

**Press Release**  
**For Immediate Release**  
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## **GRS Building Committee Seeks Public Feedback to Building Plans and Cost Estimates**

On October 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, citizens of the GRS Cooperative gathered together to review and discuss a progressive series of conceptual plans and cost estimates, for the Edward Fenn Elementary and Gorham Middle High School.

“It was exciting to have all of the team together in one room,” said Ben Mayerson, Chair of the Building Committee. “The citizens of the Cooperative, Building Committee, School Board, SAU20 Administration, school Faculty and Staff, Banwell Architects, and Lee Kennedy Co. Construction Managers (LKC) are all important members of the team. We’ve all been working together for over a year toward these forums.”

Most of the evenings’ programs consisted of David Laurin, AIA of Banwell Architects, presenting a collection of drawings illustrating the proposed organizational flow of the schools. “Each drawing showed a different concept, brought about from direct Citizen, Faculty, Staff, Administration, and Committee feedback,” comments Mayerson. “We saw plans for renovating the schools combined with some new additions, and a plan to build a totally new GMHS, from the ground up. LKC was on hand to provide price estimates, for the various plans.” It was stressed that the options shown included all the requested elements and therefore reflected a maximum price. “We can certainly cut the numbers down, if that’s what people want,” said Mayerson. “It’s all about the process. We thought it was best to show the community what the schools could look like with all the options, and then make necessary adjustments as indicated by the public.”

Blair Banker, Pre-Construction Manager for LKC commented that his estimates of renovation options include a total wall to wall, floor to ceiling rebuild of the existing spaces (which were designated to be saved); all of the new construction spaces; site work; demolition of two houses owned by the District; costs associated with keeping the schools up and running during construction; new furnishings; all design and construction fees and contingencies. Banker and Laurin pointed out; that when completed, the renovated spaces would be, for all intents and purposes like new.

On a related note, several members of the Building Committee, School Board, and Administration recently toured the Hanover High School. “They are renovating their circa 1920’s building, along with adding new buildings,” said Mayerson. “It was very similar to what we have at the GMHS and interesting to see first hand. The renovated spaces looked and functioned like new. During the entire process the school has been open, and the students are safe and removed from any construction activities.”

“The School Board has been very supportive of the Committee from day one,” says Jo Carpenter, Chair of the GRS School Board. “What makes this process so wonderful is all the background work and public access, this committee has provided. They’re working very closely with the Administration, and have discussed the needs and wants directly with the Faculty and Staff of both schools. The Board has been updated monthly, and I’m confident that we’re on track for a successful bond vote next March.”

Paul Bousquet, Superintendent of SAU20 adds, “I’ve been on various Building Committees over the last eight years. This group has conducted itself with total professionalism and openness and carried the process further than ever before. They’re following a careful process of research and inclusion, every step of the way. The

Committee is committed to listening and responding directly to the public and the school professionals. Obviously, that is extremely important for the sake of the students. After a year of working with this group, I can confidently say that there are no hidden surprises in store for the GRS Cooperative, from this Committee. Since the first day I came to the schools in Gorham over 8 years ago; my work ethic has been that the students are the most important asset we have, and this Building Committee has never lost sight of that.”

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, the Building Committee and Board will hold a third forum to report and share the results and progress from the first two forums. Once these forums are complete, we’ll return to the meeting table and make adjustments to the project and cost, based directly from the feedback the public provides us.”

“We are very sensitive to the needs of the schools, but we’re also very aware of the bottom line,” says Mayerson. “Ed Murdough, from the NH DOE, recently attended one of our meetings to discuss finance and process, and was very impressed and supportive of our work. Ed stressed that we need to concentrate on top quality workmanship to reach our goal of these buildings being built to last.

The public is welcome and encouraged to attend any or all Committee meetings. Visit the Building Committee’s webpage on the SAU20 website, at [www.sau20.org/building](http://www.sau20.org/building), for up-to-date information on Kennedy, Banwell, and Committee activities. For more information regarding these forums or anything else regarding the school projects, please contact the SAU20 office at 466-3632.