

District: Town of Leicester  
 School Name: Leicester Middle School  
 Recommended Category: Preferred Schematic  
 Date: August 21, 2019

**Recommendation**

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the Town of Leicester (the “District”), as part of its Invitation to Feasibility Study, to proceed into Schematic Design to replace the existing Leicester Primary School, Leicester Memorial Elementary School, and Leicester Middle School with a new PK-8 school facility on the existing Leicester Middle School site. MSBA staff has reviewed the Feasibility Study and accepts the District’s Preferred Schematic.

<b>District Information</b>	
District Name	Town of Leicester
Elementary School(s)	Leicester Primary School (PK-2) Leicester Memorial Elementary (3-5)
Middle School(s)	Leicester Middle School (6-8)
High School(s)	Leicester High School (9-12)
Priority School Name	Leicester Middle School
Type of School	Middle School
Grades Served	6-8
Year Opened	1961
Existing Square Footage	72,643
Additions	1976 – Addition 1996 – Renovation
Acreage of Site	43 acres
Building Issues	The District identified deficiencies in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Mechanical systems</li> <li>– Electrical systems</li> <li>– Building envelope</li> <li>– Building interior (finishes)</li> <li>– Accessibility</li> </ul> In addition to the physical plant issues, the District reported that the existing facility does not support the delivery of its educational program and identified existing and projected overcrowding. Each of the above-mentioned deficiencies were also identified at Leicester Primary School and Leicester Memorial School.
Original Design Capacity	450
2018-2019 Enrollment	370
Agreed Upon Enrollment	Study Enrollment includes the following configurations: 330 Students (Grades 6-8) 440 Students (Grades 5-8) 930 Students (Grades K-8) (Preferred Schematic)
Enrollment Specifics	Contingent upon the Board’s approval of the Preferred Schematic, the District will sign a Design Enrollment

<b>District Information</b>	
	Certification for 930 students in grades K-8, for a project that will serve grades PK-8.
Total Project Budget – Debt Exclusion Anticipated	Yes

<b>MSBA Board Votes</b>	
Invitation to Eligibility Period	March 1, 2017
Invitation to Feasibility Study	December 13, 2017
Preferred Schematic Authorization	On August 28, 2019 Board agenda
Project Scope & Budget Authorization	District is targeting Board authorization in April 2020
Feasibility Study Reimbursement Rate (Incentive points are not applicable)	59.21%

<b>Consultants</b>	
Owner’s Project Manager (the “OPM”)	NV5 Consultants, Inc.
Designer	Finegold Alexander Architects, Inc.

### **Discussion**

The existing Leicester Middle School is a 72,643 square foot building designed as a high school and converted to its current use as a middle school in 1994. Constructed in 1961, the structure received renovations and the addition of seven classrooms and a garage in 1976 and renovations of its gymnasium in 1996. The building shares a 43-acre site with Leicester Primary School (grades K-2) and Leicester High School (grades 9-12). As a result of the District’s decision – unrelated to its work with the MSBA – to close Memorial Elementary School (grades 3-5) at the end of the 2018-19 school year, Leicester Middle School will house grades 5-8 beginning in the 2019-20 school year.

The District identified numerous deficiencies in the Statement of Interest (“SOI”) that are associated with mechanical and electrical systems, building envelope performance, worn interior finishes, accessibility constraints and insufficient space to deliver its educational program. Each of these deficiencies were also identified in the District’s 2017 SOI documentation for Leicester Primary School and Leicester Memorial Elementary School, facilities that will be combined with Leicester Middle School as part of the proposed project. Additionally, the District noted insufficient parking at Leicester Primary School and a non-compliant fire alarm system at Leicester Memorial School.

As part of the Feasibility Study, the MSBA mutually agreed with the District to explore the following three student enrollment options: 330 students in grades 6-8, 440 students in grades 5-8, and 930 students in grades K-8. Although not included in its formal enrollment options, the District stated its intent to include Pre-Kindergarten (“PK”) in the proposed project if the K-8 option were selected.

Working 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. Based on the findings of this effort, the District and its consultants initially

studied fourteen (14) preliminary options that included two (2) base repair options, five (5) renovation/addition options, and seven (7) new construction options.

In consultation with the MSBA, the District agreed that at least two of the fourteen preliminary options would explore solutions that incorporated the existing Leicester Primary School structure, which is located on the same campus, into a grades K-8 configuration. “Options 6A” and “6B” reflect this requirement, with each proposing a two-building solution comprised of a renovated (and in the case of “6B”, expanded) Primary School for grades PK-4 and a new construction Middle School for grades 5-8.

The following is a list of the preliminary options considered.

Option	Description of Preliminary Options
1A	Code Upgrade (grades 6-8) of the existing Middle School for an enrollment of 330.
1B	Code Upgrade (grades 5-8) of the existing Middle School for an enrollment of 440.
2A	Renovation/Addition (grades 6-8) of the existing Middle School for an enrollment of 330.
2B	Renovation/Addition (grades 5-8) of the existing Middle School for an enrollment of 440.
2C	Renovation/Addition (grades PK-8) of the existing Middle School for an enrollment of 930.
3	New Construction (grades 5-8) on the existing track for an enrollment of 440.
4A	New Construction (grades 6-8) on the playing fields behind the existing Middle School for an enrollment of 330.
4B	New Construction (grades 5-8) on the playing fields behind the existing Middle School for an enrollment of 440.
4C	New Construction (grades PK-8) on the playing fields behind the existing Middle School for an enrollment of 930.
5A	New Construction (grades 6-8) on the playing fields behind the existing Middle School for an enrollment of 330.
5B	New Construction (grades 5-8) on the playing fields behind the existing Middle School for an enrollment of 440.
5C	New Construction (grades PK-8) on the playing fields behind the existing Middle School for an enrollment of 930.
6A	Renovation/Addition to Primary School (grades PK-4) + New Construction (grades 5-8) on the playing fields behind the existing Middle School for an enrollment of 930.
6B	Renovation/Addition to Primary School (grades PK-4) + New Construction (grades 5-8) on the playing fields behind the existing Middle School for an enrollment of 930.

Upon further review, MSBA staff and the District agreed to seven (7) 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

Option (Description)	Total Gross Square Feet (sf)	Square Feet of Renovated Space (cost*/sf)	Square Feet of New Construction (cost*/sf)	Site, Building Takedown, Haz Mat. Cost*	Estimated Total Construction ** (cost*/sf)	Estimated Total Project Costs
Option 1B: (Code Upgrade for grades 5-8)	72,643	72,643 \$239/sq. ft.	N/A	\$9,868,423	\$27,247,523 \$375/sq. ft.	\$43,721,971
Option 2C: (Renovation/ Addition for grades PK-8)	129,212	24,889 \$262/sf	104,323 \$279/sf	\$24,994,561	\$60,643,870 \$469/sf	\$75,804,838
Option 4C: (New Construction for grades PK-8)	148,645	N/A	148,645 \$291/sf	\$29,012,688	\$72,327,070 \$487/sf	\$90,408,838
Option 5B: (New Construction for grades 5-8)	85,106	N/A	85,106 \$304/sf	\$24,559,047	\$50,407,852 \$592/sf	\$63,009,815
<b>Option 5C: (New Construction for grades PK-8) ***</b>	<b>143,458</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>143,458</b> <b>\$282/sf</b>	<b>\$29,061,511</b>	<b>\$69,520,526</b> <b>\$485/sf</b>	<b>\$86,900,658</b>
Option 6A: (Renovation/ Addition and New Construction for grades PK-8)	148,369	58,331 \$165/sf	90,038 \$306/sf	\$32,622,828	\$69,732,116 \$470/sf	\$87,165,145
Option 6B: (Renovation/ Addition and New Construction for grades PK-8)	154,048	58,331 \$206/sf	95,717 \$304/sf	\$33,003,432	\$74,147,191 \$481/sf	\$92,683,989

\* Marked up construction costs

\*\* Does not include construction contingency

\*\*\***District's Preferred Schematic**

The District has selected “Option 5C”, a new three-story facility, as the Preferred Schematic to proceed into Schematic Design. The District selected “Option 5C” because it best meets the needs of the educational program and supports consolidation of two existing facilities. Key features include: distinct academic and community program zones, distinct lower school and upper school zones, flexible learning areas, teacher planning rooms, Special Education programs integrated into the academic wings, classroom wings oriented east-west for good solar control, increased spaces for outdoor learning and activities, and improved site circulation.

Although the code upgrade option (“Option 1B”) offers the lowest estimated project cost, the District determined that it would not meet its goal of providing “two schools under one roof” and would not support the District’s educational vision, as set forth in its Educational Program. It is for this reason the District did not select this option.

“Option 2C” accommodates the “two schools under one roof” concept and provides clearly organized zones for academic and community programs; however, the District determined it would not meet its goals because this option leaves several key program elements undersized and does not provide optimized energy efficiency. By retaining the existing structure’s exterior envelope and the north-south orientation of its classroom wings, “Option 2C” is unable to meet the same energy performance goals as other of the proposed options. It is for this reason the District did not select this option.

The largest of the options proposed, “Option 4C” accommodates the “two schools under one roof” concept and its programmatic organization supports the District’s educational vision. However, this option is anticipated to be less energy efficient than other options because of its scale and massing. Also, this option is the most costly of all the options studied. Therefore, the District did not select this option.

While “Option 5B” offers a compact and energy-efficient layout with clearly organized zones for academic and community programs, it does not meet the District’s goal of providing “two schools under one roof.” Similarly, “Options 6A” and “6B” failed to provide “two schools under one roof” and in fact proposed what the District identified as “one school under two roofs.” By retaining and making use of the existing Primary School structure, “Option 6A” failed to meet the District’s educational vision due to undersized classrooms and less-optimal adjacencies. “Option 6B” improved the scale and adjacency issues of Primary School by proposing an addition and internal reorganization of program but remained a separate structure from the new construction of a Middle School proposed by both “Options 6A” and “6B”. Therefore, the District did not select these three options because they do not accommodate grades PK-8 in a single structure.

The District presented its proposed Preferred Schematic to the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee (“FAS”) on August 7, 2019. At that meeting, members of the FAS stated their appreciation for the District’s educational program and its commitment to staffing the media center with a properly prepared and supported librarian. Members of the FAS characterized the proposed floorplan as compact and logical, and shared their appreciation for the preliminary ideas for its outdoor learning spaces as well as questions about how those spaces will be developed differently for students of different ages. Members of the FAS also offered the following observations for review by the District and its design team: consider designing Maker Spaces and STEM rooms so they can be totally blacked out; consider developing clear policies for the safety and supervision of Maker Spaces and STEM rooms; consider redistributing science classrooms to provide adjacency with general classrooms of the same grade level; consider distributing special education spaces more evenly throughout the plan; evaluate the number of parking spaces required and consider breaking parking up into smaller blocks; explore ways of softening the transition between building and adjacent hardscape; explore ways of modulating the scale of the gymnasium and of designing the south facade as the welcoming “civic face” of the project; and explore ways of designing each of the facades differently to reflect its respective solar orientation, topographical adjacencies and functional uses.

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

- 1) The options investigated were sufficiently comprehensive in scope, the approach undertaken in this study was appropriate, and the District’s Preferred Schematic is reasonable, 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, which is prior to executing 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, except for variations previously agreed to by the MSBA. All proposed spaces will be reviewed during the Schematic Design phase.
- 5) Pursuant to the MSBA's enabling legislation, the MSBA's regulations, and the District's proposed plan to repurpose the existing Leicester Primary for which it received a school building grant from the Commonwealth for a prior project, the MSBA may recover a prorated portion of the financial assistance that the District has received for the previous project. Additional information may be required to complete MSBA's review. The exact amount to be recovered will be established at the conclusion of the Schematic Design phase.
- 6) Pursuant to the MSBA's enabling legislation, the MSBA's regulations, and the District's proposed plan to demolish and replace the existing Leicester Middle School for which it received a school building grant from the Commonwealth for a prior project, the MSBA may recover a prorated portion of the financial assistance that the District has received for the previous project. Additional information may be required to complete MSBA's review. The exact amount to be recovered will be established at the conclusion of the Schematic Design phase.
- 7) Pursuant to the MSBA's enabling legislation, the MSBA's regulations, and Leicester School Committee's proposed plan to close the Leicester Memorial Elementary School for which it received a school building grant from the Commonwealth for a prior project, the MSBA may recover a prorated portion of the financial assistance that the District has received for the previous project. Additional information may be required to complete MSBA's review. The exact amount to be recovered will be established at the conclusion of the Schematic Design phase.
- 8) 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 Leicester be approved to proceed into Schematic Design to replace the existing Leicester Primary School, Leicester Memorial Elementary School, and Leicester Middle School with a new PK-8 school facility on the existing Leicester Middle School site. MSBA staff has reviewed the Feasibility Study and accepts the District's preferred schematic.