



Capital Development Committee

Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION REQUEST

Department of Education

West Hall Renovation and Addition, Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind

2025-016

Project Status

This is the second request for funding. Funding was first requested for the project for FY 2024-25.

**Table 1
Prioritization**

Prioritized By	Priority	Notes
Department of Education	1 of 1	
Office of State Planning and Budgeting	Not prioritized	Not recommended for funding.

**Table 2
Prior Appropriation and Request Information**

Fund Source	Prior Appropriation	Budget Year FY 2025-26	Out Year FY 2026-27	Future Requests	Total Costs
CCF	\$0	\$12,773,031	\$14,720,038	\$0	\$27,493,069
CF	\$0	\$0	\$12,043,667	\$0	\$12,043,667
Total	\$0	\$12,773,031	26,763,705	\$0	\$39,536,736

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**Table 3
Itemized Cost Information**

Category	Prior Appropriation	Budget Year FY 2025-26	Out Year FY 2026-27	Future Requests	Total Costs
Land Acquisition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Professional Services	\$0	\$2,333,508	\$951,692	\$0	\$3,285,200
Construction	\$0	\$8,293,621	\$23,193,958	\$0	\$31,487,579
Equipment	\$0	\$324,000	\$1,101,029	\$0	\$1,425,029
Miscellaneous	\$0	\$344,876	\$40,000	\$0	\$384,876
Contingency	\$0	\$1,477,026	\$1,477,026	\$0	\$2,954,052
Total	\$0	\$12,773,031	\$26,763,705	\$0	\$39,536,736

Program Plan Status

Approved Program Plan: Yes

Date Approved: 05/01/2024

FCI: 25

Project Description/Scope of Work

The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) in the Department of Education is requesting a combination of state funds and cash funds spending authority for the first phase of a two-phase project to complete a renovation and addition to West Hall. The project will enable the relocation of the School for the Blind, the Early Education Program, and the Little Language Learners program to accommodate their growing populations. Additional work includes:

- replacing a playground that is out of ADA compliance;
- expanding the chiller plant and replacing the chiller and pump equipment;
- adding a generator for backup to the chiller and steam plants in case of power outages;
- installing electric vehicle charging stations; and
- installing solar panels on the chiller plant roof.

Phase I designs the project, installs the charging stations and solar panels, expands the backup generator, and expands the chiller plant. Phase II remodels 17,256 GSF in West Hall, constructs the 10,800-GSF addition, installs an elevator and remodels entrances for ADA access, replaces the playground, and abates asbestos and lead. The remodel includes upgrading the mechanical, engineering, and plumbing systems.

Cost assumption. The school contracted with an architecture and engineering firm to develop cost estimates, and also engaged general and environmental abatement contractors for additional input. The cost per GSF for the entire project is \$1,409, and it accounts for inflation at 8.0 percent per year. The project complies with Art in Public Places and High Performance

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Certification Program requirements, and the school will target LEED Gold certification once the project is complete.

Table 4
Project Schedule

Project Component	Start Date	Completion Date
Design	May 2025	February 2026
Construction	March 2026	December 2027
Equipment	May 2027	December 2027
Occupancy	January 2028	

Project Justification

Renovating and expanding West Hall allows the School for the Blind, the Early Education Program, and the Little Language Learners Program to relocate to more conducive spaces and brings the entire building up to ADA compliance. According to the school, existing education spaces are overcrowded, lack sufficient storage, and lack appropriate bathrooms for the size of the student population. For instance, the lack of bathrooms creates concerns about younger and older students sharing spaces in an unsupervised manner, and there is only one truly wheelchair accessible bathroom in the entirety of West Hall. The lack of space impacts CSDB's specialized programming, creates unsafe environments due to overcrowding, and reduces instructional time by requiring students to transit between classrooms. Teachers have limited space to conduct student assessments or take breaks. Once the project is complete and programs are moved, the school will have adequate space to teach elementary, middle school, and high school students on separate floors, as is done with the School for the Deaf in Gottlieb Hall.

The project not only ameliorates the space concerns, but gives these programs the capacity to grow to meet demand. The Early Education Program has experienced waitlists, and the school wants to expand the Little Language Learners Program to better serve the community.

Constructed in 1931, West Hall has never had a major renovation. It is not served by the campus' chilled water system, and past roof leaks have caused water damage throughout the building. All of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems require upgrading. The playground to be replaced contains inadequate fall protection and does not meet code, creating the risk of student injury and legal exposure for the school for non-ADA compliance. CSDB also says expanding the Chiller Plant and installing a backup generator will reduce maintenance costs, increase tenant comfort, and address the potential for winter freezes in all campus buildings when a power outage occurs.

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Program Information

CSDB, founded in 1874, is a residential campus serving preschool through 12th grade students. The School for the Blind provides education and services to students with visual impairments. The Little Language Learners Program supports children aged 1.5 to 3 years of all hearing levels with curriculum based in both American Sign Language and English. The Early Education Program focuses on experiential learning opportunities for hearing- or visually-impaired students aged 3-7. The Outreach Services, Student Life, and Public Relations programs would relocate out of West Hall under the project.

Source of Cash Funds

The source of cash funds for this project is from a Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) grant. For informational purposes, BEST grant applications are due in February of each year, and the State Board of Education approves the department's prioritized grant list in June of each year. CSDB will be seeking a June 2026 grant award for the project.

Operating Budget

The project is expected to increase operating costs due to the added square footage, which may be offset by operating efficiencies from improving building systems. The school may need to hire additional personnel in the future as programming expands.

Staff Questions and Issues

1. If the first phase of the project is not funded for FY 2025-26, will the school still seek a BEST grant award in June 2026, or will this be bumped back a year?

If Phase 1 funding is received in Long Bill FY 2025-26 (May 2025), CSDB would apply for Phase 2 funding in June 2025 for Long Bill FY 2026-27 and the BEST Grant in February 2026 to compete for the grant award July 2026 – hopefully receiving both Phase 2 funding in the FY26-27 Long Bill (May 2026) AND the BEST Grant in July 2026.

2. Does the awarding of BEST grants in June of each year (that is, typically after the Long Budget Bill goes into effect) impact the funding scheme for the project?

No. It aligns well. CSDB needs to have the matching funds and be under contract with BEST in July.