

District: Chicopee  
School Name: Chicopee Academy  
Category: Feasibility Study

### Recommendation

That the Statement of Interest (SOI) for the Chicopee Academy located in the City of Chicopee be placed in the Feasibility Study category to study potential solutions to programmatic deficiencies and aging systems at the facility.

### Background

The District submitted Statements of Interest (SOIs) for two of its fifteen schools, with Chicopee Academy listed as its priority SOI. Built in 1920, Chicopee Academy is a four-story brick building which has been well-maintained and should offer many more years of service to the City. The building is approximately 172,868 square feet in size, including an addition to the rear of the building in 1974. Originally designed as a High School, it is now being used as an Alternative High School and as office space for the Maintenance and Food Service Departments. Currently, the building is only partially occupied for educational purposes, and during the 2008-2009 school year, it housed 87 students in grades 7 through 12. Despite its limited use as an educational facility, the entire building has remained heated and maintained.

According to the SOI, the District's goal is to renovate the Chicopee Academy (the Old Chicopee High School) to restore it to its highest and best use as a middle school. This is part of a citywide redistricting plan to renovate this building and move the middle school students from the Fairview Veterans Memorial School to this larger facility, Chicopee Academy. The Fairview Veterans Memorial School, a recently renovated structure that is completely ADA compliant and closer to the communities it serves, could house Grade K to 5 students from the Selser Memorial Elementary School and the Selser Early Childhood Center. This District plan would make the best use of the City's facilities for educational purposes, create neighborhood schools and reduce busing costs. According to the SOI the District identified building deficiencies including outdated systems, single pane window, ADA compliance issues and the need to update HVAC systems. The SOI states that the building is an historical landmark that, with the proper renovations, has the potential to provide a neighborhood middle school facility with expanded programs and course offerings.

Based on MSBA staff's observations during a recent visit to Chicopee Academy, staff recommend that the school be placed in the feasibility study category to further study the appropriate solution to the identified problems.