

# Cape Elizabeth School Building Project

The public is invited to attend a school tour Monday, June 2 at 6:00 pm



Renderings provided by Harriman Architects

May 2025

## Why the School Board Recommends the Phased Three-School Building Plan

On June 10th, residents will have the opportunity to vote on a bond to replace the Middle School and make critical repairs to Pond Cove. This bond is the result of years of thoughtful planning and community input. **The School Board believes passing it is crucial to ensuring safe, high-quality learning environments for our students.**

Why This Bond Matters:

**Addresses Aging Infrastructure:** This plan will replace the Middle School, resetting the clock on one of our three aging buildings and addressing necessary updates and improvements to meet current and future needs—helping us avoid a looming fiscal cliff.

**Immediate Action for Pond Cove and CEHS:** The bond also adds a new secure entry and replaces aging mechanicals at Pond Cove. In addition, existing facilities funds will be allocated immediately upon approval to address critical needs at Pond Cove and Cape Elizabeth High School through the Capital Investment Plan.

**Expert Design and Planning:** The project has been carefully designed by Harriman Architects, Maine's leading education-focused architectural firm, in partnership with Turner & Townsend Heery—one of the nation's largest Owner's Project Management firms. Their expertise, alongside the input of community leaders and district staff, has shaped this plan.

**Student-Centered Focus:** Above all, this plan prioritizes student safety and learning, while also creating spaces that benefit the entire Cape Elizabeth community.

For the past three years, we have worked with Turner & Townsend Heery, who bring nearly 50 years of experience in K-12 building projects. Their guidance has been clear: "The replacement of the Middle School should be the first thing that you do. **The Middle School has passed its useful life. The mechanicals are not supplying the quality of services required for school buildings. You have to provide a building that offers safe educational spaces. The Cape Elizabeth Middle School can no longer do that.**"

We understand this is a significant investment. We also believe it is a necessary one. Since the initial school building project came to a vote in 2022 we have carefully refined the scope of this project, reducing costs by \$30 million.

## Upcoming Events

### School Tour

**Monday, June 2 at 6:00 pm**

Meet at the CEMS entrance

### Voting

**Tuesday, May 13 - Thursday, June 5**

Early voting at Cape Elizabeth Town Hall

**Tuesday, June 10**

Election Day - Cape Elizabeth High School

[Town of Cape Elizabeth Elections & Voting website](#)



Following is the tax impact table provided by the Town of Cape Elizabeth to help you understand how the bond will affect you personally.

			Estimated Yearly Tax Impact								
Property Value	Current Mill Rate	Current Property Tax	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	
\$ 500,000.00	\$ 11.00	\$ 5,500.00	\$ -	\$ 77.00	\$154.00	\$154.00	\$149.00	\$ 72.00	\$ 72.00	\$ -	
\$ 750,000.00	\$ 11.00	\$ 8,250.00	\$ -	\$116.00	\$231.00	\$231.00	\$223.00	\$107.00	\$107.00	\$ -	
\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 11.00	\$ 11,000.00	\$ -	\$154.00	\$308.00	\$308.00	\$297.00	\$143.00	\$143.00	\$ -	
\$ 1,500,000.00	\$ 11.00	\$ 16,500.00	\$ -	\$231.00	\$462.00	\$462.00	\$446.00	\$215.00	\$215.00	\$ -	
\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 11.00	\$ 22,000.00	\$ -	\$308.00	\$616.00	\$616.00	\$594.00	\$286.00	\$286.00	\$ -	
			0.0%	1.4%	2.8%	2.8%	2.7%	1.3%	1.3%	0.0%	

**March 2025**

## Cape Elizabeth Owner's Representative Supports School Board's Building Plan

### Phased Three-School Building Plan is 'best plan for taxpayer dollars'

At the March 10 Town Council Meeting, Cape Elizabeth's Owner's Representative Turner & Townsend Heery, represented by Chuck Adam, officially provided their professional opinion on the School Board's Phased Three-School Building Plan. Turner & Townsend Heery—one of the largest Owner's Project Management (OPM) firms in the United States—has nearly 50 years of experience advising towns on K-12 building projects.

"Since the beginning of 2021, we have agreed with all of the design professionals who have worked on this project: the replacement of the Middle School should be the first thing that you do," said Adam. "The Middle School has passed its useful life. The mechanicals are not supplying the quality of services required for school buildings. You have to provide a building that provides safe educational spaces. The Cape Elizabeth Middle School can no longer do that."

Adam emphasized the safety concerns identified by design professionals with the current Middle School. "There is no denying major security concerns with that building. The need for delivery personnel to travel in the corridors with students is frightening. The large number of exterior doors on this building because of the iterations... need constant monitoring. It's a security concern."

Adam also addressed the financial implications of the plan. "We have looked at the cost implications and have not come to this decision lightly. This is all about protecting [Cape Elizabeth] tax dollars for us. We want to make sure you are getting the best value for your money, and we believe if [the town builds] a new Middle School, that's the best value for your money."

Beyond the financial considerations, Turner & Townsend Heery agreed with the school administration and design professionals that the current buildings are limiting educational opportunities for Cape Elizabeth students. "The building is not allowing the educators to do what they want to do because of the physical constraints of the building," he said.

Adam also agreed with the School Board's plan to use the Capital Investment Plan to address needs at the High School and Pond Cove. Acknowledging that the town is currently unable to replace both the Middle School and Pond Cove, Adam stressed that the best solution is to prioritize the Middle School while allowing the facilities team to address repairs to the other schools. "This is the best option for what you've told us your budget constraints are," he said.

"Building the Middle School allows Pond Cove to breathe—Pond Cove is restricted by the age and condition of the Middle School," Adam added. "[In the current plan] a new mechanical wing is added- that will improve the

mechanicals for that building. The project will provide a new, safer entrance. All of that couldn't be done with the Middle School where it currently is."

Adam acknowledged the extensive planning and exploration that has already occurred. "You've been looking at this for seven years. You've explored all the options," he said, endorsing the School Board's Phased Three-School Building Plan.

He also supported the School Board's strategy to "reset the clock" on one of the three schools, allowing the facilities team to focus on addressing needs at Pond Cove and Cape Elizabeth High School.

As the town's Owner's Representative, Turner & Townsend Heery provided an independent review of every building condition in the Cape Elizabeth school district. They have personally evaluated each of the three buildings, from the roof to the basement and everything in between. Since being contracted by the town, the team at Turner & Townsend Heery has conducted independent reviews of every design iteration intended to address Cape Elizabeth's aging school buildings.

Adam underscored the urgency of addressing the Middle School's condition. "Those of us who drive cars with 200,000 miles on them know we are on borrowed time. You have a building that far exceeds a car with 200,000 miles on it," he said.

The Cape Elizabeth School Board unanimously approved the Phased Three-School Building Plan in a special meeting on February 24 and urged the Town Council to place the bond on the June ballot, warning that delaying the vote until November would increase project costs by at least \$1 million. Residents can share their thoughts about the project with the council at the March 24

public forum  
**February 2025**

## Community Members Give Feedback on Phased Three-School Building Plan

On February 11th, the Cape Elizabeth School Board hosted a public forum to share the latest developments on the Phased Three-School Building Plan. Harriman Architects, a leading architectural firm specializing in school design in Maine, presented the current project, which includes the creation of a new middle school and significant improvements to both Pond Cove Elementary and Cape Elizabeth High School.

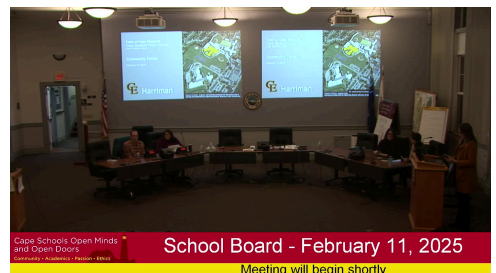
The community engaged with thoughtful questions, covering topics such as student safety, the preservation of music and athletic spaces, how the plan addresses evolving educational needs, and potential fundraising opportunities to reduce the impact of the project on taxpayers.

The School Board expressed strong support for the plan, emphasizing its importance for the future of our schools and community, including:

- **Addressing Aging Infrastructure:** This plan resets the clock on one of our three aging buildings, allowing for necessary updates and improvements to meet current and future needs.
- **Immediate Action for Pond Cove and CEHS:** Funds will be allocated to address critical needs at Pond Cove and Cape Elizabeth High School as soon as the bond is approved, using the Capital Investment Plan.
- **Expert Design and Planning:** The plan has been fully vetted by Harriman Architects, Maine's leading education-focused architectural firm, and our owner's representative at Turner & Townsend & Heery. It has been shaped by the input of key stakeholders, including Facilities Director Dave Bagdesarian, Pond Cove Principal Tiffany Karnes, Cape Elizabeth Middle School Principal Sarah Rubin and Vice Principal Jake Haugevik, Cape Elizabeth High School Principal John Springer,

### Watch Now

#### February 11 Public Forum



Cape Schools Open Minds  
and Open Doors  
Curiosity • Creativity • Compassion • Equity

School Board - February 11, 2025

Meeting will begin shortly

Superintendent Chris Record, Assistant Superintendent Michelle McClellan, and many dedicated staff members.

- **Student-Centered Focus:** Above all, the plan prioritizes student needs and safety, while also creating spaces that will benefit the entire Cape Elizabeth community.

Following the forum, during the School Board's regular business meeting, members discussed the timing of the bond. They weighed the importance of being responsible stewards of taxpayer money. Harriman Architects has warned that waiting until November could increase costs by at least \$1M, with no added benefit. The School Board members expressed enthusiasm about working alongside the Town Council to ensure the referendum presented to voters is the best possible version, balancing fiscal responsibility with the needs of our schools.

**February 2025**

## **School Board Moves Closer to Finalizing Phased Three-School Building Plan**

### **Updated Proposal Retains Full Scope for Music Spaces and Gymnasium, Prioritizes Student Safety**

At a School Board workshop on February 5, Harriman Architects presented the latest revisions to the Phased Three-School Building Plan, which includes refinements to the proposed new middle school.

The new middle school design continues to prioritize key spaces, including a spacious band and chorus room to support Cape Elizabeth's renowned music program, as well as a gymnasium large enough to accommodate high school-level athletic events.

Over the past six weeks, the School Board, in collaboration with Harriman Architects, has worked to scale down certain elements of the initial Middle Ground plan, ensuring that the final design meets the evolving needs of today's students while preparing for the future of Cape Elizabeth's educational community. Throughout this process, the Board has remained committed to creating a safe, welcoming environment for all students, ensuring that safety is a top priority in every aspect of the project.

The Board also heard from Superintendent Dr. Record, Facilities Director Dave Bagdesarian, Pond Cove Principal Tiffany Karnes, and Cape Elizabeth Middle School Principal Sarah Rubin, who each discussed the needs and priorities of their respective schools as reflected in the updated proposal.

The Phased Three-School Building Plan, a project more than two years in the making, aims to create a long-term solution for all three of Cape Elizabeth school buildings, while minimizing taxpayer impact.

The School Board invites the public to learn more about the refined plan, and provide feedback on the plan and the referendum timeline at a public forum on February 11th at 6:00 p.m. in the Cape Elizabeth Town Hall.

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## **Watch Now**

### **February 5 School Board Workshop**



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## November 2024

### School Board authorizes the Superintendent to negotiate and sign a contract with Harriman architecture firm to revise "Middle Ground" building project.

At a regular business meeting on November 12, 2024, the Cape Elizabeth School Board voted unanimously to authorize the Superintendent to work with Harriman architects to revise the "Middle Ground" design, which includes a new middle school and necessary upgrades to the elementary and high schools. The bond to fund this project, combined with an undefined municipal project, was narrowly defeated in last week's referendum.

"Over all I am heartened by the extremely close vote on the Middle Ground school project design," said Superintendent Chris Record. "We came within 166 votes of building the first new school in Cape in over 50 years. It is clear we made great progress in helping Cape citizens understand the very real needs of our schools and the multiple benefits of building a new middle school for our students and staff."

School Board members were united in their desire for Dr. Record to get right back to work with Harriman, to "sharpen their pencils" and make refinements that would lead to cost reduction. Vice Chair Philip Saucier said, "Harriman has been an excellent consulting/architecture firm. They have all the resources ... and I think that they can continue to refine this in light of what we have learned." The Board was steadfast in its support of the Middle Ground as the concept to address comprehensive safety/security needs and educational barriers while minimizing disruption to students. "We're very close," added outgoing Chair Elizabeth Scifres. "Let's see what we can tweak." She went on to say, "It's about need. And the needs have not changed."

## Watch Now

### November 12 School Board Meeting





September 2024

# Reaching Middle Ground

At a special business meeting on July 1, 2024, the Cape Elizabeth School Board voted unanimously to approve the Middle Ground design, which includes a new middle school and necessary upgrades to the elementary and high schools at a cost of \$89.9 million.

This compromise is the culmination of over [a year and a half of work](#) to gather data and input on the best way to address the ailing school buildings and the barriers to education that they present. With a price tag more than \$26 million lower than the previously proposed construction project in 2022, Harriman architect Lisa Sawin produced the Middle Ground design to address the highest priority needs of the schools at a cost the community has signaled it would support.

## SBAC Presentations to School Board

After 18 months of work, the School Building Advisory Committee was split 5-4 on the best path forward. Because of this division, the School Board invited both sides to present their recommendations at a [public meeting on May 21](#). The Board heard two presentations and asked questions on both options, hearing responses from Harriman Architects.

One proposal, [Option E](#), met most of the established educational objectives and community goals with no disruption to students, but at a price point deemed too high.

One project, [Option B](#), met very few of the established educational objectives and community goals with a great deal of disruption to students, but at a price point deemed acceptable.

The School Board directed Harriman to work on a compromise solution that meets established educational objectives and community goals with little to no student disruption in and around a price point the community had signaled it will support.

## School Board Direction to Harriman Architects

The School Board provided the following direction to Harriman at the May 21 public meeting:

- It is crucial to choose a plan that unites us.
- We need to work on consensus and compromise. It is not "B" and it is not "E." It's "The Solution."
- We have heard from the community that there is a palatable dollar figure in and around a 10% tax impact.
- Start with a new MS with full cooling, then include other necessary upgrades to the ES and HS.
- We will then want to work with our facilities director to see what we can do with state funding (School Revolving Renovation Funds).
- We need to look at this as a town-wide initiative.
- We cannot NOT meet the educational needs of our students. We can't compromise on what they deserve and what we have a responsibility to provide.

[Source: Harriman School Board Update, June 11, 2024, page 12](#)

## Middle Ground Project Overview



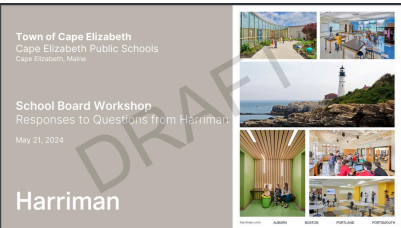
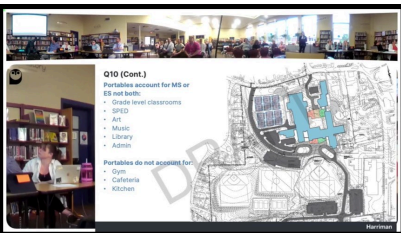
## Middle Ground Public Forum

Tax Impact

BREAKDOWN OF ANNUAL TAX INCREASES INCLUDED IN FULL BOND (Tax impact provided by Town of Cape Elizabeth)			
YEAR	\$89.9M "MIDDLE GROUND" PROJECT	\$4.8M MUNICIPAL USE (RENOVATION OF 1930s BUILDING)	\$94.7M FULL BOND AMOUNT
2025/2026	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2026/2027	1.9%	0.1%	2.0%
2027/2028	5.8%	0.3%	6.1%
2028/2029	3.9%	0.2%	4.1%
2029/2030 and after	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

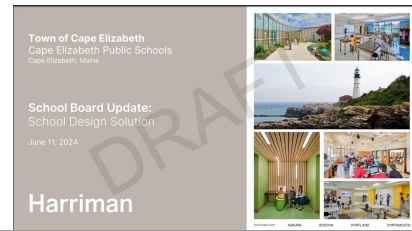
October 8, 2024 Public Forum

Click each presentation below to view.



## Harriman School Design Solution

At the [June 11, 2024 School Board Meeting](#), Harriman Architects presented the school design solution that led to the Middle Ground project. This compromise solution incorporates elements from both options presented by the SBAC and considers feedback from school staff.



July 2024

## Cape Elizabeth School Board votes unanimously in support of \$89.9M "Middle Ground" building project

At a special business meeting on July 1, 2024, the Cape Elizabeth School Board voted unanimously to approve the Middle Ground design, which includes a new middle school and necessary upgrades to the elementary and high schools at a cost of \$89.9 million.

A week prior to the vote, the School Board held a public forum at which the Middle Ground design was given overwhelming support by citizens of the town.

This compromise is the culmination of over a year and a half of work to gather data and input on the best way to address the ailing school buildings and the barriers to education that they present. With a price tag more than \$26 million lower than the previously proposed construction project in 2022, Harriman architect Lisa Sawin produced the Middle Ground design to address the highest priority needs of the schools at a cost the community has signaled it would support.

The School Board noted that the facilities department will continue to address issues at the high school and elementary school that are more efficiently accomplished as single projects. "We understand we can't do everything we need to do in one construction project," said School Board Chair Elizabeth Scifres. Identified jointly by Harriman, Turner & Townsend Heery, and CESD Facilities Director Dave Bagdasarian, those projects outside the bond are carefully planned to stay within the budgeted CIP and maintenance lines over the next eight years. CESD will also apply for funding from the School Revolving Renovation Fund (SRRF), an MDOE program that offers zero interest loans that are partially forgiven (part grant) for qualifying improvements to school buildings. Cape Elizabeth has had great success in the recent past in securing these resources, but is not relying on that program to fund those projects.

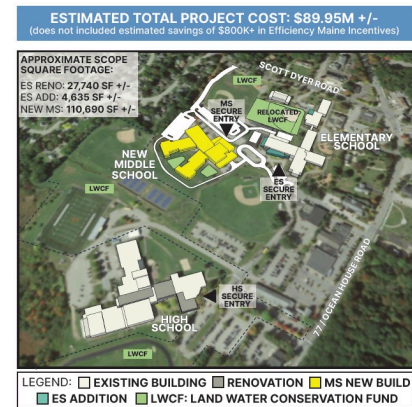
Scifres went on to say, "The Board wanted consensus and compromise, but would not compromise on education. This approach achieves exactly that. This is a major step forward for our schools and our town." In a written statement, School Board Vice Chair Phil Saucier said, "While this is a compromise plan, it really feels like a Cape Elizabeth plan".

The Town Council will consider setting a public hearing for the School Board - approved resolution on Monday July 8th. After a public hearing and if approved by the Town Council, the referendum vote will be on November 4th.

For more information about the Middle Ground:

[Harriman Presentation from the June 24 Public Forum](#)

[Video of the June 24 Public Forum](#)



*The [Middle Ground Design](#) is a compromise that meets educational needs and financial parameters.*



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