



# WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Honoring Tradition • Inspiring Excellence • Shaping the Future • Creating Opportunity

Dear Westwood Residents,

March 2019

Last year, the Town of Westwood took important steps forward on the journey to modernize our elementary schools and enhance student learning. We were accepted into the Massachusetts School



Building Authority (MSBA) program, which provides financing and guidance for cities and towns that need to build new schools. We successfully completed the Eligibility Phase and formed a School Building Committee

to oversee the process. With the majority of Westwood residents voting to approve funding at Town Meeting last May, we have now officially been accepted into the Feasibility Phase. As we move ahead, it is our commitment to keep lines of communication open and report developments that are of importance to the community.

The next step in the process is to hire a project manager and a designer to work with the School Building Committee. These people will play critical roles by working with MSBA to determine what options are possible, taking into account what the community needs and MSBA requires. We are currently drafting a Request for Service for the project manager position with the goal of having that individual hired in time to attend either the MSBA board meeting on June 3 or on July 15, 2019. Once that step is complete, we will go through a similar process to hire a designer.

MSBA has very specific rules regarding the projects for which it will reimburse cities and towns. Westwood was invited into the MSBA based primarily on the condition of our oldest elementary school, the Hanlon School, which was built in 1951. As a result, any new project must include Hanlon. During last fall, Westwood and the MSBA prepared enrollment projections to address what we believe our needs will be. The projections indicate renewed growth in our elementary

school student population over the next 10 years. Enrollment ultimately determines how much square footage, how many classrooms, and how many other rooms a new school will have.

For the Feasibility Phase of the project, the town presented MSBA three school building options—each of which would present a number of possibilities. The three are:

1. Rebuild Hanlon School for a capacity of 315 students.
2. Build a combined Hanlon/Deerfield School for a capacity of 560 students.
3. Build a combined Hanlon/Sheehan School for a capacity of 685 students.

Once in place, the project manager and designer will study the options and estimate the costs associated with each one so we have a clear picture of our choices when we hold community forums this fall.

What this all means is that by the fall, we will be ready to begin our community engagement phase. Westwood is lucky to have the opportunity to use state dollars to defray the cost of this project. But, whatever plan is ultimately approved, it will be with the input of the community and will leave us well positioned to continue providing the highest quality education.

We look forward to seeing this exciting opportunity unfold and will provide updates leading up to the community forums.

Thank you for your interest and participation in this process.

Sincerely,

**Emily J. Parks**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

**Charles Donahue**  
*Westwood School  
Committee Chair*