

TO: School Committee

FROM: Tim Piwowar, Superintendent

DATE: September 5, 2025

RE: Facilities Study Communication and Outreach Plan

At our April School Committee meeting, we released our Facilities Master Plan for the district. In addition to identifying the capital improvement needs for each of our school buildings, the plan also provided six options for addressing the long-term needs of our facilities and our enrollment. Those six options, as well as additional linked resources, are shared at the end of this memo.

During that meeting, we also discussed our key decision points for the long-term future of our school buildings, and the associated timelines with each. That timeline is shared again below:

Decision #1: Which school is the priority for the Statement of Interest (SOI)?

- Need to identify which school by the end of December 2025
- January-March 2026:
 - Complete SOI for priority school
 - SOI approved by School Committee and Select Board
- April 2026:
 - SOI submitted to Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA)

Decision #2: What are the key features of the identified school?

- Once accepted into eligibility with the MSBA, a feasibility study is conducted for the priority school
- Feasibility identified key features:
 - New construction/renovation/repair
 - Size/enrollment/grade configuration
 - Location
- If accepted into the MSBA pipeline in December 2026, these decisions are made by the end of feasibility in 2028-2029

Overall timeline:

- December 2025: Priority school for SOI identified by School Committee
 - April 2026: SOI submitted to MSBA
 - *December 2026: Accepted into MSBA Pipeline
 - *Late 2028/Early 2029: Feasibility completed; building details finalized
 - *April 2030: Construction begins on new school
 - *September 2032: New school occupied
- * - Contingent on being accepted into MSBA Pipeline; timeline is approximate

The first key decision point will take place at the December 2025 School Committee meeting, when the priority school (either Thurston or Sheehan) will be identified as the focus for a Statement of Interest to be submitted in April 2026. In preparation for that decision, it is important that we communicate about the facilities study and its options with the community throughout the fall, and use those events to gather feedback that will inform the Committee's deliberations.

The list below identified a variety of opportunities to communicate with both the school and broader community about our work. This includes meetings with school-based PTOs, three community forums, regular email updates, and a scheduled tour with the School Committee, Select Board, and Finance Committee.

Outreach and Meetings

- School PTO meetings:
 - Thurston, 9/15, 6:30pm
 - Sheehan, 9/30, 7pm
 - Downey, 9/24, 7pm
 - WHS, 9/29, 9am
 - Martha Jones, 11/18, 7pm
 - Pine Hill, 9/29, 7pm
 - Preschool, TBD
- October, TBD - tour of Thurston and Sheehan with SC, Select Board, FinCom
- Early October - October 16, 6:30pm, Town Library
- Late October - October 29, 6:30pm, via Zoom
- Mid November - November 10, 9:30am, Town Library
- Regular email updates

Dates of forums are tentative, based upon availability of space

I look forward to your feedback and discussion about our communication and outreach plan at our School Committee meeting on September 11.

Facilities Study Options and Linked Resources

Options:

- Option 1 (Status Quo):
 - Capital Improvements and Maintenance Only
- Option 2 (Add Modularity):
 - Capital Improvements and Maintenance

- Modularity at Thurston, Downey, Martha Jones, Sheehan
- Option 3 (New 6-8 School):
 - Capital Improvements and Maintenance
 - Modularity at Downey, Martha Jones, Sheehan
 - New 6-8 Middle School at Thurston site
- Option 4 (New K-5 School; Martha Jones/Sheehan)
 - Capital Improvements and Maintenance
 - Modularity at Thurston, Downey, and Martha Jones (temporary at MJ)
 - New K-5 Elementary School (combined MJ and Sheehan) at Sheehan site
- Option 5 (Redistrict and New 6-8 School)
 - Capital Improvements and Maintenance
 - Modularity or addition at Martha Jones
 - Redistrict K-5 Elementary Schools
 - New 6-8 Middle School at Thurston site
- Option 6 (Redistrict and New 5-8 School)
 - Capital Improvements and Maintenance
 - Modularity at Martha Jones
 - New 5-8 School (either 5-6 upper ES/7-8 MS or 5-8 MS) at Thurston site
 - Sheehan is closed

Linked Resources:

[Master Plan Presentation from WPS: April 7, 2025 SC Meeting](#)

[Facilities Presentation by Dore + Whittier: April 7 2025 SC Meeting](#)

[WPS Facilities Study Overview Video - Part 1](#)

[WPS Facilities Study Overview Video - Part 2](#)