Frequently Asked Questions – Bungay E.S. Facility Improvement Project
LIST AS OF APRIL 7, 2025

The Seymour Board of Education (BOE) and the Bungay Elementary School Building Committee (BESBC) are committed to providing responses to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the proposed Bungay Elementary School Facility Improvement Project (the "Project"). Please check back regularly to the Seymour Public Schools district website for updates to this list.

- **How did this proposed Project come to life?**

  In May 2023, the Board of Selectpersons (BOS) appointed members to the Bungay Elementary School (BES) Facility Needs Study Committee (Committee) including Rebecca Bennett, Jessica Butcaris, Timothy Connors, Trisha Danka, Peter Kubik, Dr. Thomas Nobili, Fred Stanek, and Edward Strumello.

  The Committee held four (4) public meetings from August – December 2023 and was joined by Seymour Public School (SPS) staff including the Superintendent, Director of Curriculum/Instruction, the BES Administration, BOE members, and BES teachers. After a tour of the BES facility, led by Tim Connors (Committee member and SPS Facilities Director), the Committee summarized a list of 23 findings regarding facility infrastructure needs, shortcomings, and limitations. These findings revealed a need to renovate/expand the BES facility to enhance the educational needs of the students and adequately provide for the physical, social, and emotional safety and comfort of students (and staff). This list can be found in the presentation found at the following link: Bungay Elementary School Facilities Needs Study

  In January 2024, the Committee, along with Superintendent Dr. Susan Compton and BES Principal Lauren Reid, presented a report of their findings to the Board of Selectpersons. Upon acceptance of the report, the BOS created the Bungay Elementary School Building Committee (BESBC) and appointed the following individuals to the Committee: Rebecca Bennett, Timothy Connors, Trisha Danka, Peter Kubik, Beth Nesteriak, Dr. Thomas Nobili, Andy North, Fred Stanek, and Edward Strumello. Fred Stanek and Peter Kubik were elected as co-chairs by the Committee, and Rebecca Bennett was elected as Secretary. The BESBC held their first meeting on January 25, 2024.

- **What is the charge of the BESBC?**

  To develop and present to the BOS and the people of the Town of Seymour design plans and cost estimates thereof utilizing the findings as set forth in the Report of the Bungay School Facility Needs Study Committee dated December 14, 2023 for vote at a referendum, and if the vote is positive, to develop construction plans and undertake and renovate/expand Bungay Elementary School within the approved plan cost of the referendum vote.

- **How/Why was the current design team selected?**

  One of the first tasks of the BESBC was to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for design consultants to develop a feasibility study for BES Facility Improvements. This

RFP was issued on March 18, 2024. In May 2024, the BESBC selected four architectural teams to interview with Committee members and requested answers to additional questions in June 2024. In July 2024, the BESBC recommended the Antinozzi Associates team to provide a feasibility study and assist the Seymour Public Schools in evaluating options regarding physical plant improvements. This study included a high-level assessment of the existing Bungay School building and site, developing educational specifications, creating conceptual design options and associated costs, and assisting with public community outreach. The purpose of the study would be to determine options of renovating the existing school facility, constructing a new facility, or a combination of both that would meet the BOE's goal in applying for a school construction grant from the State of Connecticut Department of Administrative Services Office of Grants Administration by June 30, 2025 to partially fund the project.

Antinozzi Associates was hired for their past and recent ability to deliver successful design studies and solutions for school districts throughout Connecticut, including for Chatfield-LoPresti Elementary School in 2008. The firm has a strong understanding of the context, culture, and regulatory requirements for the planning and design of K-12 public schools in Connecticut, and have a team of design consultants and engineers who have exceptional experience with public school projects and with Antinozzi Associates. Antinozzi Associates has been contracted currently for the Bungay School study only, and may (or may not) be involved in the future development of the project design and its construction. Upon successful referendum approval of the proposed project and State grant application approval, the State requires the BOE to issue an RFP from Architectural teams to provide services for the project scope submitted for State reimbursement.

- **What improvements have been made to Bungay School recently in comparison to the other schools in the District?**

  There have been some recent updates (2019) to the roof, boiler, and the addition of a roof-mounted photovoltaic (PV) array for solar power, but no major improvements have been made to Bungay School. The last major project at Bungay School was in 1996 when a modernization and code compliance improvement project was undertaken.

  Since 1996, each of the other three Seymour Public School facilities have been either built new, expanded, and/or completely renovated to a 20-year standard per State grant reimbursement requirements. Seymour Middle School was built new in 2001, and Seymour High School was expanded and completely renovated in 2005. Upon the consolidation of the Chatfield and LoPresti Schools in 2012, the existing Chatfield School was doubled in size and completely renovated to become the home of Chatfield-LoPresti School.

  Before any facility improvements are made to Bungay School, it will have been over 30 years since major improvements were completed. A majority of classrooms at Bungay School still reflect a teaching modality standardized in the mid-20th Century. While more contemporary technology exists in its classrooms, the physical school lacks program spaces required to address the current needs of its student population. This information, and the goals of Seymour Public Schools, are defined by the Educational Specifications prepared as part of our study.

- **What are "Educational Specifications" … and why are they important?**

  Educational Specifications are intended to guide the design and facility improvement decisions to ensure the project meets educational standards, aligns with a district's goals, and supports the evolving needs of students. This document provides the foundation for the project scope of work, including district instructional vision, mission and vision, a summary of prior physical plant improvement efforts, the district and school's learning expectations, and detailed explanations of academic goals by programmatic area.

  The document's shared goal is to deliver a safe, accessible, and sustainable student-centered facility that meets both current and future educational needs while adhering to the established timeline and budget. Implementing 21st (or New) Century Learning environments is weaved throughout the Educational Specifications, which should be done early in the design process to communicate district program/space needs for design implementation.

  In addition to the standard goals above, Rebecca Bennett (BESBC member and the District's Head Nurse) introduced the Planetree Person-Centered Care Approach, an approach developed/implemented by Planetree International and affiliated with Griffin Hospital. BESBC members met with Planetree/Griffin Hospital representatives in the Fall of 2023 to discuss the benefits of implementation, and this approach has been referenced in the Bungay School Educational Specifications for future incorporation.

  In coordination with the Bungay Elementary School Principal and District administration, the Educational Specification process began in mid-September 2024 and entailed interviews with Bungay School staff and administration. Construction Solutions Group, a consultant to Antinozzi Associates, obtained input and feedback regarding the Bungay School's educational programming and facility space needs. Several drafts of the Educational Specifications were shared with District administration, the BOE, and the BESBC for input, and the final version of the document was approved by the BOE at their regular meeting on February 3, 2025.

  The BOE-approved Educational Specification is also a critical document as part of the State Grant Reimbursement application process to clarify and justify the needs of a school district and how the funding the State provides is utilized and implemented in a school improvement project.

- **How has community input been obtained regarding possible improvements at Bungay Elementary School?**

  On October 8, 2024 and October 16, 2024, Antinozzi Associates led a presentation and facilitated workshop to seek input from community users of the Bungay School through interactive information-gathering activities mixed in with educational content regarding the Bungay Elementary School Study process. The workshops did not include design options or costs as the Design Team wanted to Seymour community members first.

  At the second workshop, a tour of the Bungay School facility was led by BOE facility department staff prior to the workshop. The focus of the workshops was to review the parameters leading up to a potential facility improvement option. Content included an

introduction to the design consultant team, informed attendees about the study process for a school project, reviewed the challenges of the current facility, discussed the State grant reimbursement process, and actively encouraged community participation and input. Both workshops were attended by a total of approximately 75 community members, and attendees actively engaged with Antinozzi Associates representatives.

- **What was learned from the Community Workshops in October?**

  Two community input exercises were facilitated at the workshops.

  One exercise entailed placing fake $100 bills into bags indicating an assortment of issues to be considered during the design study of the Bungay School. Each participant received $1,000 to distribute between twelve (12) "issue" bags. The top three community issues, in order of importance, were 1) Enhanced Security Infrastructure, 2) Indoor Air Quality (IAQ), and 3) New 21st Century Classrooms.

  A second exercise asked attendees to breakout into small groups to answer three questions about the Bungay School facility. Key positives of the facility expressed included non-facility related comments about the culture of the school, the staff, and the PTA's engagement. Other positives included the display of artwork, the music room, toilet rooms in the kindergarten classrooms, and a one-story building. Challenges expressed included the need for better security (limiting access points), no A/C with poor air quality, and the need for door, window, and toilet room upgrades. Other challenges included poor traffic (car/bus) flow and parking, outdoor safety issues (lack of fencing), and lack of privacy in the nursing office space.

  In the final question of "If there could be one item implemented in a Bungay School Project," providing flexible special education and sensory space rose to the top. Other thoughts included right-sizing spaces, providing STEM/maker and breakout spaces, outdoor classrooms, and an A/V system.

- **What are the project costs of the proposed renovation option?**

  The estimated construction cost of a Bungay Elementary School Renovation (or Renovate-As-New) Project is just short of $50.1M. Adding estimated project "soft costs" (professional fees, costs outside of the construction cost, FF&E, technology) of approximately 17% of the construction costs, the total Project Cost is estimated at $58,610,515. With a 2025 State Grant Reimbursement Rate of 66.79% for "General Construction", the total estimated share of the Project Cost that Seymour would need to appropriate for bonding would total $24,522,025.

- **What are the project costs of the proposed new construction option?**

  The estimated construction cost to construct a new Bungay Elementary School is just over $49.6M. Adding estimated project "soft costs" (professional fees, costs outside of the construction cost, FF&E, technology) of approximately 17% of the construction costs, the total Renovation Project Cost is estimated at $58,057,766.

Per Connecticut General Statute (CGS) Chapter 173, Section 10-285a (3)(B)(ii), a Reimbursement Rate Bonus of 10% applies when it can be shown that the cost of New Construction Project is less than the cost of a Renovation Project. Therefore, with a 2025 State Grant Reimbursement Rate for New Construction of 55.79%, plus an additional 10% bonus applied per the CGS section noted above, the total estimated share of the New Construction Project Cost that Seymour would need to appropriate for bonding would total $24,290,760.

- **Why are we building new at Bungay School instead of renovating the building?**

  The New Construction option has a professionally estimated project cost slightly below that of the Renovate-As-New option. The New Construction option offers the added benefits of: 1) a shorter construction duration; 2) avoiding the displacement of Bungay School students during construction; and 3) a greater efficiency when designing contemporary, safe, and healthy learning environments. Because we can demonstrate that the New Construction option costs less than the Renovate-As-New option, the project is eligible to receive a higher percentage reimbursement equivalent to that offered by the State for renovation.

  It should be noted that Connecticut's reimbursement of school construction does not favor renovation projects. The system is designed to limit continued updates of older schools and steer projects toward a new or mostly new condition. Based on the cost estimator's 18 years of experience, unless a structure has historical significance, or the site upon which a project is contemplated cannot accommodate a phased new construction, new construction projects represent a greater cost benefit over renovation status projects.

- **Based on the cost estimates developed for the two options studied, how could a new school be less expensive than a renovated school?**

  Monetarily speaking, some of the influences making the New Construction option less expensive are the same reasons as why we are building new at Bungay School: 1) a shorter construction duration; 2) avoiding the displacement of Bungay School students during construction (which would require more expensive phasing logistics), and 3) a greater efficiency when designing contemporary, safe, and healthy learning environments. Since the New Construction option can be shown to be less cost than the a renovate-as-new option, the Project is eligible to receive a higher percentage reimbursement equivalent to that offered by the State for renovation.

- **What is the timeline to complete the Project if the referendum passes in October 2025?**

  It is anticipated that the construction of a new Bungay School would be completed for occupancy prior to the 2028-2029 school year, with site work completed in the Fall of 2028. The following is an estimated timeline of the Project process:

  - June 30, 2025: Submission of Grant Reimbursement Application to State of CT
  - June – September 2025: Architect and Construction Management firms solicited and selected

- October 2025 – December 2026 – Design/Review Process
- December 15, 2025: Official Grant Reimbursement approval from State of CT
- January – April 2027: Pre-Construction/Bid Procurement
- May 2027: Construction Mobilization
- June 2027 – August 2028: Building Construction for occupancy
- September – December 2028: Demolition and Site Work

- **If the Town/BOE plans to submit a State Grant Application for project funding reimbursement by June 30, 2025, why hold a referendum for voters to approve the Project in October 2025?**

  The Seymour BOE and Town of Seymour elected/appointed representatives have been intimately involved in the facility evaluation process of Bungay School, and "kicking the can down the road" is becoming a less of an option as time passes. To ensure eligibility for our current reimbursement rate of 66.79%, and to mitigate further escalation of school construction costs if delayed, setting an October project referendum date allows the District to apply for State reimbursement by the June 30 deadline, and possibly begin detailed design of the project to further define the project costs.

- **What is "Plan B" if the October referendum fails?**

  If the referendum is voted down, Plan B would most likely entail a more costly piecemeal renovation over 8-10 years, with no State reimbursement funding, with higher escalation costs, higher bonding costs, and greater overall long-term costs. The results of these smaller renovation projects would 1) not meet the BOE-approved Bungay School Educational Specifications, and 2) likely result in cuts to the academic programming found in the Project's Educational Specifications due to the greater long-term costs. During the Facility Needs Study process, it was determined that maintaining the existing building in a piecemeal fashion is no longer viable as older infrastructure systems and the entire physical plant are aging at an alarming rate to the point of no repair. Though some areas have been addressed and renovated, it is the remaining areas of the Bungay School that are of concern as they age and cost more money/time to replace.

  A one-year delay of the proposed project will accrue escalation costs. At the date that our estimate was prepared, we forecasted a 4% annual rate of escalation applied to trade costs, which would increase the New Construction cost $1.45M. In the recent economic environment, construction costs and inflation/escalation rates have significantly increased, along with interest rates on bonding. Though interest rates may level off, construction costs and escalation will continue to rise. The Town/BOE will benefit from starting construction as quickly as possible to mitigate continued cost escalation and take advantage of current (and possibly future) interest rates on bonding.

- **Will the design and costs associated with the Project meet energy-efficiency codes and standards?**

  Yes, in addition to meeting current CT Energy and Conservation Code, the Project must meet (or exceed) the State's High Performance Building Standards which is equivalent to the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Silver rating system, an internationally recognized green building certification system which provides third-party verification

that a building has been designed and built using strategies to increase performance, reduce waste and improve quality of life. The costs associated with this study for conceptual purposes will incorporate these sustainable design aspects, though detailed means and methods of achieving these codes and standards will be developed in subsequent design phases after the project is approved by voters.

- **Will Bungay School reuse, or continue to utilize, the solar power and PV system?**

  The current Bungay School facility incorporates solar panels and energy. The cost estimates associated with this study for conceptual purposes incorporate sustainable design aspects, though detailed means and methods of maintaining the existing panels/power, or implementing new solar panels or other sources of energy, will be developed in subsequent design phases after the project is approved by voters. The design consultants explored salvaging the existing PV array for reinstallation during the cost analysis, however it was concluded that the cost to dismantle, store, and reinstall the system was nearly equivalent to purchasing a new PV system.

- **How will we avoid project cost over-runs?**

  A certified professional cost estimator with extensive and recent experience in estimating school construction projects throughout Connecticut has been acquired through Antinozzi Associates. As part of the conceptual planning process, a full State-mandated detailed estimate will be generated by the estimator.

  When a school project is approved and moves forward to more detailed design phases, a comparable estimate will be independently generated by the project's Construction Manager (CM). The cost estimator and the CM will compare estimates through a process referred to as "reconciliation" which provides a double-check of project costs. During the preconstruction phases, a list of possible cost management items will be identified and tracked for implementation as may be required to remain within budget.

  The term "escalation" refers to costs associated with the forecasted procurement of labor and materials at some point during the project's construction. Because school projects take years to design and construct, the initial conceptual cost estimates will include anticipated escalation costs based upon when construction labor and materials will be procured. After a project is issued for competitive bid, and bids from trade contractors are received and scope is verified, the CM will develop a guaranteed maximum price (GMP). This represents the maximum price of the project based upon contracts held with subcontractors, the CM's general conditions, overhead/profit, and contingencies. This cost is equivalent to the total Construction Cost of the estimate.

  Inevitably, all construction projects come with inherent risks. This type of cost impact is dealt with through the establishment and maintenance of contingency funds. The Owner's Contingency, ideally 5% - 7% of the total project cost, is another safeguard against project cost overruns.

- **What is driving the enrollment numbers that the State Grant Reimbursement is based upon?**

  A 10-year enrollment projection was conducted by NESDEC, an independent consultant hired by Seymour Public Schools. For purposes of State grant applications, the State of Connecticut reviews the enrollment data for the 8 years starting with the year of the application submittal. According to the enrollment projection study, Bungay School will enroll students in grades PreK–5th grade and be at its highest in school year 2031-2032. The projected enrollment for the 2031-2032 school year for Bungay is 503 students, and will add 50 PreK students bringing the total enrollment to 553 students.