

District: City of Chicopee  
 School Name: Chicopee Academy  
 Recommended Category: Preferred Schematic  
 Date: November 7, 2012

**Recommendation**

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the City of Chicopee, as part of its Invitation to Feasibility Study, to proceed into schematic design for a renovation project at the existing Chicopee Academy (former Chicopee High School facility). MSBA staff has reviewed the Feasibility Study and accepts the District’s preferred solution to renovate the existing Chicopee Academy to serve as a middle school for grades 6-8.

<b>District Information</b>	
District Name	City of Chicopee
Elementary School(s)	Anna E. Barry Elementary School (K-5) Belcher Elementary School (K-2) Patrick E. Bowe Elementary School (PK-5) Bowie Elementary School (K-5) General John J. Stefanik Memorial School (K-5) Lambert-Lavoie Elementary School (K-5) Robert R. Litwin Elementary School (K-5) Selser Elementary School (K-5) Streiber Memorial Elementary School (K-5) Szetela Early Childhood Center (PK)
Middle School(s)	Edward Bellamy Middle School (6-8) Fairview Veterans Memorial Middle School (6-8)
High School(s)	Chicopee Academy (7-12) Chicopee Comprehensive High School (9-12) Chicopee High School (9-12)
Priority School Name	Chicopee Academy (former Chicopee High School)
Type of School	Alternative High School
Grades Served	7-12
Year Opened	1920
Existing Square Footage	172,868 +/-
Additions	1957: Gymnasium 1975: Science labs
Acreage of Site	9.3 acres
Building Issues	The District identified deficiencies in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Structural integrity</li> <li>- Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems</li> <li>- Windows and envelope</li> <li>- Accessibility</li> </ul>
Original Design Capacity	1,000 +/-
2011-2012 Enrollment	97
Agreed Upon Enrollment	825 students

<b>District Information</b>	
Enrollment Specifics	The District and MSBA have mutually agreed upon a design enrollment of 825 students serving grades 6-8.

<b>MSBA Board Votes</b>	
Invitation to Feasibility Study	July 29, 2009
Preferred Schematic Authorization	On November 14, 2012 Board agenda
Project Scope & Budget Authorization	District is targeting Board authorization on April 3, 2013
Reimbursement Rate	80%*

\* By statute, the maximum reimbursement rate is 80%.

<b>Consultants</b>	
Owner's Project Manager	Arcadis U.S., Inc.
Designer	Caolo & Bieniek Associates, Inc.

## **Discussion**

The existing Chicopee Academy is a historic four-story masonry and timber framed building on a 9.3-acre site located on Front Street. The tudor-gothic style building, constructed in 1920, was originally designed to serve as a high school, and it is currently occupied by the District's Maintenance Department, Food Service Department, and Chicopee Academy students. Chicopee Academy is a small alternative education program serving grades 7-12. The majority of the building has been unoccupied since its high school population was relocated to the new Chicopee High School in 2004.

There have been two additions to the building, a single-story gymnasium wing in 1957 and a renovation and addition of science labs in 1975. The original structure consists of masonry bearing walls supporting heavy timber framing at each level. The structure of the 1957 gymnasium addition consists of steel bar joists on masonry bearing walls. The structure of the 1975 addition consists of concrete filled metal decking supported by masonry bearing walls and structural steel framing.

The District identified numerous deficiencies in the Statement of Interest. In addition to the general lack of accessibility features, the Feasibility Study confirmed that the existing facility requires window, heating, ventilation, plumbing, and electrical systems replacement, abatement of hazardous material, fire protection and seismic code upgrades, as well as non-structural exterior improvements.

In 2007, the District developed a redistricting plan that included a consolidation of its middle school students, allowing the opportunity to utilize one of the existing middle schools as an elementary school. Specifically, middle school students currently attending the Fairview Veterans Memorial Middle School would be redistricted to either the newly renovated Chicopee Academy or the existing Bellamy Middle School. The students currently attending the Chicopee Academy would be relocated to the existing Selser School and elementary school students currently attending the Selser and Szetela Schools would be relocated to the Fairview Veterans Memorial

Middle School facility that would be re-purposed to serve elementary school students. The City of Chicopee maintains two high schools: Chicopee High School and Chicopee Comprehensive High School.

In conjunction with its consultants, the District performed a comprehensive assessment of the existing conditions and the educational program and received input from educators, administrators, and facilities personnel. Based on the findings of this effort, the District and its consultants initially considered five preliminary alternatives based upon the proposed redistricting that included one base repair option, three renovation options, and one new construction option, as presented below.

<b>Option</b>	<b>Description of Preliminary Options</b>	<b>Est. Costs</b>
1	Base repair (Addresses code, life-safety, and accessibility issues)	\$18.7M
2	Moderate renovation (Retains maximum existing interior layout)	\$31.2M
3	Comprehensive renovation w/small addition (Maintains one main entry and creates new bus loop)	\$32.1M
4	Comprehensive renovation (Creates multiple entries and relocates cafeteria and kitchen)	\$31.7M
5	New construction	\$39.0M

Option 1 was not considered a viable option because the base repair does not address the District’s desired classroom sizes, space adjacencies, and general goals of the District’s educational program. Option 5 was not considered further because the cost to build a new middle school would likely exceed the cost to renovate the existing facility by approximately \$10 million, exclusive of any associated site acquisition costs. Additionally, the District has indicated that there is not any land available within the City that aligns with the geographic requirements of the District’s redistricting plan.

Based on the preliminary evaluation of options and discussion with MSBA staff, the District and its consultants advanced three options for further development and consideration in the final evaluation and development of preliminary design pricing, as presented below.

**Table 1 – Summary of Preliminary Pricing:**

<b>Option (Description)</b>	<b>Total Gross Square Feet</b>	<b>Square Feet of Reno. Space (cost*/sf)</b>	<b>Square Feet of New Const (cost*/sf)</b>	<b>Site, Building Takedown, Haz Mat. Cost*</b>	<b>Estimated Total Construction (cost**/sf)</b>	<b>Estimated Total Project Costs</b>
Option 2: Moderate Renovation	172,868	172,868 \$132/sf	n/a	\$3,258,849	\$26,080,264 \$151/sf	\$31,296,316
Option 3: Comprehensive Renovation	173,444	172,868 \$134/sf	576 \$184/sf	\$3,626,739	\$26,800,821 \$155/sf	\$32,160,986
<b>Option 4: Comprehensive Renovation***</b>	<b>172,868</b>	<b>172,868</b> <b>\$134/sf</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$3,238,728</b>	<b>\$26,442,659</b> <b>\$153/sf</b>	<b>\$31,731,190</b>

*\*Marked-up construction costs*

*\*\*Does not include construction contingency*

*\*\*\*District's preferred option*

The District has selected Option 4, which is a comprehensive renovation of the existing Chicopee Academy, as the preferred solution to proceed into schematic design. The District has determined that Option 4 most appropriately meets the District's educational goals, classroom sizes, spatial adjacencies, and desired sustainable practices, and it is in alignment with the District's proposed redistricting plan. Although Options 2, 3, and 4 all address the existing systems, code, and life safety issues, Option 4 meets the District's desire to establish separate entrances for each grade level as well as a dedicated public entrance. In addition, Option 4 proposes to relocate the cafeteria and kitchen to a more preferable location adjacent to the existing gymnasium wing.

The District presented its proposed project to the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee ("FAS") on Wednesday, October 17, 2012. At that meeting, members of the FAS raised a number of concerns regarding the District's proposed redistricting plan of the middle school student population, special education spaces and program offerings, estimated project costs, vocational educational program space, and the District's current and future technology plan. As a result of the FAS meeting and subsequent discussion with the District and its consultants, the MSBA requested and received the following:

- A demographic profile associated with the proposed redistricting, including poverty levels, using the indicator of free and reduced lunch;
- A preliminary special education submittal according to the outline in the Module 4 DESE Submittal Requirements;
- A narrative that compares the preliminary cost of the potential Chicopee Academy project with the cost information for similar projects;
- A summary of "new program offerings" associated with the District's preferred solution and confirmation that the program offerings specific to the preferred option would also be offered at the Bellamy Middle School; and
- A summary of the facility-wide technical program capturing the multiple technologies to be offered.

MSBA staff reviewed the conclusions of the Feasibility Study, all subsequent submittals, and the enrollment data with the District and found:

- 1) All initial paperwork required has been processed, including an executed Initial Compliance Certification, the composition of the School Building Committee, and the enrollment information.
- 2) MSBA has completed an enrollment projection and has reached a mutual agreement with the District for a design enrollment of 825 middle school students serving grades 6-8.
- 3) MSBA reviewed the Feasibility Study and subsequent material and finds that the options investigated were sufficiently comprehensive in scope and the approach undertaken was appropriate. MSBA staff will continue to work with the District to ensure that the estimated budget is in alignment with the scope of District's preferred solution.

- 4) The District has submitted an operational budget for educational objectives and a capital budget for MSBA review.
- 5) The District's schematic design submittal will be subject to final review and approval by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as part of the schematic design submittal prior to a Project Scope and Budget Agreement.
- 6) Subject to Board approval of the project scope and budget, the MSBA will participate in a project that includes spaces that meet MSBA guidelines, with the exception of variations previously agreed to by the MSBA. All proposed spaces will be reviewed during the schematic design phase.

Based on the review outlined above, staff recommends that the City of Chicopee be approved to proceed into schematic design for a renovation project at the existing Chicopee Academy (former Chicopee High School facility).