# Small School Districts Project Fund Request and Need Statement

## 1 - GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

**Request Type:**

- [x] New Construction
- [ ] Renovation/Remodel
- [ ] Addition

- [x] Elementary
- [ ] Middle School
- [ ] High School
- [ ] Other

**LEA/District:** San Juan School District

**School or Project Name:** Blanding Elementary School

## 2 - PROJECT SCOPE

**Total Project Space** (Gross Square Feet)

| | |
|---|---|
| New Space Constructed (GSF) | 86,900 |
| Remodeled Space (GSF) | |
| Space to be Demolished (GSF) | 68024 (Possibly) |

**Types of Space** (describe the types and amounts of space proposed to meet the programmatic requirements)

The space proposed is the new construction of an elementary school to provide a facility similar to the other elementary schools we have built in our district over the past several years.

## 3 - CAPITAL FUNDING

**Preliminary Cost Estimate:** 47,173,485

**LEA Capital Local Levy for Most Recent Fiscal Year:** 0.003

**Previous State Funding:**

(Funding previously provided for the project such as planning, land purchase, etc.)

**Other Sources of Funding:** 27,173,485

(Other sources of funding such as donations, federal grants, institutional funds, etc.)

**Is the Funding in-hand?** YES

**Debt Repayment Source** NA

**Total Requested Funding:** 20,000,000

## 4 - EXISTING FACILITY

**Existing Space (square feet) Currently Occupied** 68,024

4.1 Description of the current space (Include programmatic uses: Size, age, condition, etc.)

The existing Blanding Elementary school campus was originally constructed in 1955 of unreinforced masonry, with additions in 1964 and 1986 for additional needed programming space. The total square ft is listed as 68,000, with both additions. It includes classroom spaces, a small multi-purpose room, a cafeteria, and media center in addition to a small administrative area. It has a small surface parking area and playground structures. It also has a small grass playfield.
The existing Elementary School building is past the end of its useful life in most systems.
Structurally, the original unreinforced masonry is nearly 70 years old and is experiencing numerous cracks, joint slips, and joint failures. To date, minor repairs are holding, however the long-term viability of the system is in question. The two additions are experiencing similar failures.
The original coal fire boiler from 1955 was replaced 18 years ago with a NG system with pneumatic controls which are aged and in need of replacement. No Building Energy Management System is in place. The heating registers in most spaces are in constant need of maintenance and repair. The building is extremely energy inefficient especially in comparison with modern envelopes and energy code requirements.
The buildings are inadequately cooled for the regional warm temperatures, equipped with older technology evaporative coolers in all the classroom areas, hallways, and media center. These units are exceeding 10 years of age, and are in need of replacement.
The roofs on 2/3 of the various buildings were replaced in the 2000's but part of the replacement roof has already been replaced a second time due to failure, and the rest needs replacement within 5 years.
Kitchen equipment is at a minimum of 10 years old with most of it older and of limited repairability. The kitchen food storage is in the basement with no operable lift requiring staff to hand carry up and down stairs daily.
The window systems are single pane energy inefficient installations. Clerestory windows leak constantly and need replacement. The entire window system is in need of replacement.
The intercom system is outdated and partially not operating. It is in need of replacement.
Lighting systems are dated and inadequate. The electrical system is in need of upgrade.
Security systems are inadequate compared to modern school designs and layout restricts ability to upgrade to modern practice.

4.2 Why is the existing facility not able to meet your needs?

The school campus possesses limited ability for modern education requirements and has no ability to expand or remodel on the small site. Several important functions required for the modern educational environment have no available space.
The student count has increased beyond the existing capacity of the school, and the smaller traditional classrooms are undersized. The kindergarten is currently running double shifts of half-day kindergarten due to lack of available space.
The existing campus has no space to utilize county counseling resources, and such services are not able to be provided to the students who require them. Students and counselors were going outside on campus in order to try to maintain confidentiality, which is not optimal or even feasible in wintertime conditions. The county has now indicated it will no longer attempt to service these students without adequate facilities.
Additionally, shared District resources, who travel from campus to campus, have no spaces to perform their coaching, mentoring, speech pathology, and other essential functions for student growth and improvement in the existing old building. Students are required to use cafeteria and other's staff workspace to perform these functions currently.
As stated in section 4.1 the existing campus condition restricts the ability of the facility to meet needs. Documented security issues, structural issues, inadequate boiler and radiant operation, aging evaporative coolers, lights, windows, and roofs all contribute to a lack of student environmental safety. The playground areas are aged and are non-compliant for fall protection. The District has spent in excess of $1 million since 2009 trying to keep outdated and inadequate systems operating or replacing the inoperable ones. Over $4 million of current estimated repairs or upgrades are identified, without addressing the real space and size inadequacies.
Another major issue is student safety in traffic with bus, parent vehicles, and pedestrian traffic. The existing small campus site relies on narrow public streets with no ability to avoid commingling of buses, pedestrians, and parent drivers. No bypass lanes or other methods of reducing traffic lingering queues are possible. Students sometimes cross busy traffic locations to reach parent vehicles, and/or are dropped off to reach the school in unsafe ways. Pedestrian traffic crosses multiple intersections requiring large staffing plans to promote safety.

4.3 What is the proposed use or disposition of the existing facility if your request is funded?

Construction of the new building is scheduled to be completed after the end of the 2025-26 school year and the existing facility will continue to serve students through then as an Elementary School. The School Board is primarily concerned with the new facility decision making cycle at the moment and will investigate and consider options after the proposed facility is funded. Three options are tentatively being considered.

The first main option would be to sell the property, buildings intact. This is the simplest, and most financially attractive short-term solution. Funds from the sale would be used to replenish the depleted capital savings fund, as the fund will be effectively zero after the new building is constructed. Numerous other projects across the entire district are in need of capital outlays. The District has had outside entities express interest in this option as part of the location and new build evaluation process. The biggest issue with this option is that the district would then have no additional property within the City of Blanding beyond the 3 school campuses, as well as no additional building space.

A second compromise option is to retain the property but demolish the building. With the building removed, this property will be the only unused parcel of real estate owned by the District in Blanding. Given the uncertain nature of future growth, and the overall economic situation, this option has several issues including outlay cost for demolition, no revenue stream for the district, and no building space to be used for other purposes. Advantages would be lower future costs of maintaining a very old building and having the land available for other district purposes without needing to procure new sites.

The third major option is to retain the building and re-purpose it for other district use. This could include office spaces for District professionals which is currently lacking, warehouse and storage of District assets, and meeting and extra-curricular spaces for all 3 schools. This option is the most expensive operationally and provides no revenue replenishment, as the building would need repaired as well as remodeled. Its does provide the most flexibility and covers many outstanding needs the District has. Due to the fiscal limitations of the district, this is the least likely option.

4.4 Describe the future use of the existing facility. Include functions to be served, costs of remodeling or expansions as well as the amount of deferred maintenance and code compliance that will need to take place in the existing facility to enable it for continued use.

As mentioned in section 4.2, estimates for the cost to repair and renovate the existing building to make it safe for occupancy and use in its current configuration would be in excess of $4 million if they were to take place today. Those costs can reasonably be expected to increase by 20% or more between now and 2026 when the new school will be completed and renovation could feasibly begin in the existing building. Those costs could include a new roof; structural repairs for cracks in the unreinforced masonry; a new, energy efficient HVAC system for the entire building; new windows and increased insulation; an extensive upgrade to lighting and AV systems; and asbestos abatement throughout the building. Importantly, given the condition of the unreinforced concrete structure, it would be advisable to have the building reviewed by a structural engineer for soundness, which could result in significant renovation costs not currently included in estimates.

Notwithstanding renovation improvements, maintenance costs for a 70-year-old building are substantial, as not all problems will be discovered in the renovation process. Future use of the building or property will depend on findings from structural and other engineering reviews and the recommendations that accompany them.

If it is determined that a remodel and repurposing of the facility is cost effective, the remodel could be designed-limited to only those sections of the building that will be needed for the use of the new facility or are in the best use condition. This would allow costs to be tightly controlled by the District during the programming and design phases of that project and would likely not include upgrades to playground facilities, bus drop-off loops, or enlarged parking lots as cost controlling measures.

## 5 -REQUESTED PROJECT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

5.1 Describe the scope of the project.

The San Juan School District is seeking to replace the existing Blanding Elementary School with a new construction, 4 section, K-5 Elementary currently designed at 86,900 sq ft. The project includes a large number of programming space improvements including increased size, especially for Kindergarten and Pre-K, and specifically designed Special Education spaces, Cultural Education spaces, and STEM spaces, as well as program spaces for support professionals. The building type is designed as economically as possible for materials, subcontractor labor availability, and long-term life cycle of the facility.

Associated site improvements including but not limited to parking lots, bus and parent drop-off loops, grass and hard surface playgrounds, onsite and offsite utilities, and offsite and onsite road improvements will also be designed and constructed.

In addition, the new facility features a small auxiliary gym that will be used throughout the school day for elementary student PE and play as well as for assemblies and all-school functions. The reason the gymnasium is sized this way is that by making it have Utah Athletic Association standard size courts it can serve as an economical way to address lack of space for practice and games at the nearby middle school and high school. After the elementary school day, the gym will be used as a practice facility for the many boys and girls middle school and high school teams that currently compete for and overwhelm the capacities of the only two gymnasiums at the junior high and high school. The new elementary school is designed to compartmentalize the area around the gymnasium so middle school students, high school students, and community groups can use the facility without gaining access to the entire school thus saving energy and ensuring security. It also allows the cafeteria to be reduced in size to just the function of a serving area.

Located in Blanding, Utah, the existing school serves a population in town as well as a significant surrounding area. The existing site is completely inadequate for housing the new school, as well as the need to keep the existing school operating until the new school is complete as it is the only elementary school in town, and the district owns no other properties that could accommodate school needs and activities during construction. The new site selected is a greenfield site located SW of the corner of 800 N and 100 W at nearly twice the size of acreage of the existing school site.

5.2 Explain how this project eliminates risks to student life and safety through renewal or replacement.

The existing Blanding Elementary school has a number of significant safety issues that will be addressed with this replacement school.

One major issue is student safety in traffic with bus, parent vehicles, pass-thru vehicles, and pedestrian traffic. The existing small campus site relies on narrow public streets with no ability to avoid commingling of bus and parent drivers. No bypass lanes or other methods of reducing traffic lingering queues are possible. Students sometimes cross busy traffic locations to reach parent vehicles, and/or are dropped off to reach the school in unsafe ways. Pedestrian traffic crosses multiple intersections requiring large staffing plans to promote safety.

The new school campus design splits traffic on 3 different streets: Buses route along the north side of the campus into a dedicated bus loop onsite; parent vehicles route to a dedicated drop-off loop to the east with long on-site queues to reduce traffic build up on the street; and

younger students in the Kinder and Pre-K classrooms area have a special, separate drop-off loop and area to further increase safety for the most vulnerable population as well as reduce queuing for parents by being able to escort their child to the doors without lengthening the time for parents of older children. Pedestrian traffic is simplified by having only one 4-way intersection and one 3-way "T" to reduce the need for additional traffic guards.
The existing facility has no provisions for secure and safe playground or building control and the existing layouts and size constraints do not lend to easy modification of the facility to provide secure access. The new building is being designed in consultation with a national expert in school safety and security to ensure the school meets or exceeds national best practice in safe school design strategy. Some of the safety improvements over the existing school include:
•Central office and secure vestibule with audiovisual monitoring and remote entry access.
•Implement principles of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) including territoriality, natural surveillance and access control.
•Secure site perimeter.
•Secure building perimeter.
•Safe student drop-off.
•Automated Interior Compartmentalization.
Modern fire control, alarm systems and telecommunications systems will also make the student population safer by ensuring proper fire safety and emergency incident management.

5.3 Explain how this project addresses essential program growth and capacity. Estimate any increases in program capacity that will result if this request is funded.

The new campus building addresses a number of programming issues that the existing school and site cannot solve. The existing school site has no room for expansion to cover some of these programming issues as well as inadequate size to serve the student population. One of the most important ways the new building addresses capacity is in the Kindergarten and Pre-K areas. Due to space restrictions, the school is currently double shifting half day Kindergarten in the same classroom. There is no additional space to grow the FDK program. As more and more families opt to enroll in FDK, the current school will not have the space to accommodate these students. The new building will provide adequate space for anticipated Full Day Kindergarten growth.
Other new programming spaces include Special Education spaces that are specifically designed for this role, as well as a STEM lab to allow better facility support for newer curriculum practices.
San Juan School District uniquely serves the educational needs of many different cultural populations including Navajo and Ute student populations. The District's Heritage Language Program is an important part of the educational program and goals of the district. Over 40 percent of the students at Blanding Elementary School are Native American students. Dedicated space within the schools for cultural learning is required for the curriculum and is being incorporated in the new campus.
The existing campus has no space to utilize county counseling resources, and such services are not able to be provided to the students who require them. New space programming for these vital services is being provided for in the new campus space which meet HIPAA and other confidentiality laws and requirements.
Additionally, shared District resources, who travel from campus to campus, have no spaces to perform their coaching, mentoring, speech pathology, and other essential functions for student growth and improvement in the existing old building. Teacher collaboration space is also non-existent in the current school. Specific tutoring spaces, shared office spaces, and other shared educational spaces, address these needs in a minimalist and well-thought out way in the new building. These shared spaces are fully utilized throughout the week by different specialists.
The District has increased needs for athletic space that are also being provided for within this new construction. The three schools in Blanding have two gymnasiums among them. Most schools of these student number sizes are programmed for at least 3 spaces. By building a gymnasium as part of this project, the district meets the needs of the overall school community as well as the elementary for day-to-day instruction, and cold weather physical education space at a minimal increase in cost compared to a stand-alone minimally used facility.

5.4 Summarize your decision-making process that has led to this project request (e.g., construction of a new facility versus remodeling

an existing building or a combination of build new and remodel existing). Explain how it provides a cost effective solution that is appropriate for the facility's need.

San Juan School District has been tracking and evaluating the existing building and campus health for years. Formal building evaluations have been conducted, and plans and prioritizations have been made on the most important needed repairs and capital plans.
It has been readily apparent both from the condition of the existing campus and the major programmatic issues caused by the lack of expansion space and traffic issues, that the district needs to replace the aged facility.
The District has been frugally setting aside money for this capital improvement for a number of years. However, over the last 6 years--and especially the last 3 years--construction costs have been accelerating at a rate the district cannot possibly keep up with from a savings standpoint.
Recognizing this, the District has thoughtfully and carefully evaluated the costs and balanced the needs of the overall project against existing space. San Juan SD hired professional PM management staff from the state contract to oversee the design and construction to ensure adherence to budget and District requirements.
The building itself, is cost-effective. The building is substantially smaller than K-5 buildings being built in the state currently. At 86,900 sq ft, the building is 8-10% smaller than similar buildings performing the same function. This is a direct cost savings of several million dollars. This is achieved through a rigid rejection of non-program spaces, thoughtful adjacencies and an economical layout.
Professional estimating using industry recent actual construction numbers by both the Project Management Firm, and the Contractor during design allows for real-time owner decisions on the economic feasibility of proposed systems, finishes, and design elements. The current projected square foot cost is substantially lower than current bids and projected numbers for next year.
The District has selected cost effective mechanical, roofing, and structural building materials. Primarily a metal building construction, excepting the tall spaces, where masonry is more durable and cost-effective, the structure overcomes dependency on a difficult masonry subcontractor environment, and shortens the overall duration of the project. The entire building excepting the tall spaces at the Gym and Cafeteria, is a one-story construction. This eliminates the need for expensive and hard to maintain elevators, as well as simplifying structural elements. The mechanical system is roof-top, off the shelf heating and cooling package units. This allows for easier care by residential as well as commercial technicians, and easier to replace components, as well as being the least expensive initial capital cost option. The roof is a current industry standard single ply construction being used throughout the district.

5.5 Explain how this request comports with the school district's provision of matching funds and sufficient revenues for ongoing operation and maintenance.

Yes, the district has set aside and will continue to set aside funds for the ongoing operation and maintenance of the facility.
As mentioned in 5.4, The District has recognized the need for the replacement of this school for years and has been frugally saving funds in order to accomplish this. The District has always been one of the higher taxed districts in the state and has increased our capital local levy to the state maximum. These tax efforts and other budget initiative have allowed the district to safe a significant amount of the funds needed for this project. When the recognition of the current cost escalation's impact on construction pricing occurred, the District endeavored to establish with professional assistance exactly what the new school would cost and how to apply the saved funds in a matching proposal to the state for the remainder.
Despite the new facility being nearly 20,000 sq ft larger than the existing building, operational and maintenance costs of the new facility will be considerably lower than the existing. The energy savings from the modern envelope, high efficiency heating and cooling, more efficient lighting systems, energy management systems and best practice design features, will actually reduce the current outlay by a significant portion.
Operation and Maintenance cost funds not spent can be cycled forward for the next few years to create a fund pool for future capital outlays.
Modern engineering practice life cycle analysis indicates that capital costs for the first 5-10 years of the operation of a new facility are negligible if good maintenance practices are scheduled and applied.
The district will actually be in a better financial position with yearly Maintenance and Operation funding to be able to go to other needs with the assistance of the State for matching funding for this large capital outlay.

5.6 How would this facility benefit the District and enhance efficiency of use; including combining necessarily existent schools.

While there is no combining of Necessarily Existent Schools with this project it does address a significant need in the most efficient way. As mentioned above, the District has increased needs for athletic space that are also being provided for within this new construction. The three schools in Blanding (the Middle School and High School being NESS) have two gymnasiums among them. One Gymnasium to serve the 300 students at the Middle School and one to serve the nearly 400 students at the high school. Most schools of these student number sizes are programmed for at least 3 gymnasium spaces. By building a gymnasium as part of this project, the district meets the needs of the overall school community as well as the elementary for day-to-day instruction, and cold weather physical education space at a minimal increase in cost compared to a stand-alone minimally used facility. All other benefits from this project also mentioned above.

5.7 (Optional:) Additional information for consideration.

An Important factor in considering the request for the matching funds for the Blanding Elementary Project, is the tremendous financial impact on Construction due to the rural nature of the District.

Arguably, San Juan School District is the most "rural" of any school District in Utah in terms of distance and time of travel from a population center of at least 100,000 people. Transportation costs, material availability and probably the most important of the last few years, labor availability, have caused a disproportionate handicap on rural school districts. While Blanding and the surrounding area possesses a limited quantity of qualified labor capable of performing construction work of this nature, this scope is beyond the ability of local resources and bonding capacity to achieve in the appropriate time frame. Thus nearly all materials, and a significant portion of the labor has to be imported, which results in per diem wage and housing costs, transportation, and increased costs due to a lack of alternative labor or materials.

The District, based upon best industry practice, is expecting the school to cost in upwards of 18-25% more than a comparable school along the Wasatch front and is budgeting accordingly. Recent rural schools from a lesser distance from population centers in Utah experienced this kind of financial markup in the last few years.

Despite this handicap, San Juan is demonstrating being good guardians of the local and state taxpayers in the careful planning, design and construction of this new facility that will be safer, and cost less to operate while providing a modern education environment for the students. Preliminary Cost Estimate includes Construction Cost Estimates, Design, and Construction Management Fees.