



Town of Arlington
Office of the Town Manager

Adam W. Chapdelaine
Town Manager

730 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington MA 02476-4908
Phone (781) 316-3010
Fax (781) 316-3019
E-mail: achapdelaine@town.arlington.ma.us
Website: www.arlingtonma.gov

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Dear Town Meeting Members and Candidates,

I would like to invite you to participate in the AHS Building Project process and join the Building Committee for a tour of the existing facility and a special information session.

For your convenience, we have scheduled two sessions. You need only attend one night and you may also opt to come just for the tour or the information session:

- Monday March 25: 7-8pm Tours (lobby), 8-9pm Information Session (Old Hall)
- Tuesday, April 9: 7-8pm Tours (lobby), 8-9pm Information Session (Auditorium)

Our high school no longer meets today's educational needs and growing enrollment will soon push it over capacity. In addition, it is on accreditation warning because of a deteriorating facility. We are partnering with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to access state funding for up to one-third of the project cost, thereby significantly reducing the cost to Arlington taxpayers.

Since the Town Meeting tour and information session in November, we have new material to share with you. The building design has evolved significantly, decisions have been made about what will be included in the facility and the cost of the project has been finalized.

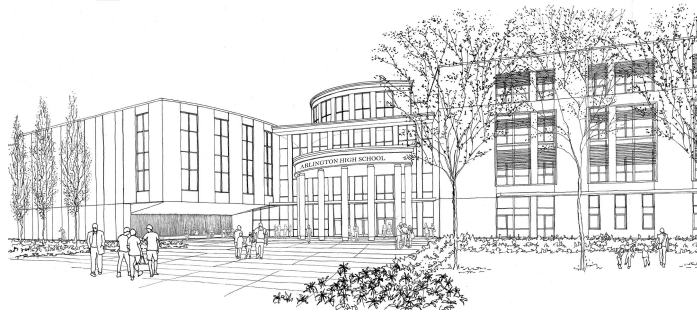
Town Meeting will play a critical role in the next steps. In advance of the June 11 debt exclusion vote and the Special Town Meeting on April 29, I encourage you to join me and Building Committee members to:

- Learn more about why we need a new high school.
- Discuss the design, cost, and construction timeline.
- Ask questions and provide your feedback.
- Tell us what resources and information you need to answer questions in your precincts.

The new high school will be one of the Town's most significant capital investments and will serve Arlington for generations. Enclosed is an overview of the project. For more information about the design, educational vision, and cost, visit www.ahsbuilding.org. Alternatively, feel free to reach out to me or other members of the Building Committee to ask any questions or express any concerns that you may have.

I look forward to seeing you this spring.

Adam Chapdelaine
Arlington Town Manager



Arlington High School Project Overview

Arlington needs a new high school because of increasing enrollment and an outdated facility that no longer meets today's educational needs. We have an opportunity right now to access state funding for up to one-third of the project cost, thereby significantly reducing the cost to Arlington taxpayers.

Why we need a new high school

Over the past decade, the district's enrollment has grown from 4,700 students to about 6,000. This is the equivalent of adding 3 elementary schools since 2009. The current high school is reaching capacity and cannot accommodate this enrollment growth.

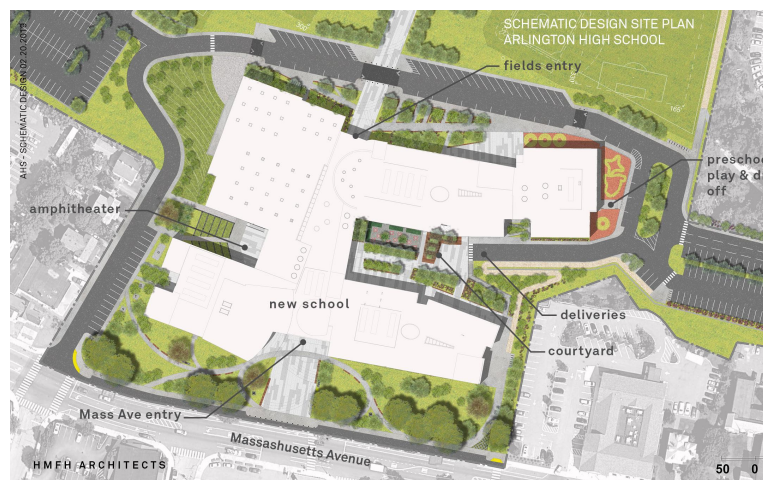
In addition, the school's deteriorating facility is an obstacle to teaching and learning. The New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC) placed AHS on 'warning' status in 2013 citing inadequate classrooms, science labs, and technology infrastructure, which affect the overall learning environment for the students.

The new AHS

The new school is the product of over two years of planning and community input and is designed for 1,755 students. The selected design concept is the best combination of cost-effectiveness, educational design, and construction timeline. Embodying Arlington's educational vision, it will allow educators to deliver instruction in a safe, welcoming environment.

Features of the new school:

- ✓ Upgraded science labs & classroom layout to deliver modern instruction
- ✓ Expanded library and makerspace enhance collaborative, hands-on learning
- ✓ New Discourse Lab for debate and dialogue
- ✓ Upgraded Auditorium & Black Box theater support the award-winning arts program
- ✓ Improved athletic facilities and direct access to the Minuteman bikeway
- ✓ Sustainable design will reduce lifecycle costs



Cost factors

As dictated by the state's process, the total cost of the building cannot exceed the total overall budget of \$291M. There are three primary cost factors that contribute to the overall cost of the project:

- High Schools are costly because they are large and require many specialized spaces.
- The Boston area construction market is expensive, with 4% annual construction cost escalation.
- AHS has specific factors that increase its cost above typical high school projects.

The AHS educational program is strong and broad and the new building needs to provide the costly specialized spaces required in a modern, 21st century high school. In addition, education-related offices and programs currently residing in the facility will be included in the new school (Menotomy Preschool, School District Administration and Payroll, Arlington Community Education offices, and the LABBB Special Education Collaborative). Finally, the AHS site is complex and phased building on a compact, contaminated site with an operating school is more costly.

During the Schematic Design phase, the Building Committee removed non-education related offices from the new building (IT, Facilities and Comptroller) to reduce the scope and cost of the project. Additionally, sustainability is an inherent part of the new design to not only reduce lifecycle costs of the Town's largest facility but also to help Arlington reach its goal of being carbon neutral by 2050.

Renovation is not adequate

Renovating the existing AHS facility is not adequate. A completely renovated building (with no additions) would not accommodate enrollment growth nor provide space for all programs at AHS. It also would not support current educational needs. Renovation/addition options were found to be significantly more expensive than the selected design.

Construction timeline

Construction could begin as early as July 2020. The new Performing Arts and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math) wings are estimated to be open to students in 2022, with construction of the new school fully completed in 2024.

All children in 3rd grade or younger
will attend a new, completed school.

Today's Freshmen (class of 2022)
will benefit from half of the new building.

Next Steps

In order for the project to move forward, Arlington voters must pass a debt exclusion to pay for the new building. The town-wide election is scheduled for June 11.

For more information about the design, educational vision, and cost, visit our website (www.ahsbuilding.org) or Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ahsbuilding).