

The Facilities Subcommittee met on Monday, August 24, 2026, in a Virtual Zoom Meeting. Present were Jennifer Cullum, Andre King, Sara Ahern, Doug Boulanger, Chris Dwelley, and Jen Kruczek.

Ms. Cullum called the meeting to order at 10:02AM.

Approve Meeting Minutes

- Motion by Mr. King, seconded by Dr. Ahern, and the Committee voted, unanimously, to approve the Meeting Minutes of July 27, 2026.

Update on Consultant Research

- Dr. Ahern provided an update regarding research into demographic and enrollment study consultants. The demographer used a couple of years ago has retired. She spoke to a consulting group based in Ohio that has previously performed work for Massachusetts districts, including Nauset, Scituate, Nantucket, and Needham. The demographic study encompasses data collection and development with an estimated duration of 10–12 weeks at a cost of \$17,000. There are optional services at an additional cost: utilization forecast (\$5,000); facilities planning (\$8,000–\$12,000); comprehensive redistricting (recommended 1–2 years prior to opening a new school). She reached out to professional colleagues for recommendations and will secure two additional proposals and quotes for comparison.
- Ms. Cullum noted that prior research involving the Housing Authority returned inaccurate results due to difficulties tracking immigrant demographic data and associated margins of error. Dr. Ahern explained that these projections rely in part on historic trends and patterns.
- Ms. Cullum asked if the Collins Center performs similar work. Dr. Ahern will look into this, adding that enrollment data in grades K–3 currently remains solid.
- In response to Mr. King's question regarding additional consultant evaluation areas (e.g., student geography, density, addresses, district boundaries, building age, and building status), Mr. Dwelley clarified that the subcommittee can customize the scope as needed.
- Mr. King asked about school consolidation examples (such as New Bedford) and Dennis-Yarmouth's feasibility study.
- Dr. Ahern noted that Dennis-Yarmouth has been accepted into the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) process and assigned an MSBA consultant for their feasibility report, putting them in a different stage. She highlighted that communities often wait until further along in the process before engaging the broader community, noting Dennis-Yarmouth was denied seven times prior to acceptance.
- Ms. Cullum stated that while enrollment figures may not always appear favorable on paper, a credible consultant can help articulate and support the overarching argument for constructing a new school.

Talking Points for School Committee and Town Council related to Budget Support

- Ms. Cullum emphasized that there should be no misunderstanding that having the smallest contribution per child is not a positive metric.
- Dr. Ahern noted that accelerated and capital repairs must be part of the budget conversation, specifically referencing the Barnstable Intermediate School (BIS) and Barnstable High School (BHS) roof projects. The district was recently notified of a 55% reimbursement rate and expects the project design soon. While the estimated cost is around \$13 million, exact figures will be known following an upcoming check-in call.
- Mr. Dwelley stated financing options include funding through the tax levy or a debt exclusion vote. He suggested considering a debt exclusion for both projects or combining levy funding with a debt exclusion. He asked Mr. Boulanger to confirm Accelerated Repair Program (ARP) reimbursement rates with the MSBA at the next update meeting.
- Dr. Ahern discussed leveraging School Committee support for the Town's debt exclusion, referencing Phinney's Lanes, to reallocate current expenditures back into the operating budget.
- Mr. Dwelley recommended that the Subcommittee make a formal proposal to the School Committee to support this approach.

Summarize the Work of the Facilities Subcommittee

- Dr. Ahern proposed drafting a memo to the School Committee detailing the Subcommittee's past activities, analyses, and recommendations, noting that the Subcommittee's future charge should focus on monitoring progress between the school district and the town.
- Ms. Cullum stated that the memo should be completed by the October meeting and noted she will work on it.
- Mr. King noted that consultants can draw upon and expand the existing body of knowledge to inform future action.
- Ms. Cullum emphasized synthesizing all Subcommittee contributions to help craft messaging for the Town Council and the Comprehensive Financial Advisory Committee (CFAC) regarding school facilities needs.
- In response to Mr. King's inquiry regarding potential debt exclusions for upcoming wastewater management projects, Mr. Dwelley confirmed that debt exclusions would apply to future sewer projects and any capital projects exceeding \$5 million.

Next Steps

- The next meeting will take place on September 21 at 4:00pm.

Motion by Mr. King, seconded by Dr. Ahern, and the Subcommittee voted to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jen Kruczek
Executive Assistant