

District: Town of Needham  
 School Name: Hillside Elementary School  
 Recommended Category: Preferred Schematic  
 Date: January 20, 2016

**Recommendation**

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the Town of Needham, as part of its Invitation to Feasibility Study, to proceed into Schematic Design to replace the existing Hillside Elementary School with a new K-5 facility on the Central Avenue site, conditional upon the Town’s full ownership, control, and exclusive use of the entire proposed project site or a combination of ownership and, as to that portion of the proposed project site now owned by an adjacent town, a lease that assures exclusive jurisdiction and control of that land for the anticipated useful life of the approved project. MSBA staff has reviewed the Feasibility Study and accepts the District’s preferred solution.

<b>District Information</b>	
District Name	Town of Needham
Elementary School(s)	Broadmeadow Elementary School (K-5) Hillside Elementary School (K-5) John Eliot Elementary School (K-5) Newman Elementary School (PK-5) William Mitchell Elementary School (K-5)
Middle School(s)	High Rock School (6) Pollard Middle School (7-8)
High School(s)	Needham High School (9-12)
Priority School Name	Hillside Elementary School
Type of School	Elementary School
Grades Served	K-5
Year Opened	1961
Existing Square Footage	47,197
Additions	1968: Addition 1997: Modular Classrooms
Acreage of Site	24.6 acres
Building Issues	The District identified deficiencies in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Overcrowding</li> <li>– Structural integrity</li> <li>– Mechanical systems</li> <li>– Electrical systems</li> <li>– Plumbing systems</li> <li>– Envelope</li> <li>– Windows</li> <li>– Roof</li> <li>– Accessibility</li> </ul> In addition to overcrowding and physical plant issues, the District reported that the existing facility does not support the delivery of its educational program.
Original Design Capacity	Unknown

<b>District Information</b>	
2014-2015 Enrollment	421 students
Agreed Upon Enrollment	Study Enrollment includes the following configurations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 390 students for grades K–5, with half day Kindergarten</li> <li>– 430 students for grades K–5, with full day Kindergarten (<i>Preferred Solution</i>)</li> <li>– 445 students for District-wide 6th grade Center</li> </ul>
Enrollment Specifics	Contingent upon the Board’s approval of the preferred solution, the District will sign a Design Enrollment Certification for 430 students in grades K-5.

<b>MSBA Board Votes</b>	
Invitation to Eligibility Period	November 20, 2013
Invitation to Feasibility Study	July 30, 2014
Preferred Schematic Authorization	On January 27, 2016 Board agenda
Project Scope & Budget Authorization	District is targeting Board authorization on July 27, 2016
Feasibility Study Reimbursement Rate (Incentives points are not applicable)	32.47%

<b>Consultants</b>	
Owner’s Project Manager	Steven Popper, Town of Needham Employee
Designer	Dore & Whittier Architects, Inc.

## **Discussion**

The existing Hillside Elementary School is a 47,197 square foot facility located on a 24.6 acre site, which currently serves students in grades K–5. The original school building was constructed in 1961. The District identified numerous deficiencies in its Statement of Interest (“SOI”) including: poor energy efficiency; outdated mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems; and the presence of hazardous materials. In addition, the District’s SOI identified numerous deficiencies associated with accessibility, overcrowding, and appropriateness of existing spaces to deliver its educational program. Additionally, a 1980’s offsite chemical spill, on a property adjacent to the school site, has resulted in the contamination of groundwater and soil. Consequently, the site and the school building must be consistently monitored for hazardous materials. Based on the information provided, any development on the current Hillside site would need to include provisions that address contaminated ground water and soil, and provisions for ventilation and monitoring of the air quality within the school facility.

In conjunction with its consultants, the District performed a comprehensive assessment of the existing conditions in the Hillside Elementary School, the High Rock School, the DeFazio Park site, and the Town Forest site. Soon after the initial site investigations, an additional property on Central Avenue became available to the District. Due to the location of the property within the Hillside Elementary neighborhood, the District decided to include the Central Avenue site in its evaluation of potential sites and completed a comprehensive assessment of the property. The District also performed a review of its educational program, receiving input from educators, administrators, and facilities personnel. Based on the findings of this effort, the District and its

consultants initially studied 26 preliminary options that include one capital improvement option, six addition and/or renovation options, and 19 new construction options for two different grade configurations. The preliminary options are presented below in groups because many of the preliminary options that were evaluated are similar.

<b>Option</b>	<b>Description of Preliminary Options (Grade K–5 Configuration)</b>
Group A	Capital improvements to the Hillside Elementary School building
Group B	Two variations of addition & renovations to the existing Hillside Elementary School building
Group C	Five variations of a new K–5 school on the existing Hillside Elementary School site
Group D	Two variations of a new K–5 school on DeFazio Park site (west)
Group E	Two variations of a new K–5 school on DeFazio Park site (east)
Group F	New K–5 school on Town Forest property
Group J	Four variations of a new K–5 school on the Central Avenue site

<b>Option</b>	<b>Description of Preliminary Options (Grade 6 Configuration with K–5 at High Rock School)</b>
Group D	Two variations of a new grade 6 school on DeFazio Park site (west)
Group E	Two variations of a new grade 6 school on DeFazio Park site (east)
Group G	New grade 6 school on Pollard School site
Group H	Renovation for K–5 at the High Rock School; three variations of additions & renovations to the High Rock School to serve a K–5 school program

The District evaluated the feasibility of each site and developed multiple options for the sites where a project appeared viable.

The District eliminated the “Group D” variations on the DeFazio Park site (west) because of the noise and vibrations from the nearby commuter rail tracks and limited play areas. “Group F” was eliminated because this option would negatively impact the Town Forest. “Group G” was eliminated because of site circulation challenges, the need for a four-story building, and the loss of the existing Pollard School play fields.

The District evaluated multiple variations for each of the remaining sites. Subsequently, the District selected an option for each site and a configuration that best suited the educational goals of the District. MSBA staff and the District agreed to evaluate six final options from the respective “Groups” for further development in the final evaluation of preliminary design pricing, as presented on the following page.

### Summary of Preliminary Design Pricing for Final Evaluation of Options

Group (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†
Group A (Option A): Base Repair	45,505	45,505 \$156/sq. ft.	N/A	\$1,263,793	\$8,246,634 \$183/sq. ft.	\$12,989,000
Group B (Option B1): Addition/Renovation	101,400	10,980 \$447/sq. ft.	90,420 \$438/sq. ft.	\$5,955,012	\$50,504,935 \$498/sq. ft.	\$91,016,000
Group C (Option C3): New K-5 on the existing site	90,927	N/A	90,927 \$432/sq. ft.	\$6,718,211	\$45,963,957 \$506/sq. ft.	\$85,259,058
Group E (Option E1a): New K-5 on the DeFazio Park – east	90,927	N/A	90,927 \$423/sq. ft.	\$5,878,034	\$44,378,560 \$488/sq. ft.	\$62,177,521
Group E (Option E2a): New Grade 6 Center on the DeFazio Park – east	96,444	N/A	96,444 \$427/sq. ft.	\$6,099,187	\$47,250,863 \$490/sq. ft.	\$82,114,393
Group H (Option H3): Renovations to existing High Rock School for K-5	81,100	65,100 \$64/sq. ft.	16,000 \$431/sq. ft.	\$1,157,264	\$12,254,769 \$380/sq. ft.	
<b>Group J (Option J3): New K-5 on the Central Avenue site***</b>	<b>90,927</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>90,927 \$441/sq. ft.</b>	<b>\$6,109,065</b>	<b>\$46,198,535 \$508/sq. ft.</b>	<b>\$62,369,698</b>

\* Marked up construction costs

\*\* Does not include construction contingency

\*\*\*District's preferred option

† The Overall Project Costs for Options B1 and C3 include \$19,277,564 in swing space modular school project costs.

The District has selected “Option J3” as the preferred solution to proceed into schematic design. “Option J3” will replace the existing Hillside Elementary School with a new three-story, K-5 facility on the Central Avenue site. This option represents the District’s preferred solution to deliver its desired educational program within a new facility without requiring swing space. The District has noted that a major advantage of the preferred solution is that redistricting will not be required because of the proximity of the current Hillside Elementary School to the Central Avenue site. Furthermore, the proposed solution will allow for sufficient site area to support vehicular circulation and outdoor play/education spaces for the school.

Although “Option A” and “Option B1” would improve the conditions of the existing facility, the District’s desired educational plan would not be fully accommodated. “Option A” would require

full compliance with the current building code for new construction resulting in complex phasing and an extended construction duration. “Option A,” “Option B1,” and “Option C3” would require provisions for addressing the existing contaminated groundwater and soil and for ventilation/monitoring of the air in the building. Additionally, “Option B1” and “Option C3” would require a modular construction project to serve as swing space during construction resulting in increased project costs and construction duration.

“Option E1a” was a less desirable option because it would require the redistricting of K-5 students throughout the District, even though it would allow for the delivery of the District’s desired educational program.

As part of the Feasibility Study, the District evaluated “Options E2a/H3” for the potential to build a new 6<sup>th</sup> grade center in combination with converting the existing High Rock building back to a K–5 facility. After the evaluation of this alternative, the District concluded that its desired K–5 educational program could not be delivered in the High Rock building. This combined solution of “Option E2a/H3” would also be the most expensive solution and would require significant redistricting of students. Therefore, “Option E2a/H3” was not considered for further evaluation.

The preferred solution includes the use of an adjacent parcel of land that the District is proposing to lease from the Town of Wellesley in order to provide additional play area as part of the proposed project. The MSBA requires that the District have full ownership, control, and exclusive use of the entire proposed project site or a combination of ownership and, as to that portion of the proposed project site that is now owned by the Town of Wellesley, a lease that assures exclusive jurisdiction and control of that parcel of land for the anticipated useful life of the approved project; or, in the alternative, remove the adjacent parcel of land now owned by the Town of Wellesley from the proposed project site. The MSBA has notified the District of these requirements and that full control and exclusive use of the entire project site, as more specifically described above, must be gained within 120 days after approval of the Project by the MSBA’s Board and prior to the MSBA executing a Project Funding Agreement with the District.

The District presented its proposed project to the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee (“FAS”) on January 6, 2016. At that meeting, members of the FAS discussed the site design and circulation, flood plain issues, the District’s STEAM program and technology plan, the organization of the cafeteria and the District’s lunch policies, and the value of break-out spaces within a classroom cluster.

MSBA staff reviewed the conclusions of the Feasibility Study, all subsequent submittals, and the enrollment data with the District and found:

- 1) MSBA reviewed the Feasibility Study and subsequent material and finds that the options investigated were sufficiently comprehensive in scope, the approach undertaken in this study was appropriate, and the District’s preferred solution 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 schematic design submittal will be subject to final review and approval by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as part of the Schematic Design submittal prior to 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, with the exception of variations previously agreed to by the MSBA. All proposed spaces will be reviewed during the Schematic Design phase.
- 5) The District must secure, to the satisfaction of the MSBA, full ownership, control, and exclusive use of the entire proposed project site or a combination of ownership and, as to that portion of the proposed project site that is now owned by the Town of Wellesley, a lease that assures exclusive jurisdiction and control of that land for the anticipated useful life of the approved project.
- 6) Early in the Schematic Design phase, the District must provide the MSBA with a description of the local process including the proposed schedule to secure full control and exclusive use of the proposed site, or provide an updated site plan that is limited to Town owned property.
- 7) As part of the Schematic Design phase, the District must provide a status of its Letter of Mapping Amendment (LOMA) efforts regarding the Town's accepted flood plain and the FEMA Flood Zone. In addition, the District must provide contingency plans if FEMA does not accept the proposed flood plain elevation decrease to 85 feet. Finally, the District must explain how it will address any outstanding issues related to the project scope and budget.
- 8) As part of the Schematic Design phase, the MSBA will continue to work with the District to better understand the total area associated with (a) dining and food service space, (b) health and physical education space, and (c) core academic areas, as well as how these spaces serve the student population.
- 9) 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, MSBA staff recommends that the Town of Needham be approved to proceed into Schematic Design to replace the existing Hillside Elementary School with a new K-5 facility on the Central Avenue site, conditional upon full ownership, control, and exclusive use of the entire proposed project site or a combination of ownership and, as to that portion of the proposed project site now owned by the Town of Wellesley, a lease that assures exclusive jurisdiction and control of that land for the anticipated useful life of the approved project.