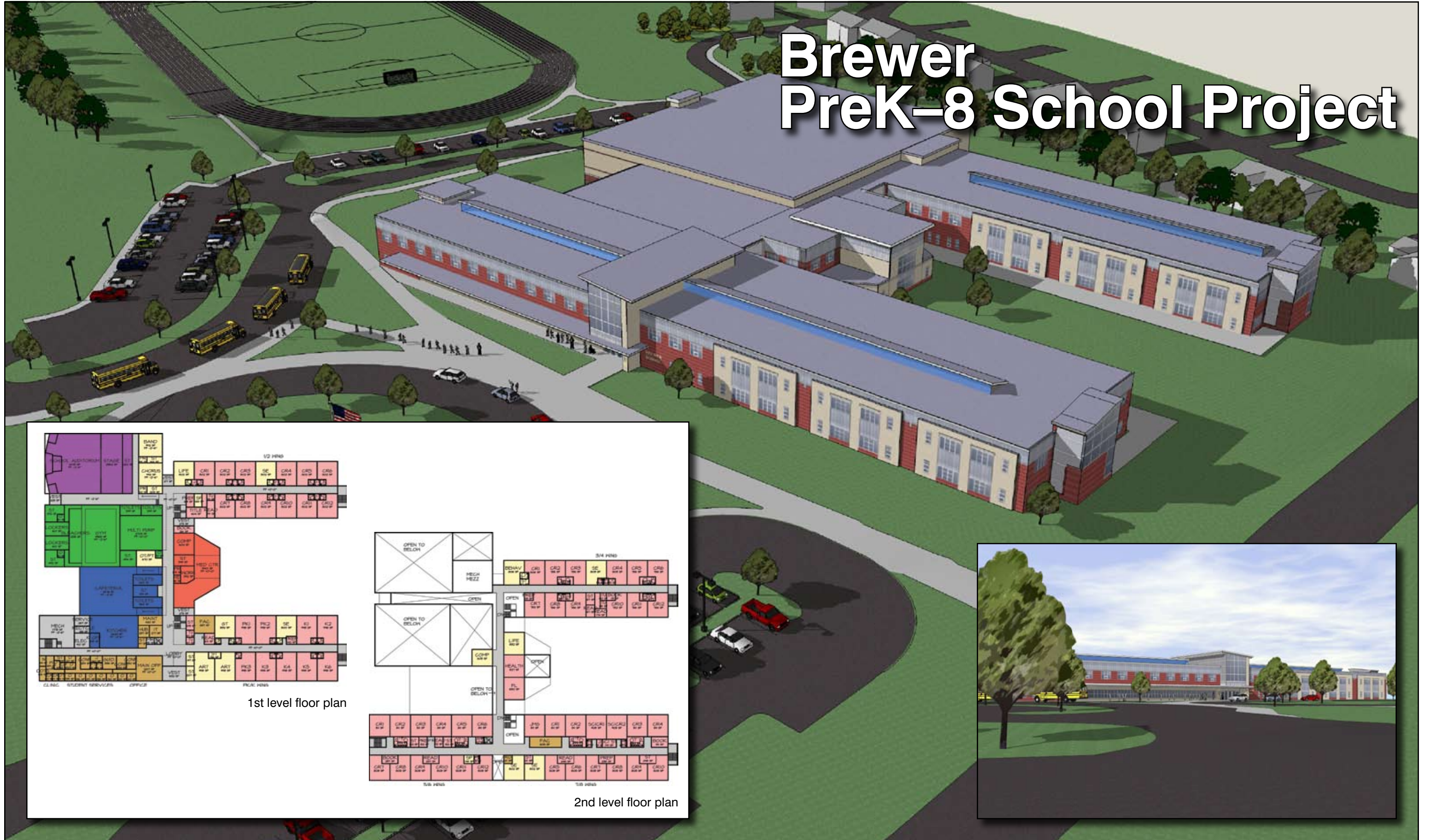


Brewer PreK-8 School Project



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Vote is Dec. 4th

After eight years in the making, the time is approaching for the residents of the City of Brewer to approve the construction of a new PreK-8 school to be located at the site of the now-closed Pendleton Street School.

With its 50-year or longer anticipated lifespan, the proposed two-story, 156,350 total square foot school will feature 71 classrooms with an enrollment capacity of 1,050 students and 121 staff and faculty members, and a new performing arts center that will be used by both the entire school system and the community. Currently, the high school has no auditorium.

The Referendum

City residents will be asked to vote on the construction project in a special election scheduled for **Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2007**. Voters will vote on a set of referendum questions that will allow the City of Brewer and the Board of Trustees of the City of Brewer High School District to issue bonds to fund the project.

Project History

In a collaborative effort that began eight years ago between the Brewer Building Committee - a committee made up of city residents, parents of school-aged children, school committee members, city officials and members of the school Board of Trustees - the State Board of Education, the Department of Education, various local and state regulatory departments, and the project's architects, WBRC Architects and Engineers in Bangor, the project was approved by City residents in two separate straw polls taken in May and October. The votes have allowed the project to proceed to the final referendum process.

The proposed PreK-8 school will replace the aging, deteriorating elementary and middle school buildings in the Brewer school system. The school buildings that will be phased out upon completion of the project include Pendleton Street, Washington Street, Capri Street, State Street and the Brewer Middle School located on Somerset Street.

In the first vote in May, Brewer residents expressed their approval of the selection of the Pendleton Street School location, the site for the proposed project. The school was closed last year due to its deteriorating condition and the presence of mold, and those students have since been relocated temporarily to Washington Street School.

In the second vote held in October, 168 voters gave unanimous approval for the concept, and the Brewer School Department presented the project to the Maine State Board of Education on October 10, 2007.

The Board of Education also approved the project unanimously, clearing the way for the Dec. 4 referendum.

Project Timeline

Upon approval by Brewer residents in December, the project is scheduled to begin in 2008. After a competitive bidding process that will take place during July, '08, construction will start in October '08 and be completed by June, 2010.

During the remainder of that summer, equipment from the existing schools will be relocated to the new site before fall classes start in September, 2010.

Facts and figures

Project cost: \$36,850,383
Project cost of performing arts center: \$2,637,500
Total project cost: \$39,487,883
Gross floor area (excluding performing arts center): 145,800 sq. ft.
Gross floor area (performing arts center): 10,550 sq. ft.
Total gross floor area: 156,350 sq. ft.
Number of stories: 2
Grade levels served: PreK-8
Number of classrooms: 71
Enrollment capacity (students): 1050
Staff capacity: 121

Environmental Impact

Designed under the concept of renewable resources, the proposed school will be constructed using materials that reduce or eliminate environmental contaminants, and systems for heating and ventilating that can bring in 100% fresh air for occupants.

The building will use non-combustible materials erected on a steel-framed building, and the building's orientation was designed to maximize renewable resources - the primary wings will be built on an east-west axis and classroom windows will face north and south, which allows the use of natural lighting to assist in the thermal heating of the school. According to preliminary, conservative estimates, this design can help reduce energy costs by \$50,000 per year.

In addition, a state-of-the-art heating system, a centralized food preparation area, and the centralization of five schools into one will save in transportation, heating fuel and energy costs.

With safety in mind

The safety of students, faculty and staff is important, and the building was designed to address those concerns.

All entrances and exits will be controlled electronically by a centralized electronic card-access system. Visitors to the school will be required to check in with the front office through an anteroom, and other parts of the building will be secured through the card-access system.

Though the building will be constructed with non-combustible material and a full sprinkler system, exits are located strategically to allow easy egress in the event of an emergency or fire.



Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some of the more frequently asked questions by Brewer residents:

Q: How much will this project cost?

A: The total cost of land acquisition, the new school and the performing arts center is \$39,487,883, comprised of the following:

- The State of Maine and Brewer will share the cost for land acquisition and school building construction:

New school (State of Maine - 99.6%):	\$36,717,383
Land acquisition (City of Brewer - 0.4%):	\$133,000
Total excluding performing arts center:	\$36,850,383
- The performing arts center will cost \$2,637,500, funded entirely by the City of Brewer

Thus, the total cost of the project is allocated below:

State of Maine @ 93%:	\$36,717,383
City of Brewer @ 7%:	\$ 2,770,500
Total project cost:	\$39,487,883

Q: Why two separate amounts?

A: Due to current rules regarding the construction of new schools, the Maine Department of Education could not support funding the construction of auditoriums or performing arts centers at the middle school level. Due to the efficiencies that would be gained by building such a center as part of the larger project, it was decided to include that part of the new school in the overall project and ask voters to approve the additional cost.

Q: What happens if we don't approve it now?

A: Since the current buildings are aging - the middle school is more than 80 years old, and the oldest of the elementary schools (State Street) was built in 1945 - the continued deterioration, even with the best maintenance plans in place, will add up to increased costs over time. It is only a matter of time until the remaining buildings suffer the same fate as Pendleton Street, and residents may face a more costly solution. Renovating the current buildings would likely exceed the cost of the proposed school, all at local expense.

Q: How will this affect our taxes?

A: Since most of the project is being funded by the state, the remaining portion will be paid over the 20-year period of the bonds. This essentially spreads the principal value over the life of the bond, or just over \$130,000 per year, plus interest - a minimal amount considering the total cost of the project.

A note about the performing arts center

Added to the overall design of the proposed school, the center will serve as the central facility for theater, musical and community performances. The current venue, located at the Brewer Middle School, will become unavailable once the school is closed.

The high school does not have such a center, nor is there one in the community.

While the designs do allow for the completion of the proposed school itself if voters elect not to fund the center, some costs of the base project may increase since exterior walls would have to be constructed where the building would have been extended.

The addition of the performing arts center will be funded locally, but there are several reasons to include it as part of the larger project now, instead of waiting until the future:

- The construction crew is already there. The economy gained by having the same construction crew and equipment build it at the same time cannot be realized if the center is built as a separate project in the future.
- Escalation/inflation - The materials, labor and overall costs of construction will rise through the normal effects of inflation.

It makes sense to build the center now, even at the cost that will be borne by Brewer residents.

The Referendum Questions

Question 1:

Do you favor increasing the debt limit of the City of Brewer High School District from \$5,000,000 to 7.5% of the most recent state valuation of the City of Brewer?

Question 1 raises the Trustees' bond limit so they are able to obtain funding to construct the project. Their current limit is only \$5 million, not enough to bond the proposed school. The increase in the limit was approved by the Legislature in 2005, pending approval by voters in the City of Brewer.

Question 2:

Shall the Board of Trustees of the City of Brewer High School District be authorized to issue bonds or notes in the name of the District in an amount not to exceed \$36,850,383, which bonds may be made callable, to construct and equip a grade Pre-K through grade 8 school on the site of the existing Pendleton Street School and an adjoining parcel that the Board of Trustees currently has under an option agreement (the "Project"); to accept a Maine High Performance Schools grant of up to \$120,000 for the Project; and to acquire and convey easements and other real estate interests as may be required for the Project?

Question 2 authorizes the Trustees to obtain a bond of \$36,850,383 to build the project. All but \$133,000 of the debt service on this bond will be paid by the State of Maine over the life of the bond, with the remaining portion to be paid by the Board of Trustees. The \$133,000 will be used to purchase property for the proposed school.

The following Project information is provided as part of Question 2:

A. Responsibility for Bond Payments

The City of Brewer High School District is responsible for the local share of annual principal and interest payments for the school construction project included in the total cost of education appropriated pursuant to 20-A MRSA Section 15690, subsection 1, if any, and for the annual principal and interest payments for the non-state-funded portion of this school construction project.

To help explain this, the "local share" will be the debt service on the \$133,000 used to purchase property, and will be paid by the Board of Trustees over 20 years.

B. Additional Operating Costs

The estimated amount of the additional operating costs attributable to the Project during each of the first two years is \$0.

It is estimated that the new school will actually save taxpayers \$50,000 each year in operating costs during the first two years of operation.

C. Use of High Performance Schools Grant

The Department of Education is expected to require the District to use a Maine High Performance Schools grant of up to \$120,000 to reduce the Project cost and the total amount of bonds or notes authorized to be issued for the Project. If total construction bids exceed estimates for the Project, the State may permit the District to use the grant for such additional costs.

This grant will provide technical assistance that will lead to reduced energy consumption in the new school, thereby lowering operation and maintenance costs through better building design.

Question 3:

If the Project described in Question 2 is approved, shall the Board of Trustees of the City of Brewer High School District be authorized to issue an additional \$2,637,500 in bonds or notes at local expense to construct and equip a school auditorium as part of the Project?

Question 3 authorizes the Trustees to obtain a bond to be paid at local expense to build a school auditorium, or performing arts center. With the closure of the current middle school after the project is completed, the district will not have a venue for theater or musical performances.

Question 4:

If the Project described in Question 2 is approved, shall the Board of Trustees of the City of Brewer High School District be authorized to accept in-kind gifts, if any, and to accept and expend cash gifts, if any, to provide additional equipment and improvements for the Project, provided that the work authorized by this question does not increase the indebtedness incurred for this Project?

Question 4 authorizes the Trustees to accept gifts from any source to improve the project. However, the acceptance of such gifts cannot increase the cost of the project.

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