District: Town of Northborough
School Name: Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School
Recommended Category: Preferred Schematic
Date: August 19, 2026

Recommendation

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the Town of Northborough (the "District"), as part of its Invitation to Feasibility Study, to proceed into Schematic Design to replace 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. MSBA staff has reviewed the Feasibility Study and accepts the District's Preferred Schematic.

It should be noted that the District's proposed project is subject to the review of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services. Should the District be approved by the Board to proceed into Schematic Design for this proposed project and then subsequently considered by the Board for approval of a Project Scope and Budget Agreement and a Project Funding Agreement, the vote to approve a Project Scope and Budget Agreement and a Project Funding Agreement will make the execution of the Project Funding Agreement contingent upon the District meeting U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services requirements to the extent applicable.

District Information	
District Name	Town of Northborough
Elementary Schools	Fannie E. Proctor Elementary School (K-5) Lincoln Street Elementary School (K-5) Marion E. Zeh Elementary School (K-5) Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School (K-5)
Middle School	Robert E. Melican Middle School (6-8)
High School	N/A
Priority School Name	Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School (K-5)
Type of School	Elementary School
Grades Served	K-5
Year Opened	1962
Existing Square Footage	45,000
Additions	N/A
Acreage of Site	35.4 acres
Building Issues	The District identified deficiencies in the following areas: – Mechanical systems – Electrical systems – Plumbing systems – Fire protection systems – Building envelope – Accessibility In addition to the physical plant issues, the District reported that the existing facility does not support the delivery of its educational program.
Original Design Capacity	Unknown
2025-2026 Enrollment	259 students

District Information	
Agreed Upon Enrollment	Study Enrollment includes the following configurations: – 310 students in grades K-5, plus Pre-kindergarten students served by the Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School. (Preferred Schematic) – 625 students in grades 3-5 consolidated with another elementary school to be determined for a town-wide grades 3-5 enrollment.
Enrollment Specifics	Contingent upon the Board's approval of the Preferred Schematic, the District will sign a Design Enrollment Certification for 310 students in Kindergarten through grade 5, plus Pre-kindergarten.
Total Project Budget – Debt Exclusion Anticipated	Yes

MSBA Board Votes	
Invitation to Eligibility Period	December 13, 2023
Invitation to Feasibility Study	February 26, 2025
Preferred Schematic Authorization	On August 26, 2026 Board agenda
Project Scope & Budget Authorization	District is targeting Board authorization on February 24, 2027
Feasibility Study Reimbursement Rate (Incentive points are not applicable)	48.68%

Consultants	
Owner's Project Manager (the "OPM")	PMA Consultants, LLC
Designer	Flansburgh Associates, Inc.

Discussion

The existing Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School is a 45,00 square foot facility located on a 35.4-acre site, that currently serves students in Kindergarten through grade 5. The original school building was constructed in 1962 with roof replacements completed in 2011 and 2015.

The District's Statement of Interest ("SOI") identified numerous deficiencies in the existing facility related to outdated mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection systems, building envelope, as well as accessibility issues. The SOI also identified deficiencies in the 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 two (2) study enrollment options:

- 310 students in Kindergarten through grade 5, plus Pre-kindergarten, at the Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School (Preferred Schematic); and
- 625 students in a District-wide grades 3 through 5, at the Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary 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 nine (9) preliminary options that included: one (1) code upgrade option, six (6) addition/renovation options, and two (2) new construction options. The following is a detailed list of the preliminary options considered.

Option	**Description of Preliminary Options**
Option A	Code upgrade at the existing Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School, with an estimated total project cost of $48.6 million.
Option B-2	Addition/renovation at the existing Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School designed for 310 students in Kindergarten through grade 5, plus Pre-kindergarten, with an estimated total project cost of $102.9 million.
Option B-3	Addition/renovation at the existing Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School designed for 310 students in Kindergarten through grade 5, plus Pre-kindergarten, with an estimated total project cost of $103.7 million.
Option B-4	Addition/renovation at the existing Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School designed for 310 students in Kindergarten through grade 5, plus Pre-kindergarten, with an estimated total project cost of $102 million.
Option B-1	New construction at the existing Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School site designed for 310 students in Kindergarten through grade 5 plus Pre-kindergarten, with an estimated total project cost of $98.4 million.
Option C-2	Addition/renovation at the existing Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School designed for 625 students in grades 3 through 5, with an estimated total project cost of $125 million.
Option C-3	Addition/renovation at the existing Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School designed for 625 students in grades 3 through 5, with an estimated total project cost of $127 million.
Option C-4	Addition/renovation at the existing Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School designed for 625 students in grades 3 through 5, with an estimated total project cost of $127.2 million.
Option C-1	New construction at the existing Marguerite E. Peaslee Elementary School site designed for 625 students in grades 3 through 5, with an estimated total project cost of $123.6 million.

MSBA staff and the District agreed that all nine (9) options would be considered for further development and consideration in the final evaluation and development of preliminary design pricing as presented below including: one (1) code upgrade option, six (6) addition/renovation options, and two (2) 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 A: (Code Upgrade at the Peaslee ES)	45,000	45,000 $334/sq. ft.	N/A	$4,461,329	$19,508,429 $434/sq. ft.	$43,776,984
Option B-1: (New Construction for 310 students on the North-side of Peaslee ES site)***	***71,000***	***N/A***	***71,000 $544/sq. ft.***	***$13,588,833***	***$52,179,332 $735/sq. ft.***	***$88,755,950***
Option B-2: (Renovation and South-side addition for 310 students at Peaslee ES)	71,000	45,000 $483/sq. ft.	26,000 $580/sq. ft.	$12,432,018	$49,273,149 $694/sq. ft.	$91,451,428
Option B-3: (Renovation and North-side Addition for 310 students at Peaslee ES)	71,000	45,000 $479/sq. ft.	26,000 $574/sq. ft.	$12,808,763	$49,298,519 $695/sq. ft.	$90,787,176
Option B-4: (Renovation and Large North-side Addition for 310 students at Peaslee ES)	71,000	20,200 $553/sq. ft.	50,800 $546/sq. ft.	$13,388,565	$52,305,224 $737/sq. ft.	$91,366,770
Option C-1: (New Construction for 625 students on the North-side of Peaslee ES site)	95,855	N/A	95,855 $523/sq. ft.	$14,226,795	$64,382,775 $672/sq. ft.	$107,360,451
Option C-2: (Renovation and South-side addition for 625 students at Peaslee ES)	95,855	45,000 $473/sq. ft.	50,855 $524/sq. ft.	$13,130,751	$61,025,465 $637/sq. ft.	$106,019,442
Option C-3: (Renovation and North-side addition for 625 students at Peaslee ES)	95,885	45,000 $477/sq. ft.	50,855 $536/sq. ft.	$14,017,941	$62,713,887 $654/sq. ft.	$108,660,758
Option C-4: (Renovation and Large North-side Addition for 625 students at Peaslee ES)	95,855	20,200 $554/sq. ft.	75,655 $504/sq. ft.	$13,682,239	$63,024,249 $658/sq. ft.	$109,146,277

** Marked up construction costs*

*** Does not include construction contingency*

******District's Preferred Schematic***

The District selected "Option B-1" as the Preferred Schematic to advance into Schematic Design because the District determined that this option best meets the District's educational program requirements and long-term vision. Additionally, this option offers the opportunity to provide a modern and flexible learning environment with grade level learning neighborhoods, collaborative breakout spaces, and appropriately located student support areas that anticipate enhancing the District's educational delivery methods. Also, this option is anticipated to offer significant site benefits, including ample outdoor recreation and play areas, improved traffic circulation, improved separation of vehicles and pedestrians, and a clear and efficient opportunity for future expansion, ensuring the facility can accommodate evolving educational needs over time. Furthermore, this option is anticipated to minimize disruption to students and staff by allowing the existing school to remain operational during construction.

"Option A" was not selected by the District primarily because this option did not adequately address the District's educational program requirements. Additionally, this option would result in less buildable area and would require multiple phases of construction that would cause significant disruption to daily school operations.

"Option C-1", "Option C-2", "Option C-3", and "Option C-4" were not selected by the District because these options did not support the District's preferred K-5 grade configuration and did not align with the District's preferred educational model. As a result, the District determined that a smaller school population would better support strong relationships among students, staff, and families. Furthermore, these options could potentially pose additional challenges with potential relocation of students and transportation logistics, which were not desired by the District.

"Option B-2" and "Option B-3" were not selected by the District because both options would require extensive renovation of the existing school while it remained occupied, resulting in a more complex construction process and greater disruption to school operations when compared to a newly constructed facility. Additionally, these options did not provide the same level of educational flexibility, operational efficiency, or long-term value, which were desired by the District.

"Option B-4" was not selected by the District because this option would still require substantial demolition and reconstruction, retaining about half of the existing school, while adding a large new addition. This option would also require the relocation of fields and play areas, resulting in a more complex site layout and less desirable traffic and bus circulation patterns.

The District presented its proposed Preferred Schematic to the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee ("FAS") on July 29, 2026. At that meeting, members of the FAS discussed the following items:

- 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;
- 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,
- Roofing design consideration as it relates to architectural features as well as the location of mechanical equipment and photovoltaic panels.

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 recommends that the Town of Northborough be approved to proceed into Schematic Design to replace 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.