District: Town of Swansea
School Name: Joseph Case Junior High School
Recommended Category: Preferred Schematic
Date: December 5, 2025

Recommendation

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the Town of Swansea (the "District"), as part of its Invitation to Feasibility Study, to proceed into Schematic Design to replace the existing Joseph Case Junior High School with a new facility serving grades 6-8, on the site of the existing Joseph Case High School. MSBA staff has reviewed the Feasibility Study and accepts the District's Preferred Schematic.

District Information	
District Name	Town of Swansea
Elementary Schools	Mark G. Hoyle Elementary School (PK-2) Gardner School (K-2) Elizabeth S. Brown Elementary School (3-5) Joseph G. Luther Elementary School (3-5)
Middle School	Joseph Case Junior High School (6-8)
High School	Joseph Case High School (9-12)
Priority School Name	Joseph Case Junior High School
Type of School	Middle School
Grades Served	6-8
Year Opened	1927
Existing Square Footage	76,027
Additions	1952 – Addition
Acreage of Site	16.25 acres
Building Issues	The District identified deficiencies in the following areas: – Mechanical systems – Electrical systems – Plumbing systems – Building envelope – Windows – Roof – Accessibility In addition to the physical plant issues, the District reported that the existing facility does not support the delivery of its educational program and has existing and projected overcrowding issues.
Original Design Capacity	Unknown
2024-2025 Enrollment	490 students
Agreed Upon Enrollment	510 students
Enrollment Specifics	The District and MSBA have mutually agreed upon a design enrollment of 510 students serving grades 6-8.
Total Project Budget – Debt Exclusion Anticipated	Yes

MSBA Board Votes	
Invitation to Eligibility Period	December 21, 2022
Invitation to Feasibility Study	February 28, 2024
Preferred Schematic Authorization	On December 12, 2025 Board agenda
Project Scope & Budget Authorization	District is targeting Board authorization on October 29, 2026
Feasibility Study Reimbursement Rate (Incentive points are not applicable)	56.26%

Consultants	
Owner's Project Manager (the "OPM")	PMA Consultants, LLC
Designer	Finegold Alexander Architects

Discussion

The existing Joseph Case Junior High School is a 76,027 square foot facility located on 16.25-acre site, currently serving students in grades 6-8. The original building was constructed in 1927, with an addition in 1952.

The District's Statement of Interest ("SOI") identified numerous deficiencies in the existing facility related to outdated mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems; the building envelope; windows; roof; accessibility issues; and overcrowding. The SOI also identifies deficiencies in existing spaces and notes the spaces within the existing facility are not conducive to delivering the District's educational program.

In conjunction 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 six (6) preliminary options that included: one (1) code upgrade option, one (1) addition/renovation option, and four (4) new construction options. The following is a detailed list of the preliminary options considered.

Option	Description of Preliminary Options
Option RP1	Code upgrade at the existing Joseph Case Junior High School (Site 1) with an estimated total construction cost of $72.5 million and an estimated total project cost of $98.6 million.
Option AR1	Phased addition and renovation of the existing Joseph Case Junior High School (Site 1) designed for 510 students in grades 6-8, with an estimated total construction cost of $110.1 million and an estimated total project cost of $147.3 million.
Option NoE	New construction (3-story) at the existing Joseph Case Junior High School site (Site 1) designed for 510 students in grades 6-8, with an estimated total construction cost of $134 million and an estimated total project cost of $172.6 million.
Option N1 (U Shape)	New construction (3-story) located to the north of the existing Joseph Case High School (Site 2) designed for 510 students in grades 6-8, with an estimated total

Option	Description of Preliminary Options
	construction cost of $116.1 million and an estimated total project cost of $148.5 million.
Option N2	New construction (3-story U-Shape) located to the north of the existing Joseph Case High School (Site 2) designed for 510 students in grades 6-8, with an estimated total construction cost of $114.1 million and an estimated total project cost of $146 million.
Option N3	New construction (3-story) located to the northeast of the existing Joseph Case High School (Site 2) designed for 510 students in grades 6-8, with an estimated total construction cost of $112.3 million and an estimated total project cost of $143.7 million.

As a result of this analysis, the District determined that all six (6) options would be considered for further evaluation.

MSBA staff and the District agreed to explore these six (6) options for further development and consideration in the final evaluation and development of preliminary design pricing as presented below, including: one (1) code upgrade option, one (1) addition/renovation option, and four (4) new construction options.

Summary of Preliminary Design Pricing for Final Evaluation of Options

Option (Description)	Total Gross Square Feet	Square Feet of Renovated Space (cost*/sq. ft.)	Square Feet of New Construction (cost*/sq. ft.)	Site, Building Takedown, Haz Mat. Cost*	Estimated Total Construction ** (cost*/sq. ft.)	Estimated Total Project Costs
Option RP1: (Code Upgrade)	76,027 sf	76,027 sf $618/sq. ft.	N/A	$17,116,310	$64,143,992 $844/sq. ft.	$98,602,094
Option AR1: (Addition/Renovation)	116,342 sf	18,434 sf $845/sq. ft.	97,908 sf $958/sq. ft.	$24,177,917	$133,615,311 $1,148/sq. ft.	$169,019,704
Option NoE: (New Construction)	116,342 sf	N/A	116,342 sf $1,233/sq. ft.	$18,309,935	$161,804,856 $1,391/sq. ft.	$208,009,533
Option N1: (New Construction)	116,342 sf	N/A	116,342 sf $816/sq. ft.	$33,166,586	$128,241,699 $1,102/sq. ft.	$162,222,232
Option N2: (New Construction)	116,342 sf	N/A	116,342 sf $779/sq. ft.	$33,166,586	$123,822,791 $1,064/sq. ft.	$156,632,435
***Option N3: (New Construction)	***116,342 sf***	***N/A***	***116,342 sf $773/sq. ft.***	***$30,543,146***	***$120,471,612 $1,036/sq. ft.***	***$152,393,285***

** Marked up construction costs*
*** Does not include construction contingency*
****** District's Preferred Schematic***

The District selected "Option N3" as its Preferred Schematic to proceed into Schematic Design. The District determined this option is anticipated to offer strong connections between the Junior High and High School to support shared programs and aligned schedules. Additionally, they found that this option is designed to result in safe and flexible site access and promotes a sense of community through open learning neighborhoods. The District determined that this option also provides desirable central spaces like the media center, gym, dining, and auditorium that form the heart of the school, encouraging collaboration and exploration. The District also indicated that this option provides outdoor learning areas that are thoughtfully integrated into the natural environment and the layout supports future growth. Lastly, the design of this option reflects educational priorities and results in the shortest estimated construction timeline.

"Option RP1" was not selected by the District because this option does not meet the District's educational visioning and program requirements. The District indicated the layout associated with this option presents educational challenges, does not improve traffic flow, and is anticipated to be the most expensive to maintain and operate. Additionally, the District determined that this option would cause significant disruption to ongoing education during construction.

"Option AR1" was not selected by District because this option involves long construction phases and temporary use of existing spaces, which would cause significant disruption to ongoing education during construction. The District also indicated that the site does not provide nearby outdoor space for physical education or athletic fields needed for Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association ("MIAA") student-athletes. While the educational layout meets the District's vision, the impact on students during construction and the missed opportunity to connect closely with the High School's academic programs led to this option being dismissed.

"Option NoE" was not selected by the District because this option would result in two separate buildings on the same site with shared parking and access, which was not desired by the District. The historic 1927 building would need to be reused for purposes outside the Junior High program, which would not support a cohesive learning environment, especially for programs like Art and STE that are currently in remote spaces. Additionally, the District indicated "Option NoE" does not allow for future expansion because of site constraints and that the option is anticipated to be costly, especially since a temporary school would need to be built and remain in use for several years.

Although "Option N1" and "Option N2" meet the educational program requirements and offer shared campus benefits with the adjacent High School, these options were not selected by the District. The District indicated that the Junior High School location on the north side of the site made it less visible from the main campus entrances, which was seen as a disadvantage. Both options required relocating existing High School parking and athletic fields, which would extend the construction timeline. Additionally, the District indicated that while the designs included new sports facilities and flexible access to Wood Street, the overall impact on site layout, visibility, and construction duration led the District to choose a more favorable alternative.

The District presented its proposed Preferred Schematic to the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee ("FAS") on November 5, 2025. At that meeting, members of the FAS members discussed the following: the importance of professional development and dedicated time for teacher planning and curriculum development, particularly as it relates to science and social studies curricula; proposed science lab adjacencies and opportunity to share science prep spaces; location of Special Education spaces and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ("DESE") review

process following the Schematic Design submission; the importance of continued community outreach efforts for the Proposed Project; appreciation for the overall building design; site circulation and traffic flow; further development of the site plan and proposed retaining walls, especially with consideration to topography and grading; the opportunities and challenges associated with potential future expansion; discussion regarding MSBA's non-participation as it relates to auditoriums at the junior high school level; location of the guidance and administrative offices; consideration of solar mitigation for west-facing classrooms; building massing and architectural features; and, proposed use of the distributed Media spaces and opportunities to seek feedback from other districts that have incorporated similar design features.

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 and 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 Special Education submission 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) 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 recommend that the Town of Swansea be approved to proceed into Schematic Design and replace the existing Joseph Case Junior High School with a new facility serving grades 6-8, on the site of the existing Joseph Case High School.