

Brookline High School Expansion FAQs

1. What is happening with the possible expansion of Brookline High School? Will it be expanded at the current site or a new site?

The School District and Town initiated the process for a possible expansion of Brookline High School last year when they submitted a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) stating the town's desire to become a part of MSBA's school construction grant program. In December 2015, we received word Brookline was not included in the program, and rather than wait a full year before reapplying, the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, and the Advisory Committee, in three separate votes, voted without objection to forego MSBA partnership funding to allow for greater design flexibility, lower total project cost, and an accelerated timeline in order to address as soon as possible the high school's enrollment growth and core facility renovation needs. This feasibility study will determine a site location and whether or not BHS will require one or two sites.

2. How do the high school process and the process for building a 9th elementary school overlap?

Due to Brookline's extraordinary K-12 enrollment increases there now exists a need to expand at the K-8 and 9-12 levels. It is anticipated that both projects will occur during an FY17 – FY20/21 timeframe. Since we will not pursue partnership with the MSBA school construction program, we can accelerate a timeline toward construction for the 9th school to be completed by 2020, and the high school to be completed by 2021.

3. Where are we in the process so far?

Between March and May 2016, the Brookline High School Expansion Working Group has taken steps to advance the process to expand and renovate BHS. The working group is made up of BHS teachers, staff, coordinators, district administrators, and school committee members. On June 13 the BHS Expansion Working Group is hosting a community meeting to share the current timeline and process and hear input on potential options from community members for this expansion project, which is designed to prepare PSB for the rapid increase in high school enrollment expected in the coming years. There will be more public meetings listed on the PSB website in PSB News and on the Capital Projects page at www.brookline.k12.ma.us/capitalprojects as well as the Brookline town website at www.brooklinema.gov.

4. What has the school district already done to study and plan for the expansion of BHS?

In September 2013 the School Committee voted to direct the Superintendent to engage in further study regarding the B-SPACE recommendation to maximize the use, whether by efficiency and/or expansion, of Brookline High School. The charge included beginning a process of analyzing the pedagogical and administrative implications of optimally serving up to 2,500 high school students in Brookline. The recommendation(s) may include new or revamped programs, staffing and administrative structures, and facilities use. The process to develop a plan and educational program for an expansion of high school capacity includes consultation with current BHS faculty and students, the Brookline community, the School Committee, PSB leadership, as well as input from the research on current best practices in curriculum, instruction, and pedagogy for secondary schools. This process is to be led by the Superintendent and Headmaster, and will take into account, but not be limited to, the options presented in the HMFH Architects, Inc. High School Concept Study, the B-Space Committee Report, and the Symmes Maini & McKee Associates (SMMA) study from 2015.

In total, since 2011, there have been three studies, 15 options reviewed, two visioning sessions to understand and contribute to the BHS further study process with District administrators, BHS administrators, BHS teachers, BSH students, BHS parents, school committee, selectmen, planning board, building commission, and members of the business community.

6. What is the enrollment growth for BHS?

Over the last five years, BHS enrollment has increased by 12.7%. Since 2010, student enrollment at the high school has increased from 1,726 students to 1,946. Grades Kindergarten through 4 average 651 students this year, while grades 8-12 still average only 490 students. We project that there will be more than 2,500 students attending Brookline High School in grades 9-12 by the school year 2020-2021.

7. What has changed; what is different than when I went to BHS?

Over the many years, the needs have changed at BHS and state/federal requirements have added changes as well. Class sizes are typically smaller than 30 or 40 years ago because supports and services have expanded (including mandated special education requirements and requirements for English language learners), extensive BHS curriculum offerings, graduation requirements, and State “Time on Learning” Requirements have reduced study halls and open periods and now require a minimum of 990 hours of instruction for all students.

8. What are the next steps and the current project timeline?

The most immediate next step is to use the input from the community and staff visioning to create a preliminary educational plan that will be guide the feasibility study. Next steps and a ‘best case scenario’ timeline are below:

May – August 2016

- BHS team creates Educational Plan based on visioning results, and input from a broad range of BHS teachers, staff, and community input including yours from tonight
- Develop preliminary vision and direction for BHS expansion
- Seek services for feasibility study

September 2016

- Begin feasibility study phase. Duration = 6 months

March – April 2017

- Complete feasibility study
- Public presentations and hearings
- Final Decision on any necessary site selection

May 2017

- Present project to Town Meeting to begin process for attaining funding for Design and Construction Phases

October 2017

- Complete Schematic Design
- Public presentations and hearings

November 2017

- Debt Exclusion Override to fund Construction Drawings and Construction

January 2019

- Groundbreaking for construction. Duration = 29 months

September 2021

- School Opens