

District: Town of Somerset
 School Name: Somerset Middle School
 Recommended Category: Preferred Schematic
 Date: June 17, 2020

Recommendation

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the Town of Somerset (the “District”), as part of its Invitation to Feasibility Study, to proceed into Schematic Design to replace the existing Somerset Middle School with a new facility serving students in grades 6-8 on the existing site. MSBA staff has reviewed the Feasibility Study and accepts the District’s Preferred Schematic.

District Information	
District Name	Town of Somerset
Elementary School(s)	Chace Street Elementary (PK-5) North Elementary (K-5) South Elementary (K-5)
Middle School(s)	Somerset Middle School (6-8)
High School(s)	N/A – High School is part of the Somerset-Berkley Regional School District
Priority School Name	Somerset Middle School
Type of School	Middle School
Grades Served	6-8
Year Opened	1965
Existing Square Footage	126,980
Additions	Additional wing in 1969
Acreage of Site	25.21 acres
Building Issues	The District identified deficiencies in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mechanical systems – Electrical systems – Plumbing systems – Windows
Original Design Capacity	721
2019-2020 Enrollment	650
Agreed Upon Enrollment	Study Enrollment includes the following configurations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 590 students (grade configuration 6-8) (Preferred Schematic) - 770 students (grade configuration 5-8)
Enrollment Specifics	Contingent upon the Board’s approval of the Preferred Schematic, the District will sign a Design Enrollment Certification for 590 students in grades 6-8.
Total Project Budget – Debt Exclusion Anticipated	Yes

MSBA Board Votes	
Invitation to Eligibility Period	December 13, 2017
Invitation to Feasibility Study	October 31, 2018

Preferred Schematic Authorization	On June 24, 2020 Board agenda
Project Scope & Budget Authorization	District is targeting Board authorization at April 2021 Board meeting
Feasibility Study Reimbursement Rate (Incentive points are not applicable)	56.89%

Consultants	
Owner's Project Manager (the "OPM")	CGA Project Management
Designer	Ai3 Architects LLC

Discussion

The existing Somerset Middle School is a 126,980 square foot facility located on a 26-acre site and currently serves students in grades 6-8.

The original school building was constructed in 1965 with an addition constructed in 1969 followed by brick repair in 1997 and boiler replacement in 1999. The District identified numerous deficiencies in the Statement of Interest including outdated mechanical, electrical, and plumbing components, and inefficiencies associated with the existing building envelope.

As part of the Feasibility Study, the District explored options that considered a grade reconfiguration by relocating the District's fifth grade students into a potential middle school facility. This effort resulted in the following study design enrollments: 770 students for grades 5-8 and 590 students for grades 6-8.

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, facilities personnel, and considered both study enrollment options. Based on the findings of this effort, the District and its consultants initially studied seven preliminary options that include four addition/renovation configurations, two new construction options, and one base repair option. The following is a list of the preliminary options considered.

Option	Description of Preliminary Options
1	Base Repair at the existing middle school (Grades 6-8)
2	Addition/Renovation retaining the 1965 building (Grades 6-8)
3	Addition/Renovation retaining only auditorium, stage, and lecture hall (Grades 6-8)
4	New construction on middle school site (Grades 6-8)
5	Addition/Renovation retaining the 1965 building (Grades 5-8)
6	Addition/Renovation retaining only auditorium, stage, and lecture hall (Grades 6-8)
7	New construction on middle school site (Grades 5-8)

As a result of this analysis, the District determined that "Option 1" does not provide a long-range cost-effective solution locally, nor does this option meet the needs of the District's educational program. However, the District agreed to continue to include this option for cost comparison purposes only.

“Option 3” and “Option 6”, were not considered further by the District as a result of the amount of new square footage required and the significant disruption to students throughout a complex and multi-phased construction project. The estimated duration of construction for these options is 48 and 52-months, respectively.

Although similar to “Option 2”, “Option 5”, was not considered further by the District as a result of the estimated cost and the significant disruption to students throughout an estimated 48-month phased construction project.

As a result of further consideration at the conclusion of the Preliminary Design phase, MSBA staff and the District agreed to three final options for further development and consideration in the final evaluation of options, as well as the “Option 1” Base Repair included for cost comparison purposes only. However, several variations of “Options 2, 4, and 7” were generated as part of the District’s efforts in evaluating and determining a preferred schematic, therefore, an additional variation to “Option 4” is included in the preliminary pricing table below.

Summary of Preliminary Design Pricing for Final Evaluation of Options

Option (Description)	Total Gross Square Feet	Square Feet of Renovated Space (cost*/sq. ft.)	Square Feet of New Construction (cost*/sq. ft.)	Site, Building Takedown, Haz Mat. Cost*	Estimated Total Construction ** (cost*/sq. ft.)	Estimated Total Project Costs
Option 1 (Base Repair, grade 6-8)	126,650	126,650 \$233.82/sq. ft.	- -	\$1,876,625	\$31,489,688 \$248.64/sq. ft.	\$37,060,000
Option 2 (Add/Reno, grade 6-8)	139,000	79,500 \$380.49/sq. ft.	59,500 \$535.04 /sq. ft.	\$11,737,836	\$73,821,529 \$531.09 /sq. ft.	\$91,900,000
Option 4.8.4 (New construction, grade 6-8)	131,900	- -	131,900 \$432.63 /sq. ft.	\$11,717,399	\$68,782,169 \$521.47 /sq. ft.	\$86,920,000
Option 4.10.5 *** (New construction, grade 6-8)	131,900	- -	131,900 \$425.91 /sq. ft.	\$11,951,179	\$68,128,992 \$516.52 /sq. ft.	\$86,300,000
Option 7 (New construction, grade 5-8)	154,800	- -	154,800 \$416.68 /sq. ft.	\$11,788,161	\$76,290,848 \$492.83 /sq. ft.	\$96,430,000

* *Marked up construction costs*
 ** *Does not include construction contingency*
 *** *District’s Preferred Schematic*

The District has selected “Option 4.10.5” as the Preferred Schematic to proceed into Schematic Design. This option represents the District’s preferred solution to deliver its desired educational program at a lower estimated cost when compared to the other options considered with minimal

disruption to education during construction. “Option 4.10.5” also aligns with the District’s town-wide masterplan, proposes a simplified building organization, and is anticipated to result in a shorter construction duration when compared to the other options studied.

Although “Option 2” accommodates the District’s preferred grade configuration, the District determined that “Option 2” offers no educational, financial, or strategic benefits. “Option 2” would involve several undesirable phased-occupied renovation additions, would require a minimum of five construction phases and extend the construction schedule to 42-48 months and was therefore eliminated from further consideration.

After consideration and research related to the educational, social, emotional, developmental, and financial advantages and disadvantages of a 5-8 grade configuration versus a 6-8 grade configuration, the District determined that the inclusion of grade 5 in the middle school is not the most appropriate grade configuration for the Town of Somerset. Therefore, “Option 7” was eliminated from further consideration.

While “Option 4.8.4” was very appealing to the District, after careful consideration, it was determined that this option does not have a compact and efficient building footprint, would result in longer distances between programs, and is estimated at a higher cost when compared to similar options. Therefore, “Option 4.8.4” was eliminated from further consideration.

The District presented its proposed project to the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee (“FAS”) on June 3, 2020. At that meeting, members of the FAS discussed an appreciation for the clear presentation of the Educational Program reflected in the design; an appreciation for the proposed layout of academic neighborhoods and distribution of Special Education spaces; the importance of World Language programs; consideration of backstage access to auditorium; consideration of acoustics related to the proposed placement of lavatories; site circulation and encouragement to lessen the proposed vehicular hardscape; appreciation of the proposed outdoor learning spaces including associated maintenance of the greenhouse; consideration for involving maintenance staff in outdoor gardening efforts; the proposed separation and security of the building during community after-hours use, and the proposed project schedule as it relates to local Town Meeting and potential ballot dates.

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

- 1) The options investigated were sufficiently comprehensive in scope, the approach undertaken in this study was appropriate, and the District’s Preferred Schematic is reasonable and cost-effective and meets the needs identified by the District.
- 2) The District has submitted an operational budget for educational objectives and a capital budget statement for MSBA review.
- 3) 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, which is prior to executing a Project Scope and Budget Agreement.

- 4) MSBA staff will continue to work with the District regarding any adjustments to the site circulation concept and associated vehicular hardscape scenarios. Staff will also continue to understand and coordinate any adjustments related to the District's Town Meeting/ballot vote dates that may impact the project schedule.
- 5) Subject to Board approval, the MSBA will participate in a project that includes spaces that meet MSBA guidelines, except for variations previously agreed to by the MSBA. All proposed spaces will be reviewed during the Schematic Design phase.
- 6) As part of the Schematic Design phase, the District will work with the MSBA to determine a mutually agreeable methodology to differentiate eligible costs from ineligible costs.

Based on the review outlined above, staff recommends that the Town of Somerset be approved to proceed into Schematic Design to replace the existing Somerset Middle School with a new facility serving students in grades 6-8 on the existing site.