

Berlin Elementary School  
372 Paine Turnpike North  
Berlin, VT 05602

Return Service Requested

PRSRT STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 42  
Barre, VT

# Berlin Elementary School Renovation Bond Vote

*Bond vote November 8, 2016*

*Last Official Public Hearing November 7 at 6:15 pm at BES*

**Dear Community Member,**

On Tuesday, November 8 the voters of Berlin will consider a \$2.99 million bond for renovation and repair of the Berlin Elementary School. We have brought forth what we believe is a responsible and balanced approach that will: replace failing systems with more efficient ones; remove dangerous asbestos from the building; bring the school up to required fire and ADA codes and standards; and improve the security and safety of the building.

This plan reflects the needs of the building, the children, and the staff who teach them. It also reflects a concerted effort to keep costs under control and present a budget our community can accept. Everything asked for in this bond is necessary and nothing is frivolous. We have made a conscious effort over many meetings to narrow and prioritize the facility needs with affordability in mind.

We believe these fixes are an investment in our community asset and, more importantly, our children and our future. The board unanimously supports this project. **Please review this information, attend the final community forum on November 7 at 6:15 pm, and vote on November 8.** If you have any questions, please contact any one of us.

Sincerely,

**The Berlin Elementary School Board**

Carl Parton, 223-2854, [vtdcs@toast.net](mailto:vtdcs@toast.net)  
Amy Tucker, [atucker@trans-video.net](mailto:atucker@trans-video.net)  
Chris Winters, 279-1649, [wintersvermont@gmail.com](mailto:wintersvermont@gmail.com)

Vera Frazier, 229-0074, [frazier5477@aol.com](mailto:frazier5477@aol.com)  
Jason Giroux, 505-4014, [jgiroux@U32.org](mailto:jgiroux@U32.org)

## Berlin School Renovation Bond Vote Please Vote on Nov. 8!



**Last Official Public Hearing Monday, Nov. 7 at 6:15 pm at BES**

## Why Renovate Now?

- **Failing Systems:** plumbing, heating, flooring
- **Building Safety:** asbestos removal, security
- **Energy Efficiency:** lighting, heating
- **Code Compliance:** ADA, fire safety
- **Health:** asbestos removal, clean air
- **Student Needs:** 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment

**Maintaining our school is an investment in one of our most important community assets and our property values, but more importantly, in our children and our future.**

## Why Renovate Now?

### Taking Care of Our Community Asset

The repairs in this renovation project are mostly long-deferred but much-needed fixes of failing systems in a 50-year-old school. East Montpelier and Middlesex schools are the same age and have recently undergone similar system repairs. Our project is different, with no increase in square footage. Many of the items on our list were part of a previous bond vote which did not pass in 2005. Those problems have not gone away -- they've only gotten worse and more expensive to maintain. Waiting any longer would be irresponsible.

### Why hasn't the school board built this into its regular budget?

For many years, the school board has worked hard to present Berlin with a conservative and responsible school budget. Finding large dollar amounts is not easy in an annual budget. The major fixes of this project are too expensive and too urgent for our annual school budget to absorb.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What needs to be done?

This project consists of fixes for asbestos removal, system failures, code compliance and security updates. The most significant pieces of the project are:

HVAC (\$400K)	ADA Accessibility (\$200K)
Lighting/electrical (\$300K)	Security (\$125K)
Floor & Ceiling (\$300K)	Building envelope (\$125K)
Plumbing (\$275K)	Gym floor and tables (\$75K)
Asbestos abatement (\$250K)	Fire code (\$25K)

The major systems in need of replacement, repair or upgrading are: plumbing, heating, lighting, floors and ceilings. All asbestos must be removed because of deteriorating pipes and asbestos-backed floor tiles throughout. Accessibility, fire safety and building security all need immediate improvement. With permitting, engineering, design, moving, storage and other “soft” costs, the whole project totals \$2.99 Million. For the full list of repairs visit [www.berlinschool.org](http://www.berlinschool.org).

## What about ACT 46 and consolidation?

The outcome of Act 46 is still unknown. Regardless of any decision on merging as a district, we will still need our school. As one of the larger schools in the district, it is not going to close.

## What about energy savings?

Several thousand dollars will be saved each year with LED lighting and decreased maintenance costs due to bulbs lasting 10 times longer. Thousands more in annual savings will come from upgrades to room ventilators, heating systems, building envelope and energy controls.

## Can't this wait until the economy or tax rates improve?

The fixes in the project have been deferred for at least a decade and they are beginning to jeopardize student and teacher safety and health. Failing systems, poor lighting, air quality, security risks, code violations and asbestos abatement can no longer be ignored.

## Is everything in the project really necessary?

A dedicated committee met several times over the summer with an architect from Black River Design to prioritize investments and cut unnecessary items and those which could be handled in the annual budget. Our school serves as Berlin's Red Cross Disaster Shelter, is used by over 30 community groups and is booked more than 200 nights/year for other uses. It must be a safe and reliable building.

## The cost of doing nothing – pay now or pay later?

This plan reflects the balance between facility and educational needs and our concern for affordability. We concluded that deferring these large fixes was no longer an option and that taking advantage of the currently low interest rates made good financial sense for these urgent repairs.

As systems age, maintenance costs increase. The current “band-aid” approach is not a good use of our tax dollars. We pay far more in the long run and we risk health and safety issues or school-closing events. Burst pipes, failed heating systems, or asbestos exposure are a few examples of what we face daily at the school. **We believe that properly investing in the facility now is what is best for Berlin.**

# Tax Implications and Financial Considerations

## What will this mean for my tax bill?

This project requires a 20 year bond borrowed at an estimated 3% interest. This plan reflects the balance between facility and educational needs and our concern for affordability. Tax rates are complicated, but most property owners will see an increase on their tax bills:

- Households earning less than \$50,000/year are not affected (if capped at 5% of income)
- Households earning between \$50,000 and \$90,000 pay some modified, capped amounts
- Households earning over \$90,000 pay at a rate of \$114 per \$100,000 of home values

Estimated Annual Tax Increase Associated with \$2,999,476 Building Project					
Step 1: Find the approximate value of your housesite:	Step 2: Find the column that most closely approximates your household income:				
	If Capped at 5% of Income Under \$47,000	\$50,000	\$70,000	\$90,000	Without education tax adjustment and income over \$105K
Step 3: Find the intersection of steps 1 and 2 – This is the estimated education-related tax increase (if any) for your housesite.					
\$50,000	\$0	\$57	\$57	\$57	\$57
\$100,000	\$0	\$114	\$114	\$114	\$114
\$140,000	\$0	\$148	\$160	\$160	\$160
\$180,000	\$0	\$148	\$205	\$205	\$205
\$240,000	\$0	\$148	\$207	\$266	\$274
\$300,000	\$0	\$148	\$207	\$266	\$342
\$360,000	\$0	\$148	\$207	\$266	\$410
\$400,000	\$0	\$148	\$207	\$266	\$456

The Chart Considerations:

- 1) This assumes that the Title 32 S 6066 computation of adjustment remains the same.
- 2) The Chart above applies to residential properties only. Non residential, commercial and rental properties are subject to the State wide tax rate set each year by the Vermont Legislature.
- 3) Per Town Meeting tax table file for FY17 for a house and up to two acres.
- 4) Uses the highest cost for the bond payment (Year 1) in the amount of \$230,312.

**Please Vote on Nov. 8!**

This proposal was carefully crafted after a thorough analysis and a realistic prioritization of needs. These fixes reflect what we believe is good stewardship of the building and the learning environment. This is the most affordable budget we could responsibly bring forward to address the most pressing needs and to invest in Berlin's future.

**Are YOU Registered to Vote?**

Registration is easy and the deadline is Nov. 2!

You can visit the Town Clerk's Office to register OR check your status/register online

[www.mvp.sec.state.vt.us](http://www.mvp.sec.state.vt.us)

**Thank you for your time and consideration. Please join us on November 7 at 6:15 for the final community forum on this bond vote.**