

**Westwood Public Schools Committee  
School Committee Agenda-Community Forum  
Thurston Middle School Cafeteria  
Thursday, December 12, 2019  
7:00pm**

**Present:**

Anthony Mullin, Chairperson  
Joseph Jowdy, Vice Chairperson  
Carol Lewis, Clerk  
Maya Plotkin, Committee Member  
Charles Donahue, Committee Member  
Ayesha Tariq, WHS Student Representative- not in attendance

Emily Parks, Superintendent  
Allison Borchers, Assistant Superintendent  
Lemma Jn-baptiste, Director of Business and Finance  
Abby Hanscom, Director of Student Services

**Meeting called to order 7:04pm**

**Discussion Item (7:04-8:28)**

Elementary Schools Building Project Update (7:04-7:14)

Mr. Boone from Dore & Whittier's Educational Programming department presented.

Objectives

- Report out educational and facilities progress to date.
- Explore how education and facilities have changed.

Explained the MSBA process and timeline.

- Currently in the process to define and generate a series of options and the preliminary design program will conclude in March 2020 with short list of options that will be presented to the MSBA. Over the summer, the short list of options will present to decide on a final preferred solution. And then, for about a year, the schematic design will be completed; and in at the Town Meeting in spring 2021, vote on the funding for this project will take place. If all goes through, construction would begin early 2022 with the school opening fall of 2023.

Scenarios to be studied.

- Hanlon only 315 students either renovation, renovation and addition, or new
- Hanlon + Deerfield 560 students either renovation and addition or new
- Hanlon + Sheehan 685 students either renovation and addition or new

A resident asked when is it voted on, who decides which project is presented at the Town Meeting? The School Building Committee will decide on the final project. These forums are meant to have the public support of the project which will be presented at the town meeting.

A resident asked about traffic issues. With this proposal of consolidation will there be a traffic analysis done? Yes, maybe more than one will be done depending on what options make the short list. Currently looking at existing sites now for traffic study and work with what project comes forward. All School Building Committee meetings are public and welcome to attend if there is specific topic interested in learning.

A resident asked what happens if the project is voted down in May 2021. If town votes down, the MSBA project is dead. It is highly unlikely to get accepted into this program again. The town will have very difficult decisions to make to work on the three existing buildings and will take a lot longer to fix the buildings.

Discussion regarding Educational Plan (7:14-8:28)

Programming

Principal Interviews and Educational Walk-thrus

- Intentional space for special education, student support services, and specials
- Classrooms designed to allow multiple activities
- Library expressed as learning stations at heart of school
- Opportunities for sensory seeking and sensory avoidance
- Maintaining relationships is important...students known well by adults... small school feel
- Flexibility expressed as key feature: group size, activities, tools and resources, acoustical and visual experience
- Wide variety of spaces... not a one size fits all model: small group space, movement space, extended learning area, etc.
- Student play/exploration as key theme
- Careful consideration of safety and security
- Reimagine the student dining experience
- Embrace the idea of student choice... of learning place, furniture, manipulative, recess

Faculty and Staff visioning workshop

Principals' workshop

Spent the professional development day to work on this workshop for all 5 elementary schools' staffs.

- Classroom pairs with small group rooms between
- Classrooms that support multiple activities
- Flexibility at multiple levels (group size, access to technology, mobile furniture, etc.)
- Variety of space including breakout space
- Opportunities to move & interact with learning environment (explorations & play - a children's museum experience)
- Intentionally designed special education space

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- Leverage the outdoors for learning

Ms. Parks explained that the PD was for all 5 elementary schools staff, looking at educational plan for the entire elementary, not just the three schools that are being affected by the project.

### Early Project Planning

Hanlon only (315 students) = 3 sections per grade  
Hanlon/Deerfield (560 students) = 5 sections per grade  
Hanlon/Sheehan (685 students) = 6 sections per grade

### Special Education Programs

- All current programs will continue
- Some programs may be relocated and incorporated into project depending on the scenario

Grade-level clusters with breakout space  
Project zoned into public and private

A resident commented that Westwood is known to be a very strong academic district. That is occurring in the current space and the kids are learning. Why change the type of building Westwood is currently using? Teachers are working very hard to work with the existing space to accomplish this new type of learning. MCAS we do well in, that is only one aspect in learning, there is more to the student learning Westwood would like to do.

A resident asked, when speaking with the teachers, if outdoor learning was talked about? Yes this was talked about.

A resident asked about maintenance. Will there be info on what was spent on the three schools and if it doesn't pass, then what the cost will be to repair the buildings? Yes, that will be compared along with the educational plan. Resident also asked what has been spent on the buildings in the past five years in order to have a better idea to understand which building may need more money to fix/repair.

A resident asked if a new building was built, what is the maintenance for a square room building vs. a multi functional building? That is all looked at.

A resident asked what happens to the school not included in the project? They need to articulate the plan for the third building when the vote is taken on the new project.

A resident asked is there was enough time to determine the full scope of the project with the MSBA state timeline? Will have a better answer to this in a few months when further along in the process.

A resident asked, if voted down, could the voters hear what the alternative would be? Yes it will be presented.

### Next Generation Educational Experience of Students

- What has changed? More collaborative, technology, set up of classroom is different, safety and security, more adults are involved now.
- Education has moved away from passive teaching to active teaching.
- Social Emotional learning now included in teaching.

Facilities that support the experience of students

- Showed a variety of slides including floor plans of new elementary schools.

Resident asked about cost/number of students at the newly opened elementary school in Needham, MA. There are 500 students and the cost was \$53Million.

Resident asked about the folding partition and acoustics and the concern for noise level? They are built so much better now that it works well.

Resident asked has there been any post studies with buildings built in the last couple of years? Yes there has been studies done. On student yes, not staff retention. 16% better learning based on better learning space.

Resident asked if coming from new elementary space to then a conventional/traditional middle school and high school has there been change in learning? Students feel they are more bored and wanting the features they had at the newer built building, but learning remains the same.

Resident asked about floor covering in the Needham MA. building. Linoleum is used, there is no waxing. Asked if there was a way to quantify the furniture that would need to be replaced over time. Yes that could be documented.

#### Educational Facilities Activity

Residents were asked to explore the images placed around the room and respond

- I like - A positive comment about something that the project should explore
- I wish - A visionary comment about something the project should consider
- I wonder- A comment requesting additional information or exploration

Next Steps slide

- December & January 2020 - Options Development
- February 2020 - Cost Estimates and Options Evaluations
- March 2020 - Identification of Short List and Submission of PDP to MSBA
- Summer 2020 - Identification of Preferred Solution & Submission of PSR to MSBA

Resident asked if there has ever been a time when a community has decided on a project and the MSBA didn't agree? They will not terminate the process but ask if the community is sure of their choice and request the community to relook at their decision.

Resident asked about the number of projected projects. Start with around 15 projects and get down to 6-7 projects on short list.

Resident asked when the next meeting like this would take place? Around end of January early February.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Plotkin. Seconded by Ms. Jowdy.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

### **Meeting Adjourned at 8:28pm**

#### List of Documents and Exhibits Used at Meeting:

- December 2019 Public Forum slideshow presentation by Dore and Whittier
- Various images of elementary school facilities