Medford High School: Community Forum #1 January 7, 2026

Questions and Answers

1) **Question:** With all of the preschool aged children on site, is funding a playground included in the scope or is that, like the pool, outside the scope of the MSBA funding and therefore on taxpayers?
   Answer: Yes, the MSBA will reimburse for a playground, however, the MSBA currently caps funding of all site work at $73 per square foot. Any site work exceeding this value will be the responsibility of the City of Medford

2) **Question:** Do we know yet if we will have to sacrifice some of our classroom sizes if we go to all new build?
   Answer: General classrooms sizes on MSBA projects are mandated by the MSBA guidelines. These guidelines support general education classrooms that are sized between 825 and 950 square feet. Current MHS general education classrooms are of varying sizes – but are all smaller than the MSBA guidelines. So the classrooms will NOT be reduced in size with all-new or addition/renovation construction project.

3) **Question:** The Project Timeline forecasts ~2.5 years of studying, designing, approving, developing construction plans and then, it looks, 2 years of bidding and construction. How does this ~4.5 timeline compare to other school around the Commonwealth?
   Answer: The current construction schedule is a high-level estimate and does not show the start of early release packages (e.g., portions of the build completed first), or the completion of landscaping and field work after the new building is operational. The overall construction scope of this project is being reviewed as the building size is confirmed and the project type is determined (addition and renovation or new construction). This schedule will continue to be refined as the preferred building option is finalized and a construction manager is engaged to closely review the project's logistics and phasing. The timeline will also depend on the design option chosen; each has its own complexities, phasing and timelines.

4) **Question:** Premature question but if a new build is approved/necessary where would the existing students and daycare go?
Answer: It is difficult to confirm what level of classroom swing space will be required at this time. The project team and the Medford School Building Committee are reviewing dozens of potential options to understand the best project for Medford. Once a preferred option is selected, it will allow the project team to better understand construction phasing needed, and how that may impact current students and programs. It is anticipated that some modular classrooms will need to be located on-site during construction to support educational needs. Though not reimbursable by the MSBA, today's modular classrooms provide temperature-controlled, accessible learning environments and are a good solution to solving a temporary need.

5) **Questions:** When will this voting occur? November 2026 or special election?
Answer: The vote for funding approval is anticipated to take place during the Spring of 2027

6) **Question**: How does this team think about the aspects of the building that are utilized by the broader community beyond MPS?
Answer: The project team is very aware of how big a community asset Medford High School is, and the features available on the property are to the city. The project team will continue to hold Community Forums and other community outreach events to capture community desires as the project moves through the Feasibility Study (which will continue into June 2026). Additionally, dedicated programming meetings have been (and will continue to be) held with all operators of non-high school program spaces that are used by the Medford community at the high school building.

7) **Question:** What is CTE?
Answer: Career and Technical Education

8) **Question:** How much exploratory work has been done around wayfinding? One issue I encountered in my limited use of MHS (as someone who did not attend the

school) was that the wayfinding was inadequate for the building's size and complexity. This is also an issue I have seen at many newly-built schools around the Greater Boston area, so I am particularly concerned about this.
Answer: This has already come up numerous times in discussions with MHS administration and students. Wayfinding will be a key aspect of the building project, starting from the entrance into the high school site and continued throughout the new building. The project team will continue to work closely with MHS admin and the School Building Committee to understand the needs and goals of the new wayfinding.

9) **Question:** What about the swimming pool? Is there a plan for it in a new building?
Answer: At this time, the project team is exploring all options for a new MHS facility. This includes options to maintain the existing pool and renovate it, and options to build a new pool facility. The options also include removing the pool, as the MSBA does not consider it reimbursable. The project team is reviewing all options and the associated pricing of each option, so the Medford School Building Committee can understand the financial, logistical, and schedule implications of keeping or eliminating the pool facility

10) **Question**: Will there be air conditioning?
Answer: Yes, the building will have air conditioning.

11) **Question:** How much of the building is below current codes?
Answer: Currently, most building elements suffer from non-code compliance. Code non-compliance includes building, accessibility, and energy codes spanning many building and infrastructure elements including: site and building accessibility, building envelope, mechanical ventilation, electrical, plumbing and structural (seismic). It is important to note that the building's current condition is "grandfathered," and compliance is triggered once any major project is pursued.

12) **Question:** Have we learned anything interesting during site investigation?
Answer: Several site exploratory scopes of work are still underway, notably geotechnical investigations. Geoenvironmental (Phase I Environmental Site Assessment) is complete, revealing that a portion of the site previously housed an

Almshouse and the City Infirmary. A localized portion of the site also operated as a dump for a limited amount of time, in an area of the site that had been previously used as a quarry. Beyond these items, nothing else interesting (unexpected) has emerged from the site investigations to date.

13) **Question:** What sort of special education representation (lived experience) is there on the EP&E advisory team?
Answer: We have two staff members on the Educational Planning and Equity advisory team, including the Director of Student Services, Special Education teachers at MHS, and a parent of a student receiving Special Education services. A member from the Medford Office of Disability Services is also serving on the Site Safety and Security Advisory Team.

14) **Question:** Has there been consideration in including some of the "vocational" students and non-vocational in being a part of this?
Answer: MHS students from both CTE and non-CTE programs have been engaged throughout the educational visioning and programming process. Hearing the voices of students is critical to the building projects' success.

15) **Question:** Will the building committee meetings also be on zoom?
Answer: Building committee meetings are held in the MHS library, with a Zoom option available for those who cannot attend in person. The SBC meetings are also televised on the City of Medford's regular media outlets. Occasionally, the building committee will hold in-person only meetings when the topic and planned meeting agenda can't be delivered in a hybrid format.

16) **Question:** What lived experience of people with physical and intellectual disabilities is informing decision-making on this project? Are we centering the work in universal/inclusive design to avoid "retrofitting" spaces once they're in use?
Answer: The work is centered around universal, inclusive design practices specific to the needs of the Medford community. To support this effort, the SBC has formed an Educational Planning and Equity advisory team which focuses on creating the most educationally appropriate and accessible facility for ALL. A second advisory team, which focuses on the topics of site, safety, and security, has among its

members staff from the Medford Commission for Persons with Disabilities. Additionally, the building committee membership includes representatives from the District's special education programs as well as the Curtis-Tufts Therapeutic Day Program. Detailed programming meetings have also been held with stakeholders from both groups.

17) **Question:** Will there be a city Project Manager that teams with Matt Rice to oversee the entire project?
Answer: This is the role of the Owners Project Manager (OPM), LeftField. LeftField is responsible for overseeing the entire project through final closeout and commissioning. This includes leading procurement of the construction manager, site oversight of the construction manager's team, design review of SMMA's documents, and approval of invoices prior to Medford SBC approval.

18) **Question:** The schedule is aggressive and seems to anticipate new construction on a clean site with no surprises. Has a schedule based on a phased renovation been considered?
Answer: The current schedule shows a best-case scenario based on the initial information received about the project. As the project progresses through the feasibility study, each potential option is reviewed for logistical and phasing challenges. The final schedule will be closely reviewed with the construction manager during the Schematic Design phase to confirm phasing durations and overall schedule. The goal is to have the new building facility open in the summer of 2030, with final site work and landscaping extending into 2031. The final schedule will be determined once a preferred option has been selected. The project team is committed to maintaining an aggressive schedule to prevent year-over-year cost escalation wherever possible.

19) **Question:** Does the MSBA still require the City Council to approve the full project budget?
Answer: Yes. City Council and the Mayor must approve any debt-exclusion that will go before the voters, and any amounts paid for out of the city operating budget in its normal course of business.

20) **Question:** How and when will the impact on Medford resident property taxes be understood?
Answer: The final tax impact for the selected project will be known after the MSBA Board of Directors meeting in April of 2027. Between now and then, there will be many decisions made regarding design options and scope that will contribute to refined cost estimates along the way.

21) **Question:** Are you reaching out to donors for something like the pool?
Answer: The project team is committed to exploring all possible funding options for the project. It's too soon to know how much of the project will require a debt exclusion and how much can be absorbed by the city budget, donations, or otherwise.

22) **Question:** There is a lot of construction in Medford and requirements added by the Greenline. Did the population plan account for this? Will we leave an option for expansion should the city population balloon?
Answer: It's hard to predict the future, but generally speaking, YES, enrollment increases have been accounted for. The MSBA validated enrollment study is required for all projects. Medford's enrollment study was completed in early in 2025 and incorporates:

- Past and current enrollment trends
- Overall trends in local and national birth rates (which are declining)
- Historical and *projected* residential permits, including single-family, multi-family, and 55+ housing units
- Local housing market trends
- Expected changes in grade configuration and special education programming

The MSBA and Medford jointly set the planning enrollment at 1,395 high school students (grades 9–12), which is a 16.5% increase over the current population. This number is used for space planning, sizing classrooms, labs, shared spaces, and all MSBA-required calculations. In addition, the project accounts for 200 preK students to be co-located on the site, and up to 100 day care students. MSBA-funded

projects are generally designed to adapt to population changes through flexible learning spaces, planning for 85% space utilization, and site configurations that allow for future modifications.