



## Hamilton - Wenham Elementary School Project

### Community Forum #6

May 22, 2025

**JCJ** ARCHITECTURE



**PMA Consultants**

# AGENDA

**Project Overview**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Questions & Answers**

# AERIAL VIEW LOOKING SOUTHEAST



Schematic Design is an evolutionary process and will change throughout to ensure that the final design aligns with the Educational Plan and project goals

**Hamilton-Wenham Elementary School Project**  
**Community Forum #6 5/22/25**



HAMILTON-WENHAM  
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT




JCJ ARCHITECTURE

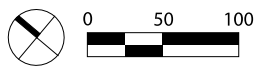


PMA Consultants

# SITE PLAN

1. Entry Plaza
2. Terrace Learning
3. Parking (242 Spaces)
4. Transformer Generator
5. Soccer Fields (105' x 65', U8)
6. Wall Ball
7. Half Court
8. Outdoor Play (Older Students)
9. Softball Field
10. Outdoor Learning
11. Outdoor Dining
12. Outdoor Play (Younger Students)
13. Gates

-  Pedestrian Circulation
-  Bus Circulation
-  Car Circulation

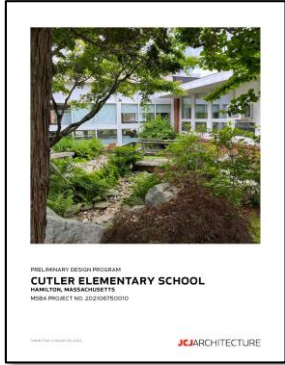


“This project is a nice balance of small neighborhood scale, sharing resources and school cultures.”

MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee



# How did we get here? Did the process consider renovations?



- **2014 Strategic Plan: school consolidation recommended**
- **2018 The district repeatedly applied for MSBA funding**
- **2022 Cutler School was accepted into the MSBA Core Program**
- **2023 A comprehensive Educational Plan was created by community members, teachers, parents, staff, and students to address current and future student needs**

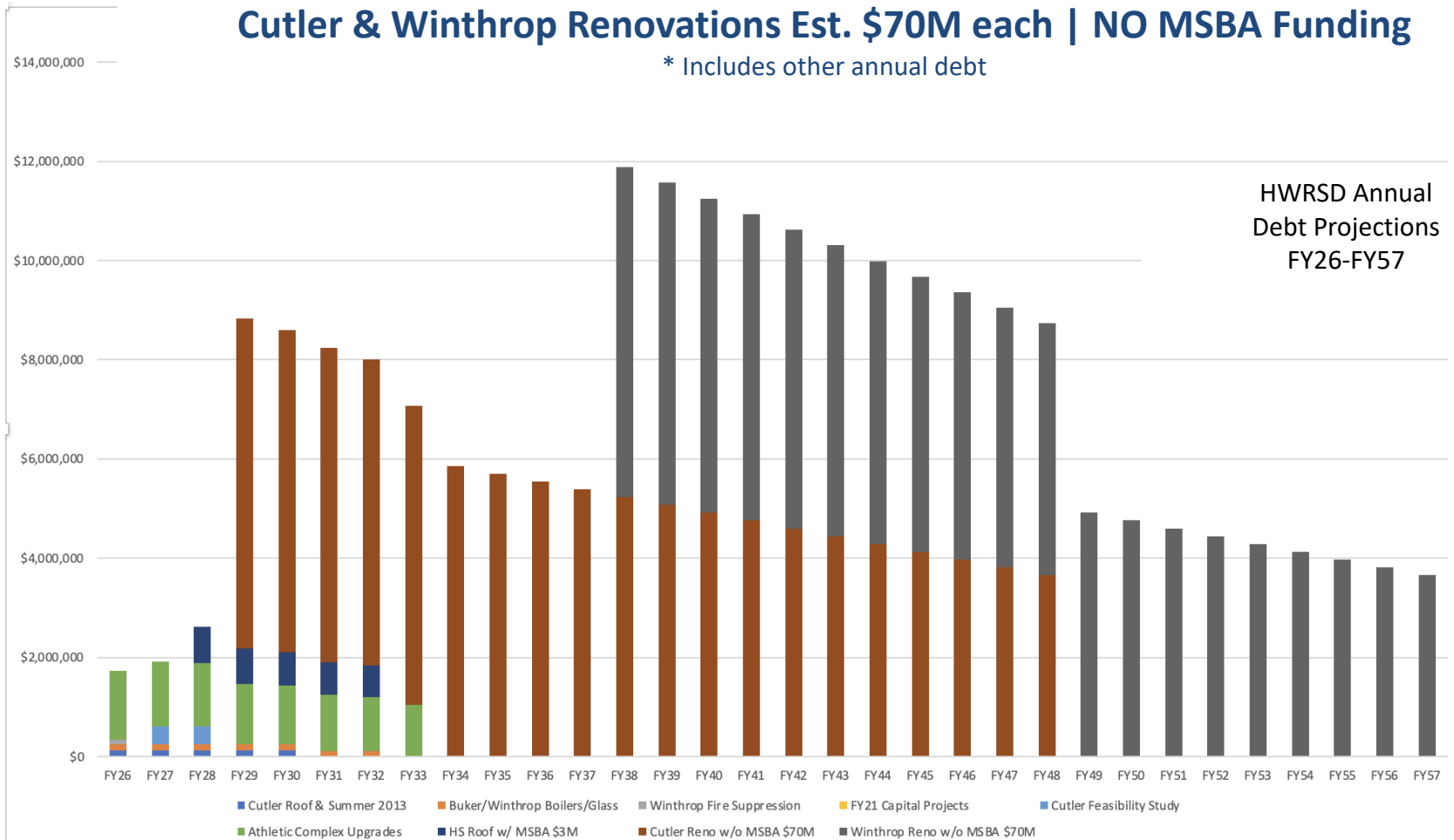
## The School Building Committee explored:

- **3 design categories: renovation, addition/renovation, and new construction**
- **24 potential sites across Hamilton and Wenham**
- **14 total design options**

Source: [www.hwschools.net/about/hw-elementary-project](http://www.hwschools.net/about/hw-elementary-project)

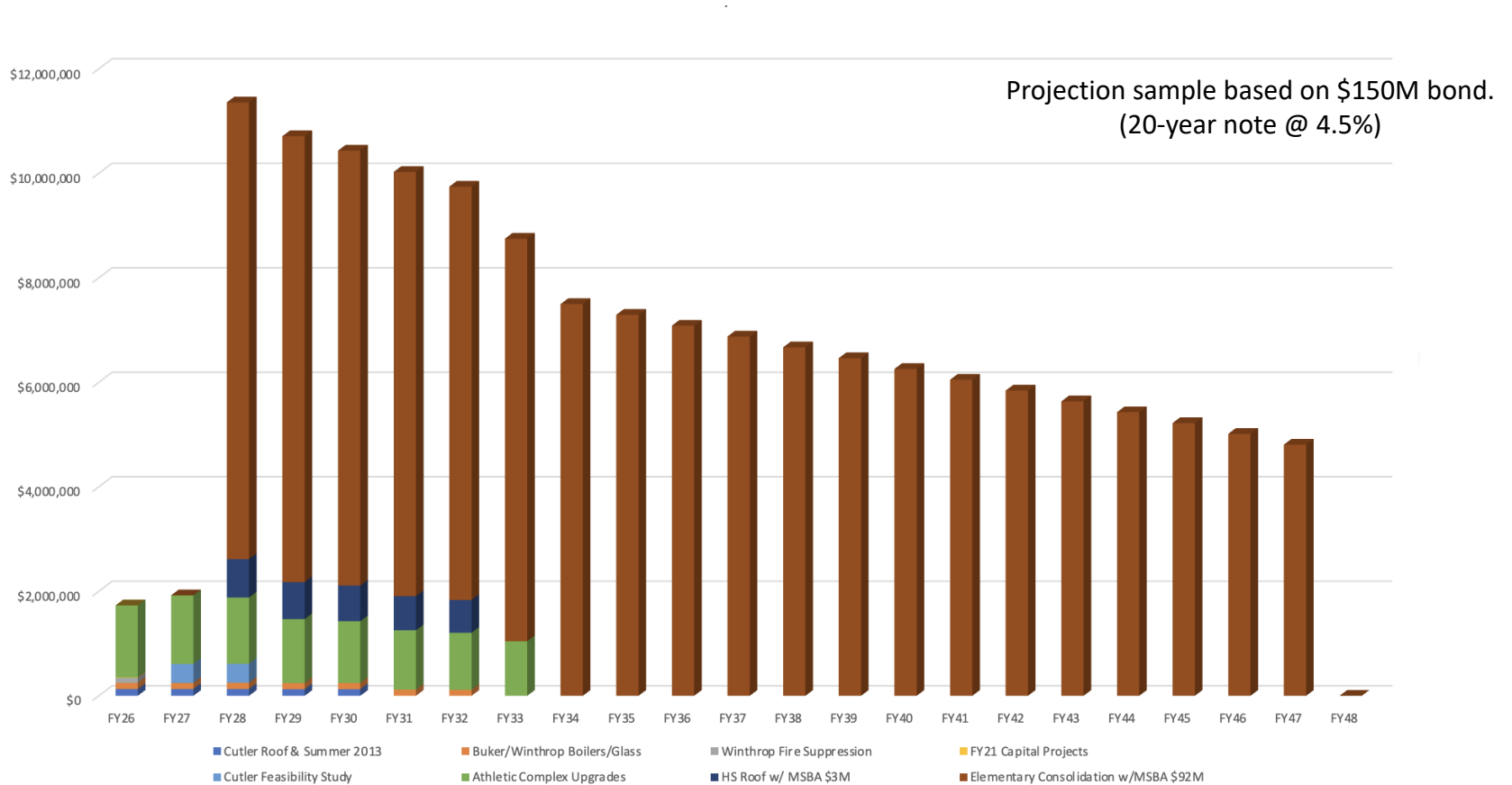
# Cutler & Winthrop Renovations Est. \$70M each | NO MSBA Funding

\* Includes other annual debt



# Consolidated School Grades 1-5 | MSBA Funding FY26-FY47

\* Includes other annual debt



## **Which is cheaper: renovating two schools or building one consolidated school? Is there any viable plan that will cost taxpayers less?**

- At PSR, the estimated total project cost for base repairs to Cutler ES and Winthrop ES were \$48.6M and \$49.0M, respectively, for a combined total of \$97.6M with a probable MSBA reimbursement \$0 due to not meeting the Educational Program requirements for a District share of \$97.6M.**
- At Schematic Design, the estimated cost for the Preferred Solution, Option C3.4 was \$142.3M with a probable MSBA reimbursement of \$49.8M for a District share of \$92.5M.**

Source: *HWES Building Committee Meeting April 18, 2024*

# **If we vote No on the new consolidated school, can we change the scope of work and use MSBA funding to renovate instead?**

- **No. A "no" vote ends the current MSBA project. Any future plan, including renovation, would require starting the MSBA application process from scratch.**
- **The cost escalation over those years would be considerable. Ipswich is a good example; their original cost in 2018 was approximately 70 million for an elementary school of 775 students. Estimates for the same building in today's dollars will likely exceed 160 million.**

Source: [\*MSBA Failed Vote Policy Statement\*](#)

## **If the Welch School in Peabody was renovated with MSBA funding, why can't we?**

- **Welch School's existing layout and classroom sizes met the MSBA's educational space standards before they began their project.**
- **Cutler and Winthrop schools fall far short of these standards across nearly every area: classroom size, specialized spaces, support areas, and accessibility.**
- **Since 2019/20, construction costs have risen 3-5% annually. MSBA's cost estimates for elementary schools have doubled, from \$454 per sq. ft. (Peabody Welch School) to over \$900 per sq. ft. for projects starting in two years.**

Source: *HWES Building Committee Meeting April 22, 2024 and HWRSD School Committee Meeting April 25, 2024*

# Can we change the Educational Plan to make renovation of our existing schools possible with MSBA funding?

- **Downgrading the plan or changing it at this point would also forfeit the MSBA funding.**
- **Downgrading to force-fit existing buildings would also compromise educational quality and still require extensive and expensive upgrades that the MSBA may not support.**
- **Downgrading the Educational Plan does not address the space and program needs**

Source: *MSBA Module 3 Guidelines*

# Don't our three elementary schools serve the needs of all our students just fine as they are?

- Many learning spaces are too small or missing altogether—intervention rooms, breakout areas, and safe, modern environments are essential.
- Where students learn affects how they learn, and where teachers teach impacts retention.
- Schools built in the 1950s weren't designed for today's specialized programs like CASL, Intensive Learning Program, Therapeutic Learning Center, PT, OT, and Language-Based instruction. These programs now operate in inadequate spaces.

## **Why was the Winthrop School not considered? Was it because Hamilton wants to develop the property for 3A?**

- **No. The Town of Hamilton has clarified that the Winthrop property is not included in the proposed 3A zoning, as shown in a map published in *HW News* (Vol. 1, Issue 21) and on the town website.**
- **Winthrop School was not accepted into the MSBA program because the MSBA identified Cutler as having greater need. However, they did allow us to study a possible school consolidation, which included a complete evaluation of the Winthrop site.**
- **Winthrop School site has significant space limitations due to how the school sits on the property. There is not enough room to build a new school while keeping Winthrop open, leading to phased construction.**

Source: [HWES Building Committee Meeting January 22, 2024](#)

# Are there major drainage and wetland issues that will be impacted by building a new school on the Cutler property and have mitigation costs for septic and drainage been considered?



- The existing Cutler School site is outside the current wetland setbacks; the proposed project is outside current and proposed future wetland “no build setbacks”.
- The proposed project will provide stormwater management mitigation within the project scope of work.
- The Schematic Design & cost estimate includes costs for sanitary sewer (septic) and storm drainage.

Source: [www.hwschools.net/about/hw-elementary-project](http://www.hwschools.net/about/hw-elementary-project)

## **Isn't there enough space to move some elementary grades to the middle school and shift 8<sup>th</sup> grade to the high school?**

- **Middle School and High School do not have extra/empty classrooms. This would require major grade-level restructuring.**
- **Things to consider: overcrowding, developmental and social challenges, special education services, and facility limitations.**
- **The Middle and High Schools weren't designed to accommodate additional younger grades and would require renovations and staffing changes, without solving the core issue of aging, inadequate elementary buildings.**

Source: *MSBA Study Enrollment Certification Letter date November 1, 2022*

# QUESTION & ANSWER

Project Website



Please visit for all updates  
and content posting!

Documents & Reports section  
of the Project Website



Please visit for further information!



Thank You!