

## ABSTRACT

### THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ATTACHMENT IN FUNDRAISING: THE RENOVATION AND RESTORATION OF JOHN HANDLEY HIGH SCHOOL WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA

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The need for public school construction and the cost of funding that construction has been the source of considerable concern and debate as far back as the late nineteenth century and has carried forward through the first decade of the twenty-first century. Although it is estimated that the United States has spent almost \$750 billion on school construction since 1900, studies have also pointed out that only six percent of the schools were built since 1980. Numerous studies since 1990 to the current day have placed estimates as high as \$322 billion needed to meet current needs for renovation, repair, and new construction.

The need and cost for funding public school construction is also within the context of how these costs are funded in the United States. Most school construction, with some exceptions, is heavily dependent upon local government, in other words the local taxpayer as the source of funds for the needed construction. This study focused on the needs of Winchester, Virginia, a small city located in the Northern end of the Shenandoah Valley. Winchester Public Schools and the local government were faced with \$50 million in local school construction needs for its only high school, a historic building of iconic stature. The prevailing thought among many was that this figure was too high, or exceeded the fiscal capacity of local government. When the estimated cost began to rise, local decision makers were faced with the dilemma of what to do. The conclusion was to take the unheard of step of conducting a capital campaign to raise funds in order to assist in the renovation and restoration John Handley High School.

The methodology used was to conduct semi-structured interviews of persons, purposefully chosen, who were involved in the decision-making or in some way were involved in the capital campaign environment. The intent was to explore attitudes and beliefs about the school and the fundraising effort. The results reveal a fascinating story about the school's original benefactor and the forces of social capital and attachment to the school that occurred over its history. These forces ignited the effort to raise private funds to renovate and the restore the school that resulted in the donations of funds in excess of six million dollars and has yet to come to a conclusion. The study reveals not only the beliefs and attitudes of the individuals involved, but also the attachment that an entire community has for its beloved school and the community spirit it symbolically represents.