Meeting Minutes
Massachusetts School Building Authority
Facilities Assessment Subcommittee Meeting
Wednesday, July 29, 2026

A meeting of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (the "MSBA") Facilities Assessment Subcommittee (the "FAS") was held on July 29, 2026. The meeting was held remotely via Zoom.

Members Present: Matt Deninger, Designee of the Commissioner of Education; Terry Kwan, appointed member; and Anne Brockelman, appointed member.

Others Present:

Jennifer Gonzalez, Michael McGurl, Chris Alles, Diane Sullivan, Elena Seiti, Ustavi Gadani, Nick Govostes, Rebecca Rokne, Jeffrey Adams, Maria Caprigno, Carley Belfield, Emily Udy, Karl Brown, Stephen Garvey, Jennifer Panacopoulos, August Knuth, Shannon Hadorn, Lexi Winston, Craig Hovey, Sarah Przybylowicz, Casey Phillips, Jennifer Flynn, Keegan Boyden, Anne Hudson, Olivia Lynch, Julia Long, Valerie Nivose, Kathleen Andrade, Conor Hartnett, Isaac Fish, Tatiana Meyer, Meredith Roberts, Thirtsa Savain, Maria Puopolo, Nina Bordeaux, Elizabeth Corrielus, Esmé Juros, Robin McElaney, Samantha Finnigan, Jack Cullen, Anushka Naik, Christina Forde, Amanda Baldwin, other MSBA staff, District representatives and members of the public.

Call to Order

Anne Brockelman, Vice-Chair of the Facilities Assessment Subcommittee, called the meeting to order at 9:31 AM. The Vice-Chair explained that the meeting is being held in accordance with Chapter 30A, section 20, of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Next, the Vice-Chair explained that, per Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, any person is permitted to record the open meeting; she then explained that she is obligated to inform attendees of any recording at the beginning of the meeting. The Vice-Chair then requested that anyone recording the meeting please identify themselves using the "raise hand" feature. MSBA Associate General Counsel, August Knuth, confirmed that two members of the public identified themselves to record the meeting: Peter O'Neil and Kay Matipa from the Needham Observer.

MSBA Deputy Executive Director, Jennifer Gonzalez, introduced the members of the FAS, MSBA staff, and District personnel, and then proceeded with the first item on the agenda.

Town of Northborough – Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School District Presentation

MSBA Project Manager Utsavi Gadani provided an overview of the project, which proposes replacing the existing Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary school with a new facility serving students in Kindergarten through grade 5, plus Pre-Kindergarten, on the site of the existing school.

Northborough's Superintendent of Schools, Greg Martineau, began by providing the background and history of Northborough. Assistant Superintendent Stefanie Reinhorn provided insight into the educational vision and overarching goals of the project, as well as variations from the MSBA's space summary recommendations. The OPM for the project, PMA, gave an overview of the meetings and the community outreach events that had taken place and that were scheduled in the coming months. The District discussed the submission of the Preferred Schematic Report and how they will continue to work through review comments from the MSBA. The District presented the various options. The District mentioned that they have attended many community outreach events. The Designer, Flansburgh Architects, presented on the building layout, including floorplans and site features. The Designer also went over the envisioned character and inspiration for the indoor and outdoor spaces, the sustainability goals of the project, the phasing and planned construction logistics for the project, and a cost comparison between the evaluated options.

During the presentation, the FAS, MSBA staff, and the District discussed the following:

- Appreciation of the District's Educational Program and the updates made since the original submission;
- Distribution of Special Education spaces and the DESE review process following Schematic Design;
- Appreciation for the flexibility of the proposed general classrooms for multidisciplinary learning as well as the inclusion of professional librarian services, dedicated professional support and space for Digital Literacy and Computer Science instruction;
- Potential opportunities for the design team to showcase sustainability elements such as energy and water use as design features and as part of community outreach for the Proposed Project;
- The importance of continued input from faculty and staff as the design progresses;
- Appreciation for the overall building design;
- Building massing and scale;
- Proposed parking locations; and,
- Roof design considerations as it relates to architectural features as well as the location of mechanical equipment and photovoltaic panels.

MSBA Director of Project Management Chris Alles then provided an overview of next steps for the district.

Town of South Hadley – Mosier Elementary School District Presentation

MSBA Project Manager Utsavi Gadani provided an overview of the project, which proposes replacing the existing Mosier Elementary School with a new facility serving grades 1 through 5 on the site of the existing school.

South Hadley's Superintendent of Schools, Jennifer Voyik, gave an overview of the educational vision for the District and the educational needs of the proposed building. The District also gave a summary of the SBC meetings, work group meetings, visioning workshops, community forums, and other outreach events that have been held already and that were anticipated in the near future. The Designer, Mount Vernon Group Architects, then discussed the District's site and design choices, mentioning how they were able to move the proposed building outside of the nearby wetlands area and detailing how the proposed design helps with the integration of various inter-disciplinary subjects. The Designer presented on the floorplans and discussed how the design of the building is intentionally set up in wings, a design they've coined "the Hug," and discussing their intention to disperse special education programming throughout the wings. The Designer also mentioned that the lobby prioritized access to communal spaces and spoke to the drop off area and how it relates to the school's desired identity and culture. The Designer then discussed some of the space variances from MSBA guidelines, outdoor spaces, as well as some proposed sustainability features. The OPM, Skanska, concluded the presentation with the Preferred Schematic Report pricing summary, the analysis of the evaluated and selected options, and an overview of the project timeline.

During the presentation, the FAS, MSBA staff, and the District discussed the following:

- The District's Educational Program and previous feedback communicated as part of MSBA review of the Preliminary Design Program regarding proposed scheduling as it relates to the implementation of project-based learning, use of the proposed STE room, and proposed professional development opportunities;
- Appreciation for the building design concept that incorporates entry into a large forecourt with two wings;
- Suggestion to consider plantings and opportunities to extend green space between the building and proposed parking area;
- Opportunity for transparency and visual connection from the building entry to the cafeteria; and,
- Distribution and location of Special Education classrooms, particularly those proposed at the end of hallways in classroom neighborhoods, and the DESE review process associated with the Schematic Design submission.

MSBA Director of Project Management Chris Alles then provided an overview of next steps for the district.

Town of Needham – Pollard Middle School Schematic Design Update District Presentation

MSBA Project Manager Emily Udy provided an overview of the project, which proposes a new facility designed for grades 6 through 8, on the site of the existing Pollard Middle School.

The Designer for the project, HFMH, provided a site plan comparison between the Preferred Schematic Report and the end of the Schematic Design phase, discussing floor plans and any adjustments to shaping. These adjustments included the direction of the school and the layouts where various subjects will be taught. The Designer also presented on the sectional relationships between the different floors, a circulation diagram, site grading, and which areas of the school will have natural sunlight for the sixth grade wing and the cafeteria. The Designer noted that some of these changes are in response to community feedback, and that the overall phasing of the project has been adjusted with these changes such that the sixth grade wing will now be the only part of the project built in phase two. The Designer also explained that the building was reduced from five levels down to four and that the placement of some larger communal spaces, including the gymnasium and the auditorium, had been adjusted.

Needham Town Manager Katie King then discussed the planned location of geothermal wells and explained that the relevant conversations regarding Article 97 and the associated environmental obligations and approvals were ongoing. The total project cost for the Preferred Schematic Report and Schematic Design were presented. The District discussed the cost driver and considerations for the Project, and concluded with a discussion of the project timeline.

During the presentation. the FAS, MSBA staff, and the District discussed the following:

- Appreciation for the thoughtful changes and refinements to the design since the submission of the District's Preferred Schematic;
- Reductions in the estimated project cost since the Preferred Schematic Report and the associated factors;
- Considerations for the location of parking;
- Refinements to the proposed entrance to the site and improvements to pedestrian experience;
- Rationale for incorporating a purple roof as a construction add-alternate compared to the base scope of a green roof;
- Importance of ongoing community outreach; and,
- Construction phasing schedule and intentions.

Closing Remarks

Ms. Brockelman sought a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Mr. Deninger and seconded by Ms. Kwan.

Roll Call Vote:

Terry Kwan – Yes

Matt Deninger – Yes

Anne Brockelman – Yes

The motion passed – 3 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstaining.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:42 AM.