



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
23 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, ME 04333-0023

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

PENDER MAKIN
COMMISSIONER

EXHIBIT # X.A.

To: Members of the State Board of Education
From: Pender Makin, Commissioner*
Date: June 11, 2025
Subject: Major Capital School Construction Program; *Site Approval Consideration*; RSU 17/MSAD 17 - New Middle School Construction Project

STATEMENT OF FACT

RSU 17/MSAD 17 Superintendent Heather Manchester requests that the State Board of Education grant Site Approval for a new grades 6-8 Middle School to be constructed in the Town of South Paris.

RSU 17/MSAD 17 hired Harriman to evaluate construction options for the existing Oxford Hills Middle School North Campus (grades 7-8) in South Paris. Their analysis resulted in a recommendation of new construction that would include students from the leased building that houses the South Campus Middle School (grades 7-8) in Oxford. This project allows for the elimination of leased spaces including 13 classrooms, 2 Guidance Offices, 1 Reflection Room, and 1 Office Space and will expand programming to include the sixth grade from the district's 7 sending elementary schools.

A thorough site search led by Harriman was conducted to find a site that could support the needs of the new consolidated middle school. The search began with a total of 20 potential sites in the district. The results of a broad overview identified 6 sites which were narrowed to 4 using a comparison matrix. The final 4 sites were evaluated using a more comprehensive matrix developed by the design team and the school district. This process identified the existing North Campus Middle School 24.62 acre site at 100 Pine Street in South Paris as the best site for the new school.

This proposed site has a central location in the community, is well served by utility and transportation infrastructure, and can accommodate all athletic fields on site. Site investigations have identified some unsuitable soils which if not addressed could result in unacceptable building settlement. The Geotechnical Engineer recommends the installation of a Ground Improvement (GI) system in targeted areas as the most cost-effective solution. The new school can be constructed while the existing schools remain operational. A completed Site Application is on file with the Department of Education and meets all the applicable criteria of State Board of Education Rule, Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects.

In a public meeting on May 7, 2025, constructing a new facility on this site was endorsed by a straw poll vote of 114 in favor and 9 opposed.

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Site Approval Consideration
New Middle School Construction Project
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Project Information:

Project: RSU 17/MSAD 17 New Middle School Construction Project
Superintendent: Heather Manchester
Architect: Harriman
Engineer: Harriman
Schools to be closed: Oxford Hills Middle School North Campus and Oxford Hills Middle School South Campus
Total number of acres: 24.62
Purchase cost: \$0

COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner of the Department of Education recommends that the State Board of Education grant Site Approval for a new grades 6-8 Middle School construction project as presented.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

On May 22, 2025 the School Construction Committee recommended that pursuant to MRS Title 20-A §15905(1) and State Board of Education Rule Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects, this exhibit be placed on the June 11, 2025 State Board meeting agenda and the State Board of Education grant Site Approval to RSU 17/MSAD 17 for a new grades 6-8 Middle School construction project as presented.

**Prepared by the Office of School Facilities*