

South Hadley Elementary School Building Project Community Meeting Recap December 11, 2025

The South Hadley Elementary School Building Committee hosted a Community Meeting on December 11, 2025 to share updates on the South Hadley Elementary School Project and hear questions from the community. The meeting included a tour of the existing Mosier Elementary School, followed by a presentation reviewing the project's partnership with the Massachusetts School Building Authority, the educational vision guiding the work, existing building conditions, and preliminary design options under consideration. Approximately 40 community members attended in person, with an additional 15 participating virtually via Zoom.

[Scan the QR code to access the project website!](#)



Community members are encouraged to visit the [project website](#) to view the meeting recording, review the presentation, and read the full FAQ.

Community Questions & Answers

Below is a summary of key questions raised at the meeting, along with responses from the project team.

Why is the district considering a larger elementary school (Grades 1–5) instead of smaller (2–4) or separate buildings?

The district is evaluating a Grades 1–5 configuration for the Mosier Elementary

School project in addition to the current Grades 2–4 model. Fifth grade is still considered developmentally elementary, and this configuration aligns with current educational practice in many districts. A Grades 1–5 elementary school can be designed with smaller, grade-level “neighborhoods” that support age-appropriate learning while allowing for shared resources. This approach can improve operational efficiency and support long-term cost effectiveness while maintaining a strong sense of community within the school.

How does the proposed design support smaller learning communities within a larger building?

The proposed designs organize students into grade-level “neighborhoods,” allowing students to remain grouped with peers of the same age. Each neighborhood functions as a smaller learning community within the larger school, while shared spaces such as the media center, music rooms, and specialized classrooms are centrally located and used by all grades.

Many communities use this neighborhood-based model, including South Hadley’s Skala School. Other recently constructed schools that incorporate similar neighborhood layouts include Mountain View School in Easthampton and Barrie Brook Elementary School in Ludlow. These designs help maintain a sense of community while supporting efficient use of shared resources.

Does combining grades into one building reflect best practices?

Yes. Many communities now use models that bring multiple elementary grade levels together in a single building while

maintaining age-appropriate learning environments. This approach allows schools to share resources efficiently and has become increasingly common over the past decade, including in projects supported by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) across Massachusetts.

Why is minimizing disruption during construction an important consideration?

Construction activities can affect daily school operations and the learning environment. As part of the planning process, the district evaluates how renovation, addition, or new construction options can be phased and managed to reduce impacts on students and staff. Factors such as site logistics, scheduling, and access to outdoor and instructional spaces are carefully considered so learning can continue safely and effectively.

What is the project timeline?

This timeline outlines the major phases of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) process, from the current Feasibility Study through design, construction, and opening of the new

school. The project is currently completing the Feasibility Study and beginning the Preferred Schematic Report phase. A Town Election ballot vote is anticipated in winter 2027, and construction would proceed only if the project is approved by voters.

What is the preliminary cost range for the project?

Based on December 2025 Preliminary Design Program cost estimates, the current total project cost order-of-magnitude ranges are:

- Code Upgrades and Basic Repairs: **\$50–\$55 million**
- Addition/Renovation (Mosier Elementary School Site): **\$80–\$115 million**
- New Construction (Mosier Elementary School Site): **\$90–\$124 million**
- New Construction (Middle School Site): **\$92–\$120 million**

These estimates are preliminary and will be refined as the project advances through the MSBA process.



What percentage of the project cost would the state reimburse?

South Hadley's base MSBA reimbursement rate is 61%, but this applies only to eligible costs. The MSBA sets caps on eligible construction and site costs, meaning the effective reimbursement rate will be lower than 61%. The final MSBA grant amount and the Town's share of project costs will be confirmed later in the process after further design development and review.

What would happen to Skala Elementary School if a Grades 1–5 option is selected?

If a Grades 1–5 option is selected, Skala Elementary School would transition into an Early Childhood Center serving preschool and kindergarten. This option would allow the district to expand early childhood programming, potentially increase preschool availability to five days per week, and improve access for families. Under this scenario, Mosier Elementary School would serve as the district's elementary school for Grades 1–5, organized in a grade-level neighborhood cluster setting. All options remain under consideration by the School Building Committee, and no final decision has been made.

How were design enrollment numbers determined?

The Massachusetts School Building Authority conducted an enrollment study using historical enrollment trends, birth rate data, and demographic projections. MSBA-approved enrollment figures include approximately 360 students for Grades 2–4 and approximately 590 students for Grades 1–5. These figures determine the maximum school size eligible for reimbursement.

What type of vote would approve the project, and when?

The project would require approval through a Special Town Vote, anticipated in winter 2027. This would be a debt exclusion vote, allowing the Town to borrow funds for the project and temporarily exclude the associated debt from Proposition 2½ limits for the duration of the bond.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR UPCOMING COMMUNITY MEETING & MOSIER SCHOOL TOUR

Thursday, February 5, 2026

5:15 PM – Mosier School tour (in person)

6:00 – 7:00 PM – Community Meeting and presentation, followed by Q&A.

A virtual option will be available for the 6 PM meeting via the project website.

Free childcare will be provided at the Mosier Gymnasium.

This is a multi-year project, and community input will continue to inform decision-making throughout the process.

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