

District: Maynard
School Name: Maynard High School
Recommended Category: Preferred Schematic
Date: January 27, 2010

Recommendation:

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the Town of Maynard, as part of its Invitation for Feasibility Study, to proceed into schematic design for construction of a new high school to replace the existing Maynard High School. MSBA staff has reviewed the feasibility study and accepts the District's preferred solution to replace its 9-12 High School with an 8-12 High School.

Background:

Maynard, with a current student population of about 1,325, has one elementary school (Green Meadow, Grades Pre-K-3), one middle school (Fowler Middle School, Grades 4-8) and one high school (Maynard High School, Grades 9-12). Maynard High, which is the district's priority Statement of Interest (SOI), is 83,480 square feet, built in 1962, and has a current enrollment of 329 students.

In their SOI, the District identified a number of building issues associated with the facility. The original HVAC system is more than 40 years old and is no longer able to maintain a healthy environment conducive to learning. Many of the room ventilator units have failed automatic controls, are expensive to operate and are unable to maintain appropriate room temperatures. Many of the roof and wall mounted exhaust fans are inoperable. The original single pane window systems are still in place, and the roof is in need of replacement.

In addition to the physical plant issues, the District identified programmatic deficiencies, including: inadequate library space; outdated design of science rooms; limited guidance space; inadequate and outdated technology; and, lack of secured entrances. The facility's locker rooms are in poor condition and do not meet current ADA or MAAB standards, and the music room is not ADA compliant. These, as well as other deficiencies, contributed to Maynard High School being placed on probation by NEASC in 2006. The District has been performing work to address these issues, but District officials believe that no further corrective action can take place without at least a major renovation.

Maynard High School is located on the same site as the Fowler Middle School and the Green Meadow Elementary School. Construction of the Fowler Middle School was completed in 2001. It is a 40,000 square foot facility that currently serves grades 4 through 8 and meets the needs of the district. The Green Meadow Elementary School is a 78,000 square feet facility that serves grades Pre-K to 3. The original building was built in 1954 with additions in 1974 and 1988, and is currently experiencing some overcrowding. The District has reported that with some relief regarding overcrowding and its commitment to ongoing capital improvements, the facility can continue to serve the needs of the District.

On April 2, 2008, the MSBA Board of Directors approved staff's recommendation to issue an invitation into the Feasibility Invitation category to further study the problems identified at the Maynard High School. Due to the small student population of this District, with a high school enrollment just over 300 students and an initial proposed budget of over \$50 million, this invitation specifically emphasized the need for continued investigation into regionalization as an educationally appropriate and cost effective solution.

Discussion

As directed by the MSBA, the Town of Maynard continued to pursue regionalization solutions with six area communities including:

- Hudson School District
- Concord-Carlisle Regional School District
- Lincoln-Sudbury Regional School District
- Nashoba Regional School District
- Acton-Boxboro Regional School District
- Littleton School District

The community meetings were coordinated through Maynard's Town Administrator, a Selectman, a School Committee Member and similar representatives from the other Community. All communities expressed an interest in exploring the potential mutual benefits that regionalization could offer, but concluded that at this time, regionalization was not in their best interest. Many of the districts did not have current facility needs, were concerned about the recent trend in diminishing state aid for transportation to regional school districts, and had questions regarding existing grade structures, educational and financial control. In addition to the feasibility study, the District has provided the MSBA with a report that summarizes all of these regionalization meetings and research, and District officials believe that they have exhausted all potential regionalization opportunities. The MSBA acknowledges the due diligence performed by the District as required in the Feasibility Study Invitation.

Concurrent with these regionalization meetings, the District and its team were investigating the continued use of the high school ("status quo" option), multiple grade restructuring options within the District, the use of vacant or under-utilized space, and the leasing or acquisition of potentially available space. After thorough investigations, these options were ruled out due to space restrictions, limited available alternative structures, and an existing High School that is undersized and at the end of its useful life.

The MSBA felt that it was critical for the District to examine as many options as possible and consider all potential combinations of grades and facilities in search of a solution that could alleviate overcrowding within the overall school system, while providing a cost effective solution suitable for a District with a small population. The District studied in excess of 25 options. For each option, the District developed a matrix listing the benefits and limitations of each option that considered the educational, facility, and financial impacts. Each preliminary option also considered both Renovation/Addition and New Options regarding the High School.

Green Meadow ES	Fowler MS	High School	
Existing Configuration	Pre-K to 3	4 to 8	9 to 12
A	Regionalization – See discussion above		
B	Pre-K to 3	4 to 8	9 to 12
C	Pre-K to 2	3 to 7	8 to 12
D	Pre-K to 2	3 to 6	7 to 12
E	Pre-K to 1	2 to 7	8 to 12
F	Pre-K to 5	6 to 8 / 9 to 12	OFFLINE
G	Pre-K to 4	5 to 12	OFFLINE
H	OFFLINE	Pre-K to 6	7 to 12

After lengthy evaluation and discussion of Options A-H, the District narrowed the options and advanced the following options for pricing and further evaluation. Each option was further examined regarding the educational, facility and financial impacts and included conceptual floor plans and areas to support the preliminary cost estimates.

Option (Description)	Green Meadow ES	Fowler MS	High School	Estimated Total Construction Cost
Option C1 - High School - Add/Reno	Pre-K to 2	3 to 7	8 to 12	\$33.7 M
Option C2 - High School - New	Pre-K to 2	3 to 7	8 to 12	\$34.3 M
Option D1 - High School - Add/Reno	Pre-K to 2	3 to 6	7 to 12	\$34.8 M
Option D2 - High School - New	Pre-K to 2	3 to 6	7 to 12	\$36.7 M
Option H1- High School Add/Reno Fowler MS Add	OFFLINE	Pre-K to 6	7 to 12	\$42.4 M
Option H2 - High School New Fowler MS Add	OFFLINE	Pre-K to 6	7 to 12	\$43.6 M
Option F - Fowler MS Add Reno Green Meadow ES	Pre-K to 5	6 to 12	OFFLINE	-

The District preferred the larger high schools for grades 7-12 included in the D and H options because of the possibility of larger educational and sports offerings, and the earlier integration of Maynard students into the High School curriculum. The District also considered the overall financial benefits of operating only two schools offered with the H options; however, further investigations concluded that the surrounding areas could not accommodate the required additions that would be needed for the two schools.

Although the options that included grades 7-12 in the high school were educationally preferred, the District recognized the MSBA’s concern that such a restructuring option would result in underutilized spaces within the recently constructed Fowler Middle School even with a restructuring of students from the elementary school to the middle school. Accordingly, the District has supported the 8-12 high school grade structure for the following reasons:

- Earlier engagement in high school would reduce drop out and choice out rates in the District as demonstrated previously;

- Overcrowding at the Green Meadow Elementary could be alleviated without the need for renovation/additions to the existing Fowler Middle School
- The larger design enrollment (410 versus an enrollment of 335) provides for additional educational program opportunities as well as increases the opportunity to construct a more efficient building and provide

Because of the inefficiencies and high costs associated with building a high school designed to serve a population of 410 students, the District and MSBA staff continued to work to narrow the program space and refine the proposed space summary to reflect a design enrollment of 410 students. Based on these efforts, the MSBA and District evaluated the following three options to determine the most cost efficient and educationally appropriate options for a high school of this size. All three options include moving grade 3 from the Green Meadow Elementary School to the Fowler Middle School to address overcrowding at the elementary level.

	Option (Description)	High School Enrollment (Grades)	Total Gross SF	SF of Renovated Space (Cost/SF)	SF of New Constructio n (Cost/SF)	Estimated Total Construction Cost (Cost/SF)
1	Fowler MS (3-8) Add HS (9-12) Add/Reno	336 (9-12)	112,684	83,480 (\$ 277/SF)	29,204 (\$359/SF)	\$33.0 M (\$298/SF)
2	Fowler MS (3-7) HS (8-12) Add/Reno	410 (8-12)	115,811	83,480 (\$277/SF)	32,331 (\$349/SF)	\$35.4 M (\$297/SF)
3	Fowler MS (3-7) HS (8-12) New	410 (8-12)	112,803	N/A	112,803 (\$313/SF)	\$35.3 M (\$313/SF)

The District recommends Option 3 as the most educationally appropriate solution. The District feels strongly that the preferred option must include moving the 8th grade to the high school to increase engagement and reduce the drop out and choice out rates in the District. The District has presented a comprehensive evaluation illustrating that the extent of work required for the renovation options is such that very little of the existing building would remain when complete. A new facility will be more efficient to operate and provide a flexible layout based on today's learning methodologies and standards.

The MSBA has reviewed the District's Feasibility Study and the regionalization report. Although the MSBA would not normally participate in a high school for such a small student population, based upon the due diligence performed by the District, limited opportunities for regionalization and a reduction of the original budget from over \$50 million to approximately \$40 million, staff recommend that Option 3, a new high school combined with a grade restructuring at the middle school to accommodate the overcrowding at the elementary school, be accepted as the District's preferred alternative to provide the most educationally appropriate and cost effective solution.

MSBA has reviewed the conclusions of the Feasibility Study and the enrollment data with the District and found:

- 1) All initial paperwork required has been processed including an executed Initial Certificate of Compliance, the composition of the School Building Committee and the enrollment questionnaire.
- 2) MSBA has completed an enrollment projection utilizing the enrollment questionnaire completed by Maynard, and has reviewed Maynard's existing high school capacity as provided by the District and an updated status of development under construction in the District. The MSBA enrollment projection supports an enrollment of 410 students (grades 8-12) for replacement of the Maynard High School on the existing site. Maynard agrees with this enrollment projection.
- 3) MSBA reviewed the feasibility study and regionalization report and finds that alternatives investigated were sufficiently comprehensive in their scope and that the District's preferred option is reasonable and cost-effective.
- 4) The MSBA and the District have reviewed the space summary submission and have agreed to further refine their allocation of spaces as it relates to MSBA guidelines.
- 5) MSBA staff will work with the District to establish a design budget for the construction project.

Based on the review outlined above, staff recommends that the Town of Maynard be approved to proceed into schematic design to replace its 9-12 High School with a new 8-12 High School.