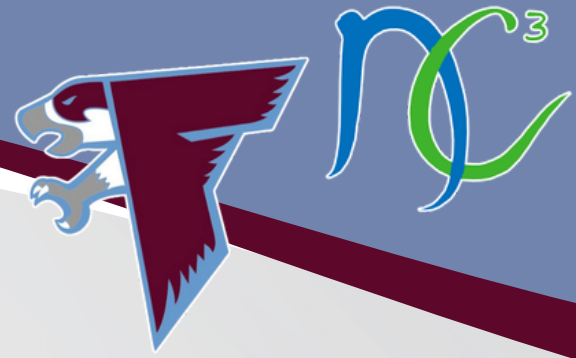


Planning for the **FUTURE** of North Country Union High School & North Country Career Center



North Country Union High School is a cornerstone of our community and has served generations of students for nearly 60 years, playing a central role in preparing students for college, careers, and community involvement. However, the educational needs of our students have changed significantly over the past 60 years, and the building is **approaching the end of its useful life**.



Range of Facility Needs

A 2022 Vermont Agency of Education report determined that approximately **91% of the building's useful life has been expended**. Many of the school's major systems are original or beyond their expected lifespan, including:

- Primary HVAC distribution system
- Central cooling system
- Boiler system
- ADA accessibility issues
- Sprinklers and fire suppression systems
- Fire alarm system
- Security systems
- Piped system to unit ventilators
- Electrical distribution infrastructure
- Exterior windows
- Elevators



Without significant investment, NCUHS/NCCC will continue to experience increased system failures, higher maintenance costs, and growing safety concerns.

Additionally, the **North Country Career Center** has 25 rooftop heating, cooling, and ventilation units that are well beyond their life expectancy and are in need of replacement. Of the overall number of rooftop units that need to be serviced between the NCCC and the NCUHS annually, **75% of that service work occurs to the units on the NCCC roof**.

What is the PCB issue and how does it affect the school?

Following the discovery of high polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) levels at Burlington High School in 2020, the state of Vermont began testing schools built or renovated prior to 1980. **NCUHS was among more than 15 schools identified with elevated PCB levels**.

- At NCUHS, PCB contamination stems from caulking used prior to 1980 around windows and ductwork.
- Unit ventilators located beneath windows have contributed to the spread of contamination to HVAC systems, surrounding masonry, and adjacent ground areas.
- PCB contamination extends beyond the building itself and into surrounding soil, requiring protective measures such as rubber matting around the adjacent building's exterior perimeter.
- We have needed to limit the use of some educational spaces with identified and remediated PCBs.
- This issue has also affected the adjacent North Country Career Center (NCCC), which will also require remediation efforts.
- Reuse of the buildings would tie the school district to annual testing costs in perpetuity.

Statewide, **Vermont schools may require at least \$6.4 billion over 20 years** for repairs and modernization, with significant health and safety issues identified in many facilities. **By July 2027, all qualifying schools must complete PCB testing and mitigation efforts**.

While PCB contamination did not create the aging infrastructure challenges in NCUHS, it has **amplified the urgency** of addressing them in a comprehensive and responsible way.

The A-Wing Lobby

One of the most visible concerns at NCUHS is in the **A-Wing Lobby and connector corridor**, where glass failures occur periodically and unpredictably—and where cracks develop at the sill and eventually cause windows to break into large pieces.

Water infiltration and corrosion are contributing factors, and continued deferred maintenance increases safety risks over time. Our maintenance staff currently replace glass as failures occur, but this reactive approach does not resolve the underlying issue.

A long-term corrective solution is needed to improve safety, reduce water damage, enhance aesthetics, and extend the building's service life.



THE BOTTOM LINE: NCUHS no longer meets modern standards for accessibility, efficiency, and learning environments.

As educational programming has evolved over the past six decades, so too have expectations for accessibility, technology integration, security, and energy efficiency.

NCUHS faces challenges related to:

- ADA compliance standards
- Inadequate square footage in key areas
- Building envelope deficiencies
- Inefficient mechanical systems
- Rising operational and maintenance costs

Continuing to invest in short-term fixes will not address the structural and systemic limitations of the current facility.



A Community-Driven Process

The North County Supervisory Union, in partnership with leaders at NCUHS and NCCC, is carefully evaluating long-term options and will engage the entire community in the process. This effort has included the formation of a Building Committee, made up of staff, parents, and community members.

The Building Committee has identified six priority focus areas:

- Community use of the building
- Failing systems
- Inadequate square footage
- Building envelope issues
- ADA compliance
- PCB contamination

As we consider next steps, we are exploring whether renovation or construction of a new high school would provide the most responsible long-term solution. **Our goal is to ensure NCUHS and NCCC continue to serve students and the broader community safely, efficiently, and effectively for generations to come.**

Learn More!

Get more information on NCUHS's facility needs and the effort to find solutions:

www.northcountryfuture.org

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