

New Monument Mountain represents an investment

By LEIGH DAVIS

As both a parent and a legislator, I've seen firsthand how deeply our schools shape the life of a community.

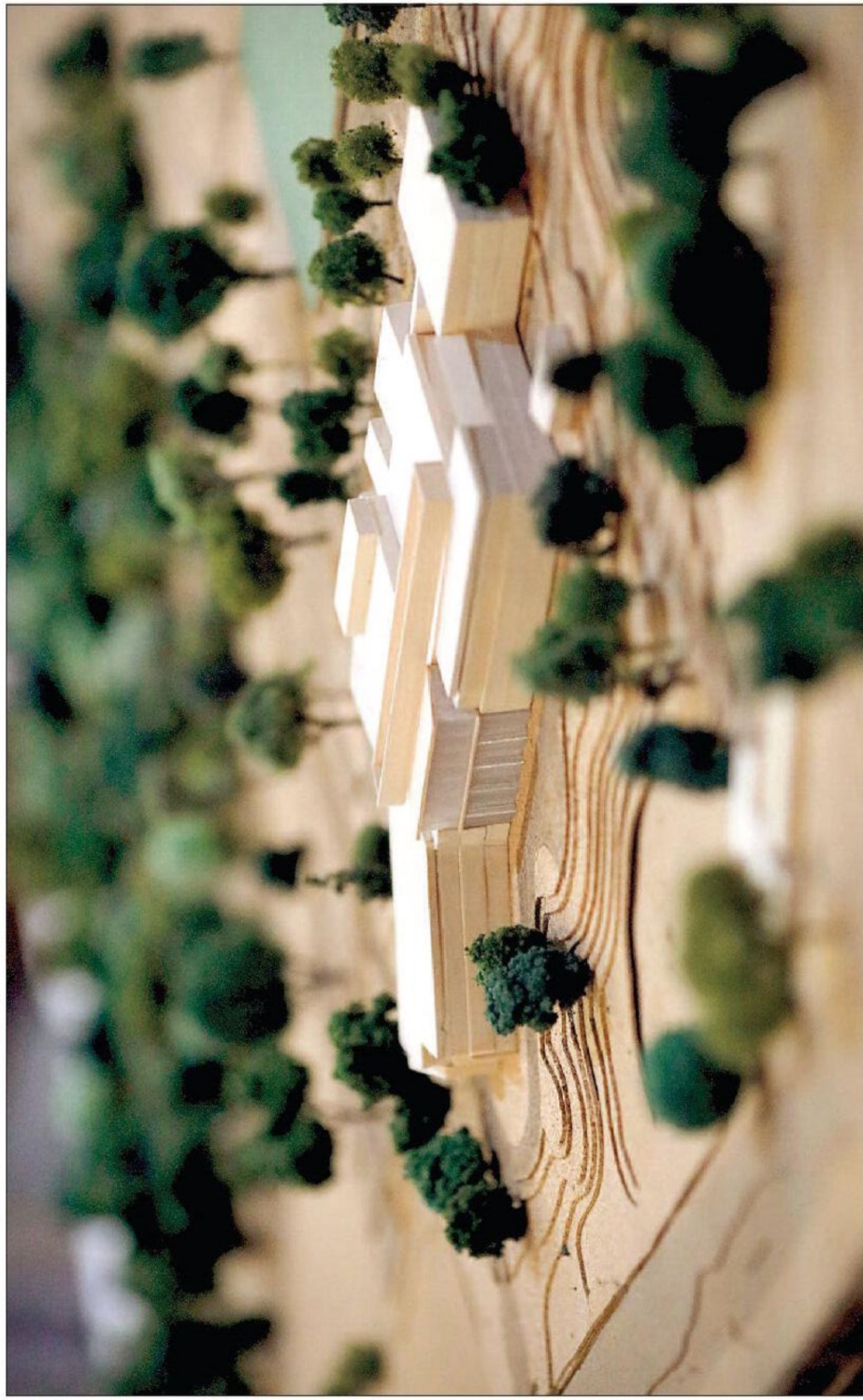
From 2015 to 2023, my three children attended Monument Mountain Regional High School. The experience they had there — guided by dedicated educators and a supportive community — helped shape who they are today. That kind of education doesn't happen by accident; it happens because a community chooses to invest in it.

Now it's time for us to make that choice again.

Rebuilding Monument Mountain is about far more than bricks and mortar. It's about ensuring that our young people can learn, grow and build their futures here in the Berkshires. Our region faces a workforce shortage that touches nearly every sector. From health care and public safety to the trades and education, critical positions remain unfilled — and the strain on local services is growing. Businesses can't find enough skilled workers, and too many young people leave the region to find opportunity elsewhere.

If we want the next generation of health care providers, first responders, teachers, tradespeople, and entrepreneurs to stay, we must give them a reason to. That begins with a high school that prepares them for modern careers, fosters pride and connects learning to opportunity. Every student deserves that same foundation in a building that matches the quality of their education. And our teachers and staff deserve a clean, safe and modern environment in which to do their essential work.

A strong, modern high school is a cornerstone of a thriving local economy. It attracts families, supports



A model of the final design for the proposed new Monument Mountain Regional High School building is displayed at a September presentation.
STEPHANIE ZOLLSHAN — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

employers and signals to the commonwealth that we're serious about our future.

The proposed new Monument Mountain qualifies for Green School status through the Massachusetts School Building Authority, earning an additional 4 percent reimbursement and \$500,000 in MassSave rebates. It would be all-electric and net-zero ready, powered by geothermal wells that heat and cool the space efficiently. The building would be larger, healthier and more energy-efficient, reducing annual operating costs. That's smart,

forward-thinking governance: lowering long-term expenses while improving health, safety and sustainability.

The new facility also would serve the broader community with a dedicated entrance and flexible space available after-school hours for meetings, training and adult education, while doubling as an emergency shelter and warming or cooling center during extreme weather.

Repairing the existing building would cost millions more over time without solving its core problems,

leaving taxpayers facing unpredictable annual increases for temporary fixes. A full rebuild allows us to lock in \$82 million in state aid now, ensuring every dollar is spent on a lasting solution that serves generations to come.

Monument is more than a school — it's a gathering place, a source of pride, and part of our shared identity. It's where we come together for concerts, performances, sporting events, and celebrations. It reflects who we are as a community, and it should reflect the best of who we are.

Every community faces moments that define whether we move forward or fall behind. This is one of them. Rebuilding Monument isn't just an investment in education; it's an investment in our workforce, sustainability, civic strength and community pride. It's an investment in the Berkshires and ensuring our young people not only grow up here but choose to build their lives and raise their own families here.

As a legislator, I think every day about long-term investments that move communities forward. As a parent, I

think about the world we're leaving to our children. Both point to the same truth: investing in education is the most meaningful investment a community can make — one that pays dividends in opportunity, vitality and hope for generations to come.

On Nov. 4, I'll be voting yes to rebuild Monument Mountain Regional High School.

State Rep. Leigh Davis represents the 3rd Berkshire District, which includes the Berkshire Hills Regional School District, in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.