

PreK-12 Space Needs

Joint Select Board and School Committee Workshop

February 27, 2023

Lynsey Heffernan, Chair School Committee

Executive Summary

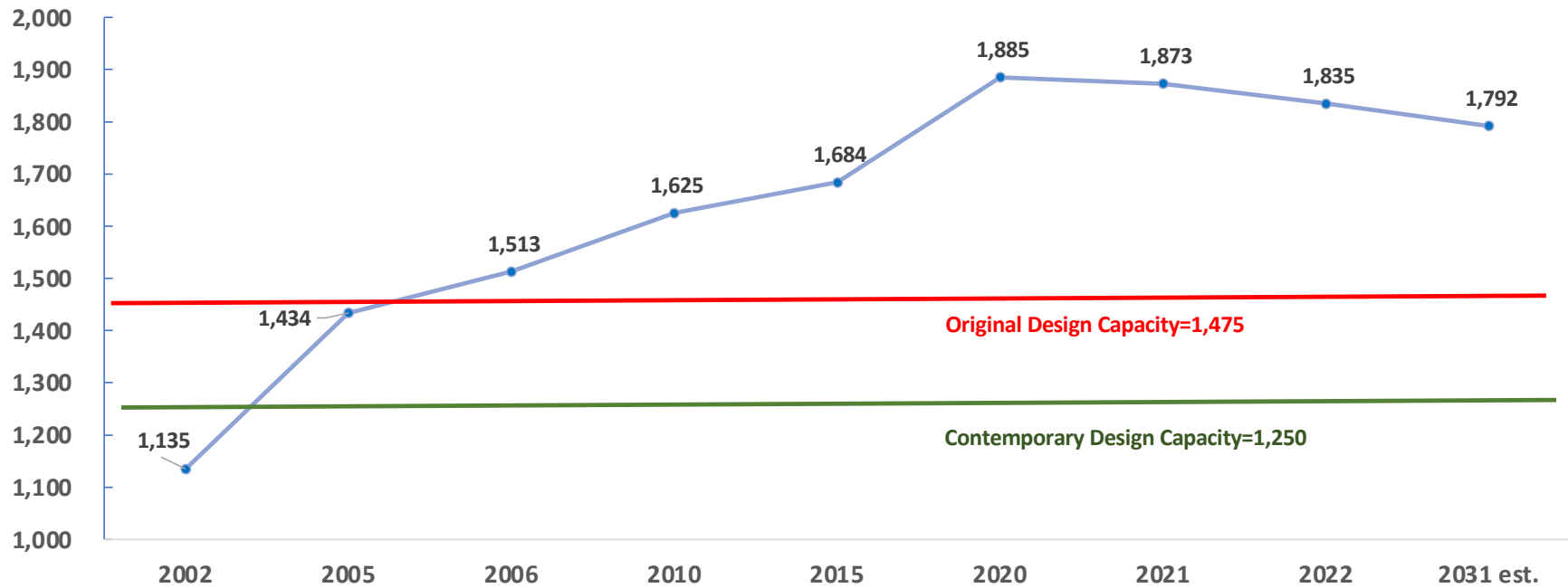
- After reviewing the PreK-12 Space Study, a proposed path forward would include two key steps:
 - The town should submit a statement of interest this Spring to the MSBA to add a significant addition to the High School to address chronic over-crowding resulting in diminished educational programming to meet our community's need.
 - Collectively, we form a Study Committee to consider how we want to address early childhood and elementary needs for the community, analyzing various configurations which have been presented.

High School Space Need

High School: Physical Needs

- The PreK-12 Space study, as a point in time assessment, determined that the High School as designed can serve 1,250 students, though enrollment today is at 1,821 students.
- This school has the greatest enrollment pressure today and is severely overcrowded.
- A renovation and addition of 87,669 square feet would alleviate that pressure.
- Per MSBA guidelines, the High School is deficient in space for “Core Academic Spaces,” “Special Education,” and in “Vocations & Technology” by nearly 86,900 square feet.
- “The academic and technology deficits should be the driver for any future space needs.”
- Additionally, lack of air conditioning limits the building’s use.

Shrewsbury High School Enrollment History



From the LPA PreK-12 Space Study

- “The academic and technology deficits should be the driver for any future space needs”
- **Core Academic Spaces:** Many classrooms undersized (especially science labs); Classrooms that do comply with guidelines are on the low end of the acceptable square footage range; Quantity is far from meeting need; No academic “Commons”
- **Special Education:** Many classrooms undersized; Classrooms that do comply with the guidelines are on the low end of the acceptable square footage range; Quantity is far from meeting need; Resource rooms are greatest deficiency by far
- **Vocations & Technology:** Some undersized technical classrooms remain; Original ‘shop’ spaces have been reallocated overtime for academic needs

High School: Educational Needs

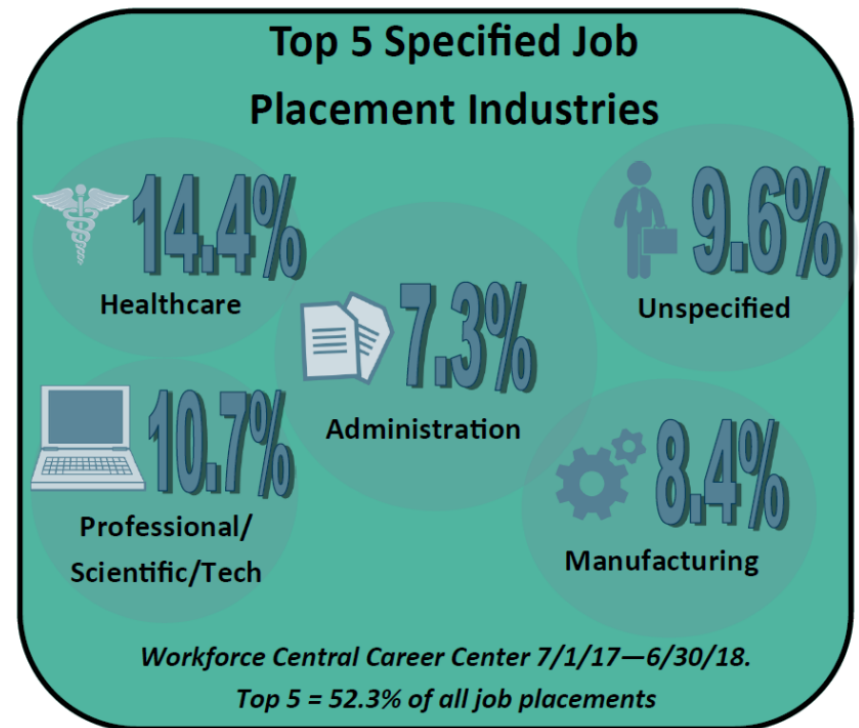
- No room for expanded academic programming, including
 - Electives for existing departments (we have fewer than peer schools in the humanities and we have very limited ability to offer students multiple STEM classes)
 - New academic programming (examples could include more business/ finance / entrepreneurship, computer science, graphic design, engineering, robotics, etc.)
- We have already had to cannibalize spaces to provide space for increased, mandated special education and English language education programming, and this will keep happening if these needs continue to grow
- The building was not designed to have the number of school (guidance) counselor offices for this size population, and does not have sufficient confidential spaces/offices for school adjustment counselors, the BRYT program (for students returning from hospitalizations, etc.); we have had to subdivide spaces in recent years

Vocational/ Hands-On Programming

- Clearly the community wants to see the town address the troubling lack of access for vocational programming. The state is not coming to our aid.
- The additional space at the High School would **not** create an Assabet-like program.
- However, additional space at the High School could include instructional space that can be designed for flexible use, including expansion of programs that could provide voke-tech educational experiences such as Project Lead the Way engineering or biotech, etc.
- Additional computer/technology lab space could expand options for graphic design, computer science and information technology, robotics/machining

Feasibility Study: Address “what” vocational programming

- If selected for the MBSA funding, the first step would be to complete a feasibility study.
- The School Department has already partnered with MassHire Central Region Workforce Board.
- Vocational/Hands-On opportunities should be tied to local job placement needs and opportunities



From MassHire website: CMWIB Impact Dashboard

MSBA Process Timeline

Dates below represent earlier/later possibilities for each step.

1. Submit SOI in April 2023
2. If MSBA sees it as viable, likely they would visit the site sometime in the fall
3. MSBA notifies us in Feb/Mar 2024 if we are invited into the eligibility pipeline
4. Special Town Meeting to allocate funding for the feasibility study: Fall/Winter 2024
5. Project team (architect and project manager) formed: by Jan/Apr 2025
6. Feasibility study completed: July/Dec 2025
7. Schematic design: Jan/Aug 2026
8. Project scope and budget and project funding agreement with MSBA: Mar 2026/Feb 2027
9. Special Town Meeting and Town Election for Debt Exclusion: Spring 2026/Spring 2027
10. Final design development and selection of builder: Feb 2027/Mar 2028
11. Construction completed: Spring 2029/Spring 2030

Tentative Key Municipal Process and Votes

If accepted by MSBA upon first submission*:

- Town Meeting: Between Fall to Winter 2024 for a Feasibility Study
- Town Meeting and Town Election on Debt Exclusion: Between Spring 2026 to Spring 2027
- Construction complete between Spring 2029 to 2030
- When does the bill hit the taxpayer?

*Delaying the MSBA process for a year will prolong the academic issues, provide no path forward for vocational programming and will increase costs.

Early Childhood & Elementary: Educational Needs Assessment

To prepare for the future, planning is needed to determine a best path forward for our youngest learners

Key Questions about Early Childhood and Elementary Educational Needs?

- In the future will the need for pre-school increase, either because of demand or will state/federal law require preschool?
- What is the best model for early childhood education in terms of size of the building? What are the benefits and trade offs with large elementary schools?
- Should Pre-K be folded into each elementary school or provided in a separate setting?
- What is the value of “neighborhood” elementary schools?
- How should equity fit into our thinking about elementary education?

Proposal: Form a Study Committee on Early and Elementary Education

- Charter a study committee to address the key questions on the previous slide and **to make recommendations** regarding our capital needs over the coming years.
- Invite members of the parent community to join, one from each school (Coolidge, Paton, Spring, Floral, Beal, Parker Road).
- Additional members representatives of the Select Board (2); School Committee (2); Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations; Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Elementary Principals, Department of Public Works (2-3), Town Manager and Superintendent
- Timing:
 - Potentially announce the formation of this Committee prior to May's Town Meeting.
 - This work will take time possibly as long as six-months

Goal of Study Committee:

- Create a transparent public process to discuss the future direction for early childhood and elementary capital spending.
- Recommendations from the Study Committee to be shared with the Select Board and the School Committee.
- These recommendations, and any additional municipal capital needs, could be folded into a longer-term Capital Plan

Additional Considerations

- What additional municipal capital needs, outside of the schools, need to be considered?
 - Schools account for 88.5% of the square footage of the public building division.
 - The other recommendations from the PreK-12 space study need to be considered in conjunction with all the municipal needs.
- Is there need for a comprehensive assessment of the capital needs for those remaining spaces during this time?

Possible Next Steps

- March 1- **School Committee:** LPA Presents findings of PreK-12 Space Study
- March 14- **Select Board:** School Committee members join to discuss space needs at the High School and across the district (Should LPA attend?)
- March 15- **School Committee:** Discussion of High School Need- Vote of SOI; Discussion of a Study Committee to assess Early Childhood and Elementary Space needs
- March 25- *School Committee Presents to Finance Committee-* Include discussion of space needs with a focus on the needs at the High School
- March 28- **Select Board:** School Committee members join to discuss High School Space need; Potentially vote on SOI for High School
- March 29- **School Committee:** Possibly vote to create Study Committee to commence later this Summer
- April 7 – Tentative Date for SOI to be completed. Due date is April 14.