



Bethel Public Schools

Johnson and Rockwell School Renovations Frequently Asked Questions

How long has the project been in development?

The Board of Education began discussions regarding the project in 2010. The project is currently being overseen by the Board of Education, Board of Education Ad-Hoc Rockwell School/Johnson School Committee including, Board of Education members, school administrators, community members, Board of Finance members, and parents.

What is the Board of Education currently looking at in terms of renovations? What has changed that they need to reconsider the 2011 recommendation?

The Board of Education is currently looking at the following options:

- Add onto RS with Renovate as New (K-3), BS (Pre-K – 3), JS (4-5) Renovate as New with Addition
- RS (K-3) Renovate as New, BS (K-3), JS (4-5) Renovate as New with Addition, Circle Of Friends (COF) at JS
- RS (K-2) Renovate as New, BS (Pre-K-2) & JS (3-5) Renovate as New with Addition

District enrollment has changed since the original study:

- February 2013: Enrollment study had projected enrollment to go down approximately 300 students to about 2700.
- January 2016: Enrollment study projected to be enrollment stable at around 3000 students due to increased development within the community and in-migration (students not born in Bethel, but entering the system at school age/prior to starting school) based on home sales.

What did the Bethel Board of Education approve in 2011? Is this still the recommendation?

“Renovate as New” Rockwell School & Johnson School (with an addition) for a total cost of \$56.3 million (\$39 million paid by residents). The Board of Education is currently exploring additional options.

Did the Board of Education consider other options both in 2011 and 2016?

The Board considered multiple options both in 2011 and 2016. They looked at:

- forming three K-5 schools,
- closing Rockwell and making a Pre-k – 2 School and 3-5 school, with additions at Johnson & Berry;
- building as new;
- renovate options; and
- the cost of doing nothing

What is a School Construction Grant?

The State of Connecticut reimburses communities for the cost of school construction in the form of grants to relieve impact on the local taxpayer. The percentage of reimbursement is based on the scope of the project. Here is how the State provides reimbursement to Bethel.

- **Renovate as New** – 46% - a *Renovation* is a school building project to totally refurbish an existing building and which results in the renovated facility taking on a useful life comparable to that of a new facility.
- **New Facility** – 30% - These are projects for construction of entirely new facilities within a district.
- **Renovate** – These are projects which involve changes to the interior structure of an existing building. They may be undertaken to add new features to a facility where the features did not previously exist. New Items and code compliance work are eligible for state reimbursement at 46%. Replacement items (such as boilers) are not reimbursable.

What if the Board of Education chooses to do nothing? How much would it cost the taxpayers?

In 2011, fixing existing problems would cost the taxpayers approximately \$18.6 million (with approximately \$2 million in state reimbursement). This would only maintain our current structures, not meeting the educational needs of today's learner nor solve space issues.

How have the costs of renovations increased over time?

Construction costs have risen approximately 4% per year. The same project would cost close to \$70 million (compared to the 56.3 million in 2011). Every year the project is delayed, it has a significant impact to the educational programs and the cost to taxpayers.

Interested in getting involved or going on a tour of Rockwell or Johnson School?

Sign-Up here at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Registration-RS-JSRenovation>