

Key Points

Vermont's schools are among the oldest in the nation.

2021 study confirms that the costs to address deferred maintenance on school buildings is growing exponentially.

State Funding for School Construction is a critical component of our collective responsibility.

AIAVT supports the passage of H. 454 and specifically endorses the reinstatement of State funding for School Construction.

The State should commit to a responsible level of state funding for school facilities and create a funding mechanism that reliably generates the necessary funds.

AIA Vermont is a Chapter of the American Institute of Architects with over 300 members

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AIAVT Supports State Funding for School Construction

For the future of our state educational program and our children, the State of Vermont needs to play a meaningful role in the funding of K-12 Public School Facilities.

Vermont's K-12 school buildings are among the most important public resources in every community. They not only provide necessary educational space for our children but serve many other support roles including space for before/after school programs, community events, meetings, polling, banquets, plays, health care/screenings, and recreation/athletics.

Despite their importance, Vermont communities have struggled to build and properly maintain their school facilities. Construction costs and complexity of systems have outpaced most local funding mechanisms. The State's former School Construction Aid program has been dormant for two decades. Without an active State program in place, schools have not had reliable leadership with regard to their facilities. Facilities management varies widely from school to school, District to District. The recent State funded Facilities Assessment (2021) confirmed that critical infrastructure needs total at least \$300-400 million dollars statewide. This assessment identified repair costs to existing facilities and systems. It did not address the changing instructional needs or code updates and system improvements.

AIAVT supports Vermont's efforts to reintroduce State Funding for School Construction and encourages all legislators to proudly assist their districts by working out a plan to assess and fund Vermont's K-12 school facilities.

- State leadership and guidance will demonstrate a commitment to address aging facilities spurring confidence and investment by communities throughout the state.
- Funding strategies for facilities improvements should encourage immediate action to prevent further deterioration of our schools while supporting new educational models and State visioning.
- Funding mechanisms should be reliable, predictable and generate sufficient funding to provide a fair incentive to individual districts to invest in local projects.
- We suggest that the State establish a sliding scale offering school districts between 30% and 50% reimbursement of qualified project costs.