

Report of School Building Committee for Wellesley Middle School - UPDATE

2010 Annual Town Meeting

A Report of the School Building Committee for Wellesley Middle School is provided in the Advisory Committee Reports to Town Meeting and begins on page 86. Since the Report went to print, the School Building Committee ("SBC") has continued evaluating options to address the increased enrollment and space needs at the Wellesley Middle School ("WMS"), specifically the increased utilization of existing spaces and schedule optimization. The following is an update to the Report.

The Educational Program at WMS is driven primarily by 1) the class size guidelines of 22 students and 2) the delivery model (houses and clusters, see pages 87-88 of the Advisory Report). The School Committee reaffirmed its commitment to the WMS Educational Program on March 23, 2010. This program is based on educational research and practice and the historical success with this model in Wellesley.

Evaluating the Options

To evaluate the options for increasing available spaces at WMS through increased utilization of classrooms and scheduling optimization, the Wellesley Public Schools ("WPS") Administration engaged Mr. Frank Locker, of *Frank Locker, Inc.*, an educational planning consulting firm.

Several options were analyzed and the results were presented at a joint SBC/School Committee meeting. Each option considered sharing teaching spaces among some educators and moving teachers around the building to available spaces to better increase the utilization of the classrooms:

1. Sharing language spaces within the language department so that those teachers would not have a dedicated classroom;
2. Dispersing the language teachers throughout the building to spaces available during the day.
3. Dispersing language teachers throughout the building and displacing 7th grade academic labs;
4. Sharing of 8th grade classrooms by department and reassigning language classes to available spaces;
5. Language and 8th grade core classes dispersed to available spaces and the addition of part-time teachers;
6. Overall rescheduling change, which would shift away from the current model to an "open enrollment" model similar to the high school;

The evaluation of options focused on the following:

- Utilization impact (how many spaces would be gained by a change)
- Impact on the delivery of the Educational Program, including the delivery model and class size
- Impact on students and staff (disruption and displacement)

Findings

Options 1 and 3 through 6 were determined to not be viable as they would result in significant degradation of the delivery model and/or produced scheduling conflicts that did not allow students to take the full complement of courses.

While Option 2 does provide a possible net gain of four classroom spaces, there is negative impact on staff and students because it requires teachers to move to a different classroom each period. The transition time between classes (4 minutes) will not permit interaction between teacher and student as the teacher needs to move quickly from one space to another; teacher set-up time and clean-up time will infringe on instructional time; and given the distances to travel, teachers will likely arrive late to class. However, despite these negative impacts, the Committee has included this option to accommodate increasing space

needs in the final years of the anticipated enrollment increase. Implementation in the final years would avoid cumulative negative impact over a sustained period of time and would diminish the number of students impacted overall.

Project Plan and Timing

The findings of this evaluation provide the information needed to complete the Project Plan for increasing capacity at WMS. The SBC recommends the following Project Plan:

- Modular construction (6 classrooms + 2 science labs), completed by Sept 2011
- Internal conversion (METCO office) and some utilization improvements in Option 2 above (2 classrooms), completed by Sept 2012
- Internal conversions (Fitness Center and Practice Rooms) and remainder of utilization improvements in Option 2 above (2 classrooms), implemented in Sept 2013

The timing of each step was reviewed based on impact to Educational Program and overall cost. The SBC has concluded that *starting* with modular construction is more prudent than *delaying* construction:

<i>Starting with Modular Construction</i>	<i>Delaying Modular Construction</i>
Costs less per square foot gained compared with internal conversions	Costs more (<i>due to Science Lab conversion</i>)
Educational Program remains intact for longer	Greater risk of not meeting need (<i>lead time issues</i>)
Less disruption as construction occurs outside current facility	More internal conversion disruption, starting earlier, lasting longer
Provides greater flexibility to adjust schedule and shifts in enrollment	Opportunity for more study, but no new information
Construction costs at an all-time low	Escalation costs and potential increases in construction costs over time

Recommendation

The recommendation of the SBC is to begin the design and permitting process for modular construction of classrooms immediately with the objective of being available for occupation in September 2011. This recommendation was approved by the SBC in a vote 7-0, with two not in attendance. One of the absent members has stated disagreement with the recommendation and has provided comments to the Advisory Committee. The other absent member supports the recommendation.

Article 20 of the 2010 Annual Town Meeting provides the transfer of funds from the Wellesley Public School Department to the Permanent Building Committee for the design and permitting. A final design, project cost and comprehensive project plan will be presented for approval at a Special Town Meeting in the fall 2010.

Submitted by School Building Committee, Wellesley Middle School

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 Chris Ketchen (Deputy Director of Town)
 Bella Wong (Superintendent, Wellesley Public Schools)
 Josh Frank (Principal, Wellesley Middle School)
 KC Kato (School Committee)
 John Moran (Director, Facilities Maintenance)
 Rob Shupe (Permanent Building Committee)
 Jack Haley (Advisory Committee)
 Geoff Witheford (citizen with construction background)
 April 9, 2010