



## Office of Capital Planning

Delavern Stanislaus, Chief of Capital Planning

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building  
2300 Washington Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Roxbury, Massachusetts 02119

capitalplanning@bostonpublicschools.org  
857-398-8097

[www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org)

---

**TO:** Boston School Committee  
**FROM:** Delavern Stanislaus, Chief of Capital Planning, Boston Public Schools  
**CC:** Mary Skipper, Superintendent of Boston Public Schools; Samuel DePina, Deputy Superintendent of Operations; Linda Chen, Senior Deputy Superintendent of Academics; Ana Tavares, Deputy Superintendent of Family and Community Advancement; Michael Firestone, Chief of Policy, City of Boston; Rebecca Grainger, Senior Advisor to the Mayor on Youth and Schools; Tali Robbins, Deputy Chief of Policy, City of Boston  
**DATE:** December 5, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Long-Term Facilities Plan: Rubric and Building Models

---

This memo serves as an update and reflection following the Boston School Committee meeting on November 15, 2023. This memo further outlines the High-Quality Student Experience we are striving for and describes the purpose of the tools we are developing to inform the Long-Term Facilities Plan.

### Outline:

- [1. Overview and Purpose](#)
- [2. High-Quality Student Experience and Building Models](#)
- [3. Decision-making Framework, Annual Process, and Community Involvement](#)
- [4. Appendix](#)
  - [BPS Rubric Data Background](#)

## 1. Overview and Purpose

In the fall of 2022, Boston Public Schools (BPS) and the City of Boston Public Facilities Department (PFD) launched a PreK-6 and 7-12 School Design Study, a set of programming and design recommendations to guide and accelerate future capital investments. The components of the School Design Study – educational specifications, design standards, and a decision-making rubric – will be critical components of the Long-Term Facilities Plan (LTFP) for the district, due by the end of December 2023 as part of the Systemic Improvement Plan (SIP).

**The LTFP is not just a plan about buildings. The plan is not an exact timeline that spells out the fate of each one of our 119 schools. Rather, the plan will outline the process for shifting the district's physical footprint over the long term, laying the foundation for the first set of new proposals in Spring 2024.**

Our physical footprint and physical spaces play a critical role in supporting students' educational journey and success. Our schools should be spaces where our students feel welcomed and inspired; have access to enriching, boundary-expanding experiences; and experiment with the latest tools and technology. The City and district are fully united in our commitment to investing in our buildings to ensure our students are educated in facilities that support what the district is calling the BPS High-Quality Student Experience. We must be realistic that there is much to do, and realizing this vision will take decades and many difficult decisions.

As we have with the [Inclusive Education Plan](#) we must also acknowledge the more than 100 years of history rooted in systemic racial disparities that historically limited equitable access and outcomes for our Black and Brown students, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners with and without disabilities.

To fully shift our physical footprint in service of the High-Quality Student Experience, we need to engage different investment strategies: building new schools, renovating existing schools, merging and closing schools all in service to provide the education and experiences our students deserve.

Major capital investments in new buildings, renovations, and expansions will create school buildings that fully support our collective vision for a high-quality education. At the same time, too many of our buildings limit our students' opportunities, and – often because of size or site constraints typical of an urban district – simply cannot offer the potential to support a High-Quality Student Experience, even with major investments. In these cases, closing schools and creating multiple-campus schools will bring us closer to a BPS physical footprint that supports the High-Quality Student Experience.

With years of [declining enrollment](#), we have a physical footprint that does not support our vision for a high-quality experience. Consolidating schools will in turn allow us to consolidate resources and focus on investing in student learning rather than maintaining declining facilities. Grade reconfigurations, in accordance with the [School Committee policy](#), will create clear pathways and fewer transitions for students. They may also free up physical space to allow a building to better support the high-quality experience across the district. For example, many of our facilities do not have the physical spaces to support our diversity of learners, especially for our students with disabilities and our multilingual learners, which results in a concentration of need in certain buildings and school communities. Investing in our facilities is essential to providing the physical spaces needed to provide a continuum of services for all students so we are able to deliver inclusive education district-wide and close the opportunity and achievement gaps.

These changes will be disruptive. They are also essential. For decades, deferred decision-making has preserved a status quo that is not serving Boston students. The LTFP will include several new tools that will accelerate this work and sustain it over the long-term – until

every student in Boston has access to buildings that support the BPS High-Quality Student Experience.

This memo outlines the High-Quality Student Experience we are striving for and describes the purpose of the tools we are developing to help us get there.

## 2. High-Quality Student Experience and Building Models

We are taking on this work to ensure all students have access to a High-Quality Student Experience. The priorities of students, families, staff, community members, and partners directly informed our definition of what we want all students to experience as a member of the BPS community. All students should have:

- rigorous and culturally affirming learning experiences,
- wellness and enrichment,
- a supportive network of caring adults, and
- physical spaces and overall facilities conditions that support learning.

Through a series of listening sessions and focus groups (January - March 2023), more than 500 community members shared their experiences with BPS and the priorities they felt were essential to providing a High-Quality Student Experience; more than 9,000 respondents did so through a survey (May 2023). The community engagement process is summarized in the [Listening Engagement Report Summary](#).

Community priorities were translated into metrics that measure how well the physical spaces in our buildings can support a High-Quality Student Experience. Data from building walkthroughs, floor plans, and the BPS Facilities Condition Assessment were used to develop a school's Building Experience Score, on a scale of 0-4. **Currently, only about 18% of all BPS school buildings provide most or all of the spaces to support the High-Quality Student Experience.**

Through the School Design Study, we developed four Building Models that can support all four components of the High-Quality Student Experience. While not all BPS buildings should or will adopt a Building Model, these models will serve as the foundation for future construction and renovation of elementary and secondary schools. Alignment behind these models will accelerate the future construction and renovation of preK-6 and 7-12 schools so that we can more urgently shift our physical footprint to support the High-Quality Student Experience, including supporting inclusive educational practices in every school. By sharing these Building Models (including the educational specifications and design standards that correspond to them) with contracted architecture and design firms, future construction and renovation projects will have a shorter planning and design timeline, allowing construction to begin more quickly.

Notably, many BPS schools are very different from the Building Models. BPS is home to several specialty schools, special education public day schools, alternative education schools, a

technical-vocational school, and three exam schools. We will continue to take into account the unique needs of specialized programs as we prioritize capital investments.

<b>Model</b>	<b>Minimum # of students</b>	<b>Minimum # of sections per grade</b>
PreK-6 (small)	356	2
PreK-6 (large)	712	4
<i>7-12 (small)*</i>	<i>650</i>	<i>4**</i>
7-12 (medium)	1150	7**
7-12 (large)	1650	10**

\*We did not develop a Building Model for high schools of this size, as future new builds and renovations are not likely to be this small. However, we included a small 7-12 high school in the rubric tool because so many BPS school buildings are too small to fit a full complement of programs; this approximation enables more buildings to be considered in the tool for investment in order to measure potential impact.

\*\*High schools are generally not programmed around the number of strands/sections per grade because high school schedules are more complex. However, these numbers serve as an approximation of the number of sections per grade.

The draft Building Models and space summaries are [linked here](#). These are in the final stages of review and will be posted publicly and incorporated into the Long-Term Facilities Plan. The Building Models are a list of spaces for each school/campus type, including the quantity and sizes necessary to meet the needs of the learning communities and to align with Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) guidelines. The draft Building Models are a core part of the Educational Specifications (Ed Specs). Ed Specs are programming standards and planning concepts used by school districts to guide new facility construction and major school renovation projects. BPS' Ed Specs define elements of school facilities that will best serve educators, students, and the school community to ensure a high-quality education and learning experience for every BPS student. The Ed Specs also promote the development of equitable facilities across the district and serve as a blueprint for ensuring an equitable approach to addressing the district's facilities needs

Note: The Education Specifications and Design Standards are in the final stages of review and will be shared publicly and incorporated into the Long-Term Facilities Plan.

**3. Decision-Making Framework and Annual Process for Community Involvement**

According to an analysis conducted during the School Design Study process, 71 of 119 school buildings/sites can fit a Building Model, while 48 buildings would require more analysis in order to fit a Building Model.

We are proposing to prioritize large capital investments (new buildings and major gut renovations) on buildings/sites that can support a Building Model in the future. This will focus our largest investments in places that have the potential to have the greatest impact on students.

The decision-making rubric tool allows us to consider possible future impacts among school buildings that can fit a Building Model. It also allows for the prioritization of investments in buildings that have the potential to close opportunity gaps by considering student impact on student populations included in the [BPS Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Policy \(OAG\)](#), disaggregated by race, ethnicity, language, socio-economic status, and disability. We will take into account potential neighborhood impact by considering communities identified in the CDC Social Vulnerability Index and Climate Ready Boston Social Vulnerability Index, and by aligning our capital investments with the BPS Community Hub School strategy.

We heard from community members several other ideas for prioritizing investments, including thinking about the history of investment and disinvestment by neighborhood and community assets (including access to public transportation and physical spaces like libraries, parks, and community centers). We have begun the data collection necessary to take such factors into account.

We are grateful for your feedback and ideas during the Boston School Committee meeting on November 15, 2023 of additional factors for consideration, including projected population growth by neighborhood, school demand, and past history of renovations. We will continue to refine our process for prioritizing investments and share publicly how we are using data to inform equitable decision-making, including data on enrollment trends and financial planning.

Schools in buildings that cannot support a High-Quality Student Experience will be considered for reconfigurations, mergers (either consolidating on one site or creating multiple-campus schools), or closures (taking a building offline), when these strategies will allow more students to access buildings that support a High-Quality Student Experience. These strategies may sometimes involve school buildings that currently support a High-Quality Student Experience. For example, a proposal for a multiple-campus school might include two or more buildings that, on their own, cannot support a High-Quality Student Experience, but have the types of learning spaces, wellness and enrichment spaces, spaces for a supportive network of caring adults, and overall facilities condition to support a multiple-strand school community across two or more sites.

**DRAFT Decision-Making Framework**

**The framework below provides guidance for investment from a facilities perspective. Additional factors will be assessed and considered in decision-making.**

Is a Building Model possible?	Proposed Strategies
Yes	<p>The Building Experience Score (0-4) describes the current configuration and condition of the building, and may be used to determine the appropriate scope and scale of investment.</p> <p>Buildings/sites in this category have the potential to support a Building Model and may be considered for major capital investments, like new builds, expansions, or significant renovations.</p> <p>Some of these capital projects might be considered in concert with strategies for another school building, including a closure, merger, grade reconfiguration, or relocation of another existing school to this site.</p>
Requires further analysis	<p>The Building Experience Score (0-4) indicates that these buildings have some or all of the physical spaces to support several categories of the High-Quality Student Experience.</p> <p>These buildings/sites are unable to fit a Building Model (including the parcel of land the school is located on) without further analysis, often because they are too small.</p> <p>These buildings may be considered for a merger (to become a multiple-campus school) or a grade reconfiguration, potentially paired with facilities investments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combining with another nearby school to create a two-campus school could provide a higher-quality student experience and expand opportunities for inclusive education, academic and extracurricular programming.</li> <li>• Reconfiguring grades or programming could better match the school programming with the building.</li> </ul> <p>Some buildings in this category may be taken offline. This may involve a school's relocation or closure.</p> <p>These buildings may continue to see investment and upgrades, but are not likely to see new builds, expansions, or total renovations. Their Building Experience Score may be used to determine the appropriate scope and scale of investment.</p> <p>With future investment, buildings with lower Building Experience Scores (0-1) could be repurposed for other uses, but are not likely to become future preK-6 or 7-12 schools.</p>

**Draft Timeline for 2024 Proposals: New Investments, Mergers, and Closures**

Note:

- The Racial Equity Planning Tool will be used for each proposal.
- We view 2024 as a learning year. We will set aside time for reflection and refinement on the process and outcomes to make revisions to the timeline and community involvement for future years.

**The timeline below is shared in draft form and serves to frame feedback from the School Committee. A refined timeline will be included in the Long-term Facilities Plan that will be posted publicly in late December. As this is a draft, please note that dates and details may shift.**

DRAFT PLAN			
When	What	Who	Why
January 2024	Individualized outreach, office hours, all leader meeting	School Leaders	All School Leaders are aware of what's happening and what's coming; some are collaborating  We will ask School Leaders to nominate at least one member of their School Site Council to send to each community workshop covering their neighborhood
	Briefings and 1:1s	Key stakeholders - e.g., BTU, CPC, SpEdPAC, DELAC	Build understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the long-term facilities plan</li> <li>- how the rubric tool works</li> <li>- how and where they can explore the data</li> <li>- the district-wide ecosystem (enrollment trends, programming needs, budget)</li> </ul> Webinar are recorded and used for future knowledge dissemination
	City-wide webinar	City-wide / open to the public	
February - early March 2024	Community workshops (approximately 3-4 across the city)	Open to the public, with representation from School Site Councils	Learn about the process, rubric, and timeline  At each workshop, we will share specific challenges we are trying to address through the long-term facilities plan. These challenges will vary slightly by each workshop, so that they are reflective of the particular dynamics of the neighborhoods and communities represented.

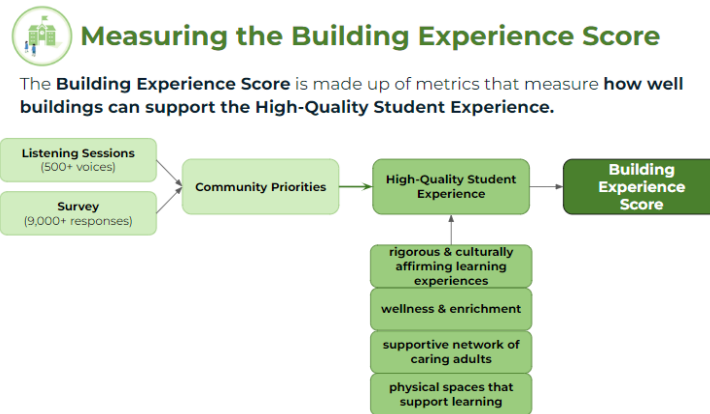
DRAFT PLAN			
When	What	Who	Why
			<p>This is an opportunity to introduce a deeper level of understanding about our challenges through the lens of school-specific and neighborhood-specific data. We will apply the rubric tool and discuss possible ways to address our challenges through investment scenarios.</p> <p>Participants have the opportunity to provide insights about community assets and opportunities to inform planning and decision-making.</p>
	Community survey	Open to the public	Distributes the survey to school communities and surrounding communities to provide insights about assets and opportunities in impacted communities to inform planning, particularly around transition planning.
Late February - March 2024	Convene a time-limited advisory working group that meets prior to proposals coming before the School Committee	Cross-functional team, including those with local expertise related to the specific challenges we are trying to address.	We will synthesize the challenges, assets, and opportunities discussed through previous engagement and develop a list of potential investment proposals for review, pressure-testing, and refinement.
March - April 2024	Meetings with each impacted school community	School leaders, Central Office support staff, and school communities	Communication is clear and transparent with impacted school communities about the proposal, the supporting data, and an initial outline of a transition plan
	Superintendent shares proposals with School Committee and SC votes	Superintendent, School Committee and open to the public	Superintendent puts proposals for mergers, closures, and new investments in front of School Committee for a vote at a later meeting within this time frame
April - May 2024	Transition planning begins for SY25-26 merger or	School communities, Central Office support staff,	<p>School communities know what is happening, when, and where to go to for support.</p> <p>School-based transition teams are formed,</p>



DRAFT PLAN			
When	What	Who	Why
	closure	and any involved partners	including school community members, Central Office staff, and partners, to begin transition planning ahead of summer break.
June 2024	City Council votes on next year's Capital Budget	City Council	After the Mayor's Office introduces a Capital Plan proposal in April, the City Council reviews and deliberates, with a vote expected by the end of June. The Capital Plan includes new capital investments affecting BPS, including new builds and renovations.
September 2024 - September 2025	Transition planning and implementation	School communities, Central Office support staff, and any involved partners	School communities are involved and engaged throughout the year in transition planning and implementation, including identifying programmatic shifts, staffing supports, resource needs, and school assignment support for a successful transition focused on student outcomes.  Merger or closure goes into effect following the end of School Year 2024-25.

## 4. Appendix

### BPS Rubric Data Information



The specific metrics that make up the decision-making rubric tool and the Building Experience Score are detailed in [this summary document](#). The BPS Rubric Dataset will be posted publicly in late December following reviewing with school leaders and other internal stakeholders. The dataset will be included in our submission of the Long-Term Facilities Plan to DESE by the end of December.

The dataset includes 115 BPS buildings. The unit of analysis is the building, rather than the school. This means that multi-campus schools have multiple entries, and multiple school buildings are listed as one entry. There are a small number of BPS buildings that were not fully assessed, and are not included in the dataset. These include buildings that were recently constructed, currently in design or under construction, or are not currently in full use.