



Colchester Public Schools

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Superintendent of Schools

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Date: December 8, 2023

To: Bernie Dennler, First Selectman

From: Daniel Sullivan, Superintendent of Schools

Re: Connecticut's HVAC Indoor Air Quality Grant

Background: Bacon Academy is currently the only Colchester Public School that is not fully air conditioned. The design of Bacon Academy as a multi-story building including seven instructional spaces without windows and a Library Media Center without windows significantly impacts teaching and learning, especially for students and staff with health concerns. For example we recorded days last spring and early this fall with classroom air temperatures of 84°F and 75% humidity. On one occasion we released school early and on several other days students and staff went home sick due to heat related illness. In addition, several of the spaces with air conditioning have original equipment including an outdoor condenser with an 18 year lifespan that needs to be replaced. In addition, other equipment is no longer operational as the R22 refrigerant that was used for the original construction is out of production and is no longer available for purchase.

Request: The Board of Education would like to request the support of the Board of Selectmen relative to the state's HVAC Indoor Air Quality Grant Program for Public Schools. In order to submit a grant application, the Board of Selectmen would need to pass three resolutions:

- Authorizing the BOE to apply and if selected accept or reject the HVAC IAQ grant
- Identify or establish a building committee for the project
- Authorize the preparation of schematic drawings and outline specifications for the project

In addition, the Board of Education will need a "Local Funding Authorization Letter" that is signed, dated and certified by the Town Clerk. While all grant applications are due by

December 31, 2023, it is our goal to submit the grant no later than December 20, 2023 in case there are unanticipated issues that need to be addressed.

Supporting Information: A few months ago Governor Lamont announced that the state would release additional funding via a competitive grant process to address indoor air quality including HVAC projects for Connecticut Schools. This grant requires matching funds and will be awarded using the school construction reimbursement funding formula. If Colchester received this grant, the state would pay 60.72% of the project. This round of HVAC funding is different from the grant offered last year as it allows school districts and municipalities to utilize remaining ARPA and ESSER funds to cover the local contribution.

The district's facility committee has identified Bacon Academy as the school with the greatest need for upgrades and additional HVAC infrastructure. In an effort to gather critical information required to submit the grant proposal, we have partnered with Trane, a company that is on both the state bid list and a member of Omnia Partners. Trane has visited Bacon Academy on multiple occasions to identify the most cost efficient approach to address air quality issues and the areas of the building that currently lack cooling.

In the attached proposal from Trane, you will see that the project is estimated to cost \$1,533,200.00. The Board of Education has \$243,960.43 remaining in ARPA funds and \$119,770.38 from ESSER II for a total of \$363,730.81 to put towards the project. Based upon the initial estimate, we anticipate a funding gap of \$238,510.15. Please be advised that the Board of Education is not asking the Town of Colchester to contribute to this project.

For more information on this grant, please visit

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DAS/Office-of-Grants-Administration/HVAC-Forms/FY-24-HVAC-Indoor-Air-Quality-Grant-Program-for-Public-Schools-Program-Guidance.pdf>

Status of other schools: Representatives from Trane visited Colchester Elementary School, Jack Jackter Intermediate School and William J. Johnston Middle School to inspect the HVAC systems. They indicated that the chillers at CES and JJIS will need to be replaced in approximately 3-5 years. The current replacement cost for those units would be approximately \$800,000 per school.

