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Office of Capital Planning

To: Boston School Committee
From: Del Stanislaus, Chief of Capital Planning
CC: Mary Skipper, Superintendent
Date: November 19, 2025
Subject: Recommendations for School Closures, Mergers, and Grade Reconfigurations

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At the School Committee meeting on November 19, 2025, the Boston Public Schools (BPS) Capital Planning team, in close collaboration with key Central Office departments, will present an update on the implementation of the Long-Term Facilities Plan (LTFP). This presentation will build upon the recommendations approved by the School Committee last year, providing a comprehensive overview of implementation progress and the corresponding student impacts observed to date.

The update will also include the Superintendent's new recommendations for school closures, mergers, and announcements on grade reconfigurations through Cycle 3 of LTFP implementation. These recommendations will be shared directly with school communities on November 17, 2025, and will be brought forward for a School Committee vote in December.

Boston Public Schools' current physical footprint does not yet fully align with our collective vision for a high-quality, equitable, and sustainable educational experience. The plan and recommendations that will be presented on November 19th will represent a critical step toward continuing to transform our facilities portfolio to better support that vision ensuring that every student learns in a modern, safe, and inspiring environment that reflects the values and aspirations of our city.

Long-Term Facilities Plan Recommendations: Cycle 3, Winter 2026
The recommendations from the Superintendent are as follows, and would be effective as of June 30, 2027:

- Close Lee Academy Pilot School
- Close Another Course to College (ACC)
- Close Community Academy of Sciences and Health (CASH)
    - Scope the Cleveland building as a potential future home for Boston International Newcomers Academy (BINcA), creating an opportunity for the school to relocate, expand, and add specialized programming including Special Education supports tailored for Multilingual Learners and Alternative Education pathways for ML students.
- Shift the Henderson K-12 Inclusion School into a PreK-8 School:
    - Reconfigure the Henderson Upper: Eliminate grades 9-12 and Transition Program (currently housing grades 2-12)
    - Merge Henderson Lower and Upper into one PreK-8 school community
    - Shift grade 1 into the Upper building to expand Pre-K capacity in the Lower building.

The following grade reconfigurations are also being announced, and would be effective **June 30, 2027 unless otherwise noted:**

- Reconfigure Tobin Elementary as a PreK-6, eliminating grades 7-8.
- Reconfigure William E. Russell School PreK-5 as a PreK-6 school, adding grade 6 at the start of school year 2026-27.

Supporting Students and Staff through Transitions
All students whose schools or grades are closing will be given priority in the assignment process for the 2027-2028 school year. Moreover, we have written Student and Families Transition Guides, as well as Staff Transition Guides that detail the coherent, central office-wide support that will be provided to our impacted schools.

The district aims to prevent occurrences where students are impacted by multiple closures throughout their educational career, but recognizes that in a district where students have choice there may be circumstances where students are impacted more than once by an unplanned transition. There are 49 students currently enrolled in the schools included in this year's Cycle 3 recommendation package who were previously impacted by a school closure, merger, or grade reconfiguration. Of these students, 8 were affected during Cycle 2 (January 2025), 18 were affected during Cycle 1 (May 2024), and the remaining 13 were impacted prior to Cycle 1. In total, 39 of these students are in grades that will be directly affected again by the proposed changes, while 10 are expected to naturally transition or graduate before any changes take effect. The district is committed to working closely with each of the 39 students and families through a personalized, 1:1 transition process.

For students with disabilities, the Office of Specialized Services (OSS) will work closely with families throughout the IEP process to ensure each student is matched with a strong school option and continues to receive all required services. All special education timelines will be upheld, IEP meetings will continue as scheduled, and teams will collaborate to support every transition. In addition, the district is actively evaluating potential locations and program designs to replace capacity and identify new school options for impacted students, ensuring continuity of high-quality services. For multilingual learners affected by these proposals, the Office of Multilingual and Multicultural Education (OMME) will provide individualized support to help families identify schools that best meet their language and learning needs.

Community Engagement
Our decision-making process is grounded in criteria that were co-developed with the BPS community, forming the foundation of the Long-Term Facilities Plan (LTFP) data framework, which continues to guide this work. This foundation is also documented in the School Design Study Equity Impact Statement (EIS), the School Design Study Racial Equity Planning Tool (REPT), the LTFP Cycle 1 EIS, the LTFP Cycle 2 REPT, and the LTFP Cycle 2 EIS for this process, all of which show how the district has built upon and evolved this work based on community engagement and feedback over time.

We are making decisions based on criteria that were shaped directly by our community. The measures for a High-Quality Student Experience were informed by feedback from more than 9,000 survey responses and 75 extended, small-group conversations in 21 public listening sessions and community focus groups with over 500 participants. That initial community engagement served as the foundation that led to the Long-Term Facilities Plan data framework, which continues to inform our decision-making process. To inform this cycle's recommendations, the district used the decision-making data framework, input from School Leaders, and input from the Internal Advisory Working Group consisting of representatives across various internal BPS departments.

In addition, the process and timeline for this cycle's recommendations were shaped by impacted community feedback from previous cycles. For example families asked that closure and reconfiguration decisions be announced and voted on before school choice season to reduce confusion and ensure transparency. In response, this year's announcement is being made before the Showcase of Schools, and the School Committee vote will occur before Choice Forms become available. This ensures families cannot rank schools slated for closure and can fully understand their school options.

Between the announcement of recommendations on November 19, 2025 and the vote by School Committee on December 17, 2025, the district will continue to engage with the communities, hear their concerns, and work with them on transition planning:

- The district has opened a public feedback survey to gather input and feedback regarding the recommendations.
- Each school community will have a virtual meeting and an in-person meeting before the vote where we will answer questions from the community and hear input regarding the district's recommendations and the transition plan for their community.
- Comments may be submitted via email to capitalplanning@bostonpublicschools.org or to the School Committee via public comment.
- Staff will receive a link to a Google Form where they may submit questions to the Central Office.

The School Committee will receive a memo on the outcomes and stakeholder analysis from the community engagement before the scheduled vote in December. We have made it a priority to work with school communities and provide support throughout the process. From the moment a school is announced our engagement strategy starts to be implemented. Each project is assigned a senior project manager who leads information sessions and serves as a bridge between the school, families, students and the district. Schools also receive support from Transition Coordinators that remain on site through the length of the proposed school transformation. These coordinators provide support for students, families, staff, teachers, and school leadership. The community is engaged and regularly updated throughout the process.

Budget Implications

We are estimating that this set of proposals will lead to one-time cost savings of about $15-$20 million. The exact cost implications will be determined as transition plans are finalized. For example, if a highly specialized program is impacted by a school closure, that program may be relocated to another school to ensure continuity of programming for students, which would mitigate any cost savings. We are committed to ensuring that all students are supported through this process and that cost savings are intentionally and responsibly reinvested in our students' education.

Grade Reconfigurations

Grade reconfigurations are designed to provide fewer transitions and more seamless pathways for our families and students. Students who are enrolled in schools that do not meet the district's primary grade configurations tend to have fewer classrooms per grade and more half-filled classes due to students transferring out at different points to attend other schools, or perhaps not choosing the school because of the additional transition points. Grade reconfigurations provide more sections per grade, particularly for middle schoolers, resulting in more desirable programming, teacher collaboration time, and the structure to support a full continuum of services. These reconfigurations also help to align our district to the 2019 Boston School Committee Policy regarding a shift to primarily a K-6/7-12 and K-8/9-12 district. Because grade reconfigurations align to the policy, they do not require a School Committee vote.

The grade reconfigurations announced by the Superintendent are as follows and will be effective on June 30, 2027 unless otherwise noted:

- Reconfigure Henderson Upper School to be grades 1-8 (eliminating grades 9-12 and the Transition Program) and shifting grade 1 from the Henderson Lower into the Henderson Upper building (currently housing grades 2-12).Shift the Henderson K-12 Inclusion School into a PreK-8 School:
    - Reconfigure the Henderson Upper: Eliminate grades 9-12 and Transition Program (currently housing grades 2-12)
    - Merge Henderson Lower and Upper into one PreK-8 school community
    - Shift grade 1 into the Upper building to expand Pre-K capacity in the Lower building.
- Reconfigure Tobin Elementary as a PreK-6, eliminating grades 7-8.
- Reconfigure William E. Russell as a PreK-6, adding grade 6 starting fall 2026-2027.

Pursuing Our Vision for Students

The work of the Long-Term Facilities Plan is guided by a vision to create a well-rounded BPS ecosystem that provides high-quality learning environments for every student close to home and strong teaching environments for every educator.

To achieve this vision, we must take a comprehensive approach to tackle the challenges facing our district. This includes actions such as school closures, mergers, and reconfigurations, as well as constructing new buildings, renovating existing ones, and improving academic programming.

While some of these proposals will be difficult in the short-term for families, educators, and students, we are confident that they are a critical next step in achieving our collective vision.

We look forward to sharing more detail about the recommendations and having the opportunity to answer your questions on November 19, 2025.