

August 18, 2023

Dear School Community,

I am writing to inform you of recent developments concerning the Colebrook School District Proposed Building Project. The need occurred because of the 2019 closure of the Colebrook Academy. The Academy served our community well for over 100 years. Safety and security concerns and large renovation costs led the school board and school community to close the Colebrook Academy. As a result, beginning in 2019, our Colebrook Elementary School welcomed 125 high school students. This school is too small and our facilities inadequate for the additional high school students and career and technical education programs.

Last year the school district embarked upon a building expansion project to add six high school classrooms and CTE lab space as well as a high school sized gymnasium on the same campus as the elementary school. We qualified for a building aid grant, sought additional grants and donations, but were unable to garner community support because of the local tax impact. Feedback received from the community indicates support for the project and the need to find other sources of funding before we could advance our work.

Meanwhile this summer, our Colebrook School Board Building Expansion Committee met and discussed positive developments. First, we have learned that the NH state budget for the biennium includes a total of \$86,000,000.00 in building aid funding. This is sufficient to fund our school project at the full 60% building aid amount! We are now considered the NUMBER ONE priority by the state for building aid.

Second, HB 452, was signed into law changing NH Building Aid rules concerning donations. Donations are no longer ineligible funding sources for building aid. Previously, charitable trust funds, bequests, gifts, and donations were deemed ineligible. Any such funding would be deducted from the final total eligible costs. This is no longer the case, and such funding will not be deducted from total project costs.

Following these developments, the Colebrook School Board agreed to resume our quest for the proposed District Building addition and new gymnasium to replace the Colebrook Academy which closed in 2019.

The School Board has initiated a Capital Campaign to bring the project to fruition. Accurately portraying our anticipated investments is a critical part of our communication to the community. With the new law in place, donations will no longer be deducted from total project costs. This changes the landscape and brings a new perspective to our project.

Our plan moving forward is to reinvigorate our work with the following aims:

1. Develop and sustain a capital campaign to raise 40% of project funds to complement the 60% building aid that has been approved by the state (pending majority voter approval of the building aid grant in March).
2. Implement a communication strategy to inform the local community, alumni and others with an interest in the Building Project.
3. Complete our project and mark the opening of the new addition in August, 2026. Our past is memorable, and our future is bright as we envision our academic and vocational high school addition and new high school gymnasium. The schools are the center of our community and mean so much more than many of us realize.

We will provide updates concerning community events and fundraising activities in the coming weeks. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Debra Taylor, Ph.D.

Superintendent