

CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Jay Lang, Ed.D., Superintendent

May 16, 2022

Re: Middle School Grade Reconfiguration Input Session

Dear Parents,

The district engaged the services of Dore & Whittier Architects this past fall to return to Chelmsford and update their work performed in 2016 to conduct a comprehensive districtwide facilities assessment and develop a short- and long-term capital plan for the Chelmsford Public Schools. The 2016 assessment has been helpful in prioritizing annual capital improvements in the schools as well as to support an application to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for a potential new school project in Chelmsford. After our initial work in 2016, the district prioritized a potential new high school project for funding consideration by the MSBA, however we have been unsuccessful in advancing a high school project based on MSBA guidelines and the fact that our high school is well maintained and in far better condition than other high schools we are competing with for funding consideration.

Taking into consideration Dore & Whittier's work this past fall, the administration and school committee changed course and decided to prioritize a middle school project as a priority project for funding consideration by the MSBA. We submitted a statement of interest (application) to the MSBA in April for funding consideration of a middle school project and hope to be invited into the MSBA funding pipeline over the next year to further discuss the need and value of a middle school project in Chelmsford. When our application receives funding consideration from the MSBA, we will need to engage the community in discussions about the preferred size of a new school, grade levels to be served, and financial and operational considerations with our preferences. This is a long-term capital project for the town, even if successful in our first application to the MSBA for funding consideration, a new school project takes 6+ years to complete given the various stages of review and approval required for such a project.

As we await a decision on our recent application to the MSBA, Dore and Whittier pointed out a number of short-term (1 – 3 year) concepts that are worthwhile and require exploring that may provide more equitable programs and services to students districtwide while awaiting a long-term new school construction project. One concept to consider in the short-term is a reconfiguration of our two middle schools, from two (2) buildings each serving students in grades 5 – 8, to one (1) building serving students in grades 5 – 6, and one (1) building serving students in grades 7 – 8. There are a number of educational and operational benefits to such a concept, as also identified by DMGroup, the consultants working with the district to develop a new multi-year strategic plan for the Chelmsford Public Schools. Earlier this spring I convened a working group of teachers and staff from McCarthy and Parker Middle Schools to examine the concept of merging the town-wide middle school populations and creating a separate grade 5-6

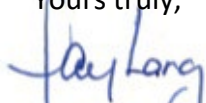
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and separate grade 7-8 middle school. The discussions were helpful to identify potential benefits as well as drawbacks to such an endeavor.

I am going to hold two information and listening sessions for parents who may be interested in hearing more about this potential middle school reconfiguration and welcome your input and thoughts on the matter. As I know the spring is a busy time of year for families, I plan to hold an in-person and a virtual session to allow for maximum participation of interested community members. If you wish to hear more about this topic, please join me for either or both sessions. The session information is below. The remote session will be recorded and posted to the CPS website for viewing after the event.

Yours truly,



Jay Lang, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

In-Person Option

Monday May 23, 2022

6:00 p.m.

McCarthy Middle School – Library

250 North Road

Chelmsford, MA 01824

Remote Option

Tuesday May 24, 2022

6:00 p.m.

Link: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1293936492989851663>