



District Office

@ Mountain View Campus
P.O. Box 158
Elizabethtown, NY 12932
Ph: (518) 873-6371

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Joshua R. Meyer *Superintendent of Schools*

June 1st, 2023

Boquet Valley Community Members,

We have important updates about the new campus project for Boquet Valley Central School District. As part of the pre-merger process between Elizabethtown-Lewis CSD and Westport CSD one of the many topics addressed was the existing infrastructure's limitations. The initial cost estimate for the project in 2017-18 was approximately \$50 million, with a local share of around \$5 million, assuming a 90.1% reimbursement from New York State.

Rising labor and material costs have now brought the anticipated cost of the new campus to \$62 million. The pandemic also resulted in delays to our progress. Despite these challenges, we retained Bernier Carr Associates as architects and started collaborating with CDC Realtors to find the best location for our new campus. After a thorough search, we settled on the Thrall Dam site. In parallel, we submitted our initial building plans to the New York State Education Department (NYSED). It took over 18 months to receive a response, which unfortunately did not align with our anticipated reimbursement rate of 90.1% of the full project.

This led to several meetings with NYSED to express our concerns and seek the full aid we initially anticipated. After a series of discussions, including a meeting with NYSED Commissioner Betty Rosa, we were able to secure additional funds and were advised not to request any further funds from NYSED. To further advocate for our cause, we sought assistance from Assemblymen Matt Simpson and Billy Jones, Senator Dan Stec, and Board of Regents member Roger Catana. Board President Heather Reynolds contacted U.S. Representative Elise Stefanik, and most recently, we reached out to Governor Hochul's office in March 2023. We await her response optimistically.

Moving forward, transparency and communication remain our top priorities. We aim to equip you with as much information as possible before the community vote scheduled for November 2023. In the coming weeks, we expect to share the finalized financial details of the project. We will be disseminating updates through newsletters and our website to keep everyone informed about the project's progress. In addition, I will host public forums this fall to answer questions and address concerns, and am available to speak with different community groups upon request.

In our upcoming communications, we will provide a thorough analysis of the costs involved in renovating our existing campuses versus building a new one at the Thrall Dam site. We firmly believe the latter is the best option for securing our district's future. Your involvement, understanding, and support are essential to this project's success. We greatly appreciate your engagement and patience during this time and look forward to sharing more updates soon.

Best regards,

Joshua R. Meyer
Superintendent
Boquet Valley Central School District