

Simsbury Board of Education

April 28, 2020



**COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE
EVERY DAY**

Facilities Master Plan



Facilities Master Plan

- Recap Public Forum Discussion
- Discuss Public Forum Feedback
- Review Current Options
- Next Steps

Facilities Master Plan – March 4th Public Forum

- Discussion of recent Board of Education activities ~ ruling out options for a new 5-6 school or a status quo approach (maintenance projects only).
- Review of neighborhood meetings ~ Community asked for focus on the educational aspect not just the buildings; many participants stated they will not support any school closing and noted that schools are outdated and at capacity.
- Staff & Community Survey ~ Results included a strong majority of faculty support for the 6-8 model, and mixed opinions from the community. Both surveys acknowledged that capital improvements are needed and would be generally supported as part of an affordable long-range plan.

Facilities Master Plan – Option 1

6th Grade Addition to HJMS + Latimer Lane”

- **1st Step** -- Constructing a 6th grade addition to the Henry James Memorial School and various improvements to the core (ex. cafeteria) spaces of the building + plan to “renovate as new” at Latimer Lane Elementary School.
- **Master Plan** -- This option eventually reconfigures, renovates, or adds to all five elementary schools, making them Kindergarten through fifth grade, geographically distributes the “Ready, Set, Go” special education program to three elementary schools, and has an option to add Pre-Kindergarten to each school.

Facilities Master Plan – Option 2

Elementary Renewal

- **1st Step** -- Maintain existing grade configuration and provide additions and renovations to Latimer Lane Elementary School.
- **Master Plan** -- This option eventually renovates , adds, or potentially proposes new construction at all five elementary schools, geographically distributes the “Ready, Set, Go” special education program to three elementary schools and has an option to add Pre-Kindergarten at each school.

Feedback from Public Forum

- Many stated that every discussion should be about how the plan will support the students, based on faculty input and reliance on the experts.
- Concerns were raised about the extent and frequency of redistricting.
- Several individuals cited national surveys and research both for and against the reconfiguration and location of 6th grade.
- Participants stated the need to communicate both cost and impact of Step 1 and the long-range plan (what projects will follow and when).

Feedback from Public Forum

- More thought and planning must be given to student's transitioning from one school to another.
- Comments were made about the capacity of schools and class size, stating some of the existing conditions are an embarrassment.
- Parents like the idea of Pre-Kindergarten in all elementary schools (positive vertical alignment and better use of specialists).

Next Steps

Over the next couple of months, we will continue to discuss the opportunities and challenges of the options being considered and plan to schedule more interactive discussions including

- Schedule Board of Education Curriculum Committee meeting to discuss the preferred placement for 6th grade.
 - Share outcomes of discussions with 6th grade teachers.
- Provide Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen with progress updates.
- Work with Board of Finance to model costs related to the reconfiguration options.