

District: Town of Southborough
 School Name: Margaret A. Neary Elementary School
 Recommended Category: Preferred Schematic
 Date: October 23, 2024

Recommendation

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the Town of Southborough (the “District”), as part of its Invitation to Feasibility Study, to proceed into Schematic Design to consolidate the existing Margaret A. Neary Elementary School and Albert S. Woodward Memorial School and construct a new facility serving grades 2-5 on the site of the existing Margaret A. Neary Elementary School. MSBA staff has reviewed the Feasibility Study and accepts the District’s Preferred Schematic.

District Information	
District Name	Town of Southborough
Elementary School(s)	Mary E. Finn School (PK-1) Albert S. Woodward Memorial School (2-3) Margaret A. Neary Elementary School (4-5)
Middle School(s)	P. Brent Trottier School (6-8)
High School(s)	N/A
Priority School Name	Margaret A. Neary Elementary School
Type of School	Elementary School
Grades Served	4-5
Year Opened	1970
Existing Square Footage	62,756
Additions	2001 – (2) temporary modular classrooms were added
Acreage of Site	80.7-acres
Building Issues	The District identified deficiencies in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mechanical systems – Electrical systems – Plumbing systems – Envelope – Windows – Roof – Accessibility In addition to the physical plant issues, the District reported that the existing facility does not support the delivery of its educational program.
Original Design Capacity	Unknown
2023-2024 Enrollment	285 students
Agreed Upon Enrollment	Study Enrollment includes the following configurations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 305 students in grades 4-5 • 450 students in grades 3-5 • 610 students in grades 2-5 (Preferred Schematic)
Enrollment Specifics	Contingent upon the Board’s approval of the Preferred Schematic, the District will sign a Design Enrollment Certification for 610 students in grades 2-5.

District Information	
Total Project Budget – Debt Exclusion Anticipated	Yes

MSBA Board Votes	
Invitation to Eligibility Period	March 2, 2022
Invitation to Feasibility Study	April 26, 2023
Preferred Schematic Authorization	October 30, 2024 Board agenda
Project Scope & Budget Authorization	District is targeting Board authorization on April 30, 2025
Feasibility Study Reimbursement Rate (Incentive points are not applicable)	39.84%

Consultants	
Owner’s Project Manager (the “OPM”)	Skanska USA Building Inc.
Designer	Arrowstreet Inc.

Discussion

The existing Margaret A. Neary Elementary School is a 62,756 square-foot facility located on an 80.7-acre site shared with the P. Brent Trotter Middle School. The facility currently serves students in grades 4 through 5 and was originally constructed in 1970, with two modular classrooms added in 2001.

The District’s Statement of Interest (“SOP”) identified numerous deficiencies in the existing facility associated with outdated mechanical and electrical systems; building envelope and roofing; windows; and deficiencies in existing spaces that are deemed incapable of appropriately delivering the District’s educational program.

As part of the Feasibility Study, the MSBA accepted the District’s request to explore options that included a consolidation of the Margaret A. Neary Elementary School and the Albert S. Woodward Memorial School grades 2-5 student populations into one building to minimize the number of transitions student will experience at the elementary school level. With a grades 2-5 enrollment option, a consolidated scenario also would result in a reduction of the number of pre-kindergarten through grade 5 school buildings the District will be required to operate as the current Finn Elementary School, which currently serves pre-kindergarten through grade 1, would be taken offline and those students would be relocated to the existing Albert S. Woodward Memorial School.

The existing Albert S. Woodward Memorial School is a 68,400 square-foot facility located on an 11.65-acre site that currently serves students in grades 2 through 3. The building was constructed in 2002, with no additions or renovations to the facility.

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 studied twelve (12) preliminary options that included two (2) code upgrade/base repair options, five (5) addition/renovation options, and five (5) new construction options, as presented below.

Option	Description of Preliminary Options
Option A.1	Base Repair for grades 4-5 with an enrollment of 305 students at the existing Margaret A. Neary Elementary School; with an estimated total project cost range of \$59-\$62 million.
Option A.2	Base Repair for grades 4-5 with an enrollment of 305 students at the existing Albert S. Woodward Memorial School; with an estimated total project cost range of \$64-\$66 million.
Option B.1	Addition/ Renovation for grades 4-5 with an enrollment of 305 students at the existing Margaret A. Neary Elementary School; with an estimated total project cost range of \$103-\$107 million.
Option B.2	Addition/ Renovation for grades 3-5 with an enrollment of 450 students at the existing Margaret A. Neary Elementary School; with an estimated total project cost range of \$124-\$129 million.
Option B.3	Addition/ Renovation for grades 3-5 with an enrollment of 450 students at the existing Albert S. Woodward Memorial School; with an estimated total project cost range of \$119-\$124 million.
Option B.4	Addition/ Renovation for grades 2-5 with an enrollment of 610 students at the existing Margaret A. Neary Elementary School; with an estimated total project cost range of \$143-\$149 million.
Option B.5	Addition/ Renovation for grades 2-5 with an enrollment of 610 students at the existing Albert S. Woodward Memorial School; with an estimated total project cost range of \$142-\$147 million.
Option C.1	New Construction for grades 4-5 with an enrollment of 305 students at the existing Margaret A. Neary Elementary School site; with an estimated total project cost range of \$105-\$109 million.
Option C.2	New Construction for grades 3-5 with an enrollment of 450 students at the existing Margaret A. Neary Elementary School site; with an estimated total project cost of \$124-\$129 million.
Option C.3	New Construction for grades 3-5 with an enrollment of 450 students at the existing Albert S. Woodward Memorial School site; with an estimated total project cost range of \$123-\$128 million.
Option C.4	New Construction for grades 2-5 with an enrollment of 610 students at the existing Margaret A. Neary Elementary School site; with an estimated total project cost range of \$141-\$146 million.
Option C.5	New Construction for grades 2-5 with an enrollment of 610 students at the existing Albert S. Woodward Memorial School site; with an estimated total project cost range of \$140-\$145 million.

As a result of this analysis, the District determined that all twelve (12) options would be considered for further evaluation. However, following the evaluation of preliminary options, the District determined that “Options B.1 and B.2” would not be considered for further evaluation as the District determined that these options would not fully address the needs of the District’s educational program, would potentially result in less efficient building layouts, costs to provide structural upgrades would result in significant estimated budget increases, and the proposed additions to the south of the building are likely required to include costly site work. Additionally, the District indicated that “Option B1” would not allow the District to group grade levels into common neighborhoods and “Option B2” would only address the educational program goals within the new classroom wing.

Additionally, and subsequent to the evaluation of preliminary options, the District determined that “Options B.3 and B.5” would not be considered for further evaluation because the District determined that these options do not fully address the needs of the District’s educational program. Additionally, both of these options would require an addition to the existing building with limited available buildable space on the Albert S. Woodward Memorial School site due to topography and the current building location and footprint.

Furthermore, the District determined that “Options C.3 and C.5” would not be considered for further evaluation because the District determined that new construction alternatives at the Albert S. Woodward Memorial School site would require the undesirable demolition of the newest building in the school district.

MSBA staff and the District agreed to explore the following six (6) options for further development and consideration in the final evaluation and development of preliminary design pricing as presented below, including: two (2) code upgrade/base repair options, one (1) addition/renovation option, and three (3) new construction options.

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 A.1: (Base Repair at Neary for 305 students)	62,756	62,756 \$632/sq. ft.	N/A	\$5,890,915	\$45,556,472 \$726/sq. ft.	\$63,000,000
Option A.2: (Base Repair at Woodward for 450 students)	68,400	68,400 \$627/sq. ft.	N/A	\$3,176,866	\$46,029,731 \$673/sq. ft.	\$58,000,000
Option B.4: (Add/Reno at Neary for 610 students)	103,392	60,285 \$684/sq. ft.	43,107 \$684/sq. ft.	\$18,850,617	\$89,533,224 \$866/sq. ft.	\$113,600,000
Option C.1: (New Construction at Neary for 305 students)	63,305	N/A	63,305 \$777/sq. ft.	\$17,043,041	\$66,259,233 \$1,047/sq. ft.	\$83,100,000
Option C.2: (New Construction at Neary for 450 students)	85,574	N/A	85,574 \$786/sq. ft.	\$17,893,329	\$85,187,701 \$995/sq. ft.	\$105,376,038
Option C.4: (New Construction at Neary for 610 students)***	99,564	N/A	99,564 \$743/sq. ft.	\$17,893,329	\$91,836,569 \$922/sq. ft.	\$113,400,000

* Marked up construction costs

** Does not include construction contingency

*****District’s Preferred Schematic**

The District has selected “Option C.4” as the Preferred Schematic to proceed into Schematic Design as the District determined that a scenario that proposes to replace the existing Margaret A. Neary Elementary School and consolidates the District’s grades 2-5 student population into a single building best meets the needs of the District and their educational program and reduces overall transitions for students in pre-kindergarten through grade 5. Additionally, the District determined this option provides the preferred grade-level neighborhoods and adjacencies, the proposed location on site is on the footprint of the existing building which is anticipated to be more cost effective than building new on the athletic fields. It should be noted that in the District’s Preferred Schematic, the grades 2-3 student population from the existing Albert S. Woodward Elementary School will be relocated to the new facility and the existing Albert S. Woodward Elementary School will serve pre-kindergarten through grade 1 students, and the existing Finn Elementary School will be taken offline.

“Option A.1” was not selected by the District because the existing square footage of this building does not accommodate the spatial needs and adjacencies associated with the District’s desire to consolidate the grades 2-5 student population into a singular building.

“Option A.2” was not selected by the District because this option does not accommodate the spatial needs and adjacencies associated with the District’s desire to consolidate the grades 2-5 student population into a singular building. More specifically, the District indicated that the proposed building layout would not allow for special education spaces to be ideally co-located within educational neighborhoods when compared to consolidated new construction options.

Although “Option B.4” results in the District’s desire to consolidate the grades 2-5 student population into a singular building, this option was not selected by the District because it was determined that the proposed layout results in less ideal adjacencies and many of the existing spaces are anticipated to result in inefficiencies. Also, the District considered a renovation option that is equal to the estimated cost of new construction to be less beneficial to the District.

“Option C.1” was not selected by the District because this option does not accommodate the District’s desire to consolidate the grades 2-5 student population into a singular building. Additionally, the District determined that this option does not achieve an appropriate economy of scale based on the estimated cost per square foot.

“Option C.2” was not selected by the District because it does not accommodate the District’s desire to consolidate the grades 2-5 student population into a singular building. Additionally, the District determined that this option results in an unfavorable scenario where a single grade would remain at the existing Albert S. Woodward Memorial School, which the District found to be unfeasible for school transition and operational costs.

The District presented its proposed Preferred Schematic to the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee (“FAS”) on September 25, 2024. At that meeting, members of the FAS discussed the following items: appreciation for the District’s thoughtful consideration of grade configuration in an effort to reinforce educational goals and minimize transitions for young learners; importance of continued input from teachers, administrators and other staff as the design develops; appreciation for the World Language program and suggestion to incorporate flexible furnishings in the associated classroom to allow for varied activities; accessibility considerations for outdoor spaces and play areas; careful selection of soft flooring materials as the design is further developed; site drainage and permitting considerations; sustainability goals and consideration of geothermal wells; clarification of

site constraints and buildable area; existing emergency access road and proximity to the adjacent middle school; proposed parking area locations as well as opportunities to reduce parking and increase green space if possible; and, appreciation for the logical design and building organization.

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) Prior to the submission of the District's Schematic Design submittal, the MSBSA requests that the District be available to present updates associated with the Preferred Schematic to the FAS. This update is to ensure a mutual understanding and agreement of the proposed project scope and to ensure that this scope will be reflected in the District's Schematic Design submittal.
- 3) The District has submitted an operational budget for educational objectives and a capital budget statement for MSBA review.
- 4) The District's Special Education submission 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.
- 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 Southborough be approved to proceed into Schematic Design to consolidate the existing Margaret A. Neary Elementary School and Albert S. Woodward Elementary School and construct a new facility serving grades 2-5 on the site of the existing Margaret A. Neary Elementary School.