

158 Spring Street Options

Cambridge School Committee | September 15, 2026

How/why did 158 Spring Street become a key district priority?

1 High concentration of CPS students live in the vicinity of 158 Spring Street

CPS fully committed to maintain elementary school presence in East Cambridge

2 Existing facility has capacity to seat over 650 students

Opportunity to enroll a significantly higher number of students to provide for the more efficient utilization of resources

3 Abutting John A Ahern field affords an opportunity for optimization of space for use by school community and Cambridge community at-large

Significant play space available, more so than most other schools especially in the Eastern part of city

4 Opportunities for instructional synergies with programs that support students in high-need categories.

Opportunities to incorporate programs supporting high-need students into infrastructure planning

What is CPS looking to accomplish?

(What problem are we trying to solve?)

How do we put more CPS **students in better positions to succeed**, with a particular emphasis on supporting students qualifying in high-need categories?

Critical principles to guide deliberation:

- Analysis must apply a **district-wide lens** so that the strategy is congruent with the other challenges and opportunities the district is confronting.
- Investment cannot be contingent upon particular set of specialized interests without factoring **long-term and community-wide implications**.
- Analysis must take into account the **financial limitations** and **relevant timelines**.
- Building must be **fully utilized with a coherent educational program** that capitalizes on the infrastructure rather than coexisting with it.
- Consistent commitment to prioritize **students qualifying as high-need**.

What is the context for this discussion?

(How do we ensure this decision is not made in a vacuum?)

How do we ensure that the decision as to which school(s) or program(s) occupy 158 Spring Street enhance the district's capacity to serve all students?

- District's strategic planning process is underway to establish long-term goals, specifically a four-year plan and 10-year vision arc.
- City completed major infrastructure investment with the opening of Tobin/DVUS (preceded by MLK/PAUS and KO/CSUS).
- City implemented three-path universal preschool program (year 3).
- Current feeder pattern developed through Innovation Agenda.
- Controlled Choice Policy governing school assignment, contemplating specific educational pathways, i.e. language immersion and Montessori program.
- Long-term facilities condition assessment identifies specific capital improvement needs across remaining school infrastructure.

What are some specific challenges that could be confronted?

(How does CPS maximize the impact of this opportunity?)

Given the context in which this discussion will unfold, what are some considerations for how to maximize the positive impact of this decision?

Opportunities:

- Create conditions more likely to yield higher student achievement.
- Response to enrollment demands.
- Alignment of high-need and/or early childhood programs.
- Foster more choice.
- Prioritize students qualifying as high-need.
- Maximize operational efficiency.

Preceding Community Engagement and Discussions

December 2024

Kennedy-Longfellow
School decision to
close in June of 2025

**Spring 2025 -
Fall 2025**

Community
Engagement sessions
discuss the range of
opportunities and
challenges,
programming and
infrastructure.

Spring 2026

Community
engagement sessions
and strategic
planning process
explore seven
theoretical
opportunities to
explore for the future
of 158 Spring Street.

Fall 2026 (now)

Consideration of
specific scenarios.



September 15, 2026: Discussion of Potential Scenarios

3

possible scenarios to consider with potential for district-wide benefits to CPS students.



Scenario #

1

***Amigos
School
Relocation***

Potential Benefits of Relocating the Amigos School to 158 Spring Street:

Relocating the Amigos School would increase the number of available seats at one of our district's highest-performing schools, with an opportunity to serve more high needs students.

- The Amigos School achieved a **statewide accountability percentile of 91 in 2025** (2026 scores are still embargoed), with **high-needs students** (38% of the school's current enrollment) scoring at the **84th percentile in ELA** and **77th percentile in Math** and demonstrating consistently high growth.
- Among PK-8 CPS students from **Spanish-speaking households** who do **not** currently attend Amigos:
 - **135 are identified as high needs**, including **60 students who receive IEP services** and **61 English learners**.
 - **79% who chose Amigos as # 1 choice are high need students**.
- Dual-language programs significantly improve academic performance, English acquisition, and long-term achievement for high-needs students like English learners (ELs) and low-income children.*

*[Steele et al., 2017](#) (Effects of Dual-Immersion Programs on Student Achievement: Evidence from Lottery Data)

*[Thomas & Collier, 2002](#) (A National Study of School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students' Long-Term Academic Achievement)

Potential Benefits of Relocating the Amigos School to 158 Spring Street: (cont.)

Would provide students, families, and educators at our district's third largest school with more equitable amenities for learning.

- 158 Spring Street was designed to be a comprehensive PK-8 school with infrastructure features that the Amigos school community does not currently enjoy at Upton Street, including:
 - An outdoor playing field and age-appropriate playground space;
 - Science lab;
 - Large gymnasium for flexible programming;
 - Auditorium;
 - Appropriately-sized cafeteria allowing for flexible PK–8 scheduling;
 - Accessible entryways; and
 - Expanded space for special education and support staff, including related service providers.
- Upper school students benefit from larger and more diverse grade-level cohorts.
- Amigos consistently yields strong academic and social-emotional outcomes across diverse student populations.
- Ensures a high-demand school in East Cambridge and creates an opportunity to repurpose the Upton Street building to meet other needs.

Potential Drawbacks to Relocating the Amigos School to 158 Spring Street

- **Logistical moving challenges for staff and altered routines** for many current Amigos families.
- The Amigos School relocation would not address **other needs** identified in this presentation, including significant upper school enrollment pressures.
- **Time:** Language requirements in the upper elementary and middle grades, expansion of Amigos may need to occur in phases over a number of years.

Scenario #

2

***Creation of
an Early
Learning
Center***

Opportunity: Why an Early Learning Center Could Benefit CPS

For Children	For Families	For CPS
• A developmentally appropriate environment—schedule, curriculum, Tier I instruction, spaces, and routines designed specifically for 3- and 4-year-olds. • Greater flexibility to create inclusive classroom compositions aligned to student needs. • Earlier access to MTSS, related services, and specialized supports—including before IEP eligibility. • A stronger continuum across general education, Special Start, and specialized programming.	• Extended-day/afterschool opportunities could make CPS preschool accessible to more working, priority, and low-income families. • A family hub could connect preschool, evaluations, related services, home-based services, and wraparound supports. • A stronger community for Special Start families and families navigating early-childhood supports.	• Concentrates early-childhood leadership, expertise, professional learning, and collaboration. • More efficient deployment of itinerant specialists and assessment teams. • Potential for additional preschool seats. • Decoupling preschool from elementary matriculation could create a more equitable entry into elementary schools, effectuating the choice system and expanding access to high-demand schools.

Greatest Strength: *The opportunity to build a coherent early-childhood system around the developmental and instructional needs of young children.*

Enrollment Context: Why the Model Matters Beyond One Building

CPS Demand is Changing due to Cambridge Preschool Program (CPP)

- -25% 4 year old families choosing CPS as #1 choice
- +37% 3 year old families choosing CPS as #1 choice
- CPS reduced available 4 year old seats by 27% as preK enrollment declined

K Demand is Rising

- +25% K registrants (from January 2024-January 2026)
- 325 January 2026 K lottery registrants (highest in at least 22 years)
- The 2025 and 2026 K lottery sizes were larger than expected, raising planning questions for elementary capacity

What this Suggests

- Preschool is not functioning predictably as an elementary entry point.
- Afterschool care, 12-month programming, and diversity among CPP providers are significant factors in family choice.
- ELC would strengthen CPS preschool as a competitive choice for priority families.

Implication: *The case for an ELC is strongest as a system redesign – clearer early-childhood programming, stronger extended-day options, and more deliberate K-entry planning.*

Potential Drawbacks to Creating an ELC at 158 Spring Street

Practical Challenges to Geographic Location and Campus

- Early-childhood programming would underutilize portions of the building and site.
- Reduces geographic choice and potential logistical challenges for families.
- Capital expenses: Significant early-childhood adaptations, i.e. classrooms, bathrooms/sinks, OT/PT and office spaces, and age-appropriate outdoor play.

Conclusion: An Early Learning Center offers compelling educational and equity benefits. The question is whether 158 Spring Street provides the access, infrastructure, and long-term fit needed to realize them.

Scenario #

3

*Upper
Schools
Merger*

Potential Benefits to Upper Schools Merger

- Potential to create larger, more sustainable upper schools that can offer significantly greater programmatic flexibility, especially for students with complex needs.
- Reduce reliance on singleton teachers and allow for multiple teachers within a subject area, creating opportunities for collaboration, differentiated instruction, and creative problem solving for individual students.
- Increase variety of electives, specials and extracurricular activities (Arts, STEM, International, etc.).
- Scaled communities induce opportunities for more varied social connections among peer groups.
- Reduced reliance on out-of-district placements and more optimal conditions for specialized programs and services available to high need students in one location.

Potential Drawbacks to Merger

- Disruptive consolidation without actually solving the underlying enrollment and feeder-pattern problems.
- Facility not originally intended to be an upper school.
- Potential incongruence in resulting infrastructure challenges.
- Savings are uncertain once staffing, transportation, administration, and facility costs are considered.

Additional Considerations for Emphasis

- Any change to significantly address Upper School enrollment challenges starts with a complete assessment of and possible redesign to the existing secondary feeder pattern.
- A merger from four to two upper schools, while challenging, likely would more fully address the underlying dynamics of middle school enrollment and experience.

Upcoming Community Engagement and Discussions

September 29th

In-person community engagement forum on specific scenarios (part 1) at CRLS

September 30th

Virtual community engagement forum on specific scenarios (part 1)

October 1st

In-person community engagement forum on specific scenarios (part 2) at Amigos School

Other opportunities will take place at the Amigos School due to the potential implications for that specific school community.

Further consideration at meetings of the Cambridge School Committee on October 6th and October 20th.

Timeline for Implementation:

Dependent on currently uncertain capital improvements schedule, but estimated for no later than August 2028.