



**Town of Arlington  
Office of the Town Manager**

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager  
**FROM:** Eve B. Margolis, Management Analyst  
**DATE:** November 2, 2015  
**SUBJECT:** School Space Needs Draft Analysis

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The Population and Enrollment Forecasts report by Jerome McKibben of McKibben Demographic Research forecasts total district enrollment in Arlington Public Schools to increase **14%** between the 2014-15 and 2019-20 school years, and to increase another **2.7%** between 2019-20 and 2024-25.<sup>1</sup>

The McKibben report forecasts elementary enrollment will decline after 2020. However, enrollment is still forecasted to be higher than it is today, with overall enrollment increasing 2.7% between 2019-20 and 2024-25. There is a potential opportunity to address the increase in high school enrollment during a reconstruction or rebuild with MSBA in the coming years, yet that does not address the overcrowding in the elementary and middle schools. The middle school is already over capacity by over 50 students and is forecasted to increase another 391 students by 2023-24 before decreasing by 30 students the following year. Elementary school numbers are forecasted to increase into the 2019-20 school year and then start to decline.

If we monitor these numbers and enrollment continues to decline in the elementary schools, we should review the capacity for modulars or additions at elementary buildings that can accommodate it (according to the McKibben Report there are 4 elementary schools that may be able to accommodate expansion). Then when enrollment in these schools start to decline as forecasted in 2020-21, we could consider moving the sixth grade classes to the elementary schools in order to deal with the overcrowding in the middle school. This will ensure that the added space at these elementary schools do not end up as excess space and Arlington could avoid using Gibbs as a new middle school if enrollment growth does not continue past our current forecasts or dramatically falls. Many other districts have used modulars for an extended period of time while

enrollment is high in schools, removing old modulars that are no longer needed when enrollment declines. Additionally, Arlington can review student assignment and boundary lines, as Newton has done (described below), to even out elementary schools that may see more growth and move students to schools that can accommodate expansion.

The current McKibben forecasts do not take into account potential building plans on the Mugar Properties, which could lead to a further increase in enrollment. This is something that should be considered.

A number of neighboring communities have already experienced a period of enrollment growth or are forecasting growth. Like Arlington, they have completed population and enrollment forecasts to study and help plan for this change. Below are descriptions of what these communities are doing to accommodate for the change in enrollment. Many of these communities have recently passed overrides/debt exclusions to help pay for school renovations/rebuilds.

- Newton: Override passed March 2013 for the renovation/replacement of 2 elementary schools
- Wellesley: Debt exclusion passed December 2008 for a new high school, debt exclusion passed December 2014 for renovations to 2 elementary schools
- Brookline: Override passed May 2015 for the renovation/expansion of an elementary school
- Lexington: Debt exclusion passed January 2012 for the renovation/rebuild of 3 schools

### **Newton**

*Between the 2009-10 and 2019-20 school years, Newton Public School enrollment is projected to increase about 13%.<sup>ii</sup>*

Newton currently has 15 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 2 comprehensive high schools, and 1 alternative high school.

- Angier Elementary construction, in partnership with MSBA, is currently the first of 3 major school building projects: Angier students are located temporarily through December 2015 at the Carr School during construction and will return to Angier in January 2016.<sup>iii</sup>
  - Formerly, the Carr School was used as Newton's Cultural Center and went through renovations to be used as swing space during school renovations that are anticipated over the next 10-20 years.<sup>iv</sup>
- Zervas Elementary is the second major school building project underway. The project is currently in the design development and pre-construction phase. Zervas was built in 1954 and expanded with modular classrooms in 1999, 2007 and 2011. Zervas is relocating in December 2015 to the Carr School and construction is scheduled to start in January 2016.<sup>v</sup>
- Cabot Elementary: The 4th oldest school in the district, constructed in 1929 with an addition built in 1957. Cabot is in the MSBA's feasibility phase for renovation/addition or new construction.<sup>vi</sup>
- Newton created the Student Assignment Working Group to evaluate student assignment and boundary lines in order to address overcrowding of schools and consider reassigning students to help balance enrollment throughout the district. The group recommended policy

changes in September 2015, which were approved by the School Committee, to reassign boundary lines for elementary schools. This will help balance future enrollment in the high schools.<sup>vii</sup> Current students will not be affected, only incoming students. Incoming students with siblings already enrolled can attend the same school.<sup>viii</sup>

## **Wellesley**

*Between 2013-14 and 2022-23 school years, school enrollment is forecasted to decrease by 563 students (-11.6%).<sup>ix</sup>*

*From the 1990's into the 2000's, enrollment was increasing about 3.5% each year.<sup>x</sup> Enrollment between 2003-04 and 2013-14 school years increased about 14.3%.<sup>xi</sup>*

Wellesley has 1 preschool, 7 elementary schools, 1 middle school, and 1 high school. Over the last decade, the community has supported renovation, additions or new school construction for:

- Sprague Elementary in 2002
- Bates Elementary in 2004
- Preschool in 2006
- Middle School in 2007
- Fiske and Schofield Elementary Modulares in 2006-07
- Hunnwell, Hardy, and Uphams Elementary Modulares in the mid-1990's
- Temporary high school classrooms in 2008 and 2009
- Middle School renovations in 2011
- A brand new high school in 2012

Some of the older elementary school modulares will not be replaced due to projected decrease in enrollment.<sup>xii</sup>

## **Needham**

*Between 2014-15 and 2024-25 school years, overall enrollment is forecasted to decrease by 173 students (-3.1%).*

*Although total enrollment is forecasted to decrease, High School enrollment is forecasted to increase 3.9% between 2014-15 and 2024-25, further contributing to an already overcrowded High School.<sup>xiii</sup>*

Needham has 5 elementary schools, 1 school for 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 1 middle school for 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grades, and 1 high school.

- The High School was renovated and expanded in 2008 with a maximum number of students per classroom to be 22. Currently a quarter of the classrooms have class sizes of 25 or more, with a current utilization rate over 90%.<sup>xiv</sup> Needham is discussing an expansion of the high school, with a preference to add 6-8 classrooms, reclaim repurposed spaces, and expand the existing cafeteria (using a two story addition of modular classrooms and a cafeteria addition).<sup>xv</sup>

## **Brookline**

*Enrollment grew by 13.2% between 2002-03 and 2011-12.<sup>xvi</sup> Enrollment is projected to continue to increase by 1,332 students between 2013-14 and 2021-22 (19.5%).<sup>xvii</sup>*

Brookline has 1 preschool, 8 elementary schools, and 1 high school.

- Runkle and Heath K-8 Schools, in partnership with MSBA, were renovated and expanded to keep up with growth.<sup>xviii</sup>
- Devotion Elementary expansion/renovation, in partnership with MSBA, is scheduled to begin in summer 2016.<sup>xix</sup>
- Brookline is currently discussing the need for a 9<sup>th</sup> elementary school. Brookline's "expand in place" effort has included building new classrooms and using mobile classrooms.<sup>xx</sup> Brookline has continued to consider adding modular classrooms to elementary schools that still have the land capacity for such an addition, however, this will not address overcrowding that will occur in the cafeterias and other shared space in schools.<sup>xxi</sup>

## **Lexington**

*Enrollment grew by 607 students (10%) between the 2008-09 and 2014-15 school years.<sup>xxii</sup> Between 2015-16 and 2023-24 school years, enrollment is forecasted to increase by 5.4%.<sup>xxiii</sup>*

Lexington currently has 6 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 1 high school. Back in 1969 Lexington had 11 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 1 high school. A district wide preschool is located in the Harrington Elementary School. Enrollment dropped significantly between 1970 and 1990, leading to the closure of 6 elementary schools and one middle school. As enrollment started to grow in the 1990's, Lexington reopened an elementary school. In recent years, the district has increased its capacity with rebuilding, renovations, and addition of modular classrooms.<sup>xxiv</sup>

- Estabrook Elementary School was rebuilt in 2014 with help from the MSBA<sup>xxv</sup>
- Lexington is holding a Special Town Meeting in November 2015. Article 2 is to see if the Town will appropriate money for the school facility master planning study for capital projects for 3 elementary schools and 2 middle schools. This includes remodeling, reconstruction, or repair. It is unclear whether or not MSBA will be involved in any of these projects.<sup>xxvi xxvii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> [http://arlington.k12.ma.us/news/announce/Arlington\\_Population\\_and\\_Enrollment\\_Forecasts.pdf](http://arlington.k12.ma.us/news/announce/Arlington_Population_and_Enrollment_Forecasts.pdf). Page 3.

<sup>ii</sup>

[http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/cms/lib8/MA01907692/Centricity/Domain/1099/Enrollment\\_Analysis\\_Report.pdf](http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/cms/lib8/MA01907692/Centricity/Domain/1099/Enrollment_Analysis_Report.pdf). Page 12.

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=2317>

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/48467>

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=2318>

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=2319>

<sup>vii</sup>

[http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/cms/lib8/MA01907692/Centricity/Domain/69/Student%20Assignment%20Recommendation%20and%20Vote\\_9\\_16\\_15.pdf](http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/cms/lib8/MA01907692/Centricity/Domain/69/Student%20Assignment%20Recommendation%20and%20Vote_9_16_15.pdf)

[http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/cms/lib8/MA01907692/Centricity/Domain/1099/SAWG%20FAQ\\_finaldraft\\_USE.1.pdf](http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/cms/lib8/MA01907692/Centricity/Domain/1099/SAWG%20FAQ_finaldraft_USE.1.pdf)

<sup>ix</sup> <http://www.wellesley.k12.ma.us/sites/wellesleyps/files/file/file/wpsdemographicstudyreport03152013.pdf>.  
Page 24.

<sup>x</sup> [http://www.wellesleyma.gov/Pages/WellesleyMA\\_Planning/chapter3.pdf](http://www.wellesleyma.gov/Pages/WellesleyMA_Planning/chapter3.pdf). Page 20.

<sup>xi</sup> <http://www.wellesley.k12.ma.us/sites/wellesleyps/files/file/file/wpsdemographicstudyreport03152013.pdf>.  
Page 24.

<sup>xii</sup> <http://www.wellesley.k12.ma.us/sites/wellesleyps/files/sc020811.pdf>. Page 2 and 3.

<sup>xiii</sup>

<http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/finance/documents/Full%20Mckibben%20Report%20with%20Attachments.pdf>

<sup>xiv</sup> <http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/finance/documents/FINAL%20REPORT%20w%20Att.pdf>. Page 1

<sup>xv</sup> <http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/finance/documents/FINAL%20REPORT%20w%20Att.pdf>. Page 9

<sup>xvi</sup> <http://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/4320>. Page 8.

<sup>xvii</sup> <http://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/4320>. Page 26.

<sup>xviii</sup>

[http://www.boston.com/yourtown/news/brookline/2013/09/enrollment\\_spikes\\_again\\_as\\_brookline\\_approves\\_expansion\\_plan.html](http://www.boston.com/yourtown/news/brookline/2013/09/enrollment_spikes_again_as_brookline_approves_expansion_plan.html)

<sup>xix</sup> <http://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/domain/325>

<sup>xx</sup> <http://www.brooklinema.gov/1286/9th-Elementary-School-Study>

<sup>xxi</sup> <http://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/4318>

<sup>xxii</sup> <http://lps.lexingtonma.org/cms/lib2/MA01001631/Centricity/Domain/565/EWGReport30dec14.pdf>. Page 2.

<sup>xxiii</sup>

<http://lexingtonps.schoolwires.net/cms/lib2/MA01001631/Centricity/Domain/565/EWGReport16sep14.pdf>.  
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<sup>xxiv</sup> <http://lps.lexingtonma.org/cms/lib2/MA01001631/Centricity/Domain/565/EWGReport30dec14.pdf>. Page 6.

<sup>xxv</sup> [http://www.massschoolbuildings.org/news\\_events/Lexington\\_Estabrook\\_RC\\_10.6.14](http://www.massschoolbuildings.org/news_events/Lexington_Estabrook_RC_10.6.14)

<sup>xxvi</sup> <http://www.lexingtonma.gov/towngovernment/2015%20STM-November%202/%231-STMwarrant-110215-print2.pdf>

<sup>xxvii</sup> <http://www.lexingtonmultipleprojects.com/>