

To: Boston School Committee
 From: Mary Skipper, Superintendent
 CC: Dr. Sam DePina, Deputy Superintendent of Operations
 Delavern Stanislaus, Chief of Capital Planning
 Re: Capital Planning Proposals for SY25-26
 Date: June 17, 2024

This memo summarizes the process the district has undertaken to develop capital planning proposals for SY25-26 and details of tonight's scheduled vote, including:

- Spring 2024 Proposal Development Process and Community Engagement
- Proposed Closure of the Frederick Middle School and Engagement Update
- Proposed Closure of the West Zone ELC and Engagement Update
- Next Steps (if a Yes Vote)

Spring 2024 Proposal Development Process and Community Engagement

We have held 12 community events since the publication of the Long-Term Facilities Plan in December 2023 outlined in the table below. Approximately 200 community members participated in a workshop and 1,874 people responded to the Transition and Community Assets survey. The goal of this community engagement was to “provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.”¹

January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-Term Facilities Plan Community Webinar (~425 Participants)
February - March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four Community Workshops (200+ Participants) • Transition and Community Assets Survey (1,874 respondents)
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boston Student Advisory Council (35 participants) • School Leaders Professional Development (~110 participants)
March - April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Learner Advisory Councils - Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Chinese, Arabic, Cabo Verdean (151 participants to date)

Themes from community engagement sessions, along with the larger district strategy for increasing access to the high quality student experience, were shared in the [May 8 presentation](#), [May 22 memo](#), and [May 22 presentation](#) to the School Committee. For example, our community collectively said they wanted programs such as AP, sports, language education, the arts, and college/career access and modern and flexible physical spaces for learning. In the process of school transitions to ensure greater access to these types of experiences, our

¹ From the International Association for Public Participation - Spectrum of Public Participation



community said they wanted clear transition planning and supports. These themes are guiding the Long-Term Facilities planning and implementation process. Additional information is available in Appendix A.

Proposed Closure of the Frederick Middle School and Engagement Update

Close Frederick Pilot Middle School and begin collaborative planning and relaunching process with the Frederick community for future use of the building.

This closure was announced on January 10, 2024, as part of the BPS phase-out of middle schools, but has not been formally approved. The Frederick is the last free-standing middle school to close following the district's implementation of a [2019 policy](#) to shift to a districtwide PreK-6/7-12 and PreK-8/9-12 grade configuration and create fewer transitions and clear pathways, thereby eliminating traditional middle schools.

We implemented an assignment plan that suspended sixth-grade enrollment at the Frederick for SY24-25. The current 8th graders will graduate at the end of SY23-24, and current 7th graders will graduate at the end of SY24-25. This leaves 98 current 6th graders as of May 1 to be transitioned to other schools for SY25-26. All 7th graders enrolled at the Frederick Middle School during SY24-25 will receive additional transition support and receive a "no pathway priority" in the SY25-26 school choice process. All 8th graders will go through the school choice process with support for high school selection. For students with IEPs, IEP teams will identify the level of need and services that promote access to grade-level standards in the least restrictive learning environment through the IEP process. For students who are referred to specific special education programs as a result of the IEP team process, the district is exploring the below transfer options. Where possible, the whole program, including staff, will relocate to the new school option. The expansion of the Margarita Muñiz to serve grades 7-8 (already announced and beginning implementation in Fall 2024) provides an opportunity for the relocation of the Frederick's Spanish SLIFE program.

The Frederick serves the following programs. Students in these programs will have the following options after the closure of Frederick:

- Multiple Disabilities Program: Josiah Quincy Upper School
- Spanish SLIFE: Margarita Muñiz Academy
- Moderate Intellectual Impairment: Charlestown
- Learning Disability: New Mission, TechBoston Academy, Charlestown, East Boston
- Multilingual SLIFE: Brighton; eligible Spanish-speaking students have the option of the Spanish SLIFE program at the Muñiz

Students with disabilities and multilingual learners and their families have been provided with individual communication to address student and family concerns. Staff have been working with the Office of Human Capital (OHC) and Recruitment, Cultivation, and Diversity (RCD) to determine options for transitioning roles.

We are deeply committed to continuing to use the building as a school to serve Boston’s children; it is a large building with a capacity of 652 students, and the facilities are in relatively good condition. The Building Experience Score is 4, the highest possible score, and the building can provide a full continuum of services. Moving forward, we will be working with school communities and the broader Grove Hall community to identify the next use of the Frederick building as part of a collaborative planning and relaunching process, with the goal of serving a new elementary school community by SY25-26.

We began conversations about the future of the Frederick building with Frederick Governing Board leadership in Spring 2024 and will accelerate and broaden community conversations this spring and summer. We are grateful to the Frederick community for being active and thoughtful participants in this planning process.

Cost savings associated with this closure are estimated at \$6M annually.

Engagement with the Frederick community

February 28, 2023	The Frederick school community notified that the school would serve middle school students through the end of the 2024-2025 school year
January 9, 2024	The school Leader and School Staff were notified of the closure proposal
January 10, 2024	School community notified of closure proposal
January 18, 2024	School community meeting
February 1, 2024	Meeting with the Governing Board and School community
April 1, 2024	Operations Work Group Launched
May 21, 2024	Update sent to school community regarding proposal being presented to School Committee for a vote
June 3, 2024	School leadership completed proposed closure engagement activities for stakeholders
June 2024	Governing Board meeting with Superintendent

What we’ve heard regarding the future use of the building:

- Maintain the name of Lilla G. Frederick, a long-time advocate for education and empowerment in Grove Hall, for the school
- Continue to use the building for community purposes during any potential transition period instead of leaving the building vacant.
- Maintain access for future generations of students in Grove Hall and the surrounding community.
- Maintain the future occupants of the building as a PreK-6 Community Hub School, with partnerships with neighborhood organizations.

We are also committed to working with community stakeholders in Grove Hall, including the Project RIGHT and Grove Hall Alliance, to determine the school community or communities that will move into the building. The students, families, and educators represented by these coalitions have already begun meaningfully engaging in school facilities planning to identify options for merger, closure, or renovation to bring short-term and long-term benefit to the Grove Hall, Roxbury, and the wider community.

The district has conducted a preliminary analysis of nearby PreK-6 school communities that could fit in the Frederick building. We're engaging with the community about potential options to increase access to the High-Quality Student Experience, including a full continuum of services and a range of academic and enrichment programs, and expand bilingual education programming. Other options may emerge through continued community engagement. Our goal is to make a recommendation to the School Committee in Fall 2024.

As the school closes, staff have emphasized the importance of making sure that the transition of specialized programs is handled with diligence to support recently assigned families and marginalized groups. Staff has conducted one-to-one outreach to families to ensure clarity in understanding of closure. A Capital Planning Senior Project Manager has been assigned to and will work closely with the school leadership team to outline all the milestones and tasks to deliver a smooth closure, ensure that all questions and concerns are addressed, and jointly planned for a successful transition year that celebrates and acknowledges the impact of the Frederick Middle School to its students, families, and community. A Transition Coordinator will also be assigned to support this process.

Proposed Closure of the West Zone ELC and Engagement Update

Close West Zone ELC and consolidate with the Hennigan School.

The West Zone ELC and Hennigan schools operate in the same building. Not only does this result in operational inefficiencies (e.g., both schools offer K2 and Grade 1 in the same building), but there is no guaranteed pathway for West Zone students to transfer to the Hennigan. By closing the West Zone and consolidating into the Hennigan, students will have a seamless pathway from PreK through 6th grade. Every West Zone student will have a guaranteed placement at the Hennigan School.

By closing and consolidating the West Zone ELC into the Hennigan and reconfiguring the Hennigan to be a PreK-6 (the grade reconfiguration is not a part of this vote), the district can expand K0/K1 seats to meet the district's increasing demand, especially for students with disabilities.

This proposal would also provide more space flexibility in the PreK-6 Hennigan School to offer expanded programming. There are 39 core classrooms in the building. Removing the 7th and 8th grades from the Hennigan and consolidating a small number of early childhood classrooms

in the West Zone space provides more flexible space for resource rooms, arts, science, bilingual programming, etc. while maintaining the small feel of the West Zone. In essence, closing a small number of classrooms and reconfiguring the school helps us create a better student experience.

We commit to the following:

- School schedule & extended day: The West Zone ELC currently runs from 7:30am - 4:30pm and the Hennigan currently runs from 9:30am - 4:10pm. The district is committed to a 7:30am-2:20pm schedule with extended day opportunities until 4:30pm.
- Partnerships & Programming: The district will collaborate with school communities and partners to develop the Hennigan School into a Community Hub School.
- Student and Family Transitions: Welcome Services will support families impacted by the transition (i.e., families/students impacted by the loss of the 7th and 8th grades at the Hennigan, West Zone families who wish to transfer their students) through BPS Family Welcome Centers, Pop-up Welcome Centers, and Satellite Sites so families/students are informed of their options.
- Facilities: Identify and invest in small-scale facility improvements, building on the recently renovated bathrooms and ongoing work to upgrade and re-open the pool for students in grades 1-6.
- Support for Staff: Our goal is that affected staff feel valued, informed, and supported through transitions. The Office of Human Capital will provide clear communications and points of contact; weekly virtual office hours for resume, cover letter, and interview support during hiring season; recruitment job fairs and more for impacted staff.

This academic, enrichment, and operational work will be done in collaboration with the school leaders and school communities during the transition year (SY24-25). We will work with our labor partners to ensure staff impacted in this process are well-supported.

The consolidation of two schools combined with the removal of the 7th and 8th grades at the Hennigan will free up district resources to expand the early childhood program. Overall the budget is not likely to decline as resources that are saved in the upper grades are reinvested to expand instructional capacity in lower grades. This expansion will help address the district shortage of seats for K0 and K1 students with disabilities.

Proposed Configuration Maps for the Future Hennigan PreK-6

Below are two proposed configuration maps: one for SY25-26, the first year of implementation of this proposal, and the second for an end state for the Hennigan PreK-6.

Current State: There are a total of two planned K0-K1 classrooms in SY24-25 between the two schools. Staff at both schools currently lack adequate instructional space (e.g., teachers delivering courses on carts).

Future State: This proposal will allow us to add four classrooms in K0-K1, including new substantially separate classrooms. Central office teams will collaborate with school leaders and

school communities to determine future substantially separate programming and prioritize vacated space from the eliminated 7th and 8th grades for specialists, itinerants, and family center spaces to get teachers off of carts and into instructional spaces.

This proposal allows the district to meet key priorities to expand access to the High-Quality Student Experience:

- Expand early childhood seats, particularly for students with disabilities
- Provide additional opportunities for inclusion and partial inclusion settings.
- Ensure strong academic programming for SLIFE students
- Maximize our footprint to provide more flexible spaces for instruction, planning, resource rooms, and family centers

Note: Based on projections, we are confident that all returning students can fit into three consolidated classrooms in both K2 and grade 1. No students will be displaced as a result of this process. Central office teams will collaborate with school leaders and school communities to determine future substantially separate programming at the Hennigan PreK-6, but the LD program will remain intact for all current students.

Figure 1: Configuration Map for SY25-26 Hennigan PreK-6

Hennigan West Zone Configuration Map for SY2526

Classroom Count = 32; Total Capacity = 634



Key: HMRM: Homeroom
 SLIFE: Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education Program
 LD: Learning Disability Program
 Sub Sep: Substantially Separate Program

Figure 2: Configuration Map for the End State Hennigan PreK-6

Hennigan West Zone Configuration Map - End State

Classroom Count = 33; Total Capacity = 628



Key: HMRM: Homeroom
 SLIFE: Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education Program
 Sub Sep: Substantially Separate Program

Engagement with the West Zone and Hennigan communities

May 9, 2024	All School Staff and School community notified of closure proposal
May 13, 2024	Virtual community meeting – West Zone (60 community participants*) Virtual community meeting – Hennigan (25 community participants*)
May 28, 2024	In-person community meeting – Hennigan (4 staff and 2 family members)
May 30, 2024	In-person community meeting – West Zone (9 staff and 12 family members)
June 4, 2024	Office hours for staff – West Zone (3 sessions, 22 staff)
June 5, 2024	Follow-up letter and survey sent to school community

June 7, 2024	Office hours for staff – Hennigan paraprofessionals only (11 staff)
June 14, 2024	Office hours for staff – Hennigan staff

What we've heard:

- Affirmation of the district's commitments to free extended day (K0-K2 students) and the free extended Community Hub model for grades 1-6.
- The importance of the district's commitments to facilities improvements
- Questions remain about detailed operational plans, programming, and staffing, which we will work out in partnership with school communities this fall.
- Capital Planning has indicated that this is the beginning of a long, detailed process and that there is a commitment to transparency and engagement with staff and families throughout the upcoming school year.

Next Steps (if a Yes Vote)

With a Yes vote, the district will initiate the following activities as part of the transition year:

- Capital Planning Senior Project Manager will work with the school leadership team to establish a regular cadence of transition planning meetings and community engagement efforts. Details are below.
- Impact bargaining with our unions
- School-based Transition Coordinator (stipended position) will be hired to support transition efforts throughout the upcoming school year
- Internal project planning commences
- Rollout of project plan to include cadence of internal and external meetings as laid out below in collaboration with the school communities

Without a Yes vote, the Frederick and the West Zone ELCs will remain open. The closure of the Frederick Pilot Middle School is already being implemented, so that implementation would be disrupted for the school community. Families, students, and staff have already begun transitioning or transition planning. Second, the closure and consolidation of the West Zone ELC into the Hennigan preK-6 will result in an increase in the number of early childhood seats, particularly for students with disabilities. Currently, there is a significant need to expand these seats at BPS; without a Yes vote, this district will lose a strategic path to add four K0, K1, or K0/K1 classrooms in SY25-26 to meet this need.

Planned Engagement with Frederick Community

The Capital Planning Senior Project manager will partner with the Frederick school leadership team to support community engagement throughout the next school year. The following community activities have been scheduled through the Operations and Engagement work group.

When	Meeting or Event
August 2024	Staff PD: Capital Planning to present calendar for closure milestones
August/September 2024	Welcome Back Activity for Students
December 2024	Community Holiday Gathering: For current and former LGF staff
December 2024-February 2025	School Preview: Specialized visits for students to high schools and direct registration support for LGF community
June 2025	Grooving in the Grove: Community/Stakeholder activity Promotion Ceremony: student and family-centered celebration to transition students
November 2024-June 2025	Update presentations to the Governing Board on the progress of closure and coordination of community activities (every other month attendance)

Resources to support this work include an assigned Capital Planning Senior Project Manager, Transition Coordinator, and funds to support activities and events.

Planned Engagement with West Zone and Hennigan Communities

At the beginning of the school year 2024-2025, school communities will be invited to participate in work groups to support planning. Each work group will meet monthly, so meetings happen at a biweekly interval. Key information from the work groups will be shared with the broader school communities regularly. During the summer 2024, central office teams and school leaders will work together to plan the core work, timelines, and resources for the transition year.

Engagement Type	Description	Cadence
Academics & Operations Work Group	Central office-facilitated; volunteer members include school staff Sample Topics: Programming and classroom configuration, facilities work, school logistics (and we are asking the school community to build out topics)	Monthly meetings beginning in September 2024
Engagement Work Group	Central office-facilitated; volunteer members include families and school staff Sample Topics: Event to honor the school closing, activities and resources to welcome new	Monthly meetings beginning in September 2024

	families, staff interconnectivity, becoming a HUB school (and we are asking the school community to build out topics)	
Whole Community Meetings	Community meetings to share key updates, gather input on work group plans and decisions, and learn about programming and engagement opportunities	Quarterly during the school year, beginning in early fall
Communications	Written updates to school communities shared in all BPS major languages to share the latest information and updates.	Monthly beginning in September

Resources to support this work include an assigned Capital Planning Senior Project Manager, Transition Coordinator, and HUB School Coordinator and funds to support activities and events.

Appendix A. Community Engagement Winter/Spring 2024 Themes

We heard the following themes from the community for what is important to them in the transition process as well as in their schools:

<p>In the transition process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Up-to-date information and data ● Build trust with community ● Transparent decision-making and clear lines of communication ● Prioritizing populations disproportionately impacted ● Clear transition planning and support ● transportation; availability of programs/opportunities; priority in school assignment process 	<p>In our schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positive school culture and values ● Inclusion and equitable opportunities for all students ● Programs: AP, sports, language education, college/career access ● Accessible transportation ● Physical space: ADA Compliant; safe and environmentally resilient buildings; flexible spaces for extracurriculars, STEM, and art
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A summary analysis can be found [here](#).

The district also convened a time-bound Advisory Working Group (AWG) during the spring of 2024 to review and advise the district on its capital planning proposals. The group consisted of a diverse group of individuals representing various departments across the Boston Public Schools and City of Boston. These individuals were invited to join the AWG because they brought diverse viewpoints relevant to school decisions, and most had not previously been engaged in capital planning conversations so they brought a fresh perspective to the work.