

# Mansfield School Building Project

## Questions Submitted By The Public

### Budget

1. What percentage of the operating cost savings of \$865,000 under option E are due to staff cuts?

*Approximately 72% - 9.6 certified and 6.0 non-certified (see the [staffing chart](#) for exact positions).*

2. Shouldn't the use of solar panels generate excess electricity and should this not appear as an operational savings?

*We do not anticipate that they would generate more power than the schools would use. We won't know for certain the savings until we know the exact location & placement of the schools. Therefore we did not want to include any savings that we may not generate.*

3. When a new school is built is anything used from the old school or does the cost include all new contents and equipment?

*Most furniture and equipment would be new and therefore the cost would be subject to partial reimbursement from the State. However, if there is equipment and/or furnishing in the existing schools that are worth keeping, they would either be brought over to the new school or possibly used at the Middle School. For example, newer computers might be used to replace older/outdated computers at the Middle School. However, the schools have not replaced and/or purchased much equipment or furnishings in a number of years due to the consideration of building a new school and in light of budget cuts. An estimate is included for furniture & equipment in the "Soft Costs" line.*

4. Why were demolition costs and the expense of removing debris of razed schools not factored into the expense of new construction?

*An estimate for demolition costs was included for demolishing two of the schools, approximately \$640,000 each. The third school will remain after two sites have been selected. The potential re-use of the remaining school is unknown at this time. See [Newfield Construction Total Project Cost Analysis](#).*

5. What is the operating cost impact on busing of having two rather than three schools?  
*There would be no increased cost to bus students to two schools vs. three.*

### Facilities

6. Will the two school project include bathrooms in every classroom?

*The two school project will be designed to include bathrooms in the P-K, K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade classrooms. Higher grade classrooms will utilize group toilets located within the building.*

7. Have accommodations been made for preschool rooms in the proposed new school option?

*The programming and planning for the two school option envisions 2 P-K and 4 Kindergarten classrooms in each school.*

8. If the student population is expected to shrink could the specialist use classroom space to work with students individually?

*Specialists may meet in regular classrooms but often require special equipment which, with the existing elementary schools, has to be brought in requiring additional time and planning.*

9. Why not return the 5<sup>th</sup> grade to the elementary school rather than building more portables at the Middle School?

*Fifth grade students would not fit in the two new schools as proposed. The District would need to reduce the current curriculum offerings for the fifth grade program if the fifth grade were to move to the elementary schools.*

10. Has a list, detailing all the work to the three schools, categorized as an alteration, repair, code improvement, etc. been presented by Lawrence Associates?

*No. Such a detailed list has not been prepared by The Lawrence Associates because this option was not requested to be studied by the School Building Committee. The list of alterations, repair and maintenance items was based on information provided by the Town of Mansfield Maintenance Department giving consideration to equipment, systems and components that might become deficient in the foreseeable future.*

11. Is there a timeline that depicts the schedule of repair and replacement expenses to be completed at the three elementary schools over the twenty year period referred to by Lawrence Associates? Would you also please provide the formula that was used to calculate estimated expenses over this long a period of time? Would you please include how the value of each anticipated expense was estimated, (materials and labor included), for a time period as distant as ten, fifteen, and twenty years?

*Mansfield staff prepared best estimates as to what would be repaired or replaced by year for the first 5 years. Years 6 – 20 are yet to be determined based on conditions at that time. Current estimates for each item/project were escalated to reflect possible market costs at the time of replacement. These are ballpark estimates. See the schedule “Option A - Planned Improvements by Year” dated March 5, 2012.*

#### “Renovate-Like-New” Status

12. Do these three schools meet the criteria for “like-new renovations”?

*The three Mansfield elementary school do not meet the criteria for “Renovate-Like-New.” To qualify for “Renovate-Like-New” status, not less than 75% of the building must be at least 30 years old. Within the past 30 years, the Town has renovated at least 25% of each of the elementary schools.*

13. Have less than 75% of these buildings received renovations?

*No. To qualify for “Renovate-Like-New” status, not less than 75% of the building must be at least 30 years old. Within the past 30 years, the Town has renovated at least 25% or more of each of the elementary schools.*

14. Has the town considered applying to the state for waivers for non-reimbursable expenses such as new boilers? Have the expenses for renovations been calculated with these potential savings in mind?

*No consideration has been made to apply to the State for waivers for non-reimbursable expenses since these are clearly defined items and historically not subject to negotiation or waivers. Calculations have not been made with any such potential savings in mind since they are never allowed.*

15. What date and to whom, of the Bureau of School Facilities, did town officials and its representatives present an itemized and qualified list which details the components of the \$95 million budget projection for the renovation of the 3 schools? What was their response and to whom and when was it delivered? Was this list provided to elected officials?

*The original estimates for renovating all three schools were not presented to BSF as the cost to the town was determined to be unacceptable. The estimates, however, were based on State guidelines as to what is eligible for reimbursement and what is not under Alterations and/or Renovations. It is important to note that many costs considered eligible in a Renovation project are not eligible for reimbursement in an Alteration project.*

16. Were there discussions with the Bureau regarding the town's ability to qualify for "Renovate-Like-New" status and the higher reimbursement rate?

*Yes, on Dec. 22, 2011 a letter from Cherie Trahan was sent to Paige Farnham requesting clarification and confirmation of what reimbursement rate we could expect for each of the options being considered. On Dec. 28, 2011, Fred Baruzzi, Tom DiMauro, Rick Lawrence, and Cherie Trahan met at the Department of School Facilities in Hartford with Paige Farnham, George Semenec, Bud Salemi, Deputy Commissioner, DCS and Kevin Kopetz, Legal, DAS to have our questions answered. Paige discussed the fact that there was brand new legislation and guidelines for implementation which were not in place yet for how we could qualify for the higher reimbursement rate. The discussion revealed that due to the age of our schools and the most recent renovations, we are not eligible for "Renovate-Like-New" status and therefore would not qualify for the higher reimbursement rate anyway. Based on this meeting, we prepared estimates for all options at the lower reimbursement rate so that we did not under-state the cost to the town. We will continue to revisit this with the State.*

17. Has any town official asked for the state's help in figuring out how the schools might qualify for the higher reimbursement rate or expressed interest in renovating rather than building new? When and with whom?

*Yes, at the meeting on Dec. 28, 2011 – see above response.*

18. How was the square footage of each school computed when determining if they qualified for the "renovate like new" reimbursement rate? Were portables included?

*Square footage for each school was computed utilizing scaled drawings of each building and was based on the Department of Construction Services/Bureau of School Facilities standards. Square footage for portables was not included in calculations to determine "Renovate-Like-New".*

#### Water and Sewer

19. Given current water purity and possible septic problems at Vinton is there sufficient space and water resources available to accommodate a larger school population?

*The short answer is yes. There are enough resources to accommodate a larger school population. There is already a state health department approved site for another well; it may not be needed as the drinking water system in place might be large enough for 375 students. It would take an application to the state health department for their approval to determine this. Anchor Engineering has done a*

*preliminary investigation into a septic system at Vinton with Eastern Highlands Health Department observing. Anchor found no conditions that would prohibit a septic system.*

20. Was a thorough study made of the suitability of the land around Southeast School for a new and larger septic system? Was appropriate soil excavation done at that time to determine the soil drainage type?

*Yes, a thorough study was completed by Anchor Engineering with the approval of the State Department of Public Health and Eastern Highlands Health Department. Anchor found that the soil around Southeast School could accommodate a school population of 750 students.*

Sources: Public and submitted comments taken from  
2/14/12, 2/21/12, 3/7/12 and 3/12/12 Meetings and  
3/5/12 Public Hearing