

Town of Abington School Feasibility Study

information & data
gathered as of August 26, 2013

Submitted to
Mass. School Building Authority
on 9/18/13
for review and comment

1	Major Milestones Timeline
2	Facilities Evaluation
3	Site Evaluations Summary
4	Educational Visioning Summary Document
5	Educational Programming Document
6	Introduction Document 6 pages
7	Space Summary Documents
8	Options Considered Document
9	Evaluation Matrix
10	Draft of Cost Analysis Options
11	Cost of New School vs. Renovation Document
12	Review of Major Milestones

Introduction

project background

Town of Abington

The Town of Abington is a small residential town bordering the Cities of Brockton and Weymouth and the Towns of Rockland, Holbrook, Whitman, and Hanson. The Town is comprised of mainly residential neighborhoods, with a few big box stores and privately owned businesses.

Project History

On or about October 27, 2006, the Owner submitted a Statement of Interest (Appendix A) to the MSBA for Frolio Middle School. At the July 25, 2012 Board of Directors meeting, the MSBA Board voted to issue an invitation (Appendix B) to the Owner to conduct a feasibility study for this Statement of Interest to identify and study possible solutions and, through a collaborative process with the MSBA, reach a mutually-agreed upon solution.

The following are items noted in the Statement of Interest that the Town of Abington would like to address in this study:

- Elimination of existing severe overcrowding.
- Prevention of the loss of accreditation.
- Replacement, renovation or modernization of the heating system in a schoolhouse to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in the schoolhouse.

During the Spring 2012 Annual Town meeting, and subsequent ballot vote, the Town has secured the funding to complete, in conjunction with the MSBA, this Feasibility Study.

In January of 2013 the Town of Abington selected Ai3 Architects, LLC to conduct a feasibility study of the existing Abington Public Schools. The study was conducted with specific emphasis on assessing the current physical conditions of the existing Frolio Middle School and Abington High School.

The specific goals of this study include a review of the problems identified in the Statement of Interest at the Frolio Middle School and also considers and incorporates grade configurations, facility student populations, operational consolidation, and prospective site locations in development of alternatives and schemes.

The Town and MSBA have agreed on the following student enrollments (Appendix C) for the potential project:

- 665 students in grades 5-8
- 495 students in grades 6-8
- 945 students grade 6-12

The Town of Abington has established a School Building Committee for this project. The Committee consists of 22 members including Government Officials, School District Administrators, School Committee members and Town of Abington residents.

abington public schools

The Abington Public Schools is a PreK-12 district with approximately 2,100 students. Five school buildings are currently being occupied as schools and one building houses the Abington Public Schools Central Office.

Abington High School

Grades 9-12, approximately 550 students
111,831 square feet
Constructed 1962

Frolio Middle School

Grades 7-8, 350 students
51,729 square feet
Constructed in 1937

Woodsdale Elementary School

Grades 5-6, 325 students
56,000 square feet
Constructed 1958

Beaver Brook Elementary School

Grades 1-4, 650 students
67,000 square feet
Constructed 1952 with classroom
and gymnasium additions 1960

Center School

Grades PreK-K, 165 students
19,800 square feet
Constructed 1939

North School

Central Offices
19,800 square feet
Constructed 1939

The newest school in the Abington Public School system is the Abington High School at 51 years old. Minor capital projects have been completed within the past 10 years, but have been limited to less than \$3.0 million in critical boiler, roof, or window replacement projects. In 2003 a Facility Master Plan was completed which identified numerous facility and educational deficiencies across the entire Abington Public School system. Deficiencies within the 50+ year old facilities were extensive and included but were not limited to lack of educational program opportunities, undersized classrooms and program areas, insufficient accommodations for special education, inadequate student and teacher technology, lack of security systems and controls, inadequate life safety systems, presence of hazardous materials, lack of accessibility (Handicap access), non-compliance with current building codes, inefficient and deteriorated building envelopes, and grossly out-dated and poorly functioning heating, ventilation, plumbing, and electrical systems. At the time of the report, the Building Committee was eager to address these deficiencies but unfortunately the subsequent moratorium on Massachusetts school construction halted the Town and the Committee's ability to address the significant needs inherent in the school facilities. Much time and energy was invested in the 2003 effort, and the inability to address the extensive list of challenges identified in the 2003 Master Plan for many years due to the moratorium caused a significant loss of momentum within the Town.

summary of existing school facilities

Frolio Middle School

The existing Frolio Middle School is located on a very compressed 2.0 acre site surrounded by privately owned property and playfields. This includes privately owned property and recreational fields that have dedicated use and are not available for school expansion or development. The school site is located at 1071 Washington Street, Abington, MA and contains the existing 51,729 s.f school building, insufficient parking, no area for drop-off or pick-up (occurs on street), and minimal landscape areas. The Frolio School was originally constructed in 1937, with most of the 75+ year-old original building, layout, and features still existing on three levels; including a basement level. Classrooms are grossly undersized, and the building's masonry load bearing structural system combined with modern code requirements make modifications to its configuration cost-prohibitive. The limited occupancy (due to building size) of only two grade levels on multiple floors also restricts its use as a modern middle school facility. It is identified in all reports as the building with the most deficiencies and restrictions. The school currently has an enrollment of 350 students in grades 7-8. The included reports indicate that it is not practical or cost-effective to renovate/expand this facility.

Abington High School

The existing Abington High School is located on an expansive 41.0 acre parcel in close proximity to Town Hall and the Abington Public Library; and centrally located within the Town. The 50+ year-old-facility has received minimal educational program improvements in its 50 year history, and only limited capital improvements. Its classrooms and many other program areas are undersized, and it lacks most of the educational program elements associated with a 21st Century high school environment. It lacks the necessary configuration, program areas, and support spaces identified throughout the educational visioning process. Capital improvements at this building include new boilers and a window replacement project, but remaining 50-year-old infrastructure systems require immediate attention. The included reports indicate that it may be a possible candidate for renovation and/or expansion.

As a result of reviewing these two existing buildings and the 2003 Facilities Master Plan Study, the Town of Abington and the MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) have agreed that multiple grade configurations (5-8; 6-8; 6-12; etc.) should be considered as part of addressing the significant deficiencies identified at the Frolio Middle School and the Abington High School.

Although the primary focus of the 2013 Feasibility Study and Schematic Design is to address the significant educational and facility deficiencies in grades 5-12, the need to consider options which address Abington's district wide (PreK-12) concerns remains prevalent; and any potential solution for addressing grades 5-12 must not ignore opportunities to address deficiencies across all grade levels; as deficiencies which were identified across all grade levels in the 2003 report remain unresolved today. The primary deficiency at the elementary schools involves overcrowding. Elementary schools containing grades PK through 6th grade have a capacity of 895 students, and an enrollment of 1,140. The elementary schools also lack sufficient space for the expansion of programs such as full-day Kindergarten. Any solution which allows the 5th and 6th grade population to be accommodated at the middle/high school facilities would alleviate elementary school overcrowding and provide for expanded elementary school programs.

The following elementary schools are currently in use in Abington:

Woodsdale Elementary School

Woodsdale Elementary School was identified in the 2003 Master Plan as having sufficient site amenities, parking, and circulation areas. It could continue to serve as a viable elementary school within the Town with continued capital improvements. At the time of the 2003 study, the primary deficiency at the school was severe overcrowding. This has since been resolved by converting the school from a 3-6 elementary to a 5-6 elementary school, thus reducing the school population by half. Unfortunately, the 3rd and 4th grade students that were removed from Woodsdale were transferred to Beaver Brook Elementary, resulting in severe overcrowding there. Woodsdale contains 56,000sf, including 14 general classrooms and the required support spaces, resulting in a capacity of approximately 315 elementary school students. Although some infrastructure improvements will be required as part of a continued maintenance and capital improvements program, the Woodsdale Elementary School could continue to accommodate two elementary school grade levels into the foreseeable future without significant modifications or expansion.

Beaver Brook Elementary School

Beaver Brook Elementary School was identified in the 2003 Master Plan as having sufficient site amenities, parking, and circulation areas. It could continue to serve as a viable elementary school within the Town with continued capital improvements. At the time of the 2003 study it served as the Early Childhood Center and included grades PK-2. In this configuration, its primary deficiency was overcrowding. The facility has now been converted to an elementary school for grades 1-4, but remains severely overcrowded with 650 students. It contains 67,000sf, including 20 general classrooms and the required support spaces, resulting in a total capacity of 460 elementary school students. This means that capacity is currently exceeded by 190 students, the equivalent of an entire grade level. Although some infrastructure improvements will be required as part of a continued maintenance and capital improvements program, the Beaver Brook Elementary School could provide an educationally strong and viable program for three (not the current four) elementary school grade levels into the foreseeable future without significant modifications or expansion.

Center School

Center School was identified in the 2003 Master Plan as being a very small school (11 classrooms) with limited parking and drop-off areas. It was constructed in 1938, contains approximately 19,800 square feet, and has received no comprehensive renovations to date. All major building systems were identified (In 2003) as requiring updating if the school was to remain in use. Many educational deficiencies were identified in the 2003 study, along with a summary of comprehensive needs for the building envelope and interior. At the time of the 2003 Master Plan, the building was serving grades 3-6. Today, the building has more limited role and provides space for approximately 165 Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students. However, it has received minimal improvements and its continued operation as a very small school which needs significant educational and facility improvements makes it a very inefficient resource.

Although the feasibility study and schematic design is targeted at resolving issues at the

Frolio Middle School and the Abington High School, opportunities for solutions which resolve overcrowding and inefficiency within Abington's elementary schools should not be overlooked. The feasibility study includes exploring the possibility of expanding the middle school population to include grade 5, or grades 5 and 6, not only because of the enhancements this could provide to the middle school but also because this could significantly improve the elementary school environment and increase efficiency in facilities operation throughout the Town.

In order to formulate a plan to address Abington's needs, Ai3 Architects LLC proceeded with the following tasks/process:

- Review 2003 Facility Master Plan
- Document detailed existing conditions at the Abington High School and Frolio Middle School
- Conduct a series of Educational Visioning sessions which included our educational consultant (David Stephen with New Vista Design)
- Document available capacity at existing school buildings across all grade levels
- Summarize educational and facility challenges
- Generate options for resolving educational and facility challenges
- Develop costs for each of the options
- Evaluate options based on their proposed cost versus their value in resolving district-wide educational and facility deficiencies

