

WEST ELEMENTARY & SHAWSHEEN PRESCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT

FACT SHEET FOR SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

***SPECIAL TOWN MEETING— THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2022 AT 7 PM
COLLINS CENTER AT ANDOVER HIGH SCHOOL***

What is the purpose of the Special Town Meeting?

To vote on whether to authorize additional funds to allow completion of construction of the new West Elementary and Shawsheen Preschool. A two-thirds vote is required for passage.

What was the original authorization?

In June of 2021, at Annual Town Meeting and at the ballot box, funds were authorized for the design and construction of the new school. The total project budget was set at \$151,661,968, which included a maximum grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) of \$38,442,820.

Why are additional funds necessary?

Factors affecting the overall economy – supply chain disruptions, labor shortages, inflation, the war in Ukraine – have driven construction costs up by about 14.36% over budget. *(Note that changes made in the non-construction portion of the original budget (i.e., soft costs) have limited the overall project cost increase to just under 11%.)*

How much additional funds are being requested?

The total deficit is approximately \$16.4 million. This will be funded by 1) the reauthorization of West Elementary feasibility funds (approx. \$460K); 2) the use of free cash (approx. \$1.4 million); and 3) exempt debt borrowing (approx. \$14.5 million).

What will the tax impact be if the request is approved?

An exempt debt borrowing of \$14.5 million would result in an annual tax increase of about \$63 for the average value single-family home.

What is the status of construction?

Construction began in the spring of 2022. The foundation is being poured. Funds are available to continue construction through December of 2022 but not much beyond that unless additional funds are authorized.

Can the scope of construction be scaled back rather than seeking an additional appropriation?

Actions already have been taken at numerous junctures of project development to reduce costs while minimizing the impact on education. Any further reductions would significantly impact education and/or the basic elements of the project (e.g., turf field, greenhouse, gym and athletic equipment).

Are these cost increases unique to the West El/Shawsheen project?

No. Similar increases are being seen on school construction projects throughout the state, including in Lowell, Worcester, Brookline, Concord, Westwood, Groton, and Somerset.

What happens if the appropriation request is not approved?

The options are limited, but likely would include a pause to construction, a need to significantly pare the scope and educational capacity of the new school, delay in the opening of the new schools and continued use of two outdated, expensive-to-maintain and energy-inefficient schools, and increased construction costs when construction is resumed.

Where can additional information be found?

APS website: <https://www.aps1.net/2208/WESP>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WestElShawsheenPreschoolProject>

Email: joel.blumstein@andoverma.us



WEST ELEMENTARY & SHAWSHEEN PRESCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

West Elementary School was built in 1951 and added to in 1968. The Shawsheen facility was constructed in 1923. Both facilities are past their functional life in terms of building systems and instructional programming. In December 2016, following surveys, building tours, and forums, the School Committee selected West Elementary with its numerous facility deficiencies as its top priority for submission to the highly competitive Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) grant program. The MSBA selected the West Elementary school in December 2017 as one of only 15 projects from a total of 156 projects submitted that year.



The West Elementary/Shawsheen Building Project will provide a facility to accommodate a K-5 population that is approximately 50 percent larger than West's current student body. The student population at West will accommodate not only the growth in student population within its own current district, but also students from other elementary schools to relieve overcrowding at those schools and enable them to provide improved instruction.

The new West Elementary School will be designed to support the educational needs of students in alignment with up-to-date pedagogy and instructional materials/equipment. It will provide BRIDGE program students, who are on the autism spectrum, with appropriate small-group and therapy spaces, and will continue to serve medically fragile children above the age of five.

Another key component of this building project will simultaneously address the facility and education programming needs of the current Shawsheen special education preschool population. A specially designed wing will be attached to West Elementary to expand the district's ability to provide an appropriate education and related services to the students now served at Shawsheen Preschool and to increase the number of such students who can be served. By physically co-locating the Shawsheen Pre-K program and the West K-5 facility, the transition of preschool BRIDGE students to West El will be smoother and more effective. Staff from both programs, especially teachers and therapists, will have opportunities to confer with each other and observe each other's classrooms to ensure that each student entering West El is provided with the necessary supports from day one. The provision of instruction and related services for these children with extensive needs can become seamless from preschool through elementary school.

At Andover's June 2021 Annual Town Meeting and in a subsequent ballot box vote, the Town's voters overwhelmingly approved construction and the required borrowing for the new school.



BY THE NUMBERS:

August 2024—West Elementary anticipated opening
August 2025— Shawsheen Preschool anticipated opening
Anticipated Enrollment—1,055 students (includes Pre-K)
Building Size: 191,028 SF
MSBA Max Reimbursement Rate: 45.85%
Effective Reimbursement Rate: 25.35%
Current Total Project Budget: \$151,661,968

FOR PROJECT UPDATES:

For those who would like to learn more about the project, please visit the West Elementary and Shawsheen Building Project's webpage and to sign up for this newsletter on the progress of the project, visit www.aps1.net and visit the "West Elementary & Shawsheen Preschool Building Project page."

Please note that if you are a current West El & Shawsheen family or staff member, we will automatically send updates, no need to sign up!

The public is invited to attend the West Elementary and Shawsheen School Building Committee Meetings, which are held monthly with the agenda posted up to 48 hours in advance. Upcoming Committee meetings will be broadcast on Comcast Channel 99, Verizon Channel 43, and streamed from www.andovertv.org

If you still have questions, please contact Joel Blumstein, the Building Committee Chair, at joel.blumstein@andoverma.us.