floor

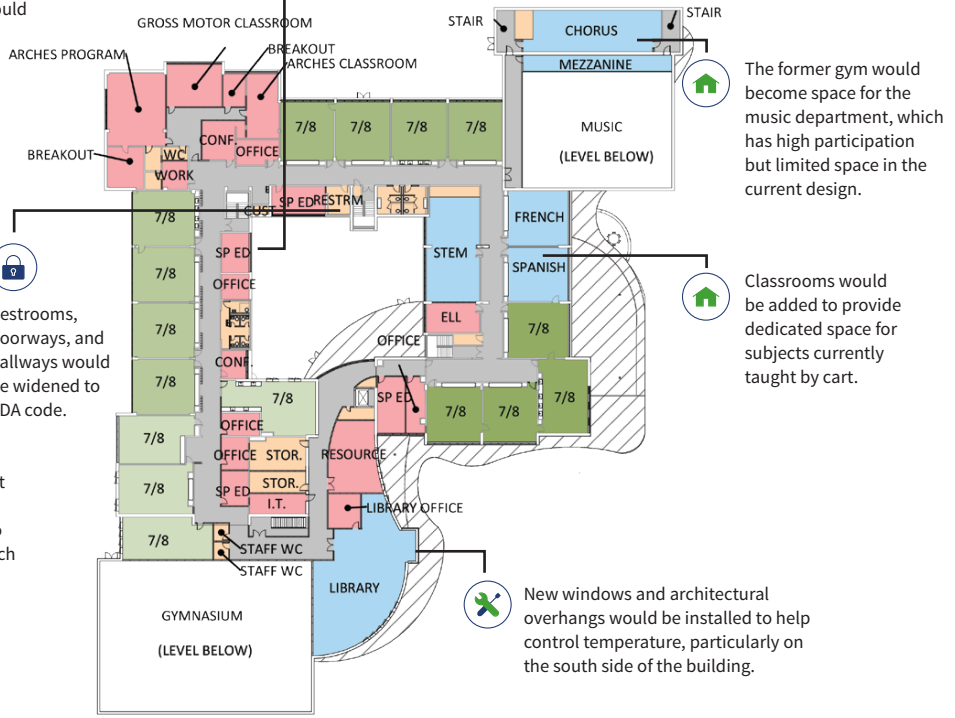
Added space to provide support to students and conduct meetings.

Restrooms, doorways, and hallways would be widened to ADA code.

The former gym would become space for the music department, which has high participation but limited space in the current design.

Classrooms would be added to provide dedicated space for subjects currently taught by cart.

New windows and architectural overhangs would be installed to help control temperature, particularly on the south side of the building.


GROSS MOTOR CLASSROOM
ARCHES PROGRAM
BREAKOUT
BREAKOUT
ARCHES CLASSROOM
CONF.
OFFICE
WC
WORK
7/8
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STAIR
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BOND DETAILS AND IMPACT

A school bond is a type of long-term financing used by public school districts to fund brick-and-mortar projects. School boards place these measures on the ballot to be considered by the voting public. This measure allows the district to borrow the funds needed to address critical issues that the district's annual operating budget cannot cover, such as aging systems, lack of space, and safety improvements.

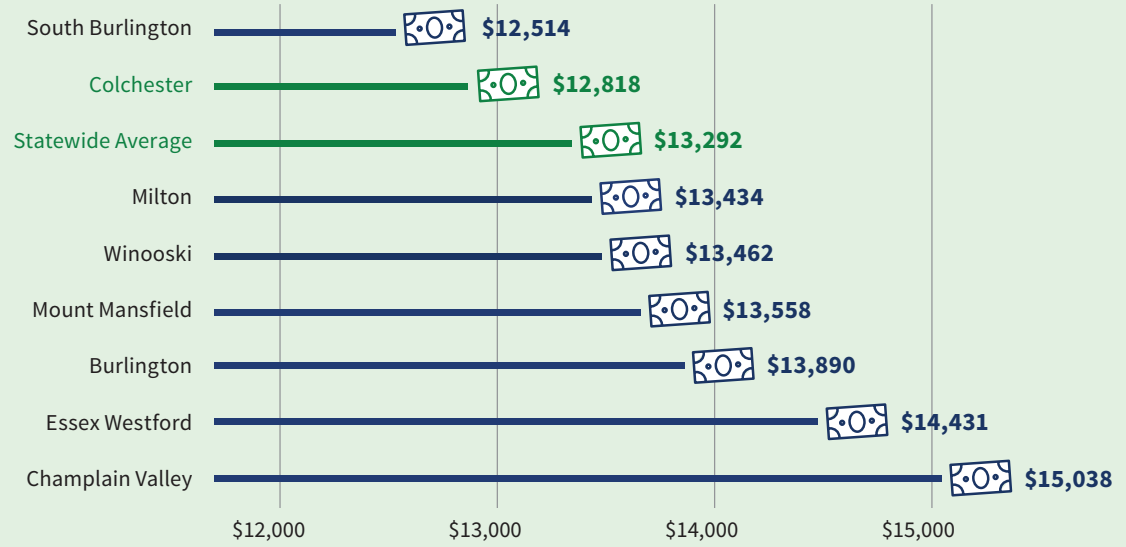
For decades, Colchester School District has been one of the lowest-spending districts in Chittenden County. Our lean budget requires us to prioritize facility needs each year. With our aging buildings, the list of issues is growing at a pace that is unsustainable with our annual operational budget. This $115 million bond would allow the district to raise the funds needed to complete work at all five schools in a single project. This would help secure a competitive bond package and avoid higher costs that would result from breaking it up and completing the work over a longer period of time.

Repayment on the 30-year loan will be structured to ease in gradually, peaking in year five before tapering off as the principal is reduced. On average, the district's annual payment will be around $5.9 million, which will be incorporated into the operational spending budget each year.

Just as with our annual budget, we are committed to maximizing every dollar and making the most of our resources for this facilities bond. Our plan focuses on renovating areas that still work for us while replacing those that have been deemed irresponsible to repair. Once completed, we anticipate immediate benefits, including a substantial reduction in energy costs thanks to added HVAC systems, improved insulation, and energy-efficient lighting.

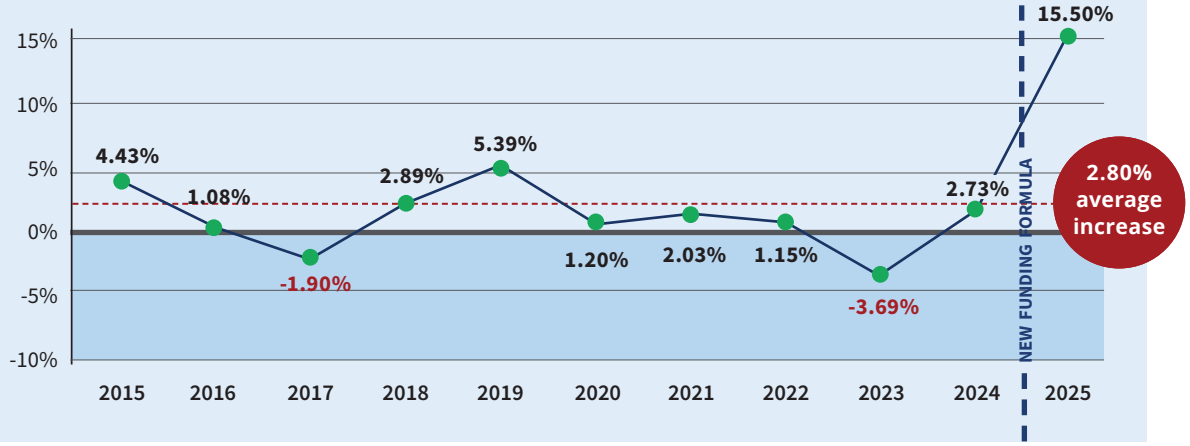
FY'25 COMPARISON OF SPENDING PER EQUALIZED PUPIL

*Numbers are estimated based on approved budgets

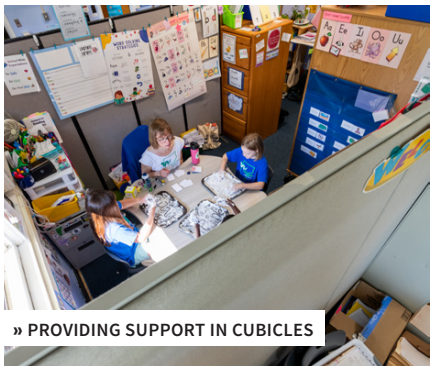


A TRADITION OF LOW SPENDING

Prior to the change in Vermont's education funding formula under Act 127, Colchester taxpayers averaged an annual increase of just 1.53% in educational taxes, with two of those years having decreased taxes. We recognize the FY'25 school budget that was voted on in March 2024 was uncharacteristically high. This was a result of the change in the funding formula at the state level and not a result of excessive or additional spending by the district. Colchester continues to be a low-spending district.

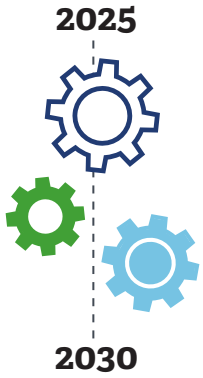


Even after adding this bond debt, Colchester will continue to be one of the lowest-spending districts in the county and will still spend less than the statewide average per pupil.



» PROVIDING SUPPORT IN CUBICLES

IMPACT ON THE AVERAGE HOMEOWNER



Taxpayers will not contribute to the bond in 2025 or 2026. The construction project will be completed in three phases, starting in 2026 and ending in 2030, allowing bond payments to increase incrementally. Afterward, the bond payments will be included in the annual operational budget, and taxpayers will contribute based on their property's assessed value or income if they qualify for Vermont's Property Tax Credit.

Approximately 61% of Colchester homeowners qualify for Vermont's Property Tax Credit and would contribute to loan repayment on a sliding scale based on income.

The average home in Colchester is assessed at $350,000. That household's estimated contribution to the loan repayment will be:

- **2027 »** $43 for the year (about $4 per month)
- **2028 »** $121 for the year (about $10 per month)
- **2029 »** $330 for the year (about $28 per month)
- **2030 »** $534 for the year (about $45 per month)
- **2031 »** $733 for the year (about $61 per month)
- **2032 »** Starting this year, the bond payment will decrease slightly each year as the principal loan balance is paid down.

RENOVATION PROJECT BUDGET

	PPS	UMS	CMS	MBS	CHS	Total
CONSTRUCTION AND SITE (Hard Costs)	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2028**	**2028**	
Construction Costs	$24,133,200	$23,974,335	$38,542,570	$6,835,500	$2,850,000	$96,335,605
10% Standard Agency of Education Contingency	$2,413,320	$2,397,434	$3,854,257	$683,550	$285,000	$9,633,561
Asbestos Abatement	$30,000	$30,000	$50,000	$15,000	$0	$125,000
Construction Subtotal	$26,576,520	$26,401,769	$42,446,828	$7,534,050	$3,135,000	$106,094,166
OTHER PROJECT EXPENSES (Soft Costs)						
Permit Fees (Fire Safety/Act 250)	$185,000	$185,000	$210,000	$60,272	$22,800	$663,072
Professional Fees (Design, Engineering, Clerk, Legal)	$1,887,500	$1,912,500	$2,692,500	$405,000	$263,500	$7,161,000
Construction Fees (Cx, Surveying, Testing)	$35,000	$35,000	$47,500	$15,000	$0	$132,500
Miscellaneous Costs (Printing, Moving, Storage, Insurance)	$131,000	$131,000	$238,500	$30,000	$18,750	$549,250
Owner Purchases (Furniture, Equipment)	$100,000	$100,000	$200,000	$0	$0	$400,000
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET	**$28,915,020**	**$28,765,269**	**$45,835,328**	**$8,044,322**	**$3,440,050**	**$114,999,989**

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

59 Rathe Rd, PO Box 27
Colchester, Vermont 05446

FAQS ABOUT THE BOND

I don't have children in the schools. Why should I contribute?

Supporting a bond initiative benefits the entire community through property values and attracting new families. Young people are our future workforce, homeowners, and taxpayers. Their education and the support they receive in school prepare them for the next step into adulthood, and the stronger their foundation, the better their outcomes. Investing in better facilities ensures safer, healthier environments for everyone. Even without children in the schools, supporting education reflects a commitment to the community's long-term success and well-being.

Why can't we keep what we have?

Most of our schools have little to no investments for upgrades since they were built about 60 years ago. At this point, some sections are beyond what is fiscally responsible to repair. Many key components in these buildings are at the end of their useful life. Infrastructure such as insulation, plumbing, HVAC, and electrical need significant attention.

Why not build a new PreK-2 school?

Building a new Pre-K to Grade 2 school and closing Porters Point and Union Memorial was extensively considered during the planning process. The logical and most cost-effective location to build a new school would be on land the district already owns. The only space large enough for a facility to hold over 500 students would be on the high school campus in the wooded area on the corner of Blakely Road and Laker Lane. The district contracted a traffic study that concluded there would be a tremendous increase during peak hours on the already congested Blakely roadway. Through our community engagement sessions last winter, we heard overwhelmingly that residents preferred keeping the two neighborhood schools. While we would keep and renovate a portion of the existing building at both schools, the proposed plan includes demolishing the oldest wing and constructing a new two-story addition.

Will the State of Vermont provide any funding aid?

In 2007, Vermont placed a moratorium on school construction aid. While there has been some recent talk about resurrecting it, no real progress has materialized. It is unlikely that school construction aid will return for Vermont schools and taxpayers. However, if it does become available, Colchester will apply for those funds to offset the cost to taxpayers.

Can the Local Option Tax be used to help fund the renovations?

The short answer is no; the law doesn't allow it. The Vermont State Legislature has created organizations, boards, and funding that separate local municipal government services and education. State statute restricts using Local Option Tax funds toward school expenses. (For reference, the State Statutes are 16 V.S.A. Section 4029 and 24 V.S.A. Section 138.)

Why is now the right time?

Over the last decade, members of the school board have been grappling with what to do with the district's aging facilities. The plan was in motion to put a bond on the November 2020 ballot, but the pandemic's impact on the community stalled that schedule. Just four years later and the same projects have increased in cost. Architects and engineers are reporting that the longer the community waits, the higher the cost will be. They also noted that supply chains have improved considerably, and contractors are becoming more available, making it an ideal time to take on the project.

Where will students be during construction?

The benefit of this proposal is that it allows the district to occupy 100% of the existing school while the new areas are being constructed. Naturally, there will be some day-to-day distractions with equipment and crews on the campus, but the school schedule and locations will be operational during renovations. The construction timeline makes maximum use of the summer breaks and when students are not in session.

HOW DO I LEARN MORE?

To learn more about the bond and see the proposed school plans, scan the QR code or visit the bond website.

csdbond.org