

Building Renovation Project Rangeley Lakes Regional School

WHY DO WE NEED THIS BUILDING PROJECT

In the last article from the RSU 75 School Board Building Committee we explained that we need the building project in order to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, to improve student safety, and to maintain the present building.

We also need to recognize that doing the project now is very good financial planning. With interest rates at record lows, it could cost significantly more money to put off the work for even another year. There is also impact of inflation on building costs if the project is delayed longer.

BUT, THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR THIS BUILDING PROJECT IS STUDENT LEARNING.

In the forty years since the Rangeley Lakes Regional School was built there have been many changes in teaching and student learning. Our building plan changes are the result of our changing world – including the technology revolution, standards based learning, and family dynamics.

CHANGES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Standards based learning means that all students are expected to master a number of standards in each subject and at each grade level. Standards based learning also requires that there will be a number of supports for students who need additional time for mastery, as well as learning opportunities for students who master standards quickly and need additional learning enrichment or advancement.

As a result, the way students are taught and learn is very different today:

- Learning is much more individualized so that all students reach their potential.
- Small groups work together in and out of the classrooms.
- Student achievement is regularly monitored with testing.
- The tests are used to plan student learning.
- Children who need more time to master the learning standards often need quiet spaces to work.
- Students who have mastered most of the standards for their grade level or for high school need enriched or advanced courses in specific areas.
- Online courses, AP courses, and college courses are offered to high school students. They need quiet spaces, too.

SPACE NEEDS

- Classrooms and other learning spaces have to support this more individualized learning.
- Space needs are also impacted by the number of programs mandated by the state and federal government.
- Science and Technology changes: one of the four goals of our Building Committee was to update the 40-year-old science labs. Supporting one-to-one computers for our students has reduced classroom space in the building.
- The strong community support for visual arts, performing arts and music have required more space to be allotted to these programs. The newest program, instrumental music, still has no suitable space for lessons or practice.

Although we have a smaller student body than we did 40 years ago, our expectations for these students are much different and more personalized so that no child *will be* left behind. Visit schools today and you will see a very different classroom in both the physical set-up and the learning environment.

Watch for our mailer about the building project. It includes **F**requently Asked **Q**uestions, building plans and financial information. Our next article will be looking at the financial aspects of the building project.