

District: Rockland
School Name: John W. Rogers Middle School
Category: Preferred Schematic

Recommendation:

That the Executive Director is authorized to approve the Town of Rockland, as part of its Invitation for Feasibility Study, to proceed into schematic design for the replacement of the existing John W. Rogers Middle School. MSBA staff and the District have collaborated on evaluating the options and concluded that the District's preferred solution to replace the existing John W. Rogers Middle School with a new facility incorporating shared spaces within the existing High School and renovating and/or repairing the existing High School is the most cost effective and educationally sound option.

Background:

The John W. Rogers Middle School, the District's prioritized Statement of Interest (SOI), was built in 1928 as the Rockland High School. In 1956, the building was converted to a Middle School, which was further renovated in 1976. The District has three Elementary Schools, one Middle School and one High School. The main building of the existing John W. Rogers Middle School is approximately 71,495 square feet. The current enrollment is 565 students. The District identified a number of building issues associated with the HVAC, electrical, and plumbing systems. In addition, the District identified problems with the building's structure citing collapsing plaster ceilings, water infiltration and the presence of mold. A lack of handicapped accessibility throughout the building, as well as site constraints impeding pick-up and drop-off, also pose safety concerns. Apart from the physical plant issues, the District identified programmatic deficiencies including undersized classrooms and a lack of specialized teaching spaces.

The District submitted two SOIs, one for the Middle School and one for the High School, and has stated that its elementary schools have reached capacity. The Town of Rockland proposed to include in its feasibility study the possibility of solving multiple District problems in this project by:

- Restructuring the grades in the Elementary Schools to provide a K- 4 program and include the 5th grade in the Middle School; and
- Building a new Middle School adjacent to the existing High School and minimizing the gross square footage of the new Middle School by maximizing the number of shared spaces utilized by both the Middle and High schools.

The MSBA has completed an enrollment projection and supports the two enrollment scenarios at the Middle School with and without the Grade 5 restructuring of 775 students and 600 students, respectively. An analysis of grades 9-12 was also performed to accommodate the feasibility study's exploration of a combined Middle and High school facility. The MSBA enrollment projection included 750 students for grades 9-12.

Discussion:

As part of the feasibility study, the MSBA and the District agreed to explore all potential solutions to the problems at the Middle School and to consider a facility optimization/consolidation with the adjacent High School. The goal is to find the most educationally appropriate and cost effective solution for the Middle School while exploring the potential to resolve the problems identified both at the Middle School and the facility conditions identified at the High School by consolidating and sharing spaces with the adjacent High School. The MSBA agreed to this based on the District's commitment to enforce key design concepts, focus on core educational spaces and to keep the construction costs as low as possible. The feasibility study analyzed, with separate detailed cost estimates and project schedules, each of the following options:

	Option	Square Footage of the Middle School	District's Proposed Total Project Budget	District's Proposed Total Project Budget for renovation of the High School
1	Addition/Renovation of the Middle School:	138,800 sf	\$50,001,218	
2	New Construction of a stand alone Middle School	127,500 sf	\$48,026,468	
3	New Construction of a Middle School adjacent to the HS with shared spaces (auditorium & media)	125,000 sf	\$47,882,110	
4	New Construction of a Middle School adjacent to the HS with shared spaces, central MEP and renovation of the HS.	108,140 sf	\$42,412,452	\$37,733,581

The District's preferred solution is Option 4 which would allow for the new construction of a Middle School and the renovation of the High School. Option 4 allows for the highest combination of shared spaces and utilizes existing High School spaces for the Middle School program. Option 4, as estimated above, reduces the building square footage to 15,860 square feet under the MSBA guidelines by locating the Middle School locker rooms in the High School team locker room, sharing the auditorium and eliminating the Middle School stage allowed in the cafeteria, utilizing the High School auxiliary gym for a fitness area for both schools, locating the Middle School Music in the High School CAD classroom area, locating the Middle School Art Room into the High School Guidance area, sharing the existing High School central plant area, and sharing the High School central receiving and custodial area. If the Middle School project is approached in combination with the renovation of the existing 163,670 square foot High School, the square footage and total project budget for the Middle School are reduced, resulting in square footage efficiencies as well as cost savings. The District has stated, and MSBA agrees, that Option 4 has the opportunity for additional project cost benefits as well as long-term operational and educational benefits for the District.

MSBA staff have reviewed the conclusions of the Feasibility Study and the enrollment and cost estimate data with the District and concluded:

- 1) All initial paperwork required has been processed including an executed Initial Certificate of Compliance; the composition of the School Building Committee for MSBA approval; and the enrollment questionnaire.
- 2) MSBA has completed an enrollment projection utilizing the enrollment questionnaire completed by Rockland. The MSBA and the District have agreed to a design enrollment of 775 students for a new John W. Rogers Middle School which will include grades 5-8. A design enrollment of 750 students for the renovated Rockland High School brings the MSBA's total MS/HS recommendation to 1525 students.
- 3) The Town has remained committed to finding the most reasonable cost effective solution and has reviewed the costs of a combined project with its school committee. The District has received favorable input in regard to community support for a combined project.
- 4) The District and its Designer will need to further review the square footage associated with each of the programs during the schematic design phase and to explore additional savings and efficiencies that can be gained through combined mechanical systems. In addition to continuing to refine the design to maximize the shared spaces and minimize the square footage, the MSBA will require the District to perform an extensive value engineering effort during design to control the costs of the project moving forward.

MSBA staff recommends that Rockland be approved to proceed into schematic design to replace the existing John W. Rogers Middle School with a new facility incorporating shared spaces within the existing High School and the renovation and/or repairs of the existing High School as the most cost effective and educationally sound option.