smma

Advisory Team – Educational Planning & Equity 3

Project Name:	Medford High School	Project Number:	25100
RE:	Advisory Team – Educational Planning & Equity	Meeting Date:	03/10/2026
Prepared by:	Soala Ajienka	Meeting Number:	03
Distribution:	Attendees		

Owner

- [x] Joan Bowen, *Head of Student Services*
- [ ] Marta Cabral, *Principal*
- [x] Nicole Chiesa, *Director of English Language and Social Studies (virtual)*
- [ ] Chad Fallon, *CTE Director*
- [ ] Suzanne Galusi, *Interim Superintendent MPS*
- [ ] Jenny Graham, *Chair of SBC, Vice Chair of School Committee (virtual)*
- [ ] Sydney Hamel, *Student (virtual)*
- [ ] Catherine Hatch, *Medford Academy (virtual)*
- [ ] Faiza Khan, *Director of Mathematics for District*
- [ ] Megan Leclaire, *EL Teacher*
- [x] Colleen Mahany, *Special Education Teacher*
- [ ] Rebecca Matloff, *School Adjustment Counselor*
- [ ] Madeline McDonough, *Teacher (virtual)*
- [ ] Dana McMahon, Teacher
- [ ] Chelsea McNiff, *EL Director (virtual)*
- [ ] Robert O'Leary, *Athletic Director Medford Public Schools*
- [x] Lisa Miller, *Programming & Web Development Teacher*
- [x] Aaron Olapade, *SBC Member, School Committee Member (virtual)*
- [x] Annemarie Rigas, *Medford Parent*
- [ ] Norman Rousseau, *Biotechnology Teacher (virtual)*
- [ ] Stacey Schulman, *Director of School Counselling and Behavioral Health (virtual)*
- [ ] Cooper Su, *Student*
- [ ] Kim Talbot, *Assistant Superintendent*
- [ ] Jonathan Wilson, *Biology and anatomy Teacher*
- [ ] Jack Haverty, *AP Somerville NWF/Resident*

SMMA & Consultants

- [x] Soala Ajienka
- [ ] Helen Fantini *(virtual)*
- [x] Matt Rice
- [x] Rosemary Park
- [x] Jamay Li

- [ ] Mike Pirollo, MLP Integrated Design

Leftfield

- [ ] Jen Carlson *(virtual)*
- [x] Matt Gulino*(virtual)*
- [ ] Adele Sands *(virtual)*

Item No.	Action	Discussion
03.01	Record	**Meeting # 3 Agenda** • Welcome & introductions • Advisory Team Recommendation Development • Next Steps
03.02	Record	**Welcome & Introductions** • Timeline Update: Project has now concluded the PDP Phase of the Feasibility Study and has now emerged in the PSR Phase of Feasibility ○ Each team will produce a set of recommendations for the full SBC to review and approve. Whilst there is overlap in topics discussed, it is important that there are no duplicates in recommendations
03.03	Record	**Advisory Team Recommendation Development** • List of Suggestions and Comments, has been shared with the Advisory team in advance of the meeting • They are a very helpful list and lens to look at the project through • Recommendations (Givens, Green): Aspects that are inherently going to be represented within the project, identified in the Ed Plan, during Programming Meetings and other fora of discussions • Recommendations (Needs Further Discussions or Review, Yellow): Aspects that warrant further discussion before they are either taken forward to the building committee, or shifted across to being Red Light Items. • Recommendations (Has challenges, Red): No items are yet designated as red and during the course of discussions, suggestions may be moved over to this category.
03.04	Record	**Guiding Principles** 1. Flexibility and Community should drive design decisions • Designation: *Yellow* • While this is important, there are other programmatic, Ed Plan, site requirements that take precedence and this suggestion needs to work closely with those other crucial elements 2. Ensure Continuity of Student Services 3. Support Identity development, social growth and academic growth 4. Create a competitive, attractive school that meets diverse needs • Designation: *Green* • Ensuring that students receive high quality support, so parents are not made to look elsewhere for more competitive offerings. This is a crucial consideration in the District's Ed Plan
03.05	SMMA to initiate meetings specific to Toilet Room discussions	**Equity, Inclusion & Identity** Ensures focus on equitable access and equitable learning environments 5. Preserve and expand equitable learning services for students with disabilities 6. Reduce stigma around special education through integrated and flexible support spaces. 7. Include dimmable lights, flexible furniture, sound absorbers, and breakout spaces in co-taught rooms • Designation: *Green* • **Discussion:** ○ Is this going to be limited to cotaught rooms? Ideally, these features are included in cotaught rooms as well as other teaching spaces. ○ SMMA clarified that this is in addition to dimmable lights, flexible lights, sound absorbers and breakout spaces already elsewhere. 8. Provide adaptive life-skills spaces sensory rooms motor-skills areas and emotional regulation spaces. 9. Design from the perspective of students with accessibility needs so all students benefit. 10. Prioritize inclusion over segregation by integrating specialized spaces into general education environments/areas. 11. Embed EL/ESL programs with academic teams rather than isolating them 12. Ensure sheltered content classes remain content-first rather than labeled as separate. 13. Create visible and welcoming Registration and EL offices for multilingual families. 14. Use multi-tiered design to support long-term residents and newly arrived families. 15. Ed Plan and Ed Space Program include a Welcome Hub and registration center that include,

		EL and support for families new to the district to easily access. SO this is already embedded in the program 16. Embed Special Education, CTE, House Offices, Science, small group rooms and breakout spaces within clusters, to demonstrate that help is always available and reduce stigma • Designation: *Yellow* • As part of PSR, design team is developing an understanding of the program adjacencies that could present opportunities within the school, to be developed with feedback from the School building community and Medford District 17. Some CTE programs could benefit from greater integration with the school community. Consider implications of isolating CTE shops within clusters based on CTE culture / associated frameworks. 18. Registration hub can support integrated learning identity and community connection. **Toilet Rooms** 19. Consider the Opportunity to incorporate all-gender toilet rooms in the new school design 20. Design Toilet rooms with signage focused on purpose rather than gender • Designation: *Yellow* • All the suggestions pertaining to toilet rooms are under consideration. More time and discussion will be devoted to addressing them during the design of the building, including more discussion with the District and school committee • **Discussion:** ○ Could location and frequency of availability be added to the list? For example, how far does a student need to travel before they get to a toilet room in the school ○ Clarification; focus on signage means having a sign that says use, i.e "Toilet," rather than gender, M or F ○ Whilst the advisory team provides a good opportunity to discuss this issues, it is important to have a lot more student voices in the room, as their priorities are different when compared to adults. ○ By introducing student voices, a multitude of means of getting feedback should be considered, beyond a speaking forum. Could surveys and google forms also be used? ○ It would also be ideal to hear from administrators as they have the responsibility of ensuring safety in these spaces ○ There are a few schools that have had to grapple with these questions in recent history. It would be a great idea to learn from their experience and lessons learned ○ Meeting Chat Comments: *I appreciate the single stall bathrooms. With the rise in SI, there should be a key for admin to get access in case of emergencies. This has been an issue a few times in Somerville* 21. Students prefer single-use stalls when available. 22. Students want stall doors that go floor-to-ceiling to ensure privacy. 23. Convertible binary-to-all-gender toilet room design is desirable. 24. Ensure that administrators have keys to quickly access single stall bathrooms in case of emergency.
03.06	Record	**Student experience, Well Being & Belonging** 25. Provide Safe Comfortable spaces for students with varied interests • Designation: *Green* • As part of the Educational space program, team is looking at different types of spaces that can create moments of respite for students as a way to make their daily experience better. For example, Quiet Café beside larger cafeteria, and smaller spaces adjacent to Media Center. • **Discussion:** ○ It is important that desk space in classrooms is sufficient for all students' needs, accommodating the tools and materials utilized during class time. 26. Create de-stress and decompression spaces that allow students to reset and re-engage. 27. Offer quiet spaces and safe spaces that are well maintained. 28. Make the school day dynamic with movement and access to varied environments • Will be further discussed with the School Committee, especially considering daily schedules and classes 29. Ensure students have comfortable flexible spaces that support productive routines.

		30. Design spaces that adapt to student needs rather than forcing students to adapt to the building. 31. Provide competitive offerings so families are not compelled to look outside the district • Designation: *Yellow* • This is from a curriculum point of view, beyond what the building can provide, but the new building will support what is laid out in the Ed Plan • When looking at the Chapter 74 programs, there are efforts to add more programs that currently do not exist and the building is being planned to support these new programs 32. Provide breakout spaces along hallways and outdoor areas that support movement and sensory engagement.
03.07	Record	**Teaching and Learning flexibility** • Designing for potential changes to education in the future and also flexibility from teacher to teacher • Community spaces should serve as active learning environments in addition to being places to gather. 35. Create flexible spaces that allow teachers to deliver the learning students need. 36. Build a flagship school that grows with the community over many years. 37. Increase Collaboration spaces for teachers and students • Designation: *Green* • Design Team has heard the need for more collaboration between students and also teachers and so this is designated as a given 38. Provide spaces for teachers to eat lunch together and hold meetings. 39. Improve placement and adjacency of support teachers who are currently scattered. 40. Add more whiteboards and vertical learning surfaces in classrooms. 41. Support Project-Based Learning with appropriate spaces. 42. Establish a Writing Center accessible to multiple departments • Designation: *Yellow* • Space Summary is holding space for Academic Support Hubs • **Discussion:** ○ Okay with Writing Center being designated as an Academic Support Hub as this strategy aligns with the need for flexibility ○ Humanities Director clarified the need for Writing Center: Writing Center is intended as a designated space that provides support for students' writing projects from a writing expert. It would ideally be open during the day as well after school hours ○ Meeting Chat Comments: Cambridge has a space like that which runs well 43. Develop a Math Lab open during the day before school and after school. Provide shared collaboration spaces for Humanities and ELA 44. Provide staff break rooms and teacher planning rooms for focused work. Shared staff rooms must still support quiet heads-down work. Teachers need quiet spaces if they no longer have assigned classrooms. • Designation: *Yellow* • **Discussion:** ○ Somerville has been an amazing high school but team significantly underestimated the amount of office space that will be needed. SMMA to put in a line item that addresses this specifically 45. The overall quantity of classrooms is to be reviewed carefully due to the MSBA shared classroom model, including mocking up a schedule to confirm the proposed number of classrooms will work. • Designation: *Yellow* • Team to work closely with District to develop a series of schedules to arrive at a right number • MSBA recommends 23 students per classroom at an 85% Utilization rate which has very different outcomes from the 25 students per classroom adopted in the classroom now. • **Discussion:** ○ Reduction of Gen Ed Classrooms has been a big concern to educators, whether the number of classrooms are enough to run schedules effectively 46. Agile classrooms should be easily reconfigured without disrupting learning. 47. Classroom desks must accommodate tools and materials used during class.

03.08	SMMA to convene a meeting with MHS to review adjancies	**Program-Specific Needs** 50. Acknowledge and plan for CTE's unique program needs. 51. Create a model House for vocational programs • Designation: *Yellow* • Heard during programming meetings 52. Provide new biotech space accessible to all students • Designation: *Yellow* • Appropriate access to Chapter 74 Spaces to be discussed during the design process 53. Improve art spaces and music areas. 54. Include occupational therapy rooms and small versatile PE spaces. 55. Provide infrastructure for global collaboration virtual meetings and simulations like Model UN. 56. Co-locate Math, Science and CTE for interdisciplinary collaboration • Designation: *Yellow* • **Discussion:** ○ Does this mean that Math, Science and CTE should all be adjacent to themselves or to each other? There are strong communities within the CTE programs and it would be important to get their thoughts on the planning of these adjacencies ○ Clarification from design team alludes to ed plan outlining the need for a cross disciplinary learning environment ○ Can this interdisciplinary collaboration include ELA and Humanities? ○ New CTE programs like Social Justice have strong collaboration potential between CTE and Humanities programs ○ Is the Large Group Instruction space expressed as a need for the humanities department included in current space planning? ○ While it is important that the Voc programs are grouped together as is the status quo, this conflicts with comments heard during the Ed Visioning sessions, where the need to have more openness with the rest of the school was expressed. ○ The adjacency discussions will be an important process to ensure that siting of CTE programs within the school are well thought out. With how specific they are, it is important that they are positioned rightly as repositioning them would be difficult 57. Co-locate Humanities and Social Studies for collaboration. 58. Cosmetology spaces should be community-facing and feel professional. 59. Health Assisting spaces should mirror real medical environments and equipment. 60. Arts spaces should not be isolated but integrated to encourage cross-department interaction. • Designation: *Yellow* • **Discussion:** ○ Performing Arts as expressed the inclusion of a small stage. ○ SMMA noted that Program includes a black box theatre which is much smaller than the auditorium but is intended for performance spaces 61. School store should be visible and student-run to build pride and ownership.
03.09	Record	**Collaboration, Community Spaces & Access** 62. Adopt middle school-style learning common spaces (per building tour of Chapman Middle School) and shared breakout areas. 63. Support classroom clusters that open into shared spaces. 64. Provide café-style spaces with varied seating. 65. Improve internal library adjacencies and shared amenities without long-term booking. 66. Ensure community spaces enhance learning rather than novelty. 67. Provide outdoor teaching spaces and connection to nature. 68. Ensure good sight lines for supervision in large shared areas. 69. Collaboration spaces should serve both departments and the broader community.
03.10	Record	**Wellness, Mental Health & Student Support** 70. Maintain the House model with counselor + adjustment counselor

		• Designation: *Yellow* • This is currently being discussed with the School Committee 71. Expand mental health services to meet increasing need. 72. Create a dedicated counseling center for presentations and group support. 73. Provide a community mental health space within the health suite. 74. Add a nurse practitioner for medication management. 75. Include spaces that reduce emotional stress and minimize anxiety.
03.11	Record	**Safety, Circulation & Building Functionality** 76. Improve safety, entrance sequence, and parking lot design. 77. Revise the main school entrance and review the number and extent of floor levels for better flow and accessibility. 78. Prioritize quality of space and student experience in all decisions. • Designation: *Yellow* • **Discussion:** ○ Meeting Chat Comment: Wondering where the discussion about elevators lives? Along the same lines of my comment re: making sure students don't have to travel too far to access toilet rooms … also want to make sure the elevators are centrally-located and accessible (and that students that need them don't need to go too far to access them). This is an important consideration as it applies not only to building design but also from an equity point of view in providing well-distributed access to toilets and circulation throughout the school experience
03.12	Record	**Community Identity & Long-Term Vision** 79. Create a flagship school that reflects Medford's Identity 80. Design for longevity so the building serves future generations. 81. Showcase Medford's historic elements within the school environment. 82. Ensure equity is visible in motion and not just in language • Designation: *Yellow* • **Discussion:** ○ Action taken towards equity with both the physical building and policy 83. Design spaces for adults as well as students to collaborate. 84. Provide bright, uplifting spaces that support student growth. 85. Community Spaces should serve as active learning environments • Designation: *Yellow* • Because this has a lot of effects beyond the school, discussions are being expanded to include community members 86. Quiet dining options are important for student belonging. 87. Centralized cafeteria with three lunch periods to support student connection
03.13	SMMA	**Next Steps** • Meeting #4, September 2026 • The Advisory Team will reconvene in September at the beginning of the SD phase to review the recommendations from this discussion as well as documentation of the Preferred Alternative Design as 2d drawings and 3d images • Subsequently, Items carried forward in agreement will be put before School Building Committee