



The Manchester Public Schools 2025 Plan for Elementary Schools

Fall 2014

Summary of the Plan

In December of 2013, the SMARTR Committee * concluded an 18 month-long study of the needs of Manchester elementary schools encompassing the growing needs of its educational programs and an aging infrastructure of elementary school buildings. In May of 2014, the Manchester Board of Education finalized its analysis and formalized its recommendations (**the Manchester 2025 Plan**) to the Manchester Board of Directors.

In July of 2014, the Manchester Board of Directors voted to put Phase I of the plan before the citizens of Manchester for funding authorization in November 2014. This 10-year plan is summarized below and detailed on the timeline within.

This plan addresses the following goals and objectives:

- Provide equity relative to learning environments for all Manchester elementary students;
- Provide learning environments that meet State standards for lighting, acoustics, air quality and security;
- Maintain class sizes within the range of 17-22 students;
- Minimize relocation of students;
- Improve space utilization across district facilities;
- Create flexibility at each school to accommodate district-wide enrollment changes;
- Utilize space at recently upgraded Highland and Bennett facilities;
- Address building needs across the district;
- Maximize the use of CT State Department of Education school construction reimbursement grants;
- Maximize operational conditions and contain costs; and
- Comply with State laws on racial balance in schools.

Phase I, which is the subject of the November referendum begins with an adaptive reuse and renovation of the historically protected former Cheney School relocating all 5th Grade students to a newly created 5/6 Cheney-Bennet Academy. This will take advantage of the previous investment in Bennet and its excess space. Additionally in Phase I, Waddell and then Verplanck will be comprehensively renovated (like new) and expanded.

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The district wide 5th grade move to Cheney will happen after an initial use of Cheney as "Swing space", while Waddell is being comprehensively renovated (like new) and expanded. Robertson and Washington will be decommissioned as elementary schools following the completion of Phase I.

Phase 2 is expected to go before the voters for approval in the fall of 2019. Four remaining elementary schools will be renovated sequentially, relocating students during renovations.

At the completion, the 2025 Plan will provide comparable and upgraded learning environments throughout the district that meet state standards for lighting, air quality, acoustics, and security, and allow for the increased use of instructional technologies.

* School Modernization and Revitalization Taskforce Revisited

Planning Team

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The 2025 Plan Timeline for Elementary School Upgrades

School Years	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/2026	
PHASE I Schools	Referendum Year												
BENNET-CHENEY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2014 -Referendum EDO40 Submitted to State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Phase Spring 2016 - State Approval for Bidding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer 2016 - Construction start (approx 14 mos.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer 2017 -Construction complete Fall 2017 Re-occupy School as swing space Fall 2017 - Waddell Students @ Bennet-Cheney swing space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2018 – continue to use Bennet-Cheney as swing space for Waddell Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2019 – OPEN Cheney 5th Graders from all schools move to Bennet-Cheney 							
Enrollment	Current Enrollment:400	Projected Enrollment:400	Projected Enrollment:408	Projected Enrollment:372	Projected Enrollment:431	Projected Enrollment:912	Projected Enrollment:920	Projected Enrollment:937	Projected Enrollment: 904	Projected Enrollment: 882	Projected Enrollment:882	Projected Enrollment:882	
WADDELL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2014 - Referendum Fall 2014 - School in Session Full year EDO40 Submitted to State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2015 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2016 - School in Session Design Phase Spring 2017 – State Approval for Bidding Plan for relocation of Waddell students to Cheney-Bennet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer 2017 - Construction start (approx 18-24 mos.) Fall 2017 – Relocate Waddell Students to Cheney swing space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction continues Fall 2018 - Waddell Students @ Cheney swing space Plan to welcome partial redistricted Robertson K-4 population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer 2019 -Construction complete Fall 2019-OPEN Newly Renovated School as K-4 Welcome redistricted Robertson students to Waddell and Buckley 							
Enrollment	Current Enrollment:345 (K-4: 293 Students)	Projected Enrollment:346 (K-4: 294 Students)	Projected Enrollment:347 (K-4: 300 Students)			Projected Enrollment:521	Projected Enrollment:521	Projected Enrollment:521	Projected Enrollment:521	Projected Enrollment:521	Projected Enrollment:521	Projected Enrollment:521	
VERPLANCK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2014 - Referendum Fall 2014 - School in Session EDO40 Submitted to State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2015 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2016 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2017 - School in Session Design Phase Spring 2018 - State Approval for Bidding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2018 - School in Session Summer 2019 - Construction start Plan for relocation of Verplanck students to Robertson swing space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2019 – Verplanck students relocated to Robertson swing space Construction continues Plan to welcome partial redistricted Washington student population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer 2020 - Construction complete Fall 2020 – OPEN Newly Renovated School as K-4 ONLY Welcome redistricted Washington students to Verplanck, Bowers and Highland 						
Enrollment	Current Enrollment:449 (K-4: 390 Students)	Projected Enrollment:450 (K-4: 391 Students)	Projected Enrollment:452 (K-4: 394 Students)	Projected Enrollment:456 (K-4: 387 Students)			Projected Enrollment:513	Projected Enrollment:513	Projected Enrollment:513	Projected Enrollment:513	Projected Enrollment:513	Projected Enrollment:513	
WASHINGTON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2014 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2015 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2016 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2017 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2018 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2019 - Begin K-4 across the district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2020 – Washington students redistricted to Verplanck + Highland Washington school turned over to Town 						
Enrollment	Current Enrollment:371	Projected Enrollment: 372	Projected Enrollment:374	Projected Enrollment:378	Projected Enrollment:379	Projected Enrollment: 312							
ROBERTSON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2014 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2015 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2016 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2017 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2018 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2019 - Robertson Students redistricted to Waddell and Buckley 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2021 - Bowers Students @ Robertson swing space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2022 - Keeney Students @ Robertson swing space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2023 - Buckley Students @ Robertson swing space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2024 - Martin Students @ Robertson swing space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robertson school turned over to Town 	
Enrollment	Current Enrollment:416	Projected Enrollment:417	Projected Enrollment:419	Projected Enrollment:423	Projected Enrollment:413								
PHASE II Schools						Referendum Year							
BOWERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2014 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2015 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2016 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2017 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2018 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2019 - Begin K-4 across the district Fall 2019 - Referendum EDO40 Submitted to State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Phase Spring 2021 - State Approval for Bidding Plan relocation of Bowers students to Robertson swing space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2021 -Construction start Fall 2021 - Bowers Students @ Robertson swing space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Complete Fall 2022 – OPEN Newly Renovated BOWERS School as K-4 ONLY 				
Enrollment	Current Enrollment:417 (K-4: 343 Students)	Projected Enrollment:418 (K-4: 344 Students)	Projected Enrollment:420 (K-4: 354 Students)	Projected Enrollment:423 (K-4: 344 Students)	Projected Enrollment:420 (K-4: 339 Students)	Projected Enrollment:339 (K-4: 364 Students)	Projected Enrollment:364		Projected Enrollment:379	Projected Enrollment:389	Projected Enrollment:389	Projected Enrollment:389	
KEENEY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2014 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2015 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2016 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2017 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2018 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2019 – Begin K-4 across the district Fall 2019 - Referendum EDO40 Submitted to State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2020 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Phase Spring 2022 - State Approval for Bidding Plan for relocation of Keeney students to Robertson swing space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2022 -Construction start Fall 2022 - Keeney Students @ Robertson swing space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Complete Fall 2023 – OPEN Newly Renovated KEENEY School as K-4 ONLY 			
Enrollment	Current Enrollment:300 (K-4: 255 Students)	Projected Enrollment:300 (K-4: 255 Students)	Projected Enrollment:300 (K-4: 255 Students)	Projected Enrollment:300 (K-4: 250 Students)	Projected Enrollment:300 (K-4: 255 Students)	Projected Enrollment:280	Projected Enrollment:367	Projected Enrollment:375		Projected Enrollment:396	Projected Enrollment:358	Projected Enrollment:358	
BUCKLEY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2014 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2015 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2016 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2017 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2018 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2019 – Begin K-4 across the district Fall 2019 - Referendum EDO40 Submitted to State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2020 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2021 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Phase Spring 2023 - State Approval for Bidding Plan for relocation of Buckley students to Robertson swing space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2023 -Construction start Fall 2023 - Buckley Students @ Robertson swing space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Complete Fall 2024 – OPEN Newly Renovated BUCKLEY School as K-4 ONLY 		
Enrollment	Current Enrollment:295 (K-4: 239 Students)	Projected Enrollment:295 (K-4: 239 Students)	Projected Enrollment:295 (K-4: 242 Students)	Projected Enrollment:298 (K-4: 238 Students)	Projected Enrollment:295 (K-4: 239 Students)	Projected Enrollment:299	Projected Enrollment:354	Projected Enrollment:356	Projected Enrollment:367**		Projected Enrollment:377	Projected Enrollment:377	
MARTIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2014 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2015 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2016 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2017 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2018 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2019 – Begin K-4 across the district Fall 2019 - Referendum EDO40 Submitted to State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2020 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2021 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2022 - School in Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Phase Spring 2024 - State Approval for Bidding Plan for relocation of Martin students to Robertson swing space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2024 -Construction start Fall 2024 - Martin Students @ Robertson swing space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Complete Fall 2025 – OPEN Newly Renovated MARTIN School as K-4 ONLY 	
Enrollment	Current Enrollment:267 (K-4: 216 Students)	Projected Enrollment:267 (K-4: 216 Students)	Projected Enrollment:267 (K-4: 220 Students)	Projected Enrollment:267 (K-4: 215 Students)	Projected Enrollment:276 (K-4: 216 Students)	Projected Enrollment:216	Projected Enrollment:257	Projected Enrollment:261	Projected Enrollment:287	Projected Enrollment:298		Projected Enrollment:298	
HIGHLAND	Current Enrollment:271 (K-4: 224 Students)	Projected Enrollment:271 (K-4: 224 Students)	Projected Enrollment:272 (K-4: 226 Students)	Projected Enrollment:272 (K-4: 222 Students)	Projected Enrollment:271 (K-4: 224 Students)	Projected Enrollment:300	Projected Enrollment:322	Projected Enrollment:322	Projected Enrollment:322	Projected Enrollment:322	Projected Enrollment:322	Projected Enrollment:322	

Design + State Grant Approvals Phase	Construction / Renovation Phase	Upgrade Completion
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Frequently Asked Questions

Why build a 5/6 school? The proposed plan adaptively reuses the vacant Cheney building which is protected for historic preservation, and creates an expanded grades 5-6 campus environment in downtown. This will utilize excess space at Bennet and share the common spaces, such as gym, library, and cafeteria at Bennet Academy, and create space in other elementary schools already at or near capacity. A grade configuration which puts students in grades five and six on the same campus supports the curriculum and instructional articulation between the two grades; and allows students and families to acclimate to the school for two years rather than one year.

There is no clear evidence that a one-grade configuration plan is universally better than others and grade configurations are often dependent on space available in schools and districts. There are eight other towns in Connecticut that have schools that span grades five and six and a number of systems, particularly in urban areas in Connecticut, that have reverted back to elementary schools that include grades K-8.

How does this approach differ from previous efforts to renovate our elementary schools? A past proposal to renovate all existing elementary schools was put forward in 1999. At that time, the total cost of the project was approximately \$110 million to overhaul the then 10 elementary schools. That proposal was defeated in a 1999 referendum by residents of Manchester. The current cost to “renovate like new” all elementary schools would be approximately \$232 million, with the taxpayers paying \$125 million after state reimbursement.

The new Manchester Public Schools 2025 Plan shown on the MPS 2025 Timeline renovates seven of the elementary schools and will cost approximately \$184 million, with the tax payers of Manchester paying approximately \$72 million after state reimbursement. Phase 1 of the MPS 2025 Plan (being voted on at the November referendum) will cost approximately \$81 million with the tax payers of Manchester paying approximately \$37 million after state reimbursement.

What are the priorities that informed this plan? The SMARTR committee, Manchester Board of Education, and Manchester Board of Directors seek to:

- Ensure that all elementary school students are learning in comparable environments that meet state standards for lighting, air quality, acoustics, and security; and support the use of instructional technologies;
- Comply with State laws to sustain racial balance in each elementary school. We have impending imbalances in 2 schools at this time.

Other priorities in developing the plan included:

- Optimizing state reimbursement by developing a plan that increases space utilization at the recently upgraded Bennet Academy and Highland Park School;
- Addressing the building improvements and repair needs across the elementary schools; and
- Minimizing student movement and relocation.

How common is a school size of 530 students in Connecticut?

Among the 169 school districts and 593 elementary schools in Connecticut, 32% of the schools have enrollments of 500 students or more, and 20% of the schools have enrollments of 450-500 students.

How large will the class sizes be at the new elementary schools? The Board of Education is committed to maintaining class sizes (as they are today) between 17-22 students at all schools in Manchester.

Does this plan comply with state requirements? The Board of Education must review its attendance and student demographic data every year to maintain a racially balanced school district. The racial balance plan must be submitted and approved by the state board of education in order to maintain state funding for our schools. If two schools are closed, students will be relocated to a school that is most contiguous to their residence with the intent to minimize impact on transportation and maintain racially balanced schools. The Board contracts with the firm of Milone and MacBroom to complete the work to racially balance the schools, as required by law. The MPS 2025 Plan provides for racially balanced schools over the next ten years eliminating the need to redistrict on a yearly basis.

What is the projected enrollment of the Manchester Public Schools and how will that impact this grade configuration?

The Manchester Board of Education commissioned an enrollment projection study in December, 2013. The K – 4 enrollment in the Manchester Public Schools is projected to increase by approximately 200 students by 2025. Architects considered this projected increase and any future additions in the design of these schools. It is also important to note that while this projected increase was considered, the state’s reimbursement formula is predicated on building to a capacity that does not exceed the projected highest enrollment within an eight year time frame. School buildings are planned typically for twenty years based on enrollment projections so we expect to maintain the current grade configuration for at least the next twenty years. Any change of grade configuration in the future would likely be determined by changes in circumstances within the community such as needs, enrollment shifts, or demographic shifts in population. The preliminary designs account for adequate parking, playground space, and traffic flow of the new student populations.

If two schools are closed, how will those properties be used?

Once the Board of Education turns a school over to the Town, it will be the Board of Directors that decides if and how a building is repurposed. Examples of repurposing of buildings in Manchester include the current senior center, the Lincoln Municipal Center and the Lutz Children’s Museum. The decommissioned school on Hollister St. was removed to make way for the new Manchester Preschool Center. Robertson will be used as swing space in the short term. It is anticipated that a variety of adaptive reuses will be explored which could include alternative educational, community and arts programs.

Since moving grade five out of existing schools creates surplus classroom space, has consideration been given to using available space in the elementary schools for pre-school classrooms?

The SMARTR Committee did consider pre-school classroom space in elementary schools. Any investment now will not receive state reimbursement or funding. However, the SMARTR Committee did propose that any future building design at the elementary school level accommodate opportunities for pre-school classrooms and the Manchester Board of Education and Administration are exploring the potential for expanded access to pre-school.

Voting on Phase I of the 2025 Plan:

November 4th, 2014 - Voting at normal polling places, 6AM to 8PM. Absentee ballots available starting October 3, 2014. Contact the Town Clerk, 860-647-3037.

For more information, visit the Manchester Public Schools website: www.mpspride.org and look under Manchester Public Schools 2025.