

District: Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
 School Name: Cutler Elementary School
 Recommended Category: Preferred Schematic
 Date: August 21, 2024

Recommendation

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District (the “District”), as part of its Invitation to Feasibility Study, to proceed into Schematic Design to consolidate the student population of the existing Cutler Elementary School and Winthrop Elementary School and construct a new facility serving grades 1-5 on the site of the existing Cutler Elementary School. MSBA staff has reviewed the Feasibility Study and accepts the District’s Preferred Schematic.

It should be noted that the proposed site development associated with the District’s Preferred Schematic requires a lease agreement extension. Should the District be approved by the Board to proceed into Schematic Design for this proposed project and is subsequently considered by the Board for approval of a Project Scope and Budget Agreement and a Project Funding Agreement, the District must comply with the MSBA’s land use requirements.

District Information	
District Name	Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Elementary School(s)	Winthrop School (PK-5) Bessie Buker Elementary School (K-5) Cutler Elementary School (K-5)
Middle School(s)	Miles River Middle School (6-8)
High School(s)	Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School (9-12)
Priority School Name	Cutler Elementary School
Type of School	Elementary School
Grades Served	K-5
Year Opened	1951
Existing Square Footage	45,800
Additions	1989 Whittier Wing addition, housing kindergarten and the gymnasium
Acreage of Site	11.5 acres
Building Issues	The District identified deficiencies in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mechanical systems – Electrical systems – Boiler systems – 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	255 students
Agreed Upon Enrollment	Study Enrollment includes the following configurations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 285 students in grades K-5 at the existing Cutler Elementary School.

District Information	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 430 students in grades 3-5 at the existing Cutler Elementary School. • 645 students in grades K-5, consolidating the existing Cutler Elementary School and Winthrop Elementary School buildings. • 740 students in grades 1-5, consolidating the Cutler Elementary School and the Winthrop Elementary School buildings. (Preferred Schematic)
Enrollment Specifics	Contingent upon the Board’s approval of the Preferred Schematic, the District will sign a Design Enrollment Certification for 740 students in grades 1-5, consolidating the existing Cutler Elementary School and Winthrop Elementary School buildings.
Total Project Budget – Debt Exclusion Anticipated	Yes

MSBA Board Votes	
Invitation to Eligibility Period	March 2, 2022
Invitation to Feasibility Study	December 21, 2022
Preferred Schematic Authorization	On August 28, 2024 Board agenda
Project Scope & Budget Authorization	District is targeting Board authorization on February 26, 2025
Feasibility Study Reimbursement Rate (Incentive points are not applicable)	47.63%

Consultants	
Owner’s Project Manager (the “OPM”)	PMA Consultants, LLC
Designer	JCJ Architecture

Discussion

The existing Cutler Elementary School is one of three neighborhood elementary schools within the District and serves students in grades K-5. The other two schools are the Winthrop Elementary School serving grades PK-5 and the Buker Elementary School serving grades K-5. The existing Cutler Elementary School, which is the District’s priority school, is a 45,800 square foot facility located on an 11.5-acre site. The original school building was constructed in 1951 with modular classroom additions added in 1952 and 1956 and the academic wing consisting of kindergarten classrooms and a school gymnasium was added in 1989.

The existing Winthrop Elementary School is a 49,750 square foot facility opened in 1959 located on a 14-acre site, and the existing Buker Elementary School is 34,880 square foot facility opened in 1953 located on a 7.5-acre site.

The District’s priority Statement of Interest (“SOI”) identified numerous deficiencies in the existing Cutler Elementary School facility associated with the age of the building and its accessibility issues; lack of a sprinkler system; outdated mechanical, plumbing and electrical system; presence, and

quantity of asbestos-containing materials; inadequate fire alarm and security systems; and existing spaces not conducive for delivering the District’s educational program.

As part of the Feasibility Study, the MSBA’s participation associated with building consolidation scenarios were limited to only the existing Cutler and Winthrop Elementary School facilities. However, grade reconfiguration scenarios of the current student population included students in the existing Cutler, Winthrop, and Buker Elementary School facilities. The MSBA mutually agreed with the District to explore the following four study enrollment options:

- Enrollment 1: 285 students in grades K-5 (Cutler Elementary School student population only.)
- Enrollment 2: 430 students in grades 3-5 (Scenarios involving the consolidation of the Cutler and Winthrop Elementary School buildings and the grade reconfiguration of the Cutler, Winthrop, and Buker Elementary School grades 3-5 student population.)
- Enrollment 3: 645 students in grades K-5 (Scenarios involving the consolidation of the Cutler and Winthrop Elementary School buildings and the grade re-configuration of the Buker Elementary School grades K-5 student population.)
- Enrollment 4: 740 students in grades 1-5; (Scenarios involving the consolidation of the Cutler and Winthrop Elementary School buildings and the reconfiguration of the Cutler, Winthrop, and Buker grades 1-5 student population.)

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 (15) preliminary options that included (1) code upgrade/base repair option, (7) addition/renovation options, and (7) new construction options, as presented below.

Option	Description of Preliminary Options
Option C1.1	Code Upgrade/Base Repair for grades K-5 with an enrollment of 285 students at the existing Cutler Elementary School; with an estimated project cost of \$44.8 million.
Option C2.1	Addition/Renovation for grades K-5 with an enrollment of 285 students at the existing Cutler Elementary School site; with an estimated project cost of \$98.5 million.
Option C2.2	Addition/Renovation for grades 3-5 with an enrollment of 430 students at the existing Cutler Elementary School site; with an estimated project cost of \$109 million.
Option C2.3	Addition/Renovation for grades K-5 with an enrollment of 645 students at the existing Cutler Elementary School site; with an estimated project cost of \$142 million.
Option C2.4	Addition/Renovation for grades K-5 with an enrollment of 740 students at the existing Cutler Elementary School site; with an estimated project cost of \$149.2 million.
Option C3.1	New Construction for grades K-5 with an enrollment of 285 students at the existing Cutler Elementary School site; with an estimated project cost of \$92.1 million.

Option C3.2	New Construction for grades 3-5 with an enrollment of 430 students at the existing Cutler Elementary School site; with an estimated project cost of \$101.9 million.
Option C3.3	New Construction for grades K-5 with an enrollment of 645 students at the existing Cutler Elementary School site; with an estimated project cost of \$132.5 million.
Option C3.4	New Construction for grades 1-5 with an enrollment of 740 students at the existing Cutler Elementary School site; with an estimated project cost of \$139.1 million.
Option W2.2	Addition/Renovation for grades 3-5 with an enrollment of 430 students at the existing Winthrop Elementary School site; with an estimated project cost of \$111 million.
Option W2.3	Addition/Renovation for grades K-5 with an enrollment of 645 students at the existing Winthrop Elementary School site; with an estimated project cost of \$143.7 million.
Option W2.4	Addition/Renovation for grades 1-5 with an enrollment of 740 students at the existing Winthrop Elementary School site; with an estimated project cost of \$151 million.
Option W3.2	New Construction for grades 3-5 with an enrollment of 430 students at the existing Winthrop Elementary School site; with an estimated project cost of \$109.4 million.
Option W3.3	New Construction for grades K-5 with an enrollment of 645 students at the existing Winthrop Elementary School site; with an estimated project cost of \$141.1 million.
Option W3.4	New Construction for grades 1-5 with an enrollment of 740 students at the existing Winthrop Elementary School site; with an estimated project cost of \$148.2 million.

As a result of this analysis, the District determined that “Option C2.2” would not be considered for further evaluation because of the anticipated extended phasing of construction required for this option. Additionally, “Option C2.2” would provide less separation between community spaces and learning neighborhoods and the renovated classrooms would not be easily configured for learning neighborhoods when compared to other options. Furthermore, the regulation sized playing fields would require overlap to fit on the site resulting in a less desirable scenario when compared to other options. However, please note that “Option C2.2” was included as part of the final evaluation of options for cost comparison purposes only.

The District determined that “Option C3.2” and “Option W3.2” would not be considered for further evaluation because of the anticipated additional costs associated with the excavation of the new playing fields at each site. Additionally, the District determined that neither of these options would allow the District to house all the pre-kindergarten through grade 2 students within the existing Buker Elementary School building. However, please note that “Option C3.2” was included as part of the final evaluation of options for cost comparison purposes only.

The District determined that “Option W2.2” would not be considered for further evaluation due to the anticipated costs associated with extended phasing. Additionally, the District determined that this option would provide less separation between the community spaces and the learning neighborhoods, and the renovated classrooms would not be easily configured for the learning neighborhoods when

compared to other options. Furthermore, the District indicated this option is anticipated to result in additional traffic to Bay Road. Lastly, the District determined that this option would not allow the District to house all the pre-kindergarten through grade 2 students within the existing Buker Elementary School building.

Subsequent to the evaluation of preliminary options, the District developed “Option W1”: Code Upgrade/Base Repair option for 285 students in grades K-5 at the existing Winthrop Elementary School. Please note, this option was included as part of the final evaluation of options for cost comparison purposes only.

MSBA staff and the District agreed to explore the following (14) options for further development and consideration in the final evaluation and development of preliminary design pricing as presented below, including: (2) code upgrade/base repair options, (6) addition/renovation options and (6) new construction options. Please note that of the (14) options, pricing for (3) options were provided for cost comparison purposes only.

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 C1.1: Base Repair at Cutler ES (285 students)	45,800	45,800 \$587/sq. ft.	N/A	\$11,337,312	\$38,199,554 \$834/sq. ft.	\$48,537,624
Option C2.1: Add/Reno at Cutler ES (285 students)	84,230	24,800 \$658/sq. ft.	59,430 \$865/sq. ft.	\$19,328,448	\$87,081,619 \$1,034/sq. ft.	\$114,961,284
Option C2.2: Add/Reno at Cutler ES (430 students) †	92,795	14,600 \$624/sq. ft.	78,195 \$824/sq. ft.	\$19,084,730	\$92,622,071 \$998/sq. ft.	\$122,564,257
Option C2.3: Add/Reno at Cutler ES (645 students)	123,281	17,000 \$662/sq. ft.	106,281 \$781/sq. ft.	\$19,726,139	\$113,997,297 \$925/sq. ft.	\$151,064,354
Option C2.4: Add/Reno at Cutler ES (740 students)	132,663	17,000 \$662/sq. ft.	115,663 \$765/sq. ft.	\$19,817,611	\$119,584,159 \$901/sq. ft.	\$158,595,717
Option C3.1: New Construction at Cutler Site (285 students)	84,230	N/A	84,230 \$775/sq. ft.	\$17,740,898	\$83,043,899 \$986/sq. ft.	\$106,368,540
Option C3.2: New Construction at Cutler Site (430 students) †	92,795	N/A	92,795 \$762/sq. ft.	\$18,075,831	\$88,760,004 \$956 /sq. ft.	\$113,946,825
Option C3.3: New Construction at Cutler Site (645 students)	123,281	N/A	123,281 \$743/sq. ft.	\$19,131,891	\$110,749,662 \$898/sq. ft.	\$142,373,470

<i>Option C3.4: New Construction at Cutler Site (740 students)***</i>	132,663	N/A	132,663 \$732/sq. ft.	\$20,069,824	\$117,244,050 \$884/sq. ft.	\$150,835,732
Option W1.0: Base Repair at Winthrop ES (285 students) †	49,750	49,750 \$538/sq. ft.	N/A	\$11,791,434	\$38,547,359 \$775 /sq. ft.	\$48,986,988
Option W2.3: Add/Reno at Winthrop ES (645 students)	123,281	34,000 \$658/sq. ft.	89,281 \$774/sq. ft.	\$17,182,971	\$108,619,245 \$881/sq. ft.	\$144,008,349
Option W2.4: Add/Reno at Winthrop ES (740 students)	132,663	34,000 \$658/sq. ft.	98,663 \$754/sq. ft.	\$17,425,017	\$114,178,561 \$861/sq. ft.	\$151,503,572
Option W3.3: New Construction at Winthrop Site (645 students)	123,281	N/A	123,281 \$744/sq. ft.	\$17,375,537	\$109,133,362 \$885/sq. ft.	\$140,317,536
Option W3.4: New Construction at Winthrop Site (740 students)	132,663	N/A	132,663 \$731/sq. ft.	\$17,750,071	\$114,672,728 \$864/sq. ft.	\$147,565,010

† Provided for cost comparison purposes only

* Marked up construction costs

** Does not include construction contingency

*****District's Preferred Schematic**

The District has selected “Option C3.4” as the Preferred Schematic to proceed into Schematic Design as the District determined this option best aligns with the District’s desire to reconfigure the District-wide grades 1-5 student population into one consolidated facility and that this option best supports the District’s educational program. The District also indicated that this option provides adaptability and flexibility to support growth and varied student's needs. Additionally, the District determined that “Option C3.4” proposes a building that promotes curiosity, sensory experiences, indoor and outdoor connections, and creates a sustainable building to be used as a learning tool and space to celebrate and honor student work. Furthermore, it is anticipated that this option will result in the shortest construction phasing schedule when compared to other options, and the new building will be located on the flattest portion of the site anticipated to result in less excavation and soil removal at the proposed building location.

“Option C1.1” was not selected by the District because this option does not align with the District’s desire to reconfigure the District-wide grades 1-5 student population into one consolidated facility, this option does not meet the District’s desired educational program, and this option is not capable of absorbing future enrollment increases. Additionally, the District indicated this option results in difficult site circulation, accessibility challenges, and does not provide full emergency access. Furthermore, this requires an extended construction schedule and portable classrooms to accommodate phasing.

“Option C2.1” was not selected by the District because this option does not align with the District’s desire to reconfigure the District-wide grades 1-5 student population into one consolidated facility. Additionally, the District indicated this option lacks full emergency access at the building perimeter, and this option requires the development of the playing fields overlapping to be accommodated as part of the site development. Furthermore, “Option C2.1” would require extended construction phasing.

Although the District did not consider “Option C2.2” in the final evaluation of options, pricing associated with this option was provided for cost comparison purposes only.

“Option C2.3” and “Option C2.4” were not selected by the District due to the lack of full emergency access at the building perimeter due to the existing building location and site constraints. Additionally, the District indicated both options would result in a less desirable reconfiguration of renovated classrooms that would impact the adjacencies with other spaces. Furthermore, it is anticipated that both options would require undesirable extended construction phasing.

“Option C3.1” was not selected by the District because this option does not align with the District’s desire to reconfigure the District-wide grades 1-5 student population into one consolidated facility. Additionally, the District indicated it is anticipated that this option would require increased excavation to accommodate development of the playing fields.

Although the District did not consider “Option C3.2” in the final evaluation of alternatives, pricing associated with this option was provided for cost comparison purposes only.

“Option C3.3” was not selected by the District because this option does not align with the District’s desire to reconfigure the District-wide grades 1-5 student population into one consolidated facility and does not meet the District’s desired educational program. The District indicated it is anticipated that this option would also require increased excavation to accommodate the playing fields and other components associated with site development.

“Option W1” was not selected by the District because this option does not align with the District’s desire to reconfigure the District-wide grades 1-5 student population into one consolidated facility and was included as part of the final evaluation of options for cost comparison purposes only.

“Option W2.3” and “Option W2.4” were not selected by the District primarily because the Town of Hamilton voted against extending the long-term lease for the Winthrop Elementary School. Additionally, the District indicated that both options would result in a less desirable reconfiguration of renovated classrooms that would impact the creation of learning neighborhoods. Furthermore, it is anticipated that both options would require undesirable extended construction phasing.

“Option W3.3” was not selected by the District primarily because the Town of Hamilton voted against extending the long-term lease for the Winthrop Elementary School. Also, the District indicated that this option requires undesirable phased and occupied construction, which is anticipated to contribute to cost increases due to extended phasing. Additionally, this option offers limited and partial fire access lane around the building perimeter and would potentially increase additional traffic to the already congested traffic on Bay Road.

Although “Option W3.4” aligns with the District’s desire to reconfigure the District-wide grades 1-5 population, this option was not selected by the District primarily because the Town of Hamilton voted against extending the long-term lease for the Winthrop Elementary School. Also, the District indicated that this option requires undesirable extended phasing, does not provide a full access fire road, and results in a non-optimized solar orientation of the new building.

The District presented its proposed Preferred Schematic to the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee (“FAS”) on July 31, 2024. At that meeting, members of the FAS discussed the

following items: appreciation of the District's Education program and response to MSBA comments; the importance of professional development and opportunities to implement proposed changes to teaching methodology in preparation for the transition to a new facility; importance of continued input from educators and facilities staff as the design develops; distribution of Special Education spaces and DESE submittal process; site constraints and associated considerations including incorporation of geothermal wells, constructability, phasing, permitting and potential schedule impacts; location of proposed outdoor learning areas and intended use of the roof terrace; the project team's experience with geothermal systems including providing life cycle cost analysis; available information, resources and tax credits associated with geothermal systems; considerations associated with consolidation of elementary schools including maintaining small neighborhood scale, sharing resources and school culture; civic presence and view of the proposed building upon approach; building massing and site drainage; indoor/outdoor connections and placement of windows and doors where sight lines may be impacted by site topography; access to outdoor spaces for students with limited mobility; and, sound assistance and providing shading for outdoor play areas.

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 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.
- 4) 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.
- 5) 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 Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District be approved to proceed into Schematic Design to consolidate the student population of the existing Cutler Elementary School and Winthrop Elementary School and construct a new facility serving grades 1-5 on the site of the existing Cutler Elementary School.