

MSAD 75 Facilities Master Plan Decision Roadmap

Introduction: Why

The MSAD 75 Facilities Master Plan is a crucial, data-driven initiative undertaken to address the immediate and long-term capital needs of our district's aging school facilities. **It is the responsible thing for the district to do for our communities; intentionally preparing for the future and proactively looking at the condition of our buildings is essential.** We have taken great care of our buildings, and this planning process acknowledges that neglecting infrastructure needs is not an option.

Sparked by a Facilities & Site Condition Assessment that identified an estimated \$67.5 million to \$81 million in total necessary repairs over the next decade, the plan's core purpose is to strategically resolve these infrastructure challenges. Furthermore, a Program Needs Analysis highlighted significant programmatic deficits across many buildings, particularly concerning accessibility (ADA), appropriate size program spaces, specialist spaces (e.g., SPED, OT, PT), and dedicated collaboration areas. By thoroughly addressing both the physical and functional needs of our sites, this Master Plan ensures MSAD 75 moves toward providing a safe, equitable, and modern learning environment for all students today and well into the future.

Where We Are Now

The Maine School Administrative District 75 Board and Administration, in partnership with [Harriman Architects & Engineers](#), has completed the initial, crucial data-gathering and community input phase for the Long Range Facilities Master Plan. This multi-year process is focused on addressing the immediate, 10-year, and long-term capital needs of our aging school facilities to ensure a safe, equitable, and modern learning environment for all students.

What We Have Done:

1. **Facilities & Site Condition Assessment:** Harriman conducted a thorough audit of all district buildings, identifying critical needs (0-3 years) and long-term capital improvement needs (3-10 years), confirming that an estimated **\$67.5M to \$81M** in total repairs are needed across the district over the next decade.
2. **Program Needs Analysis:** We identified programmatic deficiencies in many of our buildings focusing on Accessibility (ADA)

requirements, specialist spaces (e.g., SPED, OT, PT), and dedicated collaboration areas along with improper size classrooms for newer programs such as kindergarten and Pre K.

3. **Community Engagement:** We have hosted **three public forums** to present the data and to gather vital feedback on priorities. This process generated **12 preliminary draft options** (B1 through F3) [Slidedeck Presentation](#) which include multiple variations of renovations, consolidations, and or new construction options. Included with those options are a Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) cost estimates. *The public feedback poll and a link for additional questions were kept open following the second forum and will remain open following the November 17th meeting.* [Submit Questions](#)

Communication Channels:

To ensure maximum transparency and reach all stakeholders across our four towns (Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Harpswell, and Topsham), information regarding the Facilities Master Plan has been distributed through multiple channels: the district website, Parent Square, and Facebook. Press releases were issued to local news media and papers. Crucially, specific information and updates were directly communicated to Town Managers, Recreation Directors, and Town Administrative Assistants to facilitate local discussion and awareness.

Current Status:

We have not yet chosen a final option, multiple options are generated to help guide conversations. The passionate feedback from our community, especially concerning the consolidation options, confirms the need for a more structured and data-driven approach when collecting and presenting our findings... This roadmap outlines the next steps to narrow the options and prepare for a final decision.

All Master Plan Data and Documents:

You can review all presentations, assessments, and draft options on the Facilities Department page:

<https://www.link75.org/departments/facilities-grounds>

Goal: *To achieve community consensus on desired options (Renovation, Consolidation, or New Construction) that balances educational needs, facility integrity, and taxpayer burden , while remaining **in compliance with Maine State Law.*** [Closing of a School](#), [Consolidation of a School & Major Renovation Guidelines](#)

Estimated Decision-Making Timeline (Phases I, II, III, & IV)

This timeline provides a projected schedule for the entire decision-making and implementation process, assuming timely completion of reports and studies. **The project was started in March 2025.** This timeline provides a projected schedule for the entire decision-making and implementation process, assuming timely completion of reports and studies.

Based on the estimated completion of all phases, this entire project is projected to be a minimum of a 5-year process.

Phase/Step	Goal/Action	Owner	Milestone/Decision
Phase I - Estimated completion 12 - 18 Months	Exploration & Data (Study)	Harriman/Adm/FC	School Board Authorizes Master Plan Study
1a. Review Collection of Data	Share data with facilities Committee	Harriman/Adm/FC	Multiple Facilities Meetings to review preliminary results
1b. . Community Forums	Public receives information	Harriman/Adm/FC	Informational public forums via in-person and Zoom
1c. Concept/Feasibility	Schematic options; cost-estimates; site analysis	Supt/FC/Architect	Community straw poll / concept meeting
Phase II- Estimated completion 6-12 Months.	Targeted Town Consultations	Admin/FC/ Harriman	Small-group discussions held in all towns to review specific impact data
2a. . Review Community Data	Formally Identify and Document Top Options	FC	Shortlist Memo of 3-4 viable options
2b. . Final Proposal Prep	Compile statutory reports, prepare recommendation package	FC	FC compiles all statutory reports and Shortlist Memo

Phase III - Estimated completion 3 to 6 months	Formal Proposal & Authorization	Admin/Legal/Consultants	<p>Prepare for approval process for school construction project by state board or commissioner as required by 20-A M.R.S. § 4102(1) and §15901 et seq.</p> <p>Non-state funded projects must be approved by the Commissioner pursuant to § 15905-A</p> <p>If closing a school building for lack of need, unless the building is replaced by other school buildings as part of a school construction project, a full analysis will be required by 20-A M.R.S. §4102(3), which may include a comprehensive cost analysis pursuant to 05-071 C.M.R. Ch. 26.</p>
Without replacement 3 a. Board Vote to File	Authorize filing with DOE and call for referendum	Board	Official political approval to move into statutory public phase
Phase IV - Estimated Completion 12 - 24 Months If a new build. 12 months of design, 24-30 months completion	Statutory Steps & Hearings	Board/Supt/DOE Liaison	DOE acceptance

4. A. Referendum(s) & Bond Vote	Warrant signed; municipal ballots; communications	Board/Town Clerks	Bond/closure referendum result – the vast majority of school construction projects must be approved by voters pursuant to 20-A M.R.S. § 15904, § 15905-A
4. B Design & Permitting	Detailed design; permitting; grant agreements	Architect / Facilities / BoD	Construction contract awarded
4. C. Construction	Construction, commissioning, procurement Final report to Commissioner	Contractor / Facilities FC/BoD	Substantial completion Pursuant to 20-A M.R.S. § 15902, upon completion of a school construction project or a permanent space lease-purchase project, Board must certify to the commissioner that the construction project has been completed in conformity with the approved plans and specifications.
4. D. Transition & Move-in	Staff/student assignment, transportation, opening plan	Adm / Principals / HR	New building opens; final closure of old buildings
4. E. Post-implementation Review	Student outcome monitoring; final asset disposition	BoD / Adm	One year review completed

Phase I: Data Collection and Analysis Summary

Phase I successfully completed the **foundational study and data collection** necessary for the Master Plan, establishing the factual basis for future concept development and Capital Improvement Planning (CIP)

Key Activities & Deliverables

- **Facilities Condition Assessment:** A comprehensive review resulting in an Existing **Condition Summary Matrix** documenting critical maintenance and 10-year needs across the district.
- **Program Needs Analysis:** Identified key deficiencies and program requirements, summarized by a list of **Missing Program Spaces** (e.g., related to ADA compliance and specialist areas).
- **Demographic Study:** Provided essential **enrollment projections**, including a critical finding of projected decline of K-5 enrollment.
- **Concept Generation:** The team developed **12 Draft Options (B1 through F3)**. Each option included a **Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) Cost Estimate**.
- **Community Input:** Three public **Community Forums** were held, highlighting key community priorities—specifically **Safety, Energy, and Cost**.

Phase II: Deep Dive and Community Consensus

The core objective of Phase II is to narrow the field of potential options and ensure that all community concerns—including **transportation, class size, community identity, tax burden, and unintended consequences**—are rigorously weighed against factual data. This phase is also crucial for initiating and explicitly collecting the reports required for eventual state approval and voter referendum.

Option Shortlisting

The Facilities Committee (FC) must analyze the quantitative poll results from Forum #3 to identify the **3 to 4 viable options** most favored by the community. The FC will formally select these options to represent the full spectrum of community preferences (e.g., Max Renovation, Moderate Consolidation, Max Consolidation).

Key Actions and Deliverables:

- Formal FC analysis and selection of the final 3-4 viable options.

- Deliverable: **Shortlist Memo** justifying the selection of the options for deep analysis.
- Ensure all necessary statutory reports for state approval are underway. This will include the approval of school construction project by state board or commissioner as required by 20-A M.R.S. § 4102(1) and §15901 et seq. ,or, if building deemed unnecessary or unprofitable to maintain and will be closed, initiate Focused Impact Studies to provide concrete, data-backed answers to community emotional concerns, including all reports required by **Maine law, 20-A M.R.S. § 4102(3), as applicable** (Transportation, Tax Impact, Property Disposition, Debt Schedules).

Legal Citation: 20-A M.R.S. § 4102, §1512, and §15901 et seq.

Statutory Compliance and Community Impact Reporting Guide

In seeking approval from the Commissioner of Education, pursuant to 20-A M.R.S. 15910, the Board must file an application, a copy of the debt retirement schedule, and a final report on the project, including any information required by the Commissioner. Non-state funded projects must also be approved by the Commissioner of Education pursuant to § 15905-A.

If a school building is deemed to be unnecessary or unprofitable to maintain by the Board, and the building is not being replaced as part of a school construction project, prior to closure of the building the Board must file comprehensive reports with the Commissioner of Education and must obtain voter approval. 20-A M.R.S. § 4102(3)-(4). The following chart details the components of the lack of need report required by § 4102(3).

Focus Area	Statutory Requirement	Example of Data Output
A. Transportation	20-A M.R.S. §4102(3)(D): Projection of additional transportation or other related services.	Maximum Elementary Bus Ride Time (in minutes) for the 3-4 shortlisted options.
B. Educational Equity	20-A M.R.S. §4102(3)(A & B): Projection of the number of students in the affected area over the next 5 school years, including a projection of the educational programs they will need and the manner	Projected Average Class Size and Program Space Utilization (e.g., dedicated Arts/SPED space) under the shortlisted options.

	in which continuation of educational programs for affected students will be provided.	
C. Timeline	20-A M.R.S. § 4102(3)(C): Effective date on which the closing will take place	Date of closing and transition to other facilities
C. Tax Burden Clarity	20-A M.R.S. §4102(3)(G): Financial impact of closing the school building.	Estimated Annual Tax Increase per \$100,000 of Assessed Value for each shortlisted option's total cost.
D. Property Use	20-A M.R.S. §4102(3)(F): Proposed disposition of the school building.	Legal Memo on the town's right of refusal (M.R.S. §4103) and potential financial return/loss for likely-to-close buildings.
E. Financial Commitments	20-A M.R.S. §4102(3)(E): Existence of any other outstanding financial commitments, including debt service, related to the school building along with a retirement schedule of payments to meet the commitments.	Debt Retirement Schedule for all current school-related debt for each likely-to-close school.
F. Rationale	20-A M.R.S. §4102(3)(H): Statement of reasons why the school building is being closed. Lack of Need Report Requirements	Statement of Need detailing facility condition, programmatic needs, and cost savings.

In addition to the lack of needs report, the school district may be required to file a Cost Analysis Report with the Commissioner of

Education. See 05-071 C.M.R. Ch. 26.

Phase III: Consensus, Final Recommendation, and Authorization

The objective of Phase III is to achieve final consensus by deeply engaging the most affected communities, culminating in the selection of a single, unified option.

Targeted Town-Specific Consultations

- **Action:** Schedule small, focused working sessions (20–30 people maximum) in Harpswell and Bowdoinham, presenting local impact data.
- **Format:** Small-group, round-table discussions led by a facilitator, shifting the tone to "**problem-solving.**"
- **Deliverable: Community Input Summary Report** noting which of the 3-4 shortlisted options has the highest acceptability in each affected town.

Final Recommendation and Vote

This step transitions the project from analysis to formal approval, preparing the plan for the public referendum.

1. **Final Facilities Improvement Committee (FC) Recommendation**
 - **Action:** The FC uses all gathered data to vote on and recommend **one single option** to the School Board, detailing how it addresses the core priorities (Safety, Program Needs, Cost, and Community Feedback).
 - **Deliverable: Official FC Recommendation Report.**
2. **School Board Review, Decision, and State Filing**
 - **Action:** The School Board reviews the recommendation, holds at least two public meetings, and takes a final, public vote. A **2/3 supermajority** vote may be required to close a school.
 - **Action (Statutory):** Approval of school construction projects by state board or commissioner will be required by 20-A M.R.S. § 4102(1) and §15901 et seq. If the plan involves the closure of a school building deemed unnecessary or unprofitable to maintain by the School Board and the building is not being replaced as part of a school construction project, before the building may be closed the School Board must assemble and file the complete **§4102(3) Report** with the Commissioner of Education and secure voter approval pursuant to § 4102(4).
 - **Deliverable: Official School Board Resolution** adopting a single, long-range facility plan option and the **Statutory Report Filing Confirmation.**

3. **Bond Development and Public Education (Referendum)**

- **Action (Statutory):** The final step requires a local referendum vote. The ballot article must specify the additional cost of keeping the school open if the consolidation is rejected.
- **Action:** The administration and board launch a comprehensive public education campaign, detailing the cost vs. benefit and the exact **tax impact** on residents.
- **Deliverable: Referendum Vote.** The community votes to approve or deny the necessary bond funding to implement the chosen facilities master plan option.

Legal Citations: Title 20-A M.R.S. §§ 1511-1512; § 4102, § 15901 et seq).

Phase IV: Statutory Compliance, Referendum, and Implementation

The objective of Phase IV is the full execution of the selected option, moving through the necessary legal, public, and construction milestones to the opening of the new facilities (Timeline: Approx. 18–60 Months).

Key Actions and Deliverables

- **Statutory Steps & Hearings (Months 18–24):** Publish the official impact statement, hold required public hearing(s), and respond to any RFIs from the DOE.
 - *Deliverable:* DOE acceptance/hearing process complete.
- **Referendum(s) & Bond Vote (Months 22–26):** Sign the Warrant, execute municipal ballots, and lead coordinated communications and Q&A.
 - *Deliverable:* Bond/closure referendum result.
- **Design & Permitting (Months 24–40):** Manage detailed design, permitting approvals, and formalize any applicable state grant agreements.
 - *Deliverable:* Construction contract awarded.
- **Construction & Transition (Months 36–60):** Manage construction, commissioning, and procurement. Execute the final transition and move-in plan, including staff, student, and transportation assignments.
 - *Deliverable:* New building opens; final closure of old buildings.
- **Post-implementation Review (Months 54–60):** Conduct a final review, including student outcome monitoring, community debriefing, and final asset disposition.
 - *Deliverable:* One-year review completed.
- **If a New Build** will be 12 months of design, 24-30 months completion

Publicly Funded Process

If the MSAD 75 Facilities Master Plan is funded **publicly** (at the local level) instead of through state funds, the project would still require a **local referendum vote** and would have to follow most of the same statutory requirements for studies and authorization, particularly concerning school closure or major renovation.

Here's a breakdown of what happens if the project is publicly (locally) funded:

Key Similarities (Mandatory Requirements)

Even without state funding, the district must comply with several Maine state laws and processes:

- **Voter Approval (Referendum/Bond Vote):** Any significant capital project, including a major renovation, consolidation, or new construction, would require a local **Referendum Vote** to approve the necessary bond funding. The ballot article must specify the cost, and for projects \$2 million or greater, voter approval is required in Maine.
- **Statutory Studies (20-A M.R.S. § 4102(3)):** The district must still compile statutory reports, which are necessary for the recommendation package and for formal filing, particularly if the plan involves the closure or consolidation of a school for lack of need without replacement by a newly constructed building. These required reports include analyses of:
 - **Transportation** (Maximum Elementary Bus Ride Time).
 - **Educational Equity** (Projected Average Class Size and Program Space Utilization).
 - **Tax Burden Clarity** (Estimated Annual Tax Increase per \$100,000 of Assessed Value).
 - **Property Use** (Legal Memo on the town's right of refusal and financial return/loss).
 - **Financial Commitments** (Debt Retirement Schedule for current debt).
 - **Rationale** (Statement of Need for closure/consolidation).
- **Authorization and Community Engagement:** The overall phases of **Deep Dive and Community Consensus** (Phase II) and **Formal Proposal & Authorization** (Phase III) remain essential to narrow options and achieve a community-supported decision. This includes:
 - The Facilities Committee (FC) selects a shortlist of viable options.
 - Targeted town-specific consultations.
 - A final vote and recommendation by the FC and the School Board.
 - A public education campaign detailing the cost vs. benefit and exact tax impact.

Key Difference (State Department Review)

The most significant change would be the process for state review:

- **DOE Acceptance/Hearing:** Regardless of funding source, the School Board must receive formal state approval pursuant to §4102(1) and § 15901 et seq., OR, if a building will be closed because it is deemed unnecessary or unprofitable to maintain, the School Board will need to file the complete §4102(3) Report with the Commissioner of Education. Voter approval may also be required pursuant to 20-A M.R.S. §§ 15904-15905 and/or § 1402(4). State statutes outline the process for obtaining approval of proposed public school construction projects **whether state-funded or not**, but the Department of Education's fiscal review and compliance often focuses on the disbursement of state funds and adherence to the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) funding model.

In summary, the project would still move through the long planning phases (I, II, and III) to reach a single, unified option, but the **source of funds** (local bond/taxpayers vs. state aid) may dictate the formal State Board/Commissioner review process.