

February 10, 2023

Dear Students, Staff and Families,

On Tuesday, February 7, 2023, the Cumberland School Committee held a meeting to discuss a conceptual plan for the next phase of capital improvements here in Cumberland.



With student enrollment increasing in the district, coupled with the drive for providing 21st century learning environments and the continued evaluation of our school buildings for health and safety purposes, the Committee voted in full support to have our construction teams of Colliers Project Leaders and Torrado Architects submit, a Necessity of Construction Stage I application to the Rhode Island Department of Education-School Building Authority (RIDE). The application deadline for this submission is February 15th, 2023.

One of the key items presented to the Committee on Tuesday was the potential for building a new B.F. Norton Elementary School instead of the already planned renovation. This recommendation was suggested based on current and projected enrollment rates in conjunction with the understanding of the limitation of the existing building's capacity.

The above-mentioned initiative also has an impact on the scheduled renovation of the existing Ashton Elementary School, where the School Committee has approved starting the renovations in the summer of 2023 as opposed to the summer of 2024. More details will follow on the Ashton renovation schedule.

Please refer to the list of proposed capital improvements that were discussed at the Committee meeting.

- B.F. Norton Elementary School – New 4-Track Elementary School
- Cumberland High School – Roof Replacement, New Canopy Entrance and Perimeter Security System
- North Cumberland Middle School – PA System, Elevator and Security Vestibule
- Joseph L. McCourt Middle School – Security Vestibule
- Playground Assessments – Ashton Elementary School, Garvin Memorial Elementary School, J.J. McLaughlin Cumberland Hill Elementary School
- Furniture Fixtures & Equipment and Information Technology Packages – Ashton Elementary School, Community Elementary School and Garvin Memorial Elementary School

In all, the concept presented encompasses capital improvement projects totaling approximately \$59 million. Considering the State reimbursement rate of 62% (*subject to final approval*) for these worthwhile projects, this would equate to the Town of Cumberland being responsible for approximately \$22 million. Capturing savings of this amount is monumental and something that

the School Committee will be exploring on behalf of the Cumberland community as part of the Stage I and Stage II process.

Submitting this Stage 1 application on February 15th is an exciting first step. As discussed at the meeting, future steps include: discussions and actions with our Town officials and State representatives, a Stage II application to RIDE this coming September, and finally, a voter referendum in the fall of 2023. As you can see, we have many steps and processes to undertake prior to any actual action on our plan, still we are excited at the potential for this work.

We are very happy with how the first renovation was completed at John J. McLaughlin Cumberland Hill Elementary School and we are excited with our progress this year at Ashton, Community and Garvin Schools. We are looking forward to how this new work could make a significant and positive impact on students here in Cumberland.

[Click here](#) to watch the Cumberland School Committee meeting on Tuesday, February 7, 2023.

Sincerely,

Philip D. Thornton, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools