

District: Town of Dedham
School Name: Oakdale Elementary School
Recommended Category: Feasibility Study (Re-categorization to Eligibility Period and Return to Feasibility Study)
Date: February 21, 2024

Recommendation

That the Board vote to re-categorize the Statement of Interest for the Oakdale Elementary School in the Town of Dedham (the “District”) from the Feasibility Study category to the Eligibility Period category to allow the District and the MSBA to re-evaluate the enrollment projections originally established during Eligibility Period and then return the Statement of Interest to Feasibility Study so the District may commence with a new Feasibility Study utilizing updated study enrollment options.

This Board vote will rescind the October 25, 2023 Board approval of the Preferred Schematic for the replacement of the Oakdale Elementary School and the Greenlodge Elementary School with a new consolidated facility to serve 550 students in grades 1-5 on the existing Oakdale Elementary School site.

Discussion

Following the Board’s vote on October 25, 2023, authorizing the District to proceed into Schematic Design, the MSBA was informed of the Dedham School Building Rehabilitation Committee’s vote to not move forward with the Preferred Schematic project and request that the MSBA reconsider the enrollment projections on file based upon new and different information.

The new and different information provided to the MSBA by the District on December 8, 2023, includes an updated NESDEC report and housing development information not previously provided. Coupled with two additional years of DESE school enrollment information (2022-2023 and 2023-2024), MSBA staff determined that there is sufficient evidence indicating an increase in student enrollment and that revisiting the projections is warranted.

The MSBA requested that the District update its enrollment questionnaire and Educational Profile Questionnaire, which was completed on January 16, 2024. The MSBA and the District conducted an enrollment meeting on January 26, 2024, to review the enrollment projections and methodologies.

As a result of these actions, MSBA staff provided an update to the Facilities Assessment Subcommittee at the January 31, 2024 meeting and issued to the District an updated enrollment letter and study certification dated January 31, 2024. The District’s signed enrollment certification now on file, dated February 6, 2024, will inform the new Feasibility Study for the Oakdale Elementary School. The updated study enrollment options include:

1. 360 students serving grade 1-5 enrollment at the Oakdale Elementary School;
2. 560 students serving grade 1-5 enrollment in a consolidated Oak Dale Elementary School and Riverdale Elementary School; and,
3. 665 students serving grade 1-5 enrollment in a consolidated Oakdale Elementary School and Greenlodge Elementary School.

Based on the actions taken by the District and the MSBA, staff recommend that the Board vote to re-categorize the Statement of Interest for the Oakdale Elementary School in the Town of Dedham from the Feasibility Study category to the Eligibility Period category. This is to acknowledge the enrollment actions taken by the District and the MSBA based upon new and different information. This action would rescind the October 25, 2023, Preferred Schematic Board vote for Oakdale Elementary School and then return the District to the Feasibility Study phase. This will allow the District to commence a new Feasibility Study utilizing the updated study enrollment options.

The authorization to approve the Town of Dedham to return to Feasibility Study includes a reimbursement exclusion provision regarding the eligibility of costs associated with the second feasibility study. As the MSBA has reimbursed the District for the approved, eligible costs of the first feasibility study, the MSBA will not reimburse the District for duplicative costs associated with the second feasibility study for which the MSBA already provided reimbursement. As is standard practice, all costs are subject to review and audit