

**Press Release
For Immediate Release
Contact: Pauline Plourde
Phone: (603) 466- 3632
E-Mail: pplourde@sau20.org**

GRS Cooperative School District Hires Banwell Architects

It may seem a little like déjà vu all over again, but it isn't. The GRS Cooperative Building Committee issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in late June to over 20 architectural firms, seeking their interest and credentials, to design and oversee the building work to be done for the Middle-High and Ed Fenn Elementary Schools.

"Five solid responses came back to us in early July," said Ben Mayerson, Chair of the Building Committee. "Although Banwell was one of them, we felt we needed to review all the responses with equal weight. The Committee spent over 50 hours individually, and another 8 hours together in meetings considering the candidates. We decided to invite H.L. Turner Group and Banwell Architects to an evening of separate interviews to determine which of these two firms would best fit the Cooperative's needs. We spent 90 minutes with each of the firms' representatives, including their structural and systems' engineers."

The meeting lasted close to 5 hours, on July 24th. "We had a long discussion after the second firm left the interview," comments Mayerson. "We checked their references, investigated if they had any legal problems in their past, and other important criteria we felt would assist us in making a right decision for our schools. Though Turner gave a strong presentation and has a proven track record for providing good school design; Banwell's experience is second to none."

Banwell's previous work on the structural and educational needs study, gave them a familiarity which gives them and us an advantage, right from the start. Their consultant engineering companies include Allied and HR Bergeron. "Both of those firms have worked in and around our schools in the past," comments Mayerson. "They know our schools literally inside and out. That is a huge advantage for us!"

In the coming weeks, the Building Committee will have weekly meetings, as they plan with Banwell for another round of public forums, in each of the member towns. These forums will occur in late September or early October. At these forums a number of concept drawings will be presented for public comment. These drawings will include a number of ideas for renovations at the Ed Fenn. There will also be a series of renovation ideas for the GMHS as well as a concept proposing a totally new building on the present GMHS site. "Each of these concepts will have a set of cost numbers attached, so that the public can make a determination as to which scenario best fits, not only our vision for the school, but the bottom line as well," says Pauline Plourde, Business Administrator for SAU #20. "David Laurin, President and Principal Architect for our project will be there for all the forums to answer questions and facilitate public input.

Visit the Building Committee's webpage on the SAU #20 website, at www.sau20.org/building, for up-to-date information on the Banwell and Building Committee work and activities. For more information regarding these forums or anything else regarding the school projects, please contact a Building Committee or School Board member, or the SAU20 office at 466-3632.