



August 31, 2022

Mr. Ian Neviaser
Superintendent of Schools
Region #18 Lyme-Old Lyme Schools
49 Lyme Street
Old Lyme, CT 06371

via email: neviaseri@region18.org

Subject: *Statement of Opinion regarding proposed program and associated budgets for Mile Creek School Renovation, Center School Alterations, Lyme Consolidated School Alterations, and the Middle School Alterations.*

Dear Mr. Neviaser:

Enclosed for your consideration is Collier's statement of opinion regarding the proposed improvements to the Mile Creek School, Center School, Lyme Consolidated School, and the Middle School. Our statement of opinion is based on the facility studies prepare by QA+M Architecture and their subconsultants, project budgets prepared by QA+M as supported by Downes Construction Company, site walks for each of the facilities by our director of commissioning services, and our experience with alterations and renovations of many schools not only in Connecticut but in Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island as well.

Please note that Colliers has not performed an exhaustive review of the existing facilities as we have taken the facilities study at face value and did not believe such a review is warranted at this time. Colliers is very familiar with QA+M and their subconsultants and their expertise in their respective areas.

Below is a brief statement of opinion for each school based on the factors noted above. In general, all four schools have been well maintained. Compared to many of the other school districts we have worked with, your facilities are in better condition for their respective ages and type of construction.

Mile Creek School

A renovation of the Mile Creek School is being proposed and reimbursement is being sought from the state of Connecticut via a grant application submission to the Department of Education. This grant application was submitted in June 2022 with documents being prepared by QA+M Architecture. The proposed project will include renovations to the existing facility as well as a new 14,000 sq. ft. addition to support additional student enrollment anticipated in future years.

We understand that the renovations to the existing building include, but are not limited to, MEP (mechanical, electrical and plumbing) upgrades, security upgrades, technology upgrades, and improvements to the cafeteria, media center, general classrooms, special services, the gymnasium, music and art space and mechanical rooms.

With respect to the physical conditions of the building as documented in the facility study prepared by QA+M and our site visit, the scope of work as outlined in the educational specifications is consistent with projects of similar size and scope when taking into account the specific conditions of the facility. Please note that the proposed renovations are not as extensive as we have experienced on other facilities in the state. We believe this is due to the excellent maintenance program employed by the board of education. It appears to have alleviated such extensive renovations normally undertaken in many other districts. As such, the proposed project budgets are far less expensive than other school renovation projects.

Colliers has reviewed the project budgets prepared by QA+M and Downes Construction Company dated March 21, 2022. The total construction budget value of \$21,021,965 equates to a square foot cost of \$313 per square foot as noted in their estimate. This cost per square foot value is lean in our opinion. As a point of comparison, the town of Newington, Connecticut bid the Anna Reynolds Elementary School renovation project this past May. Their facility is approximately 65,000 square feet in area and a single-story structure similar to Mile Creek. The final bid cost for this project, including construction manager (CM) markups, and \$1,163M in value engineering was \$31,023,637. This equates to \$477 per square foot for a total construction cost at bid. This value aligns more so with what we would typically expect for an extensive renovation project. By comparison, the Mile Creek budget is much less thus our opinion of a lean budget.

Center School, Lyme Consolidated School and the Middle School

We understand the scope of these three projects to be similar in nature primarily comprised of MEP upgrades and security improvements. Based on our review of the QA+M facility study for each of these buildings as well as a site visit by our director of commissioning and energy services, we concur with the recommendations by QA+M and CES to upgrade the MEP systems. These recommendations are consistent with recommendations for similar school facilities. The systems that exist in these buildings are not up to par with current systems that provide better indoor air quality (temperature, dehumidification, air filtration, etc.) with more energy efficient systems that are highly controlled and monitored via digital control systems.

Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic exposed deficiencies in buildings that did not possess current MEP systems and associated controls. In facilities that were recently upgraded with newer systems, districts were able to adapt more readily to the recommendations for fresh air exchanges in the building in addition to filtering with simple adjustments to the building automation system. In comparison, district with outdated systems were installing new ductwork, fans, air conditioners and opening doors to allow more outside air in.

With respect to the proposed project budgets, most of the budgets are assigned to the upgrade of the HVAC and electrical systems with the remaining amounts for various security and architectural upgrades. The cost per square foot at each facility varies between \$159 and \$179 per square foot which is very lean as well. Approximately \$65 per square foot is allocated to the HVAC and electrical trades with the remainder allocated to other trade costs and CM markups.

In summary, Colliers does not take exception to the recommendations by QA+M contained in their documents. With respect to the MEP systems, the recommendations are consistent with almost every project we have been involved with in the state. Every district that we work with in Connecticut has placed a priority on upgrading their HVAC systems due to the exposures presented by COVID. This is also evidenced by the new HVAC grants program being developed by the state as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to assist the Region 18 public school system on this exciting endeavor. Should you require further information from us, please do not hesitate to contact me at (860) 235-5313.



Project Leaders

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles E. Warrington, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Charles E. Warrington, Jr., P.E.
Director, Project Management