

General

1. Q: How many students was the school designed for?

A: Approximately 1160 Students.

2. Q: What is the total square footage of the building?

A: The total area of the building is approximately 226,000 sf. This includes a new addition of approximately 63,000 sf.

3. Q: Can the committee establish a location where information can be displayed for the community to view?

A: All information will be available on the website. In addition the contract drawings are available at both the library and the school administration office during normal business hours.

4. Q: Why is the new addition and renovation to the high school facility necessary?

A: The majority of the existing facility is more than 50 years old and has certain limitations. This project will allow the school department to maintain the highest level of teaching including the use of modern tools and technology. This project will also be a capital investment for the town upgrading the energy efficiency of the windows, doors, insulation, roof, kitchen equipment and mechanical systems.

5. Q: What does the cost of the new school include?

A: The cost of the new school included all costs to design, construct and furnish the new high school. This includes all areas of the school from the new classroom and gymnasium wing to the reconstructed auditorium and the renovated areas throughout the existing facility.

6. Q: What kind of disruption will there be to everyday classes during construction of the new building?

A: During construction, there will be unavoidable interruptions on and around the school grounds. However, the PBC (Permanent Building Committee) is committed to minimizing the effect that construction will have on the educational environment. It should be noted that this will be a temporary inconvenience for a long term improvement. The construction will pose challenges to the high school in terms of land use (i.e. parking lots, baseball field, etc.) but the Permanent Building Committee and school administration are dedicated to working out the best possible usage of the property during construction.

The construction phasing has been designed to minimize the disruption to the existing facility. For the 2012-2013 school year there will be 1 phase, with the majority of the new construction occurring. For the 2013-2014 school year the new additions will be available for use. There will be 1 section of the existing building under construction for the entire year and 2 other parts of the existing building that will be under construction for approximately ½ of the school year.

7. Q: What safety measures will be instituted during construction of the new school?

A: The issue of safety of the site during construction has been, and will remain, the number one priority of the project during construction. The project will have a site specific construction safety plan. This plan is required by the construction contract and will be developed to address issues such as site safety, truck traffic, heavy equipment operation, and perimeter security. Requirements of the plan include physical separations between student/staff areas of the building and the work areas of the buildings. Additionally contractors, sub-contractors, and their employees are required to submit to criminal background checks and will be required to provide an accountability system for exactly which personnel are physically on site at any given time. This briefly described safety plan will be reviewed by the town's public safety agencies and school to assure all safety measures required are implemented.

8. Q: Will the new building be energy efficient? What green technologies will be used in the new building? Will this save us money?
9. A: The committee is working hard to implement the latest “green” technologies in the design and construction of the school. Systems such as automated HVAC, high efficiency lighting and lighting design, low water use plumbing and associated fixtures, renewable resources, and efficient design are all anticipated to work together to meet the highest standards possible for green technologies and construction, thus providing the highest efficiency possible in day to day operations. This building has been designed to meet or exceed the standard set forth by MACHPS. This means that the energy efficiency of the design will be at a minimum of 25-30% greater than the standards required by the current state building code. This added efficiency will allow for greater energy savings and will reduce the operating cost.
- Q: What kind of new security will be used in the new building?
- A: The design of the new school incorporates an integrated security “system.” This new and more effective security system is significantly more advanced than the one that currently exists in the school. It will allow for easy identification of all personnel and visitors and more efficient use of video monitoring, while maintaining a healthy, vibrant, and exciting environment for learning.
10. Q: Why did the Town vote to build the new school now? Why not wait?
- A: There are many benefits of pursuing this project now. To name just a few:
- Funding by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will amount to approximately 61% of eligible costs. As a result, the community would then be spending approximately 39 cents on each dollar. If the Town of Dracut does not partner with the MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) now, we will have to pay 100% of the costs for repairs and/or a new school, new fields, and demolition of portions of our existing high school. We are at the top of the MSBA’s list of projects to fund immediately and if we reject this partnership, we will be put at the back of a waiting list that is hundreds of projects long and years away.
 - The difficult economic times we find ourselves in has presented an unfortunate double-edged sword in terms of cost vs. funding in building the new school. On one hand, the economy makes it difficult for struggling citizens to fund additional projects. On the other hand, because of this same economy, construction costs are extremely low and provide a rare opportunity to build this project at a significant savings.
 - There are numerous major issues facing the current high school that must be addressed soon. A worst-case scenario is that the town chooses to not fund the new school project and a major system failure occurs at the current high school requiring the town to fund necessary repairs in an emergency and inefficient manner.
 - From the beginning, this effort has been viewed by the PBC (Permanent Building Committee) as not just a school, but a community project. The ability to complete this undertaking enhances not only the educational benefit our students will receive but will provide new opportunities for the benefit of the entire community. This high level of reimbursement and low level of construction costs are unlikely to be available in the future should the community choose to postpone action on this project.
11. Q: Will this building meet the long-term needs of our school population and the town?
- A: The PBC (Permanent Building Committee) has been working collaboratively with the MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) to determine the appropriate need and size of the new school project. These decisions are based on calculations utilized and approved by the MSBA for both today’s school population and projected future needs. The committee believes

that final school product will meet the needs of the community for many years to come. Additionally, the MSBA has very strict funding and space program requirements to which we must adhere.

12. Q: What new advances in technology will be available to our students?

A: The new high school will contain some of the latest technology available in terms of student participation and interaction, including interactive whiteboard technology, distance learning, and computer technology, which will provide for student computer technology needs well into the future. Additionally, the new technology will be available all members of the Dracut community, not just students and staff, which will enable everyone to become more well educated in the area of technology.

13. Q: Which students will be shifted from the high during construction and for how long?

A: for the 2012-2013 school year the 9th grade class will occupy the "Freshman Academy". The Freshman Academy will occupy one full wing within the existing Junior High School Building. The Freshman Academy will be separated from the lower grades. This separation will be a physical separation with the 9th grade in a separate wing of the building. In addition the Freshman Academy will be staffed by High school teachers and administrators. By creating the Freshman Academy including both physically and administrative separation, we are able to accomplish 3 things:

- By creating the freshman academy within the Junior High school Building, it allows the first phase of the construction to begin.
- At the same time the separation of the Freshman Academy from the Junior High School will allow the 9th graders to begin receiving the High School experience.
- Finally this separation will also allow the students in the lower grades to be unaffected by this adjustment.

Calendar

1. Q: When will construction begin?

A: Construction will begin in August 2012 and continue through August 2014.

2. Q: What are the major phases of construction?

A: For the 2012-2013 school year there will be one phase, with the majority of the new construction occurring. During this phase approximately ½ of the science classrooms will be renovated. For the 2013-2014 school year the new additions and renovated classrooms will be available for use. There will be one section of the existing building under construction for the entire year and two other parts of the existing building that will be under construction for approximately half of the school year.

3. Q: What is the estimated completion date if the project is completed on schedule?

A: August 2014

4. Q: When will the new school open?

A: September 2014

Cost

1. Q: How much will the new school cost?

A: The PBC (Permanent Building Committee) is very much aware of the concern over the cost of this project and continues to work diligently to provide the community a cost-effective,

efficient, quality product that will meet the needs of the town for many years. That said the total budget for the project is approximately \$60,400,000.

2. Q: How will this project be funded?

A: The MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) will provide funds for approximately 61% of eligible costs. The remainder of the costs will be the town's responsibility. The voters have approved a debt exclusion for the purposes for funding the town's portion of the project costs. Typically the town's portion of the cost of the bond is amortized over a 20 year period, during which time residents pay a specific declining amount per year until the debt is paid. Once the debt has been paid, the payment is removed from the tax rate.

3. Q: Will the new school cost more to maintain?

A: There are a number of factors that will determine the ongoing maintenance and operations of the new school. The PBC (Permanent Building Committee) has determined that the maintenance of the new school must be a priority of the community moving forward and there will be an updated maintenance plan. In terms of operating costs, the building has been designed to meet or exceed the standard set forth by MACHPS. This means that the energy efficiency of the design will be at a minimum of 25-30% greater than the standards required by the current state building code. This added efficiency will allow for greater energy savings and will reduce the operating cost. The PBC believes that the new school will be vastly more efficient to operate than the current building and will provide substantial savings to the community due to its design, green technologies, and efficiencies. When determining future operating costs and maintenance costs of the new school one must consider the efficiencies that will be realized in the new school vs. current expenditures to operate and maintain the existing school. Once the calculations of operating and maintenance of the new building are compared with the cost of the old building we believe the net result will be a better value for the Town of Dracut.

4. Q: Who is watching the costs, and how can we be sure we, the taxpayers, are getting a good value for our money?

A: The PBC (Permanent Building Committee) working with our owner's project manager, R F Walsh Collaborative Partners, along with the town accountant, town treasurer, and construction supervisors, will all work to assure the appropriate expenditure of funds consistent with the procurement and accounting laws as mandated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Town of Dracut. The PBC, as part of the process since day one, has worked diligently to assure that the final product will be the best possible value for the Town of Dracut in every aspect. We believe that upon completion of this process, the final accounting will demonstrate that we received a great product at a great value.

Education

1. Q: What educational opportunities will the new school provide that the old facility cannot?

A: The design will include teacher work spaces and large group instructional spaces that will facilitate the development and implementation of cross-curricular programs and projects. Environmentally, the school will provide research-based increased opportunities for students to learn because of such things as improved lighting, better air circulation and ventilation and controlled temperatures. The building will also be outfitted with an up-to-date security system providing all staff and students with a safe learning environment.

2. Q: How will the new school improve the delivery of curriculum?

A: There are many examples of how this will happen. They include but are not limited to:

- Every classroom in the new school will have wireless access providing teachers with the ability to integrate technology efficiently and effectively whenever and wherever it is appropriate.
- Specialized classrooms (the arts, technology engineering, etc) will have updated resources and equipment allowing teachers to deliver more real world applications and students to take advantage of learning in a 21st century environment.
- Science labs will have appropriate space for students to work, including all accessories, equipment and appropriate prep and storage space allowing students to the ability to partake in 21st century science experiences.

3. Q: How will the program of studies be different in the new building?

A: Initially the core program of studies will remain relatively the same, although the new building will allow us to update the programs that we have into the 21st century. A few examples of this include:

- The ability to make our current technology engineering program cutting edge by designing a space that will allow students to design, build and test prototypes through the use of CAD, graphic design, wood and metal fabrication labs and robotics spaces.
- Updating the current culinary arts areas to allow a more enhanced and complete programming experience.
- The addition of a language lab to allow the existing program to expand.

4. Q: Will there be designated computer labs and how many students will they be able to accommodate?

A: Yes there will be designated computers labs. In fact the final configuration of the building has a total of 5 separate labs which can accommodate 100-150 Students.

Athletics

1. Q: Where will the high school teams practice and play during construction?

A: The construction will affect the current varsity baseball field for the duration of the construction. All other fields will remain in full operation. The current plan is for the baseball team to play at another field within the complex.

2. Q: When will the baseball field be returned to use?

A: As part of phase 2 of construction the baseball field will be reconstructed including a new irrigation system. This field will be available for the High School teams for the following year. 2015-2016.