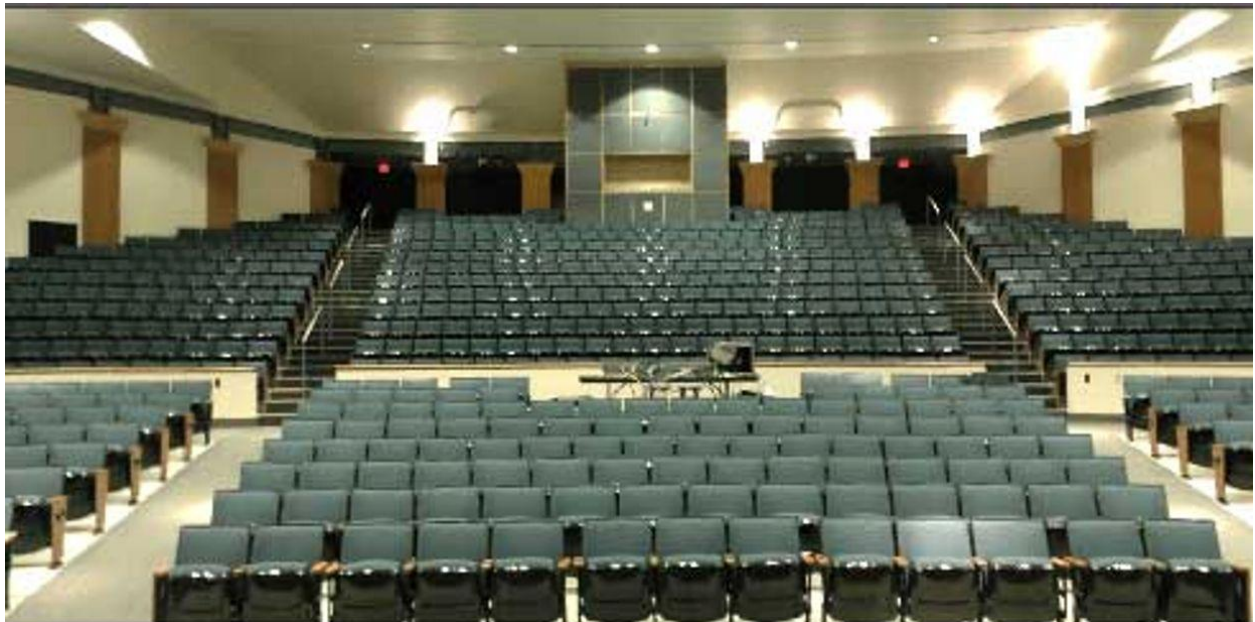




A CASE STATEMENT

The Strom Fund

2026



Background

In the fall of 2001 the new Camden Hills Regional High School fittingly opened its doors to Strom Auditorium with a production of *The Sound of Music*. CHRHS was the first school construction project in Maine to combine public and private funds to expand the facility's scope. The Strom was to be the heart and jewel of that effort. Maine's Department of Education (DOE) planned an auditorium to seat just 350. In response the Five Town School District of educators and community leaders organized around a wider vision, enthusiastically raising private funds to create an 820-seat performance and teaching space as a hub of student learning and community engagement. In the last 25 years The Strom has been wildly successful at fulfilling that mission.

Now

The Strom is now 25 years old and the 820-seat auditorium continues to have a significant impact on the school community and the larger Midcoast community by offering quality performances and unique opportunities for students to learn all aspects of theater operations. Since the opening of The Strom, students have been able to take academic courses in technical theater as well as access opportunities to practice professional stage management. More than a few have gone on to professional careers in the performing arts.

As we look ahead to the Strom's next 25 years, The Strom Fund, a fiscal entity of the Five Town CSD, has been established to address Strom Auditorium needs so that it will remain one of the premier performing arts venues in Midcoast Maine. Our careful assessment shows the upgrades, replacements, and improvements needed to keep The Strom at its best.

Our Top Goals

The priorities of The Strom Fund will be assessed and re-examined based on successful fundraising. We are currently focused on those elements which will make The Strom a **safer and more energy efficient** teaching and performance space.

Our Timeline

The Strom Fund Committee has started a 3-year campaign to raise \$730,00 so that this valued, creative space remains in excellent condition. Locals knew 25 years ago that it was beyond the capabilities of the DOE to support the construction of a premier auditorium, so they looked to the local community to fund the effort. The community responded generously. It created something truly exceptional that tens of thousands have enjoyed. Now it is time to proudly invest in "the next 25" so that The Strom Auditorium continues to thrive.

New Stage Curtains

Stage curtains are now torn and paint-spattered, which happens in a vibrant working space. Replacing the current curtains with new, safer, flame-retardant models enhances safety, reduces long-term maintenance costs, and ensures the auditorium meets modern industry standards.

COST: \$45,000

LED Lighting and New Lighting Control Board

While CHRHS has started the transition to LED lighting in The Strom, the majority of the lights are still older incandescent fixtures. A faster transition to LEDs and an upgrade to modern lighting control systems will reduce energy use and keep The Strom competitive, sustainable and equipped to support the highest level of student and community productions.

COST: \$250,000 of which we have already spent \$119,500 of raised funds to begin the transition

Replace Stage Flooring

The 25 year old stage floor is reaching the end of its structural lifespan. The surface is painted and patched multiple times each year but that maintenance does not address some of the safety hazards emerging, like nail heads and cracks that are clearly hazardous to performers' safety. To preserve the integrity of the performance space, the stage floor is to be replaced.

COST: \$50,000

Conversion to Mechanical Hoists

All linesets in The Strom are aging counterweight systems which are physically risky and prone to imbalance. We propose replacing these safety hazards with mechanical hoists to provide precise control, faster turnover, and a significantly safer working environment.

COST: \$200,000

Acoustic Shell

The current acoustic shell came from the old high school, and poses a safety hazard since sections are cracked, hardware is missing, and support structures are bent. Setup and teardown are increasingly precarious. The shell is still currently used regularly for all choral and band concerts. It is an essential piece of stage equipment. Replacing the shell is important for safety and high quality acoustics for the wide range of performances offered in The Strom.

COST: \$35,000

New Orchestra Pit Cover

Routine use over 25 years has contributed to the deterioration of the current orchestra pit cover. It has been repaired and components have been replaced but the structure is now quite damaged and it can no longer be reliably maintained. Replacing the pit cover is another strategy to enhance safety in the auditorium. **COST: \$50,000**

Refresh and Preserve the Interior

In order to preserve the facility's aesthetics and support its longevity we propose completely repainting the interior with a modern design that will restore the Strom to a state-of-the art performance space to be enjoyed by both performers and audience members. **COST: \$100,000**

The Strom Fund Budget

It is our hope to raise \$730,000 over the next 3 years to address these upgrades. Please note that improvements will begin as soon as funds are received demonstrating the critical need to address these issues as soon as possible.

Stage Curtains.....	45,000
LED Lighting and Master Controls.....	250,000
Stage Flooring.....	50,000
Conversion to Mechanical Hoists.....	200,000
Acoustic Shell.....	35,000
Replacement Pit Cover	50,000
Repainting the Interior.....	100,000
TOTAL BUDGET.....	\$730,000

*The Strom Fund, % Five Town CSD, 22 Knowlton St., Camden, ME 04843
thestrom.org*

How to Donate to The Strom Fund

Give Directly Today: There are many ways to support The Strom Fund through tax deductible gifts. A donation of any size is welcome via a **written check** mailed to The Strom Fund, % Five Town CSD, 22 Knowlton Street, Camden, ME 04843 and is fully tax deductible.

We welcome **Memorial Gifts** in honor of someone special in our community. **Naming Opportunities** may be discussed with members of The Strom Fund Committee.

Making a gift to The Strom Fund through your **Donor Advised Fund** is simple. You may recommend a grant to us by contacting your financial institution or fund manager and letting them know how much you would like to donate. The grant will arrive directly to The Strom Fund % The Five Town CSD. Please make a special request for your name and address to be included with your distribution, so you can be properly recognized for your generosity.

Your will or living trust is an important way to plan the management of your estate and ensure a lasting impression on the causes that have special meaning to you. If you are 70 ½ years of age or older, you may make charitable contributions to us **from your traditional or Roth IRA**, reducing your taxable income. You may also qualify to donate directly to charitable nonprofits **from your individual retirement accounts** without it being treated as taxable income.

Please join us this summer and fall for events at The Strom. Event and ticket information as well as more information about the StromFund is available on the website: <https://thestrom.org/>.

Who is Managing The Strom Fund Campaign?

Although the original Friends of CSD non-profit organization continues to exist, its function has been mostly as a “pass-through” organization for fundraising directed at needs within any area of the Five Town CSD. The newly organized Strom Committee has a laser focus on the needs of **just** Strom Auditorium. Our group is made up of current and former teachers plus some former members of the original Friends group. The Strom Fund has been established under the fiscal management of the Five Town CSD and all donations are tax deductible.

Contact The Strom Fund:

Jane Self jane.self@fivetowns.net

Rick Ash rickash1@gmail.com

Pat Messler pwmessler@gmail.com

Deb Meehan dfmeehan@gmail.com