



May 16, 2022

Greg Johnson, Superintendent  
Albany Public School District, ISD #0745-01  
30 Forest Avenue  
Albany, MN 56307-0040

Dear Superintendent Johnson:

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, requires a review and comment statement on the educational and economic advisability of your proposed school construction project. Information supplied by your school district and from Minnesota Department of Education sources is the basis of this review and comment. With this positive review and comment, voter and school board approval is required for Albany Public School District, Independent School District #0745-01, to proceed with the proposed projects.

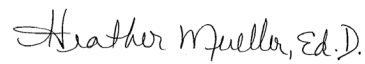
***The district shall publish a summary of the review and comment statement (the final page) in the legal newspaper of the district at least 20 days, but not more than 60 days, prior to holding a referendum for bonds or soliciting any bids for the construction, expansion, or remodeling of an educational facility.*** The department may request a statement certifying the publication, and require the submission, review, and approval of preliminary and final construction plans.

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, requires the commissioner to include comments from residents of the school district in the review and comment. As of the date of this letter, no public comments have been received. In addition, Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, ***requires the school board hold a public meeting to discuss the review and comment prior to the date of the bond referendum election.***

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, ***requires that a school district, prior to occupying a new or renovated facility after July 1, 2002, must submit a certification prepared by a system inspector to the commissioner and the building code official that will provide an occupancy permit.*** The certification must verify that the facility's installed or modified heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system operates according to design specifications and code, a system for monitoring outdoor airflow and total airflow of ventilation systems has been installed, and any installed or modified heating, ventilation, or air conditioning system provides an indoor air quality filtration system that meets ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) Standard 52.1.

If you have any questions, please contact Chris Kubesh, Education Finance specialist, at 651-582-8319 or [chris.kubesh@state.mn.us](mailto:chris.kubesh@state.mn.us). Thank you for working with us to improve school facilities for Minnesota students.

Sincerely,

  
Heather Mueller, Ed.D.  
Commissioner

cc: Don Winkels, School Board Chair

Enclosure

**The Commissioner of the Department of Education  
Review and Comment on the School Construction  
Proposal of Albany Public School District, ISD #0745-01**

A review and comment must be provided on a school district construction project proposal before the district conducts a referendum, solicits bids, or issues bonds for the project. A project proposal has been submitted for review and comment according to requirements set forth in Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, subdivisions 9 and 10, and Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.72. The district provides the following information:

1. The geographic area and population to be served:
  - a. preschool through grade 12 student enrollment for the past five years, and
  - b. student enrollment projections for the next five years.
2. A list of existing school facilities:
  - a. by year constructed,
  - b. their uses, and
  - c. an assessment of the extent to which alternate facilities are available within school district boundaries and in adjacent school districts.
3. A list of specific deficiencies of the facility:
  - a. demonstrating the need for a new or renovated facility to be provided,
  - b. the process used to determine the deficiencies,
  - c. a list of those deficiencies that will and will not be addressed by the proposed projects,
  - d. a list of specific benefits that the new or renovated facility will provide to students, teachers, and community users served by the facility.
4. A description of the project, including:
  - a. specifications of site and outdoor space acreage,
  - b. square footage allocations for classrooms, laboratories and support spaces,
  - c. estimated expenditures for major portions of the project,
  - d. estimated changes in facility operating costs, and
  - e. dates the project will begin and be completed.
5. A specification of the source of project financing, including:
  - a. applicable statutory citations,
  - b. the scheduled date for a bond issue or school board action,
  - c. a schedule of payments, including debt service equalization aid, and
  - d. the effect of a bond issue on local property taxes by property class and valuation.
6. Documentation obligating the school district and contractors to comply with the following items:
  - a. Minnesota Statutes, section 471.345 governing municipal contracts,
  - b. sustainable design,
  - c. school facility commissioning under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.72, certifying the plans and designs for heating, ventilating, air conditioning and air filtration for an extensively renovated or new facility meet or exceed current code standards, including ASHRAE air filtration Standard 52.1,
  - d. American National Standards Institute (ANSI) acoustical performance criteria, design requirements and guidelines for schools on maximum background noise levels and reverberation times,
  - e. state fire code,
  - f. chapter 326B governing building codes, and
  - g. consultation with affected government units about the impact of the project on utilities, roads, sewers, sidewalks, retention ponds, school bus and automobile traffic, access to mass transit and safe access for pedestrians and cyclists.

## Description of Proposed School Construction Project

Albany Public School District, ISD #0745-01, is proposing a single question bond referendum on August 9, 2022 that would authorize \$16.96 million in bonding authority to finance the purchase of and improvements to the vacant hospital/clinic facility in Albany for use as an Early Learning Center. The proposed facility would contain 16 classrooms in the renovated portion of the existing facility. The classrooms would house: kindergarten (4 classrooms), 3-4 year old preschool (6 classrooms), early childhood education (3 classrooms), child / daycare (2 classrooms) and art/music space (1 classroom). Other planned spaces in the renovated portion of the existing facility include a lunchroom, administrative office, specialist/support areas and a small building addition that would house a newly constructed elevator. The final proposed project component is an 8,500 square-foot gymnasium/multipurpose space addition to the existing structure.

The proposed projects would be scheduled for completion in the 2023-2024 calendar years. Cost estimates by project component are as follows:

<b>Project Cost Estimates</b>			
<b>Improvements to Existing Building</b>		<b>New Construction</b>	
Renovations - Upper Level	\$4,676,840	Gymnasium / Multi-Purpose Addition	\$2,690,000
Renovations - Lower Level	\$443,520		
Create Kitchen / Serving Area	\$720,000	<b>Other Project Costs</b>	
Elevator Addition	\$300,000	Property Acquisition	\$400,000
Demo / Abatement	\$320,000	FF&E	\$1,100,000
Deferred Maintenance	\$2,000,000	Technology	\$500,000
	\$8,460,360	Fees, Permits & Testing	\$2,367,065
		Contingency	\$966,551
<b>Total Project Costs</b>	<b>\$16,976,484</b>	Capitalized Interest	\$196,000
		Bond Issuance Costs	\$296,508
			<b>\$5,826,124</b>

The district is projecting small but continuing enrollment increases over the next five years. The proposed project would help ease congestion at the existing elementary schools in Avon and Albany by allowing the district to relocate four kindergarten classes from the existing elementary schools to the proposed facility.

A large portion of the clinic/hospital was constructed fifty years ago. The estimated renovation / deferred maintenance costs for the upper level (instructional space) available in the existing clinic/hospital facility space are around 60% of the cost of a newly constructed facility. Under MDE Guidelines, renovation / improvement costs approaching 60% of new construction costs should cause a district to consider building new instead of improving an existing structure. However, the existing structure has a significant amount of lower level space that could be utilized by the district for storage or other non-instructional purposes. While the total cost of ownership associated with the renovation of the upper level of the existing building is likely to be greater than building new instructional space, the proposed facility offers additional, lower level space that wouldn't be available in newly constructed instructional space.

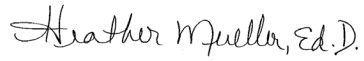
The district has supplied cost estimates to operate and staff the additional prekindergarten space and it appears existing revenues will be sufficient to fund associated operational cost increases. With the caveat explored in the prior paragraph, the proposed project appears to be in the long-term interest of the school district.

### **Review and Comment Statement**

Based on the department's analysis of the school district's required documentation and other pertinent information from sources of the Minnesota Department of Education, the Commissioner of Education provides a positive review and comment.

### **Additional Information is Available**

Persons desiring additional information regarding this proposal should contact the school district superintendent's office.



Heather Mueller, Ed.D.  
Commissioner

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