

Brunswick School Department School Construction Frequently Asked Questions



January 17, 2017

1. *Where can one find information about the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) Major Capital School Construction Program?*

Information about the program can be found at the MDOE website:

<http://www.maine.gov/doe/facilities/construction/>

2. *When will the School Department be making applications under MDOE's Major Capital School Construction Program? What projects will the School Department propose?*

Applications are due by April 2017. The School Department will submit two applications, one for a new elementary school and another for a new junior high school.

3. *When is MDOE expected to announce which projects have been approved for this round?*

MDOE expects to announce the selected projects by June 2018. However, based on previous rounds, funding approval for the selected projects typically occurs in order of priority for those that make the list. So, even if a project makes the list, it may not receive funding approval for some time.

4. *Did the state participate in funding the construction of the Brunswick High School and Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary School?*

Yes, the state share for the high school was 78% and the state share for HBS was 87%. State share means that the approved percentage of debt service is included in the education funding formula. Because the variables of the formula and the formula itself can change, the amount of debt service ultimately paid by the state can be different than the percentage approved as the state share.

5. *What does the School Department hope to achieve with the construction of a new elementary school?*

Currently, despite the use of modular classrooms, there is overcrowding at the elementary (K-5) grade level, and the Coffin Elementary School is deficient in many ways. A new elementary school would address overcrowding, provide modern, code-compliant space, and allow for expanded programming, including pre-school.

6. *How would a Town vote to approve 100% local funding of a new elementary school affect the Town's MDOE application for a new elementary school?*

The Town would no longer be eligible for state participation in the project.

7. *How would renovations to the Junior High School affect the Town's application for funding of a new Junior High School?*

Part of the review of applications submitted under the Major Capital School Construction program involves a review of the existing building conditions and a possible site visit. Renovations prior to the review or site visit would likely result in lower scoring of the proposed project.

8. *What funding assistance exists for school renovation projects?*

The Major Capital School Construction Program can be used for major renovation projects. Essentially, the process utilized is the same as the one followed for new construction projects.

The State Revolving Renovation Fund (SRRF) is designed to assist funding renovations on a much smaller scale. State participation is limited to \$1 million per school building every five years. SRRF funds are loans, typically with 0% interest. However, a portion of the loan is convertible to a grant. The grant equals the loan amount multiplied by the percentage of state funding a school unit receives.

9. *Assuming a new elementary school is constructed, what is the School Department's plan for Coffin School?*

2017-2020 – K2 Elementary School

2020-2022 – BJHS repair project may force students out of the building for periods of time. We would utilize Coffin School to house them.

2022 Options:

- a. Demolish the building
- b. Turn the Coffin Building over to the Town
- c. Use Coffin to house the Central Office, Before and After School Programs, and the Alternative Ed Programs. Continue the use of the district kitchen to prepare meals and store bulk food deliveries. Discuss use of the gymnasium with the Town's Recreation Department.
- d. Remove the portables
- e. Turn the Hawthorne building over to the Town

10. *Why is the School Department planning space for, and the operation of, a Pre-K program at the proposed elementary school?*

The School Department has had a plan for a preschool program for all eligible four year olds since 2012. The School Board voted to move forward with it when there is space available.

The four classrooms would be in session for 2.5 hours per day with an afternoon and morning session. The total census of students would be 120; 15 in each session times eight sessions.

After the first year the State of Maine would reimburse us for the students enrolled at the Kindergarten rate. Students would also have access to the department's related services and special's offerings.

Public Preschool programs can have substantial impacts on children's early learning. An analysis integrating evaluations of 84 preschool programs concluded that on average children gain about a third of a year of additional learning across language, reading, and math skills. Benefits to children's social economic development and health have been documented as well.

A quality preschool education is a profitable investment. Rigorous efforts to estimate whether the economic benefits of early childhood education outweighs the costs of providing these educational opportunities indicate that they are a wise financial investment. Available benefit-cost estimates based on long-standing national programs yield a range from 3 to 7 dollars saved for every dollar spent. In a 15-year follow-up study by the American Medical Association found that preschool participants had a higher rate of high school completion, lower rates of special education identification, grade retention, and juvenile arrests. Of all the programs offered in public schools preschool education is supported most by the business communities nationwide as necessary for future progress in the readiness of a workforce.

11. *What is the School Department's plan for community outreach, to include more than parents?*

The School Department plans to have further public forums in different parts of the town of Brunswick. Venues suggested but not finalized are Thornton Oaks, Region 10 Technical School, Curtis Memorial Library, and Perryman Drive Community Room. We have already held a meeting for the neighbors of Jordan Acres but will hold another at Hawthorne School.