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## READING SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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TO: Select Board  
FROM: Shawn Brandt, Reading School Committee Chair  
DATE: September 16, 2022  
TOPIC: Killam Feasibility Study – Warrant Article Introduction

Members of the Select Board,

Please accept the following background information, to appear in the warrant report and accompany the warrant article related to the Killam feasibility study for November's Subsequent Town Meeting.

Regards,

Shawn Brandt  
School Committee Chair

**Background:** The Killam Elementary School opened in 1969, and has not undergone any significant renovations since opening. While the facility has been well-maintained, it is now 53 years old and has a number of deficiencies. The building is not fully ADA-compliant, including bathrooms and entry points to some classrooms and common areas. The water fountains have been unusable for years due to lead levels, requiring the district to provide drinking water through expensive and wasteful water bottles. Many of the windows and doors are original to the school, so they are not energy efficient and create challenges with maintaining comfort levels. There is a fire alarm system, but no fire suppression system. Sightlines to the main doors are poor, presenting a security concern. Due to the age of the foundation, there have been some issues with water infiltration.

Programmatically, the building's configuration also presents many challenges. Some classrooms and common spaces are only accessible through other classrooms. The library / media center is an open space located at the "crossroads" of the building, which makes it difficult to maintain a quiet environment or use the space for special education or other services that may call for a degree of privacy. The needs of students and our understanding of how to provide appropriate interventions have changed over the many decades since Killam was built, and the building doesn't adequately support the space requirements for these needs. Tier 2 supports (such as small reading groups) are taking place in open settings, including hallways. Spaces originally intended for storage have been converted to offices and even learning spaces in some cases. The accessibility challenges of many of the building's spaces significantly limit the staff's ability to creatively use the building's footprint.

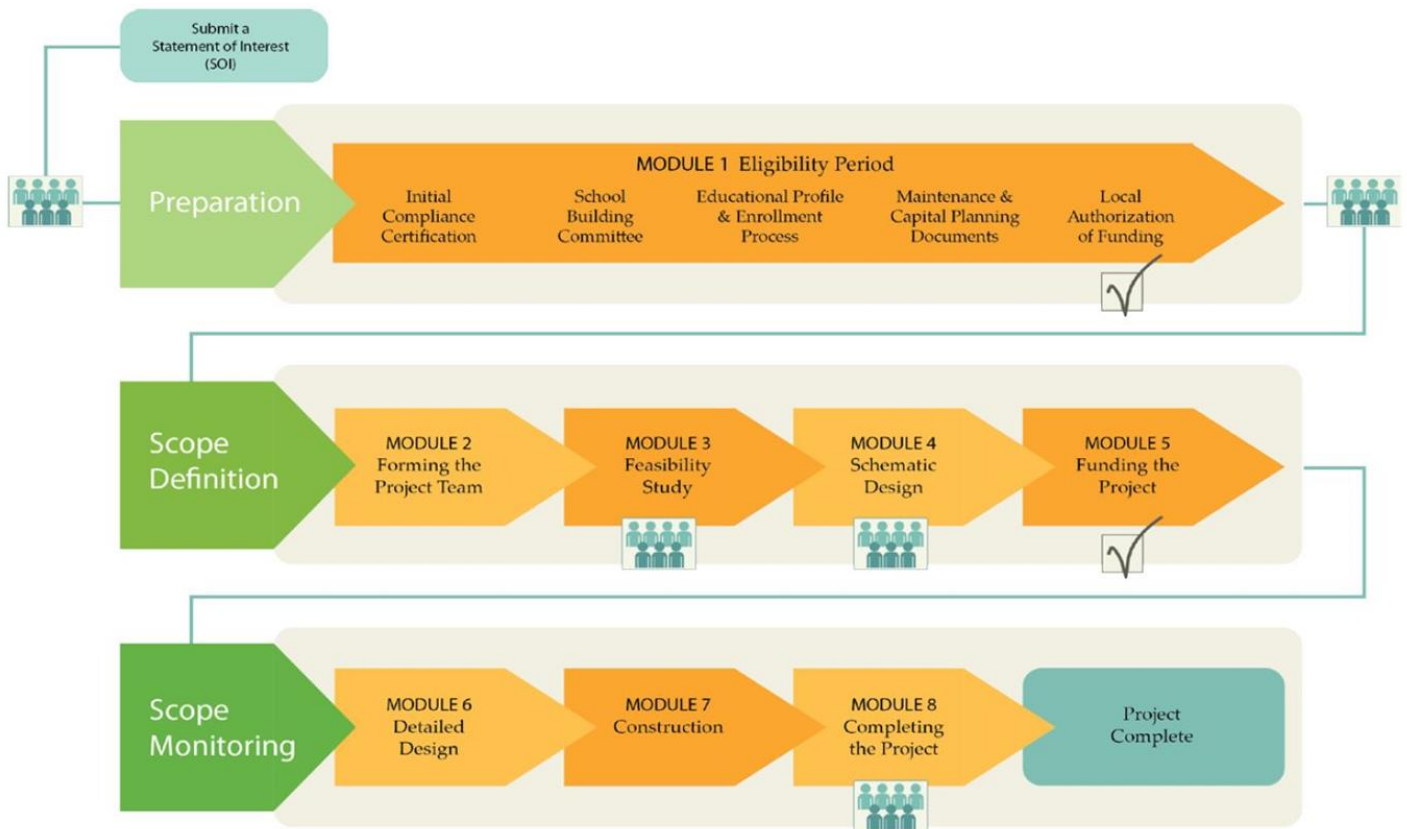
It could be possible to address some of these deficiencies through smaller renovation projects, but given the scope of the needs, it is likely that any significant renovations would reach a threshold of 20% of the building’s assessed value. This would trigger a number of compliance requirements that are currently grandfathered in (including ADA compliance). As a result, while renovations are a possible outcome of the MSBA process, a new building may be the more likely outcome.

The feasibility study will also consider solutions for other programmatic and space-related deficiencies in the district, including, but not limited to: relieving capacity constraints at other elementary schools; eliminating the need for modulars; creating a single site to house the RISE preschool program; allowing for possible future expansion of RISE as new mandates expand the eligibility for access to RISE services.

In March, Reading was fortunate to be invited by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to the Eligibility Period, opening the door to significant MSBA financial support for a renovation or rebuild of Killam. While the precise figures are to be determined, this program may provide reimbursement to the town for nearly half of the cost of any project. RPS and town staff have been working diligently over the last several months to meet the numerous requirements to graduate from the Eligibility Period into Modules 2-5, which will allow us to form a project team, conduct a feasibility study, develop a schematic design, and pursue town and MSBA approval to enter into an agreement around project scoping and funding.

This warrant article is among the final requirements for advancing beyond the Eligibility Period – specifically the “community authorization” requirement. It a) provides an affirmative vote from Town Meeting as an indication to the MSBA that the town is likely to support a project that emerges from the design phase, and b) provides the funding required to proceed through Modules 2-5, including hiring an Owner’s Project Manager (OPM), a designer, and paying for a number of analyses and studies related to the site that may be required.

The below visuals depict the stages of the MSBA process (this Town Meeting vote representing “Local Authorization of Funding” in Module 1) and a possible timeline for the overall project completion:



## Prospective MSBA Timeline

Eligibility Period/Preparation .....	270 days
June 1, 2022 through February 23, 2023	
Project Team (OPM, Designer) .....	150 days
Feasibility Study .....	300 days
Schematic Design .....	75 days
Project Scope & Funding .....	90 days
Final Design .....	1 year
Construction .....	1.5 years

**Total ~ 3.5 years**

\*The above are maximum allowed durations. Many steps will likely overlap, resulting in a shorter, 3.5-year timeframe.