

**TO:** Boston School Committee  
**FROM:** Delavern Stanislaus, Chief of Capital Planning  
**CC:** Mary Skipper, Superintendent  
Sam Depina, Deputy Superintendent of Operations  
Rebecca Grainger, Senior Advisor to the Mayor on Youth and Schools  
**DATE:** April 26, 2023  
**RE:** School Merger Proposals: Philbrick and Sumner

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## Philbrick and Sumner

### School Communities Overview

#### John D. Philbrick School

The John D. Philbrick is located at 40 Philbrick Street in Roslindale, and serves students in grades K0-6. The Philbrick is a single-strand school, with one classroom in each grade. All classrooms are general education classrooms, with the exception of one inclusion K0-K1 classroom. In SY23-24, there will be a total of 8 classrooms. In October 2022, total enrollment was 114 students.

The size of the Philbrick results in physical space constraints that make it challenging for specialists – such as the school psychologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, and speech pathologist – to have designated space to provide pull-out services. The small cafetorium serves as the cafeteria, auditorium, and gym. The Philbrick does not have a designated library space but has created a traveling cart system to serve students starting in SY23-24. Lack of an elevator greatly limits accessibility and therefore the students the Philbrick can serve. Limited additional spaces result in converting closets or sharing tight spaces as offices.

Philbrick Elementary (4561)  
 SY2324 Configuration Map  
 (8 Classrooms)

GEN/INC:8

Grade	6	GEN 25			
	5	GEN 23			
	4	GEN 23			
	3	GEN 23			
	2	GEN 22			
	1	GEN 22			
	K2	GEN 22			
	K1	INCL GEN: 9 INCL: 6			
	K0	INCL GEN: 9 INCL: 6			
	TOT	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #0070C0; color: white;">GEN</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="font-size: small;">7 Classes 160 GEN cap</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #D95319; color: white;">INCL</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="font-size: small;">1 Class 9 GEN cap 6 INCL cap</td> </tr> </table>	GEN	7 Classes 160 GEN cap	INCL
GEN					
7 Classes 160 GEN cap					
INCL					
1 Class 9 GEN cap 6 INCL cap					

**KEY**

GEN = general education classroom

INCL = inclusion classroom

### Charles Sumner School

The Sumner currently serves students in grades K1-6. In the 2023-2024 school year, the Sumner will have one inclusion strand, two general education strands, one Spanish Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) strand from K1-4, and one substantially-separate strand for students with learning disabilities from grades 2-6.

SY22-23 is the first year that the Sumner has expanded to include a 6th grade, aligning with the preK-6 pathway that BPS is working to expand across the District. However, because of limited space in the Sumner building at 15 Basile Street, the Sumner has begun using space in the old Irving Middle School building at 105 Cummins Highway for 5th and 6th grade. Across the two buildings, there are a total of 34 classrooms, with a current enrollment of 538 students.

**Sumner Elementary (4560)  
SY2324 Configuration Map  
(34 Classrooms)**

Grade	GEN/INC:23		ELL:6	SUBSEP:5	
	INCL	GEN	GEN		LD
6	INCL GEN: 15 INCL: 05	GEN 25	GEN 25		LD 12
5	INCL GEN: 15 INCL: 05	GEN 23	GEN 23		LD 12
4	INCL GEN: 15 INCL: 05	GEN 23	GEN 23	BLS 20	LD 12
3	INCL GEN: 15 INCL: 05	GEN 23	GEN 23	BLS 20	LD 8
2	INCL GEN: 15 INCL: 05	GEN 22	GEN 22	BLS 22	LD 8
1	INCL GEN: 15 INCL: 05	GEN 22	GEN 22	BLS 22	
K2	INCL GEN: 15 INCL: 05	GEN 22	GEN 22	BLS 22	
K1		GEN 20	GEN 20	BLS 20	
TOT	GEN 16 Classrooms 360 GEN cap	INCL 7 Classrooms 105 GEN cap 635 INCL cap	BLS 6 Classrooms 126 BLS cap	LD 5 Classrooms 52 LD cap	

**KEY**

INCL = inclusion classroom

GEN = general education classroom

BLS = Spanish-language Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) classroom

LD = substantially separate classroom for students with learning disabilities

While the Sumner is one of the larger elementary schools in BPS, it has outgrown its original building. Space constraints and limitations in the original design have required the Sumner to convert multiple spaces throughout the school from their original use. A larger classroom space located in the basement now serves as the school's gym. The cafeteria, also in the basement, has been built out to serve students, as there was no cafeteria in the original design. These reconfigurations have involved tough choices: what once served as a library is now repurposed as a music room, leaving the school without a designated library space. The Sumner does not have dedicated specialist spaces to be able to offer a full range of programming, including academic interventionists and specialized services like occupational and physical therapy. As the Sumner has expanded, it has found creative solutions to space constraints. For example, one former storage space now serves both as book storage and the copy room.

**The Proposal**

We are proposing to combine the Philbrick and Sumner into a one school community beginning in SY25-26. We anticipate that renovations to the Irving building will be complete by the Summer of 2025, allowing the Philbrick and Sumner to become a unified school community in the new facility.

The configuration map below assumes that combining the two schools will allow for the consolidation of general education classrooms, leading to seven fewer general education classrooms. If this merger proposal is approved by the School Committee, the Philbrick and Sumner will form a joint Inclusion Planning Team in the Fall of 2023 to develop a plan and timeline for educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive setting. The Inclusion Planning Team will identify whether the school’s pathway to inclusion creates additional opportunities to consolidate classrooms by bringing students with disabilities into inclusion classrooms.

**Philbrick Sumner Configuration Map for SY24**

Classroom Count = 35; Total Capacity = 710

6	INCL 20	Gen Ed 28	Gen Ed 28		LD 12
5	INCL 20	Gen Ed 25	Gen Ed 25		LD 12
4	INCL 20	Gen Ed 25	Gen Ed 25	BLS 20	LD 8
3	INCL 20	Gen Ed 25	Gen Ed 25	BLS 20	LD 8
2	INCL 20	Gen Ed 22	Gen Ed 22	BLS 20	LD 8
1	INCL 20	Gen Ed 22	Gen Ed 22	BLS 20	
K2	INCL 20	Gen Ed 22	Gen Ed 22	BLS 20	
K1	INCL 20	Gen Ed 22	Gen Ed 22	BLS 20	
K0					

**KEY**

INCL = inclusion classroom

Gen Ed = general education classroom

BLS = Spanish SEI classroom

LD = substantially-separate classroom for students with learning disabilities

How are the school communities left better served after the merger?

**Physical Space:** This merger will allow the Philbrick and Sumner to move into the renovated Irving building, benefiting from thoughtful, intentional elementary school design and contemporary climate and sustainability standards. It will also make the current Philbrick and Sumner buildings available for other public and community uses. Across the District, the lack of available swing space has been a major challenge that has impeded new school construction or major renovation projects. In partnership with City departments, BPS will work with the community to determine the best use of the current Philbrick and Sumner buildings to serve Boston’s young people and families.

**Enrollment and Budgets:** Merging the Philbrick and Sumner will create fuller classrooms, leading to more stable funding for the new school community. In the current school year, there are 226 open seats across both schools – more than one-third of total enrollment.

	Philbrick			Sumner		
	Capacity	Enrollment*	Open Seats	Capacity	Enrollment*	Open Seats
<b>SY2021</b>	156	112	44	614	496	118
<b>SY2122</b>	156	101	55	614	482	132
<b>SY2223**</b>	184	113	71	698	543	155

\*Based on December Enrollment

\*\*Both the Philbrick and the Sumner added Grade 6 in SY2223

Since FY22, BPS has spent \$1,623,521 in soft landing or hold harmless funds at the Sumner, and \$1,439,002 at the Philbrick, mitigating the impact of steadily declining enrollment and instability during the pandemic. Combining schools and consolidating classrooms will allow resources to be redirected from empty seats in classrooms, towards the investments that make a difference for children, aligned with BPS’ core priorities.

Determining the budget of a combined Philbrick-Sumner School will depend on the programmatic and staffing decisions made throughout the planning process during SY23-24 and into SY24-25, in preparation to move into the renovated Irving building – a \$90 million capital project. As BPS continues the Reimagining School Funding process and prepares for the full implementation of a multi-year \$50 million investment in inclusion, merging the Philbrick and Sumner will create a stable, foundational budget that is focused on the District’s core instructional and programmatic priorities in SY25-26 and beyond.

**Staffing:** Reducing the number of classrooms in a combined school will help ensure that all students are taught by teachers who have the appropriate licensure to teach particular students and classes. Consolidating classrooms will also address the persistent teacher vacancies that have affected the District overall.

**Programming:** This merger would combine a small, single-strand, general education-only school with a larger, more inclusive school with more diverse programming. A combined Philbrick-Sumner School would serve students in grades K0-6, with multiple classrooms at each grade and multiple academic program strands, including an inclusion program, a Spanish SEI program, and a substantially separate program for students with learning disabilities. With multiple classrooms in each grade level, the combined Philbrick-Sumner School would create opportunities for increased collaboration, shared planning and support among educators – foundational to a strong Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), which requires structures for effective collaboration. Multiple classrooms at each

grade level also increases flexibility in scheduling and placing students in learning environments to best serve their needs.

New and expanded programming will also be facilitated through the renovated facility. For example, the combined Philbrick-Sumner School community will have dedicated space for specialists, a library, a full-size gymnasium, and pull-out services, all designed to support the school’s program.

Demographic analysis of a merged school

*Any category with 10 or fewer students is suppressed for public sharing.*

Table 1 shows that the Philbrick has a higher proportion of Black students (41%) and lower proportion of Latinx students (33%) than the District’s overall K-5 average (28% and 43%, respectively). Conversely, the Sumner has a lower proportion of Black students (15%) and higher proportion of Latinx students (56%). A combined Philbrick-Sumner School community is projected to have a student body that is 20% Black, 54% Latinx, 22% white, and 4% of other race(s).

**Table 1. Racial and ethnic identities of merged school community.**

	PHILBRICK		SUMNER		COMBINED PHILBRICK-SUMNER		K - 5		BPS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Asian							1742	7%	4101	8%
Black	47	41%	83	15%	130	20%	6617	28%	14328	29%
Latinx	38	33%	306	56%	344	54%	9978	43%	21436	44%
White	16	14%	122	22%	138	22%	4054	17%	7051	14%
Other			25	5%	25	4%	1036	4%	1861	4%

Table 2 shows the population of multilingual learners at both schools. A relatively small proportion (21%) of Philbrick students are identified as English Learners or former English Learners, compared to 46% at the Sumner and 45% of all K-5 students District-wide. A combined Philbrick-Sumner School would have proportions of ELD1-3 students (30%), ELD4-5 students (7%), former ELs (6%), and non-ELs (57%) that are more comparable to District-wide averages for K-5 students (30%, 10%, 5%, and 55%, respectively).

**Table 2. Multilingual learner population at a merged school community.**

	PHILBRICK		SUMNER		COMBINED PHILBRICK-SUMNER		K - 5		BPS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Current EL - ELD 1-3	12	11%	181	33%	193	30%	7075	30%	11200	23%
Current EL - ELD 4-5			45	8%	45	7%	2310	10%	4252	9%
Former EL	11	10%	29	5%	40	6%	1237	5%	6608	14%
Non-EL	82	72%	290	53%	372	57%	12805	55%	26717	55%

Tables 3 and 4 show the projected population of special education students at a merged school community. Currently, the Philbrick is essentially general education-only, while only 70% of Sumner students are considered general education students (compared to 71% District-wide for K-5 students). The Sumner has a significant proportion of students in the SEI program (19%) and a smaller number of students in the inclusion program (4%) and substantially separate program (6%). Based on current programming, a combined Philbrick-Sumner School is projected to have about 13% of its students with IEPs, compared to 17% of all K-5 students. With careful planning and strong support systems in place, combining these two schools will lay the groundwork to expand inclusive education settings for more students. - building on the inclusion program currently at the Sumner, and benefiting from the many assets of the Philbrick, including strong family engagement and participation, to effectively educate more children in the least restrictive setting.

**Table 3. Projected program assignments of a merged school community.**

	PHILBRICK		SUMNER		COMBINED PHILBRICK-SUMNER		K - 5		BPS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
General Ed	109	96%	384	70%	493	75%	16609	71%	35394	73%
SEI			103	19%	103	16%	2273	10%	4562	9%
SLIFE									378	1%
Dual Language									2049	4%
Inclusion			23	4%	23	4%	1633	7%	2705	6%

Sub Separate			35	6%	35	5%	1462	6%	3689	8%
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**Table 4. Special education assignments in a merged school community.**

	PHILBRICK		SUMNER		COMBINED PHILBRICK-SUMNER		K - 5		BPS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No IEP	103	90%	461	85%	564	87%	19410	83%	39237	80%
Resource			26	5%	26	4%	933	4%	3171	7%
Inclusion			23	4%	23	4%	1605	7%	2659	5%
Sub Separate			35	6%	35	5%	1479	6%	3710	8%

Irving Building Renovation

### The Process

BPS initially proposed this merger in May 2022. During the summer and fall of 2022, BPS Central Office staff engaged in collaborative planning with the Philbrick and Sumner school leaders and the regional School Superintendent, Elena Luna, along with representatives of both schools. Initial meetings focused on enrollment trends, demographics of both schools, the use of the Racial Equity Planning Tool, broader community engagement, and budget planning.

Soon after Superintendent Skipper began her tenure, she proposed to shift the timeline for implementation of the merger to factor in the planned renovation of the former Irving Middle School building. In November 2022, BPS hosted a meeting with all Roslindale elementary schools to share a neighborhood-wide enrollment and facility analysis. This analysis suggested that a combined Philbrick-Sumner School would be a good candidate for the renovated Irving building. BPS proposed two options to the school communities:

1. The Philbrick and Sumner could merge as early as SY23-24, with students spread across two campuses. In this scenario, Sumner 5th and 6th graders would have to leave the Irving building to facilitate accelerated construction. Students would then move into a renovated building when construction was complete, potentially as early as SY24-25.
2. The Philbrick and Sumner could merge in SY25-26, after the renovations to the Irving building are complete. In this scenario, Sumner 5th and 6th graders could continue learning in the Irving building throughout the duration of construction.

This would prolong the construction timeline and increase the overall construction budget, and would allow students to move into the renovated building in SY25-26.

Based on feedback from families and educators, we adjusted our proposal to delay the implementation of the merger until the start of SY25-26, so that the two communities could come together in one shared space in the Irving building. This longer timeline also allows for more time for collaborative planning with families from each school community.

Design Team

In January 2023, the BPS Office of Capital Planning reconvened a collaborative Shaw-Taylor School Design Team to guide planning efforts and community engagement. Members from each school community include:

<b>Philbrick representatives</b>	<b>Sumner representatives</b>
Danladi Bobbit, school leader	Meghan Welch, school leader
Renal Jean, family liaison	Patricia Cartwright, 3rd grade teacher
Ramona Brown, 5th grade teacher	Erin Hull, 2nd grade teacher
Jazmen Spivey, parent	Belkys Brady, 3rd and 4th grade parent
Anna Jacobs, parent	Jasmin Torrenjon Chu, 2nd grade parent
Andre Fuller, parent	Lauren Peter, 3rd grade parent
Dennis Wright, 4th grade teacher	Amanda Lukens, 4th grade teacher
Juyla Mclean, parent	Tangela Brinson, K-2 teacher
Wilson Burton, parent	
Frances Ahearn, 3rd grade teacher	
Katie Daly	

In addition to the school community members listed above, the Design Team has included regular participation from:

- Masika Gadson, Office of Capital Planning
- Rebecca Grainger, Senior Advisor to the Mayor for Youth and Schools
- Donere Williams Johnson, Capital Planning Department
- Elena Luna, regional School Superintendent
- Jisca Phillippe, Mayor’s Office

- Velecia Saunders, Office of Opportunity Gaps
- Delavern Stanislaus, Chief of Capital Planning for BPS

Community engagement began in May 2022, but has been both broader and deeper in recent months. School-based meetings and Design Team meetings include:

- May 26, 2022 - Sumner Community Meeting
- May 26, 2022 - Philbrick Community Meeting
- January 26, 2023 - Planning meeting with school leaders, School Superintendent, and Central Office and Mayor's office staff
- February 7, 2023 - Design Team Meeting
- February 13, 2023 - Design Team meeting (REPT training)
- February 27, 2023 - Design Team meeting
- March 6, 2023 - Design Team meeting
- March 13, 2023 - Design Team meeting
- March 15, 2023 - Design Team walk-through of Irving building
- March 20, 2023 - Design Team meeting
- March 27, 2023 - Design Team meeting
- April 3, 2023 - Design Team meeting
- April 4, 2023 - Philbrick-Sumner Community Meeting
- April 10, 2023 - Design Team meeting
- April 24, 2023 - Design Team meeting