District: Town of Chelmsford
School Name: Colonel Moses Parker Middle School
Recommended Category: Preferred Schematic
Date: June 17, 2026

Recommendation

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the Town of Chelmsford (the "District"), as part of its Invitation to Feasibility Study, to proceed into Schematic Design to replace the existing Colonel Moses Parker Middle School with a new facility serving grades 4 through 6 on the site of the existing school. MSBA staff has reviewed the Feasibility Study and accept the District's Preferred Schematic.

District Information	
District Name	Town of Chelmsford
Elementary Schools	Byam School (K-4) Center Elementary School (K-4) Charles D. Harrington (K-4)
Middle Schools	Colonel Moses Parker Middle School (5-6) McCarthy Middle School (7-8)
High School	Chelmsford High School (9-12)
Priority School Name	Colonel Moses Parker Middle School
Type of School	Middle School
Grades Served	5-6
Year Opened	1967
Existing Square Footage	125,725
Additions	2001, 2003, 2004, and 2005– modular additions 2006 – addition /renovation, 5,000 gsf addition and library renovation
Acreage of Site	27.8 acres
Building Issues	The District identified deficiencies in the following areas: – Mechanical systems – 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 as well as existing and projected overcrowding.
Original Design Capacity	Unknown
2025-2026 Enrollment	817 Students
Agreed Upon Enrollment	Study Enrollment includes the following configurations: – 930 students in grades 5 through 6 at the Colonel Moses Parker Middle School – 1,390 students in grades 4 through 6 at the Colonel Moses Parker Middle School (Preferred Schematic)

District Information	
	– 1,885 students in grades 5 through 8 in a consolidated Colonel Moses Parker Middle School and McCarthy Middle School
Enrollment Specifics	Contingent upon the Board's approval of the Preferred Schematic, the District will sign a Design Enrollment Certification for 1,390 students in grades 4-6.
Total Project Budget – Debt Exclusion Anticipated	Yes

MSBA Board Votes	
Invitation to Eligibility Period	December 13, 2023
Invitation to Feasibility Study	December 13, 2024
Preferred Schematic Authorization	On June 24, 2026, Board agenda
Project Scope & Budget Authorization	District is targeting Board authorization on December 9, 2026
Feasibility Study Reimbursement Rate (Incentive points are not applicable)	52.26%

Consultants	
Owner's Project Manager (the "OPM")	Leftfield, LLC
Designer	Ai3 Architects, LLC

Discussion

The existing Parker Middle School is a 125,745 square foot facility located on 27.8-acre site, currently serving grades 5 through 6. The original building was constructed in 1967 with an addition and renovation completed in 2001, and the addition of modular classrooms in 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006.

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

As part of the Feasibility Study, the MSBA accepted the District's request to explore the following three (3) study enrollment options:

- 930 students in grades 5-6 at the Colonel Moses Parker Middle School
- 1,390 students in grades 4-6 at the Colonel Moses Parker Middle School (Preferred Schematic)
- 1,885 students in grades 5-8 consolidating the Colonel Moses Parker Middle School with the McCarthy Middle School

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

fourteen (14) preliminary options that included: two (2) code upgrade options, five (5) addition/renovation options, and seven (7) new construction options. The following is a detailed list of the preliminary options considered.

Option	Description of Preliminary Options
Option X1 (930)	Code upgrade at the existing Colonel Moses Parker Middle School site, with an estimated total construction cost of $84.8 million, and an estimated total project cost of $110 million.
Option A1.1 (930)	Addition/renovation at the existing Colonel Moses Parker Middle School site designed for 930 students grades 5-6, with an estimated total construction cost of $166.6 million, and an estimated total project cost of $212.3 million.
Option A2.1 (930)	New construction at the existing Colonel Moses Parker Middle School site designed for 930 students grades 5-6, with an estimated total construction cost of $157.2 million, and an estimated total project cost of $196.4 million.
Option B1.1 (930)	New construction at the Graniteville site designed for 930 students grades 5-6, with an estimated total construction cost of $160.7 million, and an estimated total project cost of $200.8 million.
Option A1.2 (1,390)	Addition/renovation at the existing Colonel Moses Parker Middle School site designed for 1,390 students grades 4-6, with an estimated total construction cost of $245.7 million, and an estimated total project cost of $311.1 million.
Option A2.2 (1,390)	New construction at the existing Colonel Moses Parker Middle School site designed for 1,390 students grades 4-6, with an estimated total construction cost of $218.1 million, and an estimated total project cost of $272.6 million.
Option B1.2 (1,390)	New Construction at the Graniteville site designed for 1,390 students grades 4-6, with an estimated total construction cost of $223 million, and an estimated total project cost of $278.8 million.
Option X2 (1,390)	Code upgrade at the existing McCarthy Middle School site designed for 1,390 students grades 4-6, with an estimated total construction cost of $80.7 million, and an estimated total project cost of $105 million.
Option A1.3 (1,885)	Addition/renovation at the existing Colonel Moses Parker Middle School site designed for 1,885 students grades 5-8, with an estimated total construction cost of $310.2 million, and an estimated total project cost of $391.8 million.
Option A2.3 (1,885)	Addition/renovation at the existing Colonel Moses Parker Middle School site designed for 1,885 students grades 5-8, with an estimated total construction cost of $310.2 million, and an estimated total project cost of $391.8 million.
Option B1.3 (1,885)	New Construction at the Graniteville site designed for 1,885 students grades 5-8, with an estimated total construction cost of $313.7 million, and an estimated total project cost of $392.1 million.
Option C1.3a (1,885)	Addition/renovation at the existing McCarthy Middle School site designed for 1,885 students grades 5-8, with an estimated total construction cost of $328.6 million, and an estimated total project cost of $414.8 million.
Option C1.3b (1,885)	Addition/renovation at the existing McCarthy Middle School site designed for 1,885 students grades 5-8, with an estimated total construction cost of $342.6 million, and an estimated total project cost of $432.3 million.
Option C2.3 (1,885)	New construction at the existing McCarthy Middle School site designed for 1,885 students grades 5-8, with an estimated total construction cost of $306.3 million, and an estimated total project cost of $382.9 million.

As a result of this analysis, the District determined that "Option B1.1", "Option B1.2", "Option B1.3", "Option C1.3a", "Option C1.3b" and "Option C2.3" would not be considered for further evaluation primarily due to the site constraints. The Graniteville Fields site is in the FEMA flood zone and would result in significant educational disruption on the school activities, create congestion, and offer no other replacement for the existing fields.

Additionally, the District determined that "Option C1.3a", "Option C1.3b" and "Option C2.3" would not be considered for further evaluation primarily because the McCarthy Middle School site did not satisfy the elementary enrollment pressures and educational programming needs of the District.

Furthermore, the District determined that "Option X2" would not be considered for further evaluation because this option would not fully address the needs of the District's educational program. However, please note that this option was included as part of the final evaluation of options to be considered for cost comparison purposes only.

MSBA staff and the District agreed to explore the following eight (8) options for further development and consideration in the final evaluation and development of preliminary design pricing as presented below, including: two (2) code upgrade options, three (3) addition/renovation options, and three (3) 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 X1: Base Repair for 930 students Gr. 5-6 (Parker site)	125,745	125,745 $641 /sq. ft.	N/A	$4,288,217	$84,856,462 $675 /sq. ft.	$110,070,578
Option X2: Base Repair for 1,390 students Gr. 4-6 (McCarthy site)	129,005	129,005 $589 /sq. ft.	N/A	$4,728,090	$80,722,649 $626 /sq. ft.	$104,903,311
Option A1.1: Addition/Renovation for 930 students Gr. 5-6 (Parker site)	180,059	53,782 $612/sq. ft.	126,277 $818/sq.ft	$28,958,575	$165,267,015 $918 /sq. ft.	$210,583,769
Option A1.2: Addition/Renovation for 1,390 students Gr. 4-6 (Parker site)	243,236	53,782 $607/sq. ft	189,454 $771/sq.ft.	$28,733,955	$207,412,694 $$853 /sq. ft.	$263,265,868
Option A1.3: Addition/Renovation for 1,885 students Gr. 5-8	346,432	53,782 $580 /sq. ft	292,650 $778/sq.ft.	$27,695,102	$286,701,479 $828 /sq. ft.	$362,376,849

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
(Parker site)						
Option A2.1: New Construction for 930 students Gr. 5-6 (Parker site)	166,769	*N/A*	166,769 *$777 /sq. ft.*	$29,402,445	*$159,009,871* *$953 /sq. ft.*	$198,762,339
****** Option A2.2: New Construction for 1,390 students Gr. 4-6 (Parker site)***	***238,701***	***N/A***	***238,701 $759 /sq. ft.***	***$29,894,543***	***$211,140,541 $885 /sq. ft.***	***$263,925,676***
Option A2.3: New Construction for 1,885 students Gr. 5-8 (Parker site)	338,611	*N/A*	338,611 *$745/sq. ft.*	$30,700,477	*$282,999,930* $836 */sq. ft.*	$353,749,913

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

The District has selected "Option A2.2" as its Preferred Schematic to proceed into Schematic Design, as the District determined that this option best meets the needs of the District's educational program and would address the District's capacity issues. Additionally, the proposed location allows for outdoor learning opportunities and focus on local ecology, due to the proximity to existing wetlands, and is anticipated to create improved connections across campus.

"Option X1" and "Option X2" were not selected by the District because these options do not resolve the facility or educational deficiencies and do not fully address the needs of the District's educational program. Additionally, the District noted that these options would not provide new instructional technology, programs necessary to deliver the District's curriculum, or expanded community resources, which was desired by the District.

"Option A1.1", and "Option A2.1" were not selected by the District because the District indicated that the existing facilities do not meet the needs of their educational program. Additionally, the District indicated that these options are not anticipated to alleviate overcrowding and would not support the inclusion of grade 4 students.

"Option A1.2" and "Option A1.3" were not selected by the District because these options would not address the desired spatial adjacencies described in the District's educational program. In addition, the District determined that these options are anticipated to be highly disruptive to teaching and learning due to phasing and construction sequencing while the existing building remained in continuous use as

a school. Furtheremoe, “Option A1.3” would require renovation of the existing McCarthy Middle School as a fifth elementary school or potentially requiring the construction of a new elementary school, which was not desired by the District.

“Options A2.3” was not selected by the District because this option would only partially address the District’s capacity issues and would require renovation of the existing McCarthy Middle School as a fifth elementary school or potentially require the construction of a new elementary school, which was not desired by the District.

The District presented its proposed Preferred Schematic to the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee (“FAS”) on May 13, 2026. At that meeting, members of the FAS discussed the following items: appreciation of the educational program, central location of the Media Center and opportunities to further refine the upper loft areas, the clarity of the floor plans, building layout and design elements that break down scale; distribution of the Special Education spaces and the DESE’s review process following Schematic Design; importance of continued attention to user needs as the design progresses; location of the art classrooms on the second floor relative to the stage and considerations associated with transporting materials for stage productions and of the proposed Student Art Gallery and opportunities to showcase student work in a central location while enhancing navigation and interior circulation; layout of the classroom neighborhoods and flexibility to organize grade levels by floor or by wing; clarification of the vestibule design and anticipated further development; proposed TV Studio and opportunities to collaborate with or seek resources from local cable networks; future determination of the construction delivery method and proposed location of geothermal wells, current maintenance operations and the importance of continued involvement from maintenance and facilities staff as the design moves forward.

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 Chelmsford be approved to proceed into Schematic Design to replace the existing Colonel Moses Parker Middle School with a new facility serving grades 4 through 6 on the site of the existing school.