District: Town of Needham
School Name: Pollard Middle School
Recommended Category: Project Scope and Budget
Date: August 19, 2026

Recommendation

That the Executive Director be authorized to enter into a Project Scope and Budget Agreement and a Project Funding Agreement with the Town of Needham (the "District") to replace the existing Pollard Middle School with a new facility serving grades 6-8 on the site of the existing school.

Please note, the District's proposed project includes the installation of a subsurface geothermal well field, temporary parking, and temporary construction laydown area on a parcel of land adjacent to the existing Pollard Middle School site known as DeFazio Park, which may be subject to Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth and the Open Space Act. Therefore, the MSBA Board's authorization to enter into a Project Funding Agreement will be conditioned upon the District completing any applicable requirements associated with Article 97, the Open Space Act, review of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office ("MEPA Review"), MSBA land ownership and control requirements, and any environmental approvals associated with the proposed project.

Additionally, a component of the District's proposed project includes the routing of underground geothermal well piping within an MBTA regulated area and is subject to review and permitting by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority ("MBTA"). Therefore, the MSBA Board's authorization to enter into a Project Funding Agreement will also be conditioned upon the District obtaining all required MBTA reviews and approvals for this component.

District Information	
District Name	Town of Needham
Elementary Schools	Newman Elementary School (PK-5) Broadmeadow Elementary School (K-5) John Elliot Elementary School (K-5) Sunita L. Williams Elementary School (K-5) William Mitchell Elementary School (K-5)
Middle Schools	High Rock School (6) Pollard Middle School (7-8)
High School	Needham High School (9-12)
Priority School Name	Pollard Middle School
Type of School	Middle School
Grades Served	7-8
Year Opened	1956
Existing Square Footage	146,900
Additions	1968, 1992 – major additions/renovations 2002 – addition of 10 modular classrooms
Acreage of Site	15.38 acres
Building Issues	The District identified deficiencies in the following areas: – Structural integrity – Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing systems – Fire Protection System

District Information	
	– Building envelope – Windows – 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	875 students
Agreed Upon Enrollment	1,335 students
Enrollment Specifics	The District and MSBA have mutually agreed upon a design enrollment of 1,335 students serving grades 6-8.
Total Project Budget – Debt Exclusion Anticipated	Yes

MSBA Board Votes	
Invitation to Eligibility Period	December 13, 2023
Invitation to Feasibility Study	October 30, 2024
Preferred Schematic Authorization	February 25, 2026
Project Scope & Budget Authorization	August 26, 2026, 2026 Board agenda
Reimbursement Rate Before Incentives	36.89%
Incentive Points	1.85 – Maintenance 3.00 – Energy Efficiency – "Green Schools" [1] 1.00 – Indoor Air Quality – "Green Schools" [1]
Total Reimbursement Rate[1]	42.74%

[1] *The MSBA has provisionally included three (3) incentive points for energy efficiency, and one (1) incentive point for indoor air quality, subject to the District meeting certain sustainability requirements for the project. If the District does not meet the requirements of the Green Schools Program, the District will not qualify for some or all of these incentive points, and the MSBA will adjust the reimbursement rate accordingly.*

Consultants	
Owner's Project Manager (the "OPM")	Town of Needham
Designer	HMFH Architects, Inc.

Discussion

MSBA staff reviewed the documents provided by the District and met with the District and its consultants to discuss scope and budget. The District has provided a Total Project Budget of $325,405,945 which includes an estimated construction cost of $259,587,265 ($977/sq. ft.). The Estimated Basis of Total Facilities Grant would be $185,035,732 , which excludes the following: legal fees; OPM and Designer fees associated with excluded scope; Designer fees beyond MSBA funding limits; costs associated with other administrative costs; construction costs for building and site work beyond MSBA funding limits, which includes scope associated with ineligible building area; costs associated with mailing and moving; costs exceeding the $1,915 per student allowance for furniture, fixtures, and equipment; costs exceeding the $1,570 per student allowance for computer equipment and technology. The Total Project Budget also excludes costs associated with the commissioning of ineligible building areas as well as owner's and construction contingency costs.

Additionally, the proposed demolition of the Pollard Middle School will result in the MSBA recovering a portion of state funds previously paid to the District for the Green Repair Roof Replacement Project at the existing facility completed in October 2011 (Project ID: 201101990405G). The MSBA has calculated this recovery of funds to be $68,031, and this amount has been deducted from the Estimated Maximum Total Facilities Grant.

Project Scope and Budget Agreement	
Enrollment: 1,335 students Proposed Total Square Feet: 265,572	District's Proposed Project Budget
Project Budget[1]	$301,186,196
Scope Exclusions/Ineligible Costs	-$116,150,464
Third Party Funding	-$0
Estimated Basis of Total Facilities Grant	$185,035,732
Reimbursement Rate	42.74%
Estimated Maximum Total Facilities Grant before Cost Recovery[2]	$79,084,272
Commissioning Costs Associated with Ineligible Building Area	-$38,347
Cost Recovery Associated with Prior Projects	-$68,031
Estimated Maximum Total Facilities Grant[2]	$78,977,894
Owner's and Construction Contingencies	$24,219,749
Ineligible Owner's and Construction Contingencies	-$20,325,940
Potentially Eligible Owner's and Construction Contingencies	$3,893,809
Potential Additional Grant Funds for Eligible Owner's and Construction Contingency Expenditures	$1,664,214
Total Project Budget	$325,405,945
Maximum Total Facilities Grant[3,4]	$80,642,108

[1]*Does not include Owner's or Construction Contingencies.*
[2]*Does not include any grant funds for potentially eligible Owner's or Construction Contingency Expenditures; subject to MSBA review and audit.*
[3]*Includes maximum possible Owner's and Construction Contingency grant funds, the final amount of which, if any, shall be determined by the MSBA in its sole discretion. The MSBA does not anticipate that the District will expend all of its contingency funds on expenses that are eligible for MSBA reimbursement.*
[4]*Maximum Total Facilities Grant will be allocated in part to the current Grant Cap, and in part to future available Grant Cap space.*

MSBA staff recommends an Estimated Maximum Total Facilities Grant of $78,977,894; however, the District may be eligible for up to an additional $1,664,214 in grant funds, subject to the MSBA's review and audit of the District's owner's and construction contingency expenditures. Accordingly, staff recommends a Maximum Total Facilities Grant of $80,642,108 for the Project Scope and Budget Agreement and Project Funding Agreement to replace the existing Pollard Middle School and construct a new facility serving students in grades 6-8 on the existing site. The MSBA's Board authorization to enter into a Project Funding Agreement will be conditioned upon the District completing any applicable requirements associated with Article 97, the Open Space Act, MEPA Review, MSBA land ownership and control requirements, and any environmental approvals associated with the proposed project. It will also be conditioned upon the District obtaining all required MBTA reviews and approvals for construction access within MBTA jurisdiction.