

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: Shaw and Taylor

Shaw and Taylor	2
School Communities Overview	2
Pauline A Shaw Elementary	2
Charles H Taylor School	3
The Proposal	4
How are the school communities left better served after the merger?	5
Demographic analysis of a merged school	8
MSBA Statements of Interest	10
The Process	10
Design Team	11

Shaw and Taylor

School Communities Overview

Pauline A Shaw Elementary

The Shaw is located at 429 Norfolk St and currently serves students in grades K0 through 4. In SY23-24, the Shaw plans to eliminate one second grade classroom in order to create one fifth grade classroom, allowing current fourth grade students to continue learning in the building. For SY23-24, the Shaw will have a total of 12 classrooms: one substantially separate K0/K1 early childhood classroom; two classrooms each in grades K1, K2, 1, and 3; and one classroom in grades 2, 4 and 5. Other than the early childhood classrooms, all other classrooms are general education only. In SY22-23, the Shaw's enrollment is 187 students. On average, classrooms are currently under-enrolled: from 2018 to 2022, the Shaw's total enrollment declined by 40%. This has allowed the Shaw to open a 4th grade classroom in SY22-23 and will allow the Shaw to open the 5th grade classroom in SY23-24.

P.A. Shaw Elementary (4670)
SY2324 Configuration Map
(12 Classrooms)

GEN/INC:11		SUBSEP:1	
Grade	5	GEN 23 ¹	
	4	GEN 23	
	3	GEN 23	GEN 23
	2	GEN 22	
	1	GEN 22	GEN 22
	K2	GEN 22	GEN 22
	K1	GEN 20	GEN 20
	K0		ECH 9
TOT		GEN 11 Classes 242 GEN cap	ECH 1 Class 9 ECH cap

KEY

GEN = general education classroom

ECH = substantially-separate early childhood classroom

Despite these enrollment trends, the Shaw continues to experience physical space constraints that make it challenging for the school to adopt the full range of programming that BPS expects for all its elementary schools. For example, several basement areas have been converted to be used as a gym, staff workspace, and offices for the social worker and related services. The Shaw lacks central gathering spaces such as an auditorium or full-service library and media center, as well as spaces to facilitate educator collaboration and family engagement. For example, while there is one room on the first floor currently used by the school's family liaison, this liaison will be displaced next year to accommodate the addition of Catie's Closet. There is a small staff workspace in the basement, but it is small, underutilized, and not equipped to foster effective teacher collaboration. The Shaw also does not have space to create dedicated areas for occupational therapy or physical therapy, nor does it have a sensory room to support inclusion for students with sensory issues. There is also limited space for pull-out services for students; for example, ESL instructors often use the hallways and the copy room to work with students individually. Because the Shaw is using every available space, it would be unable to expand to serve a preK-6 student body without artificially capping enrollment, eliminating classrooms and becoming a fully single-strand school.

Charles H Taylor School

Located at 1060 Morton Street, the Taylor serves students in grades K0 through 6. In SY23-24, the Taylor will have a total of 27 classrooms: one strand (K0 through 6) of inclusion classrooms, one strand (K2-6) of general education classrooms, one strand (K1-6) of Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) classrooms for students who are Haitian Creole speakers, one strand (3-6) for multilingual students in the Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) program, and two substantially separate classrooms (K2-2 and 4-6) for students with intellectual impairments. In SY22-23, the Taylor has a total enrollment of 358 students. Like the Shaw, the Taylor's total enrollment has seen a persistent decline, falling by 43% since 2018. The Taylor nevertheless faces physical space constraints that make it challenging to maintain appropriate space for pull-out services, specialists, educator collaboration, and family engagement and partnerships.

The Taylor is overall larger than the Shaw, but it is not large enough to effectively maintain this diverse programming with all the auxiliary spaces it requires. Several basement spaces have been converted to provide a fuller range of programming and services to its students. For example, to fit the entire Haitian Creole SEI strand, the Taylor has converted a small basement space to serve as a 3rd grade SEI classroom. Basement spaces have also been converted to be used for special education services, including the speech pathologist, occupational therapist, and physical therapist; math enrichment programming; physical education instruction; and as a library. These spaces are generally too small and not equipped to serve their full purpose; for example, the gymnasium cannot offer a full range of physical education opportunities, such as organized team sports, particularly for the older elementary students. The Taylor also lacks central gathering spaces, such as an auditorium, full gymnasium, or full-service library and media center, as well as flexible spaces like meeting rooms to facilitate external partnerships and deeper family engagement.

**Taylor Elementary (4151)
SY2324 Configuration Map
(27 Classrooms)**

GEN/INC:15		ELL:10		SUBSEP:2	
Grade	INCL	GEN	BIM	BLH	II
6	INCL GEN: 15 INCL: 05	GEN 25	BIM BIM: 10 BIM: 05	BLH 20	
5	INCL GEN: 15 INCL: 05	GEN 23		BLH 20	II 12
4	INCL GEN: 15 INCL: 05	GEN 23	BIM BIM: 10 BIM: 05	BLH 20	
3	INCL GEN: 15 INCL: 05	GEN 23		BLH 20	
2	INCL GEN: 15 INCL: 05	GEN 22		BLH 20	
1	INCL GEN: 15 INCL: 05	GEN 22		BLH 20	II 12
K2	INCL GEN: 15 INCL: 05	GEN 22		BLH 22	
K1				BLH-GE BLH: 12 GEN: 08	
K0	INCL GEN: 9 INCL: 6				
TOT	INCL 8 Classrooms 114 GEN cap 64 INCL cap	GEN 7 Classrooms 165 GEN cap	BLH 7 Classrooms 142 BLH cap	BIM 5 Classrooms 50 BIM cap 10 GEN cap	BLH-GE 2 Classrooms 12 BLH cap 80 GEN cap

KEY

INCL = inclusion classroom

GEN = general education classroom

BIM = multilingual SLIFE classroom

BLH = Haitian Creole SEI classroom

II = substantially-separate classroom for students with intellectual impairments

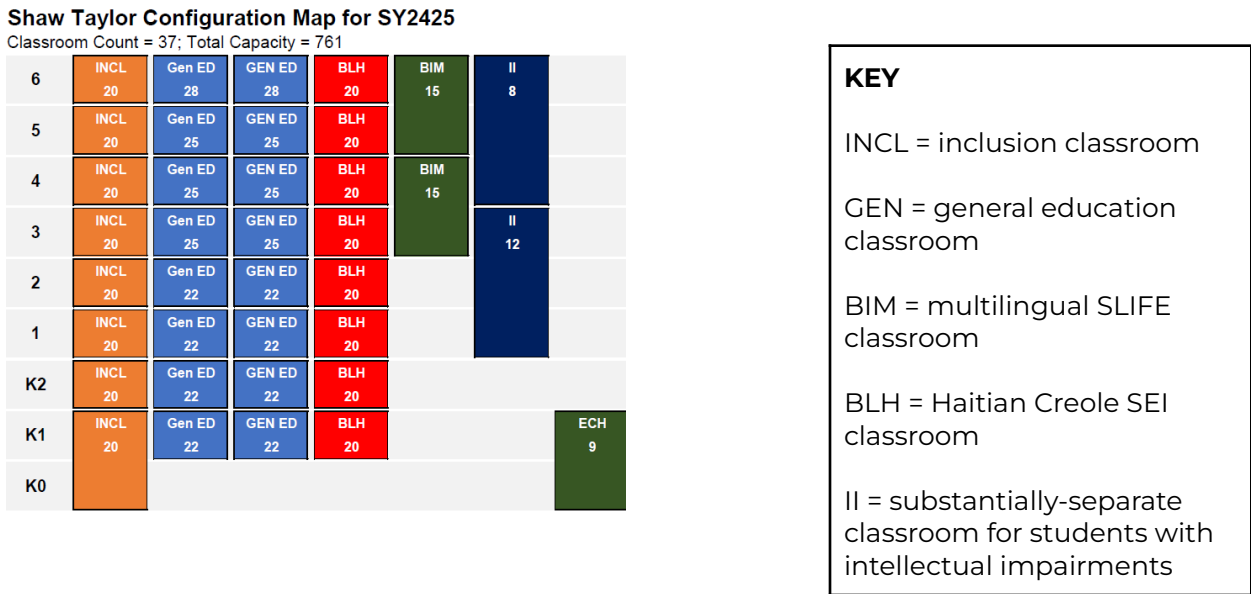
The Proposal

We are proposing to combine the Shaw and the Taylor into a single, two-campus school community that serves grades K0-6, beginning in SY24-25. The Shaw building would serve lower grade students, while the Taylor building would serve upper grade students. This configuration would allow the school to focus resources specifically for younger learners in the Shaw building, benefiting from the BPS Department of Early Childhood's curricula, professional development, and coaching.

The exact grade configuration in each building will depend on the combined school's plan for implementing inclusion. If this merger proposal is approved by the School Committee, the Shaw and Taylor will form a joint Inclusion Planning Team in the Summer of 2023 to develop a plan and timeline for educating all students in the least restrictive setting. By finalizing planned programming, this plan will indicate the most appropriate groupings of grades and programs in each of the two buildings.

The configuration map below assumes that combining the two schools will allow for the consolidation of general education classrooms, leading to two fewer classrooms across the

two campuses. The Inclusion Planning Team will help identify whether there are opportunities to further consolidate classrooms, leading to fuller classrooms as well as additional physical space in each building that can be used for enrichment or support services.



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

This merger is one step toward creating a District that is more inclusive, stable, and sustainable, but it also benefit the current Shaw and Taylor communities:

Physical Space: This merger would consolidate some general education classrooms, leading to at least two fewer classes across both buildings. The school communities will have the opportunity to decide how to best use this newly-available space – for example, as a resource room for individualized or small group instruction, or a “cool down” room for students to decompress before returning to the classroom.

The proposed FY24-28 Capital Plan – currently under consideration by the Boston City Council – includes \$11.8 million to upgrade BPS facilities across the District to facilitate grade reconfigurations. Over the course of SY23-24, we will work with the Shaw and Taylor communities to identify facilities improvements that are both impactful and practical for SY24-25. Based on community conversations so far, we believe possible capital projects may include:

- Upgrades to the physical education space (covering the exposed pipe, painting, etc.) and improvements to the staff collaboration space in the Shaw Building

- New furniture in the library, improvements to the outdoor recreation space, and improvements to the staff collaboration space in the Taylor Building

Enrollment and Budgets: Merging the Shaw and Taylor Schools will create fuller classrooms in both buildings, leading to more stable funding. In the current school year, there are 192 open seats across both schools – more than one-third of total combined enrollment.

	P.A Shaw			Taylor		
	Capacity	Enrollment*	Open Seats	Capacity	Enrollment*	Open Seats
SY2021	235	163	72	499	331	168
SY2122	235	157	78	499	323	176
SY2223***	215**	187	28	539	375	164

*December Enrollment

**True SY2223 capacity at the Shaw is 260, but we are capping grades 1 and 4 so they can expand to grade 5 next year.

*** Taylor added grade 6 in SY2223 . P.A Shaw added grade 4 in SY2223 and will expand to grade 5 in SY2324

Since FY22, BPS has spent \$733,477 in soft landing or hold harmless funds at the Shaw, and \$1,882,275 at the Taylor, mitigating the impact of steadily declining enrollment. Hold harmless funding has enabled the Shaw and Taylor to preserve services and supports for students without looking critically at the number of classrooms or overall school capacity. Combining schools and consolidating classrooms will allow resources to be redirected from empty seats in classrooms towards the investments that make a difference for students, aligned with BPS' core priorities, including inclusive educational practice, multilingual and multicultural education, equitable literacy, social work, restorative justice, and mental health, and family and community engagement.

Determining the budget of a combined Shaw-Taylor School will depend on the programmatic and staffing decisions made throughout the planning process during SY23-24. At a minimum, reducing the number of general education classrooms by two will lead to roughly \$310,000 in savings. We have committed to the Shaw and Taylor that these funds will be preserved in order to be reinvested in the two communities.

BPS is in the midst of an overall shift in how we manage our budget for long-term sustainability and student impact. As we begin to implement a multi-year \$50 million investment in inclusion in SY23-24, merging the Shaw and Taylor Schools will create a stable, foundational budget that is focused on the District's core instructional and programmatic priorities in SY24-25 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.

The combined school will continue to have one nurse in each building, and school psychologist and social worker allocations will continue to be based on student needs. BPS policy is to provide one family liaison per school, but we have committed to maintaining two family liaisons for the combined school community at least through the end of SY24-25.

Programming: This merger would combine a small, essentially single-strand, general education-only school with a larger, more inclusive school with more diverse programming. A combined Shaw-Taylor School would serve students in grades K0-6, with multiple classrooms at each grade and multiple academic program strands. This creates increased opportunities for teacher 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.

If this merger proposal is approved, school leaders and BTU members at the Shaw and Taylor will form a joint School-Based Inclusion Planning Team in the summer of 2023 to develop a transition plan to thoughtfully expand inclusion at a combined Shaw-Taylor School.

Newly available physical space in each building and additional financial resources will also facilitate new or expanded programming. Currently, the Shaw and Taylor facilities present challenges to offering a full range of enrichment programming. The District's education plan calls for elementary schools with art, music, science labs, maker space to support hands-on and STEM or STEAM programs, world language classrooms, a library or media center, etc. The combined school community will help determine how to leverage newly available space and financial resources to expand academic and enrichment programming.

Demographic analysis of a merged school

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

Along several domains, the combined school community will be more reflective of BPS than the schools individually are now. Table 1 shows that the Shaw and the Taylor both have a higher proportion of Black students (60% and 75%, respectively) than the District's overall K-5 population (28%). The Taylor has a lower-than average proportion of Latinx students

(19%), and the Shaw has a higher proportion of Latinx students (60%) than the District's K-5 average (43%). A combined Shaw-Taylor School is projected to have a student body that is 73% Black, 25% Latinx, and 2% of other race(s).

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

	TAYLOR		P.A. SHAW		COMBINED TAYLOR- SHAW		K - 5		BPS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Asian							1742	7%	4101	8%
Black	274	75%	112	60%	386	73%	6617	28%	14328	29%
Latinx	70	19%	62	33%	132	25%	9978	43%	21436	44%
White							4054	17%	7051	14%
Other			10	5%	10	2%	1036	4%	1861	4%

Table 2 shows the population of multilingual learners at both schools. About half of the Taylor's current student body is identified as an English Learner (ELD 1-5), due in large part to the strong Haitian Creole SEI program. This is compared to 31% at the Shaw and the District average for K-5 students of 30%. A combined Shaw-Taylor School would have proportions of ELD 1-3 students, ELD 4-5 students, former ELs, and non-ELs that is more similar to the District-wide average for K-5 students.

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

	TAYLOR		P.A. SHAW		COMBINED TAYLOR- SHAW		K - 5		BPS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Current EL - ELD 1-3	149	41%	45	24%	194	35%	7075	30%	11200	23%
Current EL - ELD 4-5	32	9%	13	7%	45	8%	2310	10%	4252	9%
Former EL	20	6%			20	4%	1237	5%	6608	14%
Non-EL	162	45%	127	68%	289	53%	12805	55%	26717	55%

Tables 3 and 4 show the projected population of special education students at a merged school community. Currently, the Shaw is essentially general education-only, while only

61% of Taylor students are considered general education students (compared to 71% District-wide for K-5 students). The Taylor has a significant proportion of students in the SEI program (18%), SLIFE program (9%), and inclusion program (8%). Based on current programming, a combined Shaw-Taylor School is projected to have about 11% 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 Taylor, and benefiting from the many assets of the Shaw, 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.

	TAYLOR		P.A. SHAW		COMBINED TAYLOR- SHAW		K - 5		BPS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
General Ed	221	61%	178	95%	399	74%	16609	71%	35394	73%
SEI	66	18%			66	12%	2273	10%	4562	9%
SLIFE	33	9%			33	6%			378	1%
Dual Language									2049	4%
Inclusion	28	8%			28	5%	1633	7%	2705	6%
Sub Separate	15	4%			15	3%	1462	6%	3689	8%

Table 4. Special education assignments in a merged school community.

	TAYLOR		P.A. SHAW		COMBINED TAYLOR- SHAW		K - 5		BPS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No IEP	304	84%	173	92%	477	89%	19410	83%	39237	80%
Resource	16	4%			16	3%	933	4%	3171	7%
Inclusion	28	8%			28	5%	1605	7%	2659	5%
Sub Separate	15	4%			15	3%	1479	6%	3710	8%

MSBA Statements of Interest

On April 14, with the approval of the Boston School Committee and the Boston City Council, the BPS Office of Capital Planning submitted two Statements of Interest (SOIs) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for the 2023 Core Program. The MSBA is a state agency that offers competitive grants to municipalities to support school construction and renovation projects. The MSBA's Core Program addresses extensive repairs, renovations, addition/renovations, and new school construction. If BPS is invited into the program, we would begin the process of designing and constructing a new facility for the combined Shaw-Taylor School.

We expect to hear back from the MSBA about whether we are invited into the MSBA Core eligibility period by the end of 2023. During this 9-month eligibility period, BPS would complete certain prerequisite items to prepare to take on this major project. Upon completion of the eligibility period in the fall of 2024, the MSBA would then invite BPS into the feasibility study phase. BPS would work with the MSBA to procure architects in late 2024 or early 2025, and design would begin in the winter or spring of 2025. Design would likely take two years, with construction beginning in 2027. A completed school facility would likely open in 2029 or 2030.

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 Shaw and Taylor school leaders and the regional School Superintendent, Efraín Toledano, along with representatives of both schools. Initial planning meetings focused on enrollment trends, demographics of both schools, the use of the Racial Equity Planning Tool, broader community engagement, and budget planning. When Superintendent Skipper began her tenure, she decided to delay the proposed merger for another year, until the start of SY24-25, to allow for more time for collaborative planning with families from each school community.

Design Team

In March 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:

Shaw representatives	Taylor representatives
Tinu Arowosegbe, school leader	Jennifer Marks, school leader

Rina Ambrose, school nurse	Chi Nguyen, assistant school leader
Sabine Ferdinand, 2nd grade teacher	Diandrea Modea-Davis, family liaison
Matthew Connor, K2 teacher	Kimberley Crawford, K2 teacher
Brenda Ramsey, 2nd grade parent	Marie Wade, K2 SEI teacher
Deb Shea, 3rd grade parent	Munique Sutton, 2nd and 3rd grade parent
Nece Davis, K2 parent	Waakila Dixon, 3rd and 6th grade parent
Anais Rodriguez, K1 parent and substitute teacher	Diona Wooten Robinson, K2, 1st, and 3rd grade parent
Morgan Keohane, school librarian	Marie Roseline Auguste, 5th grade parent
	Tmam Brown, K2 parent
	Jean Marie Wagnac, 4th grade parent
	Marie Zephyr, 5th grade parent

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

- Masika Gadson, Capital Planning Department
- Rebecca Grainger, Senior Advisor to the Mayor for Youth and Schools
- Donere Williams Johnson, Capital Planning Department
- Jisca Phillippe, Mayor's Office
- Velecia Saunders, Office of Opportunity Gaps
- Delavern Stanislaus, Chief of Capital Planning
- Efraín Toledano, regional School Superintendent

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 17, 2022 - Shaw Community Meeting
- May 17, 2022 - Taylor Community Meeting
- November 7, 2022 - Shaw School Site Council meeting
- November 30, 2022 - Shaw-Taylor Community Meeting
- February 2, 2023 - Planning meeting with school leaders, School Superintendent, and Central Office and Mayor's office staff
- February 13, 2023 - Planning meeting with school leaders, School Superintendent, and Central Office and Mayor's office staff
- February 16, 2023 - Taylor School community meeting

- March 2, 2023 - Design Team meeting
- March 9, 2023 - Design Team meeting (REPT training)
- March 16, 2023 - Design Team meeting
- March 23, 2023 - Design Team meeting
- March 30, 2023 - Design Team meeting
- April 4, 2023 - Shaw-Taylor Community Meeting
- April 6, 2023 - Design Team meeting
- April 13, 2023 - Design Team meeting
- April 25, 2023 - Design Team meeting