

TO: School Committee

FROM: Tim Piwowar, Superintendent

DATE: March 13, 2026

RE: Statement of Interest for Thurston Middle School

At the December 10, 2025 School Committee meeting, the Committee voted unanimously to support Thurston Middle School as the priority project for the submission of a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The decision to prioritize Thurston was made not only in response to the [district's master facilities plan](#), but also with the support of the Westwood community, as [91% of respondents to our survey identified Thurston as the top priority for the district](#).

The submission of an SOI is the required first step in the process of partnering with the MSBA to support addressing the needs of Thurston, and if accepted, has the potential to provide access to tens of millions of dollars of state funding to support an eventual Thurston project. The SOI will identify the needs of Thurston, and will include not only the needs of the facility as a building, but also how those needs impact the delivery of education in the school.

Please note that submitting as SOI does not require any financial resources at this time, and does not commit the District or the Town to any particular version of a project in the future.

If accepted into the MSBA's Core Program in response to our SOI, the next step would then be to seek funding for a feasibility study for Thurston. We anticipate that the MSBA Board will make a formal decision about our SOI at their December 2026 meeting, and we would likely seek funding for feasibility at the Spring 2027 Annual Town Meeting.

In that feasibility phase, we would be required to explore the options of repair, renovation/addition, and new construction, and would also ask to explore the two Thurston options in our master facilities plan: a 6-8 middle school, and a 5-6/7-8 co-located upper elementary/middle school. If a feasibility study were to be funded in May 2027, we would anticipate that the feasibility study might conclude in early 2029.

As part of the MSBA process, there is a required form for the vote to be taken by the School Committee to submit the Statement of Interest. Please see that language below, which includes our identified priorities for Thurston:

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on March 19, 2026, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the School Committee of the Town of Westwood, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest form dated April 17, 2026 for the Thurston Middle School located at 850 High Street, Westwood, Massachusetts which described and explains the following deficiencies and the priority categories for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future:

Priority 2: Elimination of existing severe overcrowding;

Priority 5: Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility;

Priority 7: Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approval local requirements;

and hereby further specifically acknowledge that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Town of Westwood to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

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After this vote is taken by the School Committee on March 19, it must also be approved by the Westwood Select Board. We are scheduled to present to the Select Board at their meeting scheduled for Monday, March 23, and are hopeful that they will similarly approve the SOI at that meeting.

With the authorization of the School Committee and the Select Board, we will complete the process of drafting the SOI and will submit it to the MSBA prior to their deadline of Friday, April 17, 2026. For more information about the SOI process, please see the [MSBA's SOI Process Overview](#).

I look forward to speaking with you about this at our meeting on March 19.