

District: Groton-Dunstable Regional School District
 School Name: Florence Roche Elementary School
 Recommended Category: Preferred Schematic
 Date: June 17, 2020

Recommendation

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District (the “District”), as part of its Invitation to Feasibility Study, to proceed into Schematic Design to replace the existing Florence Roche Elementary School with a new facility serving grades K-4 on the existing site. MSBA staff has reviewed the Feasibility Study and accepts the District’s Preferred Schematic.

District Information	
District Name	Groton-Dunstable Regional School District
Elementary School(s)	Boutwell Early Childhood Center (PK) Florence Roche Elementary School (K-4) Swallow Union Elementary School (K-4)
Middle School(s)	Groton-Dunstable Regional Middle School (5-8)
High School(s)	Groton-Dunstable Regional High School (9-12)
Priority School Name	Florence Roche Elementary School
Type of School	Elementary School
Grades Served	K-4
Year Opened	1951
Existing Square Footage	69,468
Additions	1988 – addition 1996-2001 – addition of modular classrooms
Acreage of Site	11.8 acres
Building Issues	The District identified deficiencies in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mechanical systems – Electrical systems – Plumbing systems – Building 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.
Original Design Capacity	Unknown
2019-2020 Enrollment	528
Agreed Upon Enrollment	645
Enrollment Specifics	The District and MSBA have mutually agreed upon a design enrollment of 645 students serving grades K-4.
Total Project Budget – Debt Exclusion Anticipated	Yes

MSBA Board Votes	
Invitation to Eligibility Period	December 13, 2017
Invitation to Feasibility Study	December 12, 2018
Preferred Schematic Authorization	On June 24, 2020 Board agenda
Project Scope & Budget Authorization	District is targeting Board authorization in February 2021
Feasibility Study Reimbursement Rate (Incentive points are not applicable)	48.27%

Consultants	
Owner's Project Manager (the "OPM")	Leftfield, LLC
Designer	Studio G. Architects, Inc.

Discussion

The existing Florence Roche Elementary School is a 69,468 square foot facility located on a 11.8-acre site that is shared with three other facilities: Groton-Dunstable Regional Middle School (Middle School North and Middle School South), and the Peter Twomey Youth Center. The school currently serves students in grades K-4. The original school building was constructed in 1951, with an addition in 1988, and seven (7) modular classrooms added in stages from 1996 through 2001.

The District's Statement of Interest ("SOI") identifies numerous deficiencies in the existing facility associated with outdated mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems; building envelope; accessibility issues; and inappropriate existing spaces for delivering the District's educational program.

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 six (6) preliminary options that include: one (1) code upgrade option, one (1) addition/renovation option, and four (4) new construction options. The following is a detailed list of the preliminary options considered.

Option	Description of Preliminary Options
1	Code upgrade option at the existing Florence Roche Elementary School.
2	Addition/renovation option at the existing Florence Roche Elementary School.
3	New construction option behind the existing Florence Roche Elementary School (Site A)
4	New construction option behind the existing Middle School South (Site B)
5	New construction option behind the existing Middle School North (Site C)
6	New construction option at the Groton-Dunstable Regional High School campus.

As a result of this analysis, the District determined that "Option 1" was not considered a viable option because it does not meet the needs of the District's educational program and would result in significant disruption to ongoing education during construction.

Although “Option 5” would meet the needs of the District’s educational program, the District determined it would not be considered for further evaluation because of the site limitations (wetlands and substantial grade changes) that resulted in an undesirable 3-story school, and limited space for future elementary school expansion. This option also reduces opportunities for future expansion of the Middle School North and Middle School South facilities.

Although “Option 6” would meet the needs of the District’s educational program, the District determined it would not be considered for further evaluation because existing wetlands limit the buildable area and the site lacks adequate existing utility capacity which results in additional costs.

Upon further review, MSBA staff and the District agreed to explore the following four (4) options for further development and consideration in the final evaluation and development of preliminary design pricing as presented below, including: one (1) code upgrade option, one (1) addition/renovation option, and two (2) new construction options. Please note the District does not consider “Option 1” a viable option, however, this option has been included for cost comparison purposes. Please note that “Option 3.2F” evolved from “Option 3”.

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 1: (Code upgrade)	69,468	62,468 \$337/sq. ft.	7,000 \$506/sq. ft.	\$2,724,240	\$27,345,253 \$394/sq. ft.	\$41,268,972
Option 2: (Addition/Renovation)	116,140	55,990 \$424/sq. ft.	60,150 \$463/sq. ft.	\$7,382,136	\$58,974,273 \$508/sq. ft.	\$80,364,123
***Option 3.2F: (New Construction)	111,720	N/A	111,720 \$468/sq. ft.	\$8,681,719	\$60,984,827 \$546/sq. ft.	\$77,005,924
Option 4: (New Construction)	111,656	N/A	111,656 \$481/sq. ft.	\$10,078,746	\$63,805,298 \$571/sq. ft.	\$80,426,450

* Marked up construction costs

** Does not include construction contingency

*****District’s Preferred Schematic**

The District has selected "Option 3.2F" as the Preferred Schematic to proceed into Schematic Design. The District selected “Option 3.2F” as its preferred option because it meets the needs of the District’s educational program, the proposed pick-up/drop-off locations reduce traffic, the proposed adjacencies of the gymnasium/stage/cafeteria and the separation of the public and private areas of the proposed concept are highly desirable.

“Option 2” was not selected because it is more costly and requires temporary modular classrooms for swing space. In addition, some programmatic deficiencies would still exist and this option would result in significant disruption to ongoing education during construction.

“Option 4” was not selected because it is more costly, included the three academic wings which increased the building envelope area, and failed to provide the adjacencies desired by the District. Additionally, the building would be set too far into the site creating substantial distance from the proposed parking and vehicular entrance and resulting in an undesirable combined driveway for cars and buses.

The District presented its proposed Preferred Schematic to the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee (“FAS”) on May 20, 2020. At that meeting, members of the FAS discussed the following items: appreciation of the educational program; distribution of the Special Education spaces, and further exploration of Special Education adjacencies; consideration of proposed staffing and time allotment for the innovation lab spaces; the maintenance and use of project areas; further alignment of the Proposed Project and educational program; orientation of the building; consideration of number and location of access points to outdoor learning spaces; importance of alignment between the landscape and the educational program; appreciation of outdoor STEM spaces; development of outdoor learning spaces; and further development of corridors and project areas.

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 Schematic Design submittal 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 Groton-Dunstable Regional School District be approved to proceed into Schematic Design to replace the existing Florence Roche Elementary School with a new facility serving grades K-4 on the existing site.