



BARRINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT

Frequently Asked Questions

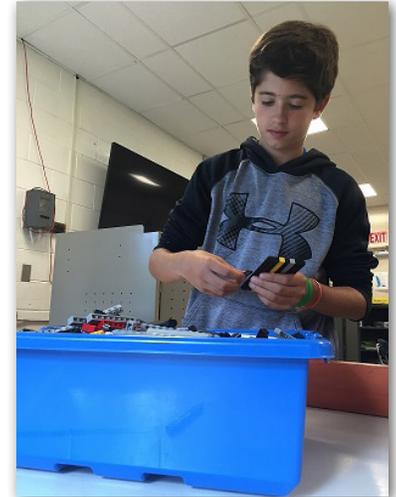
This document is intended to provide answers to the most frequently asked questions as of September 28, 2016.

THE NEED: ACADEMIC AND OPERATIONAL

Why do we need a new middle school?

Barrington Middle School was **one of only 14 schools – out of 276 in the state – to receive the lowest rating of “poor”** in a 2013 statewide analysis of school building conditions. The building was originally constructed in 1958, with additions in 1968, and it now requires extensive renovations and repairs.

A comprehensive assessment of all Barrington schools was completed in 2010 and updated in 2015. Infrastructure problems at Barrington Middle School include the following deficiencies: mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems that are at the end of their useful life, a deteriorating building envelope, cracks in the foundation walls, no fire sprinklers in the building, cracked or missing shingles, and the building is in non-compliance with many state and federal codes, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Building boilers have an expected useful remaining service life of 3-8 years. Hot water pumps are now 17 years old with an expected useful life of 15-20 years. Rooftop HVAC units are 17 years old and have exceeded their useful life of 15 years. The majority of electrical and plumbing systems are original to the building. A full report of the existing conditions is included in the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) Phase I report on this website.



The existing building does not support delivery of the rigorous, innovative, 21st century education for which Barrington Public Schools are known. The building lacks flexible classroom space and is not designed to support the educational program. Existing classrooms and science laboratories do not meet the size recommendations of RIDE, are outdated, and lack adequate equipment.

THE PROPOSED NEW FACILITY

What is being proposed?

The proposed project includes the design and construction of a new 142,500 square foot, state-of-the-art educational and community facility on the current Barrington Middle School (BMS) site, located at 261 Middle Highway.



Conceptual Rendering as of 9.12.2016



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Does the project require voter approval?

Yes. Barrington residents will have an opportunity to vote November 8, 2016, on a local referendum question on whether or not to approve a bond that would finance the new Barrington Middle School.

What would the new building look like?

The new Barrington Middle School will be a one-level facility, with a three-story classroom wing. The main level will include Administration, the Nurse's Office, the Guidance Suite, and core spaces including the auditorium, gymnasium, locker rooms, Student Union, and Learning Commons. The three-story academic wing will house Grade 6 -8 classroom clusters, and specialized classrooms. The Media Center will be located on the second floor of the classroom wing, central to all grades. As design plans are finalized, the Building Committee will work to ensure that the scale and design of the building complements the surrounding neighborhoods.

Where would the new middle school be built?

If constructed, the new Barrington Middle School would remain at the same address. It would, however, be positioned in a new location on the existing site. The proposed location of the new building on the existing site will allow the BMS learning community to remain in the current facility throughout construction of the new building.

How would the new school be different from the existing building?

The new facility will be organized more efficiently and will better support the existing innovative middle school teaching format, with an academic wing consisting of smaller learning communities or clusters. Each cluster will include three general classrooms and a science laboratory, as well as teacher planning space and a flexible "commons" area which can be used as a breakout space or for larger group activities. The new facility will have a more secure and easily recognizable main entrance immediately adjacent to the administrative offices. Core facilities, including the gymnasium, will be located off the main entry and away from the classroom clusters to allow for community use without disturbing the academic spaces. New 21st century learning areas, including a Learning Commons and Student Union, have been incorporated into the design.

What is a Learning Commons?

The Learning Commons will be a flexible, multi-functional space which will provide students with opportunities to develop 21st century learning skills such as collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. The Learning Commons will include the library and media center, with a circulation desk and stacks for books, a computer lab, breakout areas for small group work, interactive white boards, display areas, and quiet areas for reading. It will be centrally located in the new building, allowing for both student and community use during non-school hours.

What is a Student Union?

The Student Union will be made up of the cafeteria, kitchen, servery, and school store. The cafeteria and servery will be designed to provide multiple food options and shorter lines. The Student Union will provide another area within the building for students to develop critical interpersonal skills, such as communication and collaboration, facilitated by movable walls which will open to the art and technology shops to provide spaces for project-based learning. It will also be available for community use after school hours.

Will there be new furniture and equipment in the school?

Yes, furniture and equipment will be upgraded and replaced as necessary and possible as part of the new school project.

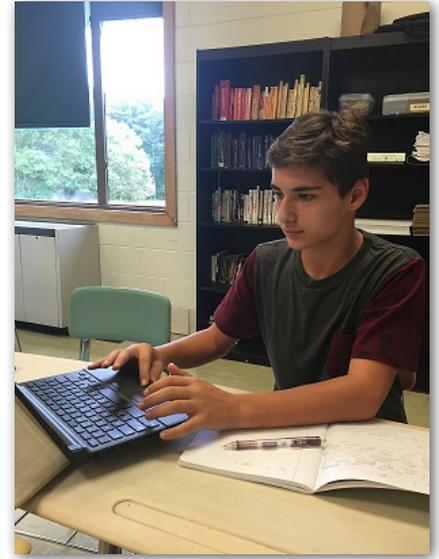


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What technology improvements will be included in the new school?

Technology improvements will be made throughout the new school facility including wall-mounted televisions in common areas for announcements and updates, and dedicated outlets at teachers' desks for computers and printers. Classrooms and the Learning Commons will have interactive white boards with projectors directly connected to teachers' computers. The electrical system will be designed to support all technology improvements. Building security measures will also be improved including the installation of security cameras, key card access systems, and a direct fire alarm connection to the Barrington Fire Department.



Will the new building meet all Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) requirements?

Yes. This project is one of the first projects in the state moving forward under the new RIDE requirements. RIDE has stated, "The School Building Authority will ensure that all approved projects provide high quality learning environments, conserve natural resources, consume less energy, are easier to maintain, and provide educationally appropriate school facilities." The school will meet the State's requirements, including minimum room sizes and energy efficiencies.

Will the building meet LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) standards for energy efficiency?

As part of the RIDE requirements, the project must meet the Northeast Collaborative for High Performance Schools (NE-CHPS) guidelines for energy efficiencies and sustainable design. The NE-CHPS requirements are equivalent to LEED for Schools Silver Certification. All opportunities for sustainable and efficient design will be reviewed and evaluated for effectiveness, cost and return on investment. Examples of sustainable design options include high efficiency HVAC and electrical systems, LED lighting fixtures, daylighting controls, areas for bicycle storage, use of recycled and low VOC emitting materials, and rooftop solar photovoltaic panels.

Will the new building be air conditioned?

The majority of the new building will have some level of air conditioning, with the exception of the kitchen and custodial areas. Classrooms will be partially air conditioned by a displacement dehumidification ventilation system that can maintain indoor air temperatures of approximately 78 degrees and humidity levels of approximately 55%. Locker rooms will be dehumidified to levels similar to that of classrooms. Other spaces, including the gym, cafeteria, auditorium, media center, and administrative offices will be air conditioned.

A displacement ventilation and air conditioning system is a flexible and efficient method of air distribution which can be used to improve air quality and thermal comfort in school facilities. It is also one of the most utilized systems for new school construction in recent years. Fresh air is delivered at the lower level of rooms, including two-story spaces, and moves upward where it is exhausted. As a result, students are consistently breathing fresh air. This natural flow of air works allows for smaller cooling equipment as well. Displacement ventilation systems are energy efficient and are the preferred air distribution method of the Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS). A brochure highlighting information about displacement ventilation systems can be found at www.BMSPROJECT.org.

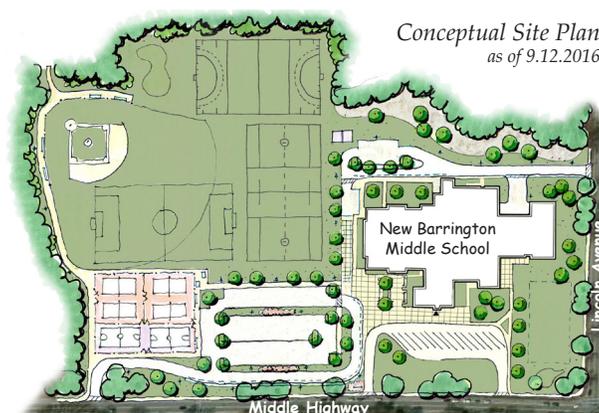


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Will there be new athletic fields?

Yes, new athletic fields will be constructed on the site of the existing facility, once it has been demolished. Athletic fields will include a baseball diamond, and multi-use fields appropriate for soccer, lacrosse, and field hockey, among other activities. Each field will be regulation size. Additional outdoor athletic facilities include a smaller general activity field along Lincoln Avenue, regulation tennis courts, basketball courts, and the ball wall. At this time, there are no plans for lighting of the athletic fields. The Barrington Public Schools will continue to work collaboratively with the Town to address the athletic field needs during the construction process.



FINANCES

What is the cost of this project?

In May 2016, the Barrington School Committee set a “not-to-exceed” budget of \$68.4 million for the Barrington Middle School building project. The total project cost is still being determined as conceptual plans are refined during the schematic design process. The recommended project budget includes both construction costs and soft costs.

What are soft costs?

Soft costs, as part of the total project cost, are the added costs that are not directly associated with the construction of the building or with the sitework. These costs may include, but are not limited to, demolition of the existing building, required testing of the ground or existing building (e.g., for hazardous materials), purchase of furniture, required permits from the town or the state, architectural and engineering fees, and insurance. These costs vary based on the size and scope of a project.

What is the cost to demolish the existing building?

Upon completion of the new school, the estimated cost to demolish the existing building is \$3.8 million. This includes the safe removal of hazardous materials as well as the actual demolition of the structure.

Is this project eligible for any reimbursement from the State?

Yes. School construction projects are eligible to receive what is called “housing aid reimbursement.” The minimum state share ratio for housing aid set by law is 35%. The share ratio, or housing aid reimbursement rate, is calculated based on the district’s “ability to pay,” with the state share ratio determined annually. The Town of Barrington will be reimbursed a minimum 35% of eligible project costs by the State of Rhode Island. This reimbursement, estimated to be \$16 million, was approved by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) in May 2016. If specific energy efficient design goals are met, the estimated reimbursement may be increased to 39%.

How does RIDE determine eligible construction costs for reimbursement?

Costs of the project that are eligible for reimbursement include those associated with the design and construction of a school building in accordance with RIDE’s approved square footage per student ratio. RIDE’s approved square footage per student ratio for a middle school is 160 SF per student. The total eligible square footage is based on RIDE approved student enrollment and the RIDE square footage per student ratio. RIDE uses a cost factor of \$330 per SF. The reimbursement calculation for the Barrington Middle School project is as follows:



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| RIDE Approved Enrollment: | 841 |
| RIDE SF Allotment per Student: | <u>x160</u> |
| | 134,560 |
| RIDE Cost/SF: | <u>x\$330</u> |
| Eligible Costs: | \$44,404,800 |

Since the proposed project is a new facility, additional eligible costs include costs associated with furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E), and technology.

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| RIDE Approved Enrollment: | 841 |
| FF&E Rate Factor: | <u>x\$2400</u> |
| | \$2,018,400 |

Total Eligible Costs: \$44,404,800 + \$2,018,400 = \$46,423,200

Minimum State Reimbursement: \$46,423,200 x 35% = \$16,248,120

Maximum State Reimbursement: \$46,423,200 x 39% = \$18,105,048

Ineligible costs include any costs for construction in excess of the approved square footage, demolition of existing facilities, and legal services.

How does the proposed budget for the new Barrington Middle School compare with other recent middle school projects in Rhode Island or nearby Massachusetts?

Because of the moratorium on state reimbursement for new school construction in Rhode Island, there have been no new middle school construction projects available for comparison. The Barrington Middle School building project proposal has a “not to exceed” cost of \$68.4 million, with an estimated \$480 cost per square foot. Ten new middle schools were approved in Massachusetts with a project start date on or after January 1, 2014, with total project costs ranging from \$44.5 million - \$110.7 million, and \$415 - \$609 per square foot.

Will the district look for grants and financial incentives to pay for energy efficiencies?

Yes. As the design process proceeds and sustainable design elements and energy efficient systems are evaluated, the Building Committee and the design team will explore all options for grants and refunds to help offset costs.

THE PROCESS

How was the plan for the new building developed?

A three day “visioning” session for the new Barrington Middle School was held in October 2015 with members of the Barrington Public Schools administration, staff, and teachers, as well as representatives of the community, Town administration, parents, and the architect’s design team. The session was facilitated by renowned educational facility planner Dr. Frank Locker. The session examined educational trends, best practices, and issues affecting the delivery of a rigorous, well-rounded middle school education, and addressed overarching themes as identified by participants. As a result of these sessions, participants conceived a preliminary diagram of the desired overall organization of a new middle school which best represented agreed-upon values and themes. These themes included flexibility, small learning communities, collaboration, and innovation. The architect’s design team utilized the organizational diagram as a basis to develop the plan for the school within the available area on the existing site. In other words, the educational goals, as envisioned by the Barrington community, drove the design of the proposed building.



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Why not just renovate the existing building?

A study was completed of existing building conditions was completed in 2010 and updated in 2015. Concepts for both a new facility and renovation of the existing building were developed and evaluated as part of the initial evaluation and schematic design process. The estimated cost to construct an addition to and renovation of the existing building to meet all current codes, including seismic and ADA accessibility compliance, were more expensive (\$89.6 million) than construction costs for a new facility (\$80.7 million estimate at the time). Another significant factor was the timeline for the addition and renovation project. Because construction would have to be phased in over time, a longer duration of time was required for completion of the project (approximately 3 years) causing disruption to the education of students. In addition, temporary trailers would be required to provide swing space at an estimated rental cost of \$1 million and an escalation of a minimum \$50,000 annually.

Why weren't some of the problems and deficiencies in the existing middle school corrected over the years?

The Barrington Public Schools has addressed several deficiencies as required over the past 20 years with a focus on health and safety for the students and staff. The District has maintained the school to the best of its ability and was commended by the Rhode Island Department of Education for its efforts. The major deficiencies exceed repairs and regular maintenance needs that are a result of the overall building structure; in addition, renovations were required to meet Rhode Island codes and RIDE Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education standards.

BASIC REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE WITHOUT STATE FUNDING: THE "GO IT ALONE" OPTION

What happens if the project is not approved at referendum on November 8th?

If the new building project is not supported at referendum, the alternative option is to "Go It Alone," i.e., to make necessary upgrades and repairs to the existing building with no state reimbursement. The Barrington Public Schools would have to proceed with a series of self-funded capital projects to address maintenance of a building that does not meet the district's long-term educational or financial goals.

Repairs would not be eligible unless the district were to pursue another RIDE Necessity of Construction approval, or in case of an emergency, were to seek sought an emergency approval under the Commissioner's authority to approve projects under \$500,000.

The Barrington Public Schools will continue to maintain and repair the existing building and invest in necessary capital repairs and upgrades without guarantee of state reimbursement.

Required Maintenance and Upgrade Costs for BMS:

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| ADA Compliance & Statutory: | \$ 1,750,883 |
| Electrical, Plumbing & HVAC: | \$ 3,547,589 |
| Exterior, Roof & Grounds: | \$ 1,455,924 |
| Interior: Ceilings, Floors, Walls, etc.: | <u>\$ 4,217,064</u> |
| Total: | \$10,971,460 |

These capital projects include basic infrastructure, maintenance and safety updates required to comply with modern fire codes and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA.) ***These repairs and maintenance upgrades would simply stabilize the existing building systems and structures at a cost of nearly \$11 million.*** Some furniture at Barrington Middle School is over 40 years old and would not be replaced. This cost does not provide for any modernization of the educational facility, including upgrades to technology, classrooms, or science laboratories. In addition, all athletic fields and courts would remain in their current condition.



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Building construction costs have exceeded the Consumer Price Index Rate of Inflation over the last several years. Based on an escalation factor of 3.5%, the construction cost for a new Barrington Middle School is estimated to increase by a minimum of \$2 million annually for every year the project is delayed. The existing middle school will become increasingly limited in its ability to support innovative teaching practices associated with a rigorous middle school education that prepares students for success in high school, college and career.

For more information, visit www.bmsproject.org.