

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address the school board this evening to bring a request for permission to pursue the construction of a greenhouse at the high school.

For several years, as a biology teacher, I have envisioned what the addition of such a facility could provide to enhance the life science curriculum of not only the high school biology courses, but also the science experiences of students from the middle school and Pond Cove. Additional use of the greenhouse could include students in our Life Skills programs, the Extended School Year garden projects, Student Driven Learning projects, Independent Studies options, and maybe a Botany/Horticultural class similar to what some of our students pursue at PATHS, to name but a few of the many ideas that a greenhouse generates.

My vision is for a substantial structure, built to last for years, that could accommodate groups of students and be a fully functional science lab and greenhouse. The greenhouse would use green technology and become as self-sustaining as possible. Additional cold frames and raised beds, directly outside the greenhouse, could extend the growing season for root vegetables, greens, and herbs for our cafeterias.

I would like to have permission to begin exploring concept designing with local engineering and design companies; to seek grants and begin fundraising from individuals, businesses, and organizations; to assemble an advisory board from various community members with interest and experience in the diverse agricultural and gardening endeavors in Cape Elizabeth; and to organize a botany club from high school students to help support the greenhouse from year to year.

I plan to apply for a CEEF grant to help with some of the costs of this project once sufficient details are in place. I would hope to also have a way for financial donations to be deposited into an account at the central office, designated for this project and to be tax deductible.

There are obviously many moving parts to such an undertaking as this. Each conversation sparks ideas and enthusiasm for what a greenhouse could provide to our school community. I would love to continue those conversations, visit other schools and organizations with greenhouses, gather ideas for building and use of one for us, learn about greenhouse management, and provide the leadership for this project.

Thank you for considering this proposal and for your support of our school district. I would be happy to answer questions and continue hearing ideas from all of you as we move forward