



Franklin Public Schools

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL FACILITIES RECOMMENDATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated May 7, 2024

We will continue to update this document. If the recommendation for Comprehensive School Facilities is approved, more detailed plans will be developed and shared.

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Topics	Questions	Answers/Resources
1. Process	1. What is the timeline for this process?	<p>The information below provides an outline of the planning process, which will be further developed pending the School Committee’s vote on the recommended plan.</p> <p><b>Spring/Summer 2024 (pending approval)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Finalized leadership structures at each school.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Administration, instructional, and behavioral support and structures</li></ul></li><li>● School Assignments</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Students - Determine school assignments for all K-5 students utilizing data from the redistricting analysis and other information. To minimize impacts, consider former Davis Thayer students entering 5th grade who were directly impacted by the closure.</li><li>○ Staff - Collaborate with the Franklin Educators Association to establish a school placement process for staff members to submit placement preferences in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement.</li><li>● Special Education - Finalize special education programming and in-district-specialized programs<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Students will receive the support and services they need as outlined in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Adhering to the IEP helps ensure that students with disabilities receive the necessary accommodations and services to help them succeed academically and socially.</li><li>○ Specialized programs will be located in each school to service students within their community school when possible.</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>2024-25 School Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Finalize educator assignments and notify staff members</li><li>● Traffic and Bussing - Continue collaborating with the Town Engineer and other consultants to develop traffic recommendations considering arrival and dismissal times at each school.</li><li>● Collaborate with school and level-based teams to build master schedules for the K-2, 3-5, and 6-8 schools.</li><li>● Engage in the capital procurement process to complete short-term capital projects.</li><li>● Contract with the moving company to develop a K-8 moving plan consistent with previous moves from DT and FHS,</li></ul> <p><b>Summer 2025</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Execute district moving plan</li><li>● Finalize individual class placement and student schedules and notify families</li><li>● Finalize bus routes and notify families</li><li>● Complete short-term capital projects</li></ul>
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	2. How will students be supported through this process?	Resources, including sample narratives and stories, will be developed to guide students during the transition. Additionally, opportunities for students to come together as a new school community prior to the start of the 2025-26 school year will be scheduled.
	3. How will parents/guardians be supported through the process?	The district is committed to providing regular, ongoing communication as new information becomes available. Upon the formation of school-based leadership teams and school assignments, we will continue to share district and school-specific information to support families and establish new Parent Communication Councils, as well as school councils with requests for representatives to serve on these councils.
	4. When will families know which school their child will attend?	If the recommendation is approved, students' school assignments will occur during the 2024-25 school year once the school attendance lines are established.
<b>2. Community</b>	1. In general, how will the sense of community be preserved?	Our goal is to maintain students' connectedness to school and community. The proposed plan identifies smaller communities within schools by having K-2 and 3-5 schools in the same building and teaming at the middle level, including a dedicated area for incoming 6th-grade students.

		<p>Currently, one of our K-5 elementary schools has 565 students enrolled and has established a strong community. This school is larger than any projected elementary school in the recommendation.</p> <p>Having our schools come together and chart their course as a newly established school community with an opportunity to form new cultures that represent all members. Establishing a new culture will be one of the priority goals in the first year. All K-8 students and families will play important roles in rebranding our schools. This includes choosing new school names and mascots. Values and traditions may be preserved or rebranded within new school communities. New PCCs will be established in each school.</p>
	2. How will small learning communities be preserved?	<p>Small learning communities will be preserved in several ways. One example at the elementary level may be to group grade-level classrooms within the building and group them into smaller teams. At the middle level, teaming will be preserved and supported by a schedule that includes opportunities for advisory and team time. There is also an emphasis on placing 6th grade, 7th, and 8th grade students together in dedicated areas.</p> <p><a href="#">April 30, 2024 Comprehensive School Facilities Assessment Presentation</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slides 15-16 for visual reference.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Student Support</b>	1. Will current staffing levels be maintained?	<p>Our objective is to provide continuous support and services to students while seeking opportunities to improve academic and social-emotional support. The School Committee has approved a budget that aims to stabilize and restore the District by prioritizing class sizes and the number of teacher sections. By consolidating and unifying schools, we can create teams of counselors, instructional support, and leadership support to enhance services that directly impact students and staff at each school.</p>
	2. What will the impact on class size be?	<p>Creating more grade-level sections allows us to balance class size and absorb enrollment fluctuations moving forward. For example, we currently have grades ranging from two sections in one elementary school and five in another school. Distributing students across five sections allows us to better predict sectioning and account for fluctuations at the K-5 level.</p>
	3. What is the impact on specialized programs?	<p>Specialized programs would be located in each school, with the goal of servicing students within their community school when possible.</p>
	4. How is curriculum, instruction, and assessment impacted?	<p>The district continues to work to ensure that all students have access to a rigorous and engaging curriculum and high-quality instructional materials. We anticipate being able to more efficiently provide targeted professional learning opportunities and tiered supports based on student needs.</p>

	5. Will teachers follow the students?	To the extent possible, we work to ensure students have familiar teachers in their new schools and the opportunity to expand their social connections and meet new teachers.
	6. How will students who were impacted by the Davis Thayer school closure be considered?	Plans to minimize impacts on the future 5th-grade students reassigned with the closure of Davis Thayer School will be prioritized. This consideration would only apply to those students directly impacted by this move.
	7. What after-school opportunities does a larger middle school give students?	A unified middle school provides students with increased opportunities to grow socially with peers and access combined/expanded clubs and activities, providing an opportunity to enhance their experience.
<b>4. Transportation/Traffic</b>	1. What will the bus plan look like?	<p>School bus routes will be developed using our transportation software to create the safest, most efficient routes. Our goal is to minimize student seat time.</p> <p>Given that each school's attendance area would expand, we anticipate an increased number of bus routes assigned to each school. Unifying middle schools will likely result in routes similar to those currently in our high schools.</p>
	2. The 2020 report scenario that considered closing Davis Thayer and Kennedy Elementary Schools stated that the utilization rate increases and vehicular routes from Kennedy to Helen Keller made the option not viable. Can you provide more information about how the recommendation has students from the Kennedy district area attending Keller?	The 2020 option considered in the report is not the same proposal presented in 2024. The 2020 option assumed other school attendance areas would not change. The current recommendation includes a comprehensive reorganization of all elementary and middle school students in the plan. Multiple options were considered, including those reviewed in 2020 and additional scenarios this year.

	3. How will additional traffic be addressed?	<p>The district has consulted the town engineer and the KBA architects regarding traffic. Both teams recommended further review and development of mitigating strategies as a part of the planning process. Examples of such strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identifying anticipated heavy traffic areas/times and suggesting new traffic patterns</li> <li>● Considering the placement of traffic details to assist with the initial transition in the Fall of 2025.</li> <li>● Provide information to families on bus transportation as an option to decrease volume throughout town</li> <li>● Developing new arrival procedures and dismissal procedures to establish organized student drop off and pick up.</li> <li>● Expand the arrival window, offering families flexibility (e.g., supervised breakfast and before-school programming)</li> </ul> <p>Currently, the elementary school day starts at 8:30 am, which starts times between elementary, middle, and high school levels to the greatest extent possible to support traffic flow by offering supervised drop-off. There is also an opportunity to address current boundary lines with a cohort of Keller students and families who must travel through the Oak Street District to attend Keller ES.</p>
<b>5. Budget</b>	1. What is the connection between the Comprehensive Schools Facilities Assessment and the override?	<p>The Comprehensive Schools Facility Assessment and the override vote on June 11, 2024, are separate processes. However, both topics create solvency and sustainability for our school district. Our proposed budget recommendation of a Level Service Plus aims to stabilize and partially restore our previously cut positions and programs. The recommended plan provides the opportunity to create solutions to sustain and expand our support, services, and programming within our budget.</p> <p>*If an override passes, the School Committee's approved budget aims to stabilize and restore services and support in the District, which includes stabilizing our fee structure. As previously shared during our public budget meetings, if an override does not pass, we must restructure our fees to address the budget deficit, which could include an increase to all fee-based programs, including the potential of self-funding transportation, extra-curricular clubs and activities, student parking, and other fees.</p>
<b>6. Facilities</b>	1. Do the identified buildings have room to adequately educate these numbers of students? Is there room for growth?	<p>In 2023, the District contracted McKibben and Associates to update the Student Population and Forecast based on the 2020 census data and other post-pandemic factors and received an updated <a href="#">Student Population and Forecast</a> demonstrating a declining enrollment.</p> <p><a href="#">February 7, 2024 McKibben Demographic Report</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Slide 16 Franklin Public Schools Total Enrollment</li> </ul>

		<p>Simultaneously, Kaestle Boos and Associates (KBA) conducted a Facilities Assessment to determine the space, age, and life of school buildings; based on the information gathered, KBA determined there is adequate space in the Lincoln Street and Washington Street complexes to educate students in grades K-5 and in the Oak Street complex to educate students in grades 6-8 with room to absorb enrollment fluctuations.</p> <p><a href="#">March 26, 2024, FPS Comprehensive School Facilities Update</a></p>
	3. Why invest in the Oak St./Horace Mann complex?	Regularly scheduled maintenance and small projects would continue to ensure the Oak Street complex is suitable for students in grades 6-8.
	4. What is the plan to address safety in large buildings?	The safety of our staff and students is our utmost priority. Lincoln Street, Washington Street, and Oak Street complexes all have the most up-to-date security functions. We will continue to actively partner with Franklin Police and Fire to ensure the safety and security of our buildings. Regularly scheduled training and drills will continue, and internal Emergency Planning Protocols will be updated. Additionally, by unifying schools, we anticipate an increase in the presence of our School Resource Officers with more frequent visits from Ben and Frankie.
	5. What is the plan for short and long-term use of Kennedy School?	One opportunity is the expansion of early childhood programs. Educational Visioning established the need to serve more students before entering Kindergarten, hopefully achieving Universal PreK. Establishing a Franklin Child Care Facility could include a focus on prioritizing placements for children of FPS educators. By offering this service, the District can support the desire to expand PreK services as well as serve educators with affordable childcare options. It also serves as a valuable tool for staff recruitment and retention, ultimately strengthening the school community while generating revenue for the school district.
<b>7. Human Resources</b>	1. Does this impact teacher retention?	<p>Reallocating resources and supports at each school through consolidation and offering more sections of the same grade level stabilize our class sizes from enrollment fluctuation and create more budget sustainability moving forward. This strategy, paired with increased school funding based on the School Committee approving a budget that aims to stabilize and restore the District, allows us to prioritize class sizes within the recommended ranges and maintain the appropriate numbers of teacher sections.</p> <p>The district will minimize the number of staff reallocations to the extent possible in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement, thereby minimizing the impact on teacher retention.</p>
<b>8. Other</b>	1. When will bus routes be determined and	Bus routes are reviewed/revised annually. This information is typically shared with families in

	shared with families?	August. Under the circumstances, this task is included as part of our transition planning process.
	2. What is the impact on the Solutions before/after school program?	The Solutions before/after school program will continue at each elementary school building. Our goal is to maintain current staffing levels in the Solutions program and explore opportunities to expand staffing levels to meet the needs of the school community.
	3. What is the District's reorganization/redistricting recommendation overview?	<p><b>Unified Middle School</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Central location unifying all 6-8 students and staff</li> <li>● Allows for core curriculum teams at each grade with unified arts, special education, and counseling staff</li> <li>● 6th-grade wing creating a smaller community within the middle school (6th Grade Academy)</li> <li>● Supports vertical alignment with high school</li> </ul> <p><b>Partner Elementary Schools (each K-2 &amp; 3-5) in two locations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Partner schools minimize transitions for students (K-5 experience in one building).</li> <li>● Seven to eight sections per grade create opportunities for student and teacher collaboration.</li> <li>● Special education programs duplicated at North and South elementary complexes allow students to attend their district school with their peers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Early Childhood (PreK)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Existing ECDC to remain in the current school building.</li> <li>● Potential expansion opportunity at the existing Pond Street building</li> </ul>
	4. How will students be distributed to schools?	<p>The district will study student distribution throughout the Town of Franklin and create a new school attendance boundary line separating the north and south portions of the town. The newly established attendance area would inform K-5 student assignments for the 2025-26 school year. Consideration would be given to those future 5th-grade students reassigned with the closure of Davis Thayer School. This consideration would only apply to those students directly impacted by this move.</p> <p>All 6-8 middle school students would fall under the same attendance boundary with the unification of one middle school.</p>



		This work will be undertaken immediately, pending a School Committee vote.
	5. Dr. Locker referenced multiple reports during the April 30 School Committee meeting. Where can we find these reports?	<a href="#">Portrait of a Graduate</a> , <a href="#">Educational Visioning workshops</a> , <a href="#">Stakeholder Forums</a> are linked here. These reports will be included as appendices in the final Comprehensive School Facilities Report.