

District: Town of Amherst  
 School Name: Wildwood Elementary School  
 Recommended Category: Preferred Schematic  
 Date: May 18, 2016

**Recommendation**

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the Town of Amherst, as part of its Invitation to Feasibility Study, to proceed into Schematic Design to consolidate the existing Wildwood Elementary School and Fort River Elementary School into two new “co-located” elementary schools, in one building, serving grades 2-6 on the existing Wildwood Elementary School site. MSBA staff has reviewed the Feasibility Study and accepts the District’s preferred solution.

<b>District Information</b>	
District Name	Town of Amherst
Elementary Schools	Crocker Farm Elementary School (PK-6) Fort River Elementary School (K-6) Wildwood Elementary School (K-6)
Middle School	Amherst Regional Middle School (7-8)
High School	Amherst Regional High School (9-12)
Priority School Name	Wildwood Elementary School
Type of School	Elementary School
Grades Served	K-6
Year Opened	1970
Existing Square Footage	82,000
Additions	N/A
Acreage of Site	14.34 acres
Building Issues	The District identified deficiencies in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ineffective open floor plan</li> <li>- Lack of natural light in many classrooms</li> <li>- Lack of fire sprinklers and fire alarms</li> <li>- Obsolete mechanical, electrical &amp; plumbing systems</li> <li>- Inefficient exterior envelope, windows and doors</li> <li>- Lack of accessibility for the handicapped</li> </ul> In addition to the physical plant issues, the District reported that the existing facility poses respiratory hazards and does not support the delivery of its educational program.
Original Design Capacity	Approximately 580
2015-2016 Enrollment	422
Agreed Upon Enrollment	Study Enrollment includes the following configurations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 360 (K-6)</li> <li>- 670 (Two K-6 schools)</li> <li>- 750 (District-wide 2-6) (<i>Preferred Solution</i>)</li> </ul>
Enrollment Specifics	Contingent upon the Board’s approval of the preferred solution, the District will sign a Design Enrollment Certification for 750 students in grades 2-6.

<b>MSBA Board Votes</b>	
Invitation to Eligibility Period	November 20, 2013
Invitation to Feasibility Study	September 24, 2014
Preferred Schematic Authorization	On May 25, 2016 Board agenda
Project Scope & Budget Authorization	District is targeting Board authorization on September 29, 2016
Feasibility Study Reimbursement Rate (Incentives points are not applicable)	68.30%

<b>Consultants</b>	
Owner's Project Manager	Joslin, Lesser & Associates, Inc. (an NV5 Company)
Designer	JCJ Architecture, Inc.

## Discussion

The existing Wildwood Elementary School is a 108,000 square foot, one-story elementary school, currently serving grades K-6. The facility is on a sloping and wooded 14 acre site in Amherst.

The original school building was constructed in 1970. Upgrades are limited to a new roof added in 2001. The District has identified deficiencies with the building including an ineffective open classroom arrangement, lack of space for differentiated learning and ELL spaces, obsolete building systems, and a lack of life safety systems. The mechanical systems and overall building envelope are not energy efficient. In addition, the District has identified moisture problems and related mold and health issues.

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. The options studied were based on three grade configurations as follows: 1. a 360 student grades K-6 school (maintaining the existing three elementary school district, replacing the existing Wildwood Elementary School with a new elementary school); 2. a 670 student grades K-6 school (redistricting to a two elementary school system and replacing the existing Wildwood and Fort River schools with a twin-school building); and, 3. A 750 student grades 2-6 school (redistricting to a district-wide system, replacing the existing Wildwood and Fort River schools with a new single 2-6 building, and re-purposing the existing Crocker Farms building as a PK-1). Based on the findings of this effort, the District and its consultants initially studied 10 preliminary options that included three addition/renovation configurations and seven new construction options. The following is a detailed list of the preliminary alternatives considered:

<b>Option</b>	<b>Description of Preliminary Options</b>
W1	360 student, grades K-6, Wildwood ES renovation
W2	360 student, grades K-6, Wildwood ES replacement on the Wildwood site
-	750 student, grades 2-6, combined ES renovation/addition on the Wildwood site
W3	750 student, grades 2-6, combined ES replacement on the Wildwood site
W4	750 student, grades 2-6, combined ES replacement on the Middle School site
FR1	750 student, grades 2-6, combined ES replacement on the Fort River site
-	670 student, grades K-6, combined ES renovation/addition on the Wildwood site
W5	670 student, grade K-6, combined ES replacement on the Wildwood site

W6	670 student, grade K-6, combined ES replacement on the Middle School site
FR2	670 student, grade K-6, combined ES replacement on the Fort River site

Based on discussions with school staff and local parents, the School Committee voted to approve the 750 student grades 2-6 configuration, therefore limiting all subsequent options to that configuration. This decision was based on a preference in the District to address the poor condition of both the Wildwood and Fort River facilities by providing a facility that co-locates both schools while providing a consolidated PK-1 school in the District. After additional evaluation and development of these options, the District and design team considered the following five options in the Preferred Schematic Report:

Option	Description of Additional Options
Code upgrade	Repair of the Wildwood facility, limited to upgrades to comply with current building code standards.
W7	New construction at the Wildwood site over the existing footprint of the building (requires relocating the Wildwood students during construction).
W10	Addition/renovation at the Wildwood site (fully renovate the existing portion of the building and construct an addition on the southeast side of the existing building).
W12	New construction at the Wildwood site in a phased construction process.
FR5	New construction at the Fort River site over the existing footprint of the building.

After final consideration and further consultation with the MSBA staff and the Facilities Assessment Subcommittee, as detailed below, the District added a refinement of option W12 as follows:

Option	Description of Additional Options
W12R	New construction at the Wildwood site in a phased construction process.

The District presented its proposed project to the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee (“FAS”) on February 24, 2016. The District, the Owner’s Project Manager, and design team presented an overview of the options studied during the Feasibility Study and the District’s preferred solution to consolidate the existing Wildwood Elementary School and Fort River Elementary School into a new elementary school serving grades 2-6 on the existing Wildwood Elementary School site. The FAS, MSBA staff, and the District discussed: 1) the World Language Program and how the program fits into the proposed design of the building; 2) the number and location of parking spaces; 3) the infrastructure for proposed technology; 4) the importance of flexibility in design; 5) the location of the media center; 6) the importance of community and teacher support; 7) professional development for educators; 8) site and zoning requirements; 9) site constraints; 10) building layout and design; and 11) the size of the proposed cafeteria.

Based on the District’s presentation and feedback at the February 24, 2016 FAS meeting, MSBA staff requested a supplement to the Preferred Schematic Report that addresses the following areas: 1) an updated Educational Program; 2) a further developed conceptual design as it relates to how the proposed facility supports the District’s proposed educational program; 3) the placement and operation of the media center on the second floor of the building; and 4) the site plan circulation/drop-off areas and building entrance locations.

On April 20, 2016, at a second FAS meeting, the District, the Owner’s Project Manager, and design team presented further development of their preferred option. The FAS, MSBA staff, and the District discussed: 1) updates to the floor and site plans since February 24, 2016; 2) community outreach efforts; 3) shelter and handicapped access at the front entrance; 4) scheduling and integration of STEAM programs and project based learning; 5) importance of having at least one sink in each classroom; 6) importance of safety and educational use of the proposed maker space; 7) technology plans; and 8) voice amplification systems in classrooms and other instructional areas in the building.

MSBA staff and the District agreed to six final options for further development and consideration in the final evaluation and development of preliminary design pricing as presented below:

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

<b>Option (Description)</b>	<b>Total Gross Square Feet</b>	<b>Square Feet of Renovated Space (cost*/sf)</b>	<b>Square Feet of New Construction (cost*/sf)</b>	<b>Site, Building Takedown, Haz Mat. Cost*</b>	<b>Estimated Total Construction ** (cost*/sf)</b>	<b>Estimated Total Project Costs</b>
Code Upgrade (Repair)	82,000 sf	82,000 sf \$170/sf	- -	\$1,251,200	\$15,202,162 \$185/sf	\$20,318,703
Option W7: (New)	122,714 sf	- -	122,714 sf \$374/sf	\$6,355,957	\$52,250,288 \$426/sf	\$66,628,860
Option W10: (Add/Reno)	126,000 sf	82,000 sf \$285/sf	44,000 sf \$429/sf	\$5,530,297	\$47,790,229 \$379/sf	\$61,053,786
Option W12: (New)	122,714 sf	- -	122,714 sf \$369/sf	\$6,347,660	\$51,675,907 \$421/sf	\$64,594,884
<b>Option W12R: (New)***</b>	<b>122,272 sf</b>	<b>- -</b>	<b>122,272 sf \$370/sf</b>	<b>\$6,341,248</b>	<b>\$51,595,747 \$422/sf</b>	<b>\$64,494,684</b>
Option FR5: (New)	122,714 sf	- -	122,714 sf \$359/sf	\$7,006,461	\$51,001,411 \$416/sf	\$65,080,264

\* Marked up construction costs

\*\* Does not include construction contingency

\*\*\*District’s preferred option

The District has selected “Option W12R” as the preferred solution to proceed into schematic design because it best meets the needs of the District as outlined in the educational program, uses the site that provides optimal buildable area, and provides a streamlined phasing of the construction process without requiring swing space. The District noted that the “Code Upgrade” option does not meet the educational program needs of the District, “Option W7” necessitates relocating the Wildwood population during construction, “Option W10” does not meet the goals of the educational program for independent schools, and “Option FR5” necessitates relocating the Fort River population during construction. “Option W12” was initially selected as the District’s preferred solution until the improved iteration “W12R” was designed in response to discussions with MSBA following the initial Preferred Schematic submittal.

MSBA staff reviewed the conclusions of the Feasibility Study, all subsequent submittals, 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 will benefit from further development of the site plan configuration and floor plans as they are advanced beyond organized concepts into schematic designs.
- 3) The District has submitted an operational budget for educational objectives and a capital budget statement for MSBA review.
- 4) 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.
- 5) 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.
- 6) 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 Town of Amherst be approved to proceed into Schematic Design to consolidate the existing Wildwood Elementary School and Fort River Elementary School into two new "co-located" elementary schools, in one building, serving grades 2-6 on the existing Wildwood Elementary School site.