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Reading Public Schools

Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow

To: Reading School Committee
From: John F. Doherty, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Date: November 7, 2019
CC: Gail S. Dowd, C.P.A., Chief Financial Officer
Joseph P. Huggins, Director of Facilities
Re: Elementary Enrollment and Space Study Update

At the November 7, 2019 School Committee meeting, Dale Gienapp, from Gienapp Associates will give an update on the Elementary Enrollment and Space Study. The study is now at a point where we would like to share with the Committee and the Community the different schemes that have been explored by Gienapp and reviewed by Mrs. Dowd, Mr. Huggins, and myself. In addition, we have shared these options and received feedback from Town Manager Bob LeLacheur and Permanent Building Committee Chair Patrick Tompkins.

Reasons to Proceed with a District Solution

Elementary Enrollment Growth at Killam and Birch Meadow-The New England Staff Development Council (NESDEC) was subcontracted by Gienapp to complete the enrollment study portion. What the study showed is that our preschool and elementary enrollment will be increasing over the next 10 years from the current enrollment (see chart below).

NESDEC Enrollment Projection (Last updated 4/22/2019)

Projected Enrollment in Grade Combinations*									
Year	PK-5	K-5	K-6	K-8	5-8	6-8	7-8	7-12	9-12
2018-19	1989	1854	2145	2844	1284	990	899	1950	1251
2019-20	2013	1897	2185	2828	1252	931	843	1882	1239
2020-21	2015	1898	2212	2787	1223	889	575	1824	1249
2021-22	2038	1920	2247	2844	1197	924	597	1780	1183
2022-23	2058	1937	2204	2839	1196	902	635	1781	1146
2023-24	2094	1974	2262	2851	1218	877	589	1704	1115
2024-25	2073	1952	2286	2837	1217	885	551	1640	1089
2025-26	2067	1944	2269	2886	1263	942	617	1684	1067
2026-27	2070	1946	2260	2913	1323	967	653	1719	1066
2027-28	2032	1907	2255	2888	1269	981	633	1717	1084
2028-29	2067	1941	2223	2879	1270	938	656	1738	1082

Moreover, the school districts that will be showing the most growth are Birch Meadow and Killam (see charts below), while the other elementary schools are showing flat growth over the next 5-10 years.

SCHOOL: BIRCH MEADOW ELEMENTARY
DATE: 4/30/2019
NESDEC HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED ENROLLMENTS

BIRTH YEAR	BIRTHS		SCHOOL YEAR	K	1	2	3	4	5	K-5 TOTAL
2009	268		2014-15	62	64	57	71	65	68	387
2010	236		2015-16	58	65	66	57	73	68	387
2011	231		2016-17	64	61	65	64	57	72	383
2012	272		2017-18	60	65	62	64	65	54	370
2013	269		2018-19	62	60	64	62	63	66	377
2014	248		2019-20	68	65	61	64	62	62	382
2015	267		2020-21	66	70	66	60	64	61	388
2016	295		2021-22	73	68	71	66	60	63	402
2017	239	(prov.)	2022-23	59	75	69	71	66	60	400
2018	275	(prov.)	2023-24	68	61	76	69	71	65	410

SCHOOL: J. WARREN KILLAM ELEMENTARY
DATE: 4/30/2019
NESDEC HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED ENROLLMENTS

BIRTH YEAR	BIRTHS		SCHOOL YEAR	K	1	2	3	4	5	K-5 TOTAL
2009	268		2014-15	67	69	81	74	87	62	440
2010	236		2015-16	77	66	75	79	75	88	460
2011	231		2016-17	66	74	64	70	76	73	423
2012	272		2017-18	66	67	81	61	68	77	420
2013	269		2018-19	79	63	67	80	57	66	412
2014	248		2019-20	77	83	64	67	80	56	426
2015	267		2020-21	74	79	85	61	67	79	445
2016	295		2021-22	82	77	80	85	61	66	451
2017	239	(prov.)	2022-23	67	85	77	80	85	60	454
2018	275	(prov.)	2023-24	77	69	86	77	80	84	472

Programmatic Changes at Preschool and Elementary-The chart below shows the changes in preschool, full day kindergarten, and special education program classroom needs since 2005. This is due to the number of students who require special education services at the preschool, the increase in students with disabilities in our special education programs, and the increase in enrollment for full day kindergarten. For example, at the October 18th School Committee Meeting, we discussed how the Compass program at Birch Meadow (for students who are on the autism spectrum) has grown from 1 full size classroom in 2015-16 to a projected need of 3 full size classrooms for the 2020-2021 school year. These programmatic needs have reduced the number of general classrooms available.

Program Change	Classrooms Allocated in 2005	Classrooms allocated in 2013	Classrooms Allocated in 2019-20 School Year	Classrooms Needed in 2020-2021 School Year
Full Day Kindergarten	5	10	14	14
Special Education Programs (Not Including Learning Centers)	1	6	9 Full Size Classrooms 6 Inclusion Classrooms 3 Small Classrooms	10 Full Size Classrooms 6 Inclusion Classrooms 3 Small Classrooms
RISE Preschool	5	7	8	8

Program Changes Since 2005 and Future Needs
(Based on Current Trends)

Review of Schemes

At the November 7th Meeting, Dale Gienapp, Joe Huggins, Gail Dowd, and I will present and discuss the different options or schemes currently being reviewed. Below is a summary of each of the schemes. In developing the schemes, Gienapp Associates used the following assumptions:

- No option was off the table, including reducing or adding to the number of elementary schools, going to a different grade configuration other than K-5, and redistricting
- The study used the projections in the NESDEC report
- Full Day Kindergarten will be for all students at some point in the future (currently at 90% enrollment)
- Modularity would not be included as part of the classroom space needed
- Preschool enrollment is assumed to have a capacity of 175 students
- Structurally, a second floor could not be built on any of the existing schools

Note: The project cost listed in parentheses is the total project cost which is the estimated construction cost plus the cost of design and oversight during the project. All costs are 2019 estimates and are not projected to a future construction date.

Scheme A (\$68.7 million)- Killam is demolished for a new two story 625 student school. The other four schools will have some redistricting to Killam to alleviate existing pressure on their schools.

- The capacity of the elementary district would be 2024 students.
- Preschool would remain at the High School and Wood End. Some preschool classes would also go to Killam.
- Additional staffing would be needed at Killam (Assistant Principal, Custodian, Specialists)
- Additional bussing would be needed due to some redistricting
- Redistricting impact is medium
- Killam Field would be impacted to build new school

- Increased traffic at Killam due to larger school
- Increased utility costs

Scheme B (\$85.8 million)- Killam is demolished for a new two story 660 student school which includes all preschool. Birch Meadow receives a 20,000 square foot addition for its growth and additional Reading growth.

- The capacity of the elementary district would be 2008 students, with high school preschool it would be 2108.
- All preschool classes will be moved to Killam, freeing up space at RMHS and Wood End to be used for classrooms.
- Additional staffing would be needed at Killam (Assistant Principal, Custodian, Specialists).
- Additional staffing would be needed at Birch Meadow (.5 Assistant Principal, .5 Custodian, .5 Secretary, Specialists)
- Additional bussing would be needed due to some redistricting
- Redistricting impact is medium
- Killam Field would be impacted to build new school
- Increased traffic at Killam and Birch Meadow due to larger schools
- Increased utility costs

Scheme C (\$59.8 million)- Killam is gutted and renovated into a 500 student school. A portion of the school is demolished to provide two stories to eliminate the modular classrooms and gain more classroom space. Birch Meadow receives a 20,000 square feet addition for its growth and additional Reading growth.

- The capacity of the elementary district would be 2006 students
- Preschool would remain at the High School and Wood End. Some preschool classes could go to Killam
- Additional staffing would be needed at Killam (Assistant Principal, Custodian, Specialists)
- Additional staffing would be needed at Birch Meadow (.5 Assistant Principal, .5 Custodian, .5 Secretary, Specialists)
- Additional bussing would be needed due to some redistricting
- Redistricting impact is low
- Killam Field may be impacted to build new school if renovation is not an option
- Students may need to be relocated during construction
- Increased traffic at Killam and Birch Meadow due to larger schools
- Increased utility costs

Scheme D (\$31.2 million + cost for a 6th site)- Killam is gut-renovated. Pre-K and Kindergarten is moved to a 6th site in town. All current elementary schools would become Grade 1-5 schools.

- The capacity of the elementary district would be 1733 students, not including kindergarten
- All preschool classes will be moved to the sixth site, freeing up space at RMHS and Wood End to be used for classrooms
- Preschool Director position would be upgraded to an early childhood principal position.

- Additional staffing would be needed at 6th site including custodians, library media specialist, nurse, technician, school psychologist, specialists
- Additional bussing would be needed for all K students that live greater than 2 miles from sixth site.
- Redistricting impact is low. Only kindergarten would be impacted.
- Killam Field may be impacted to build new school if renovation is not an option
- Students may need to be relocated during construction
- Increased utility costs

Scheme E (\$89 million)- Killam is demolished for a 660 student 3PK-1st grade school for the entire district (the other 3PK will be housed at Wood End). Birch Meadow receives a 20,000 square foot addition for growth.

- The capacity of the elementary district would be 2159 students
- Preschool classes would be at Killam and WE only, freeing up space at RMHS
- Additional staffing would be needed at Killam (Assistant Principal, Custodian) and Birch Meadow (Custodian)
- Additional bussing would be needed
- Redistricting impact is high. Grade 2-5 would be relocated from Killam.
- Killam Field will be impacted to build new school.
- Increased utility costs
- Increased traffic at Killam and Birch Meadow

Scheme F (\$102.7 million)- Birch Meadow is demolished or vacated. Reading becomes a 4 elementary school town. As a result, Killam is demolished and becomes a 650 student school. Wood End receives an addition to become a 630 student school.

- The capacity of the elementary district would be 1971 students
- Preschool classes would remain at RMHS and WE.
- Eliminating a school will result in the savings of the following positions.
 - Difference between a Principal salary and an Assistant Principal salary (approximately \$20,000).
 - 1.0 Library Media Specialist (approximately \$70,000)
 - All other staff would be deployed to Killam and WE
- Killam and WE will each need a full time Assistant Principal and a full time custodian
- Additional bussing would be needed
- Redistricting impact is medium.
- Killam Field will be impacted to build new school.
- Increased utility costs
- Increased traffic at Killam
- Increased traffic and parking issues at Wood End

Scheme G (\$120 million)- Birch Meadow is demolished or vacated. Reading becomes a 4 elementary school town. As a result, Killam is demolished and becomes a 750 student school. Wood End receives an addition to become a 660 student school.

- The capacity of the elementary district would be 2101 students
- Preschool classes would be relocated from RMHS to Wood End and Killam, freeing up space for classrooms.
- Eliminating a school and moving PreK will result in the following positional savings.
 - Difference between a 1.0 FTE Principal salary and a 1.0 FTE Assistant Principal salary (approximately \$20,000)
 - 1.0 FTE Library Media Specialist (approximately \$70,000)
 - All other staff would be deployed to Killam and WE from Birch Meadow and PreK at High School
- Additional bussing would be needed
- Redistricting impact is high. Birch Meadow students would be redistricted to Killam and Wood End. Other redistricting may occur from the other schools.
- Killam Field will be impacted to build new school.
- Increased utility costs because additional square footage is added at two schools.
- Increased traffic at Killam
- Increased traffic and parking issues at Wood End

Scheme H (\$128.7 million)- Birch Meadow is demolished for a new 430 Pre-K and K school. Killam is demolished for a new 650 student school. All elementary schools would be Grades 1-5.

- The capacity of the elementary district would be 2081 students
- Preschool classes would be relocated from RMHS, freeing up space for classrooms.
- Additional staffing costs would be close to neutral.
- Additional bussing would be needed for kindergarten and students originally at Birch Meadow who live greater than two miles to Killam or Wood End.
- Redistricting impact is high.
- Killam Field will be impacted to build new school.
- Increased utility costs
- Increased traffic at Killam and Birch Meadow
- Relocation of BM students during construction

Other Options-This study did not review only redistricting with no additional construction, renting classroom space or moving an additional grade to the middle school to create 5-8 schools. Some thoughts on those options are below.

- **Redistricting**-With the increased need for programmatic space over the last several years, combined with future projected enrollment increases, redistricting is not an option because all of our schools are at or over capacity. There are currently no additional classrooms available to accommodate future programmatic or enrollment needs. At the October 17th School Committee meeting, we requested funding for 2 to 3 classrooms for next year to address special education program needs and enrollment needs because we do not have any available space in the district.
- **Renting Classroom Space**-Renting classroom space, if available, would be an annual recurring cost to the operating budget, both for the rental costs, and any additional transportation required if a student lives more than two miles from the rented space. In

addition, the space would need to be equipped with adequate technology, classroom furniture, and other educational needs. Core space for art, music, physical education, recess, and lunch would need to be a part of any rented space. Due to special education laws and regulations, special education programs could not be moved offsite by themselves to rented space.

- **Moving an additional grade to the middle schools**-Moving Grade 5 to Parker and Coolidge would require each school to add additional classroom space and core facilities (Gym, Art, Music, Technology, Special Education). At Parker, 10 classrooms would need to be added (plus core facilities) and at Coolidge, an additional 8 classrooms would need to be added (plus core facilities) to accommodate an additional 300 + students.

Why Killam is part of any scheme listed-As stated above, each of the schemes show either a newly constructed or renovated Killam as part of the solution. There are several reasons why Killam is considered to be part of any solution moving forward.

- The increase in elementary enrollment over the next 10 years is in the Killam district and the Birch Meadow district (see enrollment charts above).
- Killam is the only school geographically on the east side of town. A renovated and larger Killam will address enrollment increases and programmatic needs in a larger section of the town without adding significant transportation costs.
- Killam is the largest elementary school in the district.
- Killam is the only school in the district that has not had any renovation or has been constructed in the last 15 years. Killam was built in 1969.
- Killam has some systems issues that will need to be eventually addressed including ADA accessibility, window replacement, fire suppression, and lead in the water.

Next Steps

After the November 7th presentation, it is recommended that the School Committee hold public sessions for the community to review the different options. A report will be given at November Town Meeting outlining the progress of the study and an overview of the options. Once the public has given feedback to the options and the process, the School Committee should recommend an option for future consideration. The funding for a feasibility study would need to be requested at Town Meeting.

Please contact me if you have any questions.