



Dedham School Committee

MEDIA ALERT

August 23, 2023



DEDHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTES TO APPROVE PROJECT SCHEMATIC REPORT FOR SUBMISSION TO MSBA

Submission puts forth plans for a combined Greenlodge-Oakdale new elementary school to be built; Project name also updated to reflect evolution of the project

DEDHAM, MA -August 23, 2023 - On Tuesday, August 22, 2023 the Dedham School Committee voted to approve the proposed Preferred Schematic Report, as recommended by the Dedham School Building Rehabilitation Committee (SBRC) for submission to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The PSR submission outlines plans and preliminary design preferences for a new, combined Greenlodge-Oakdale Elementary school to be built on the current Oakdale property. The approved PSR also includes design preference information outlining the choice of "Option D," which is a core cluster design that centralizes interactive core spaces, optimizes green space and creates distinct grade-level wings of the building.

During the meeting, school committee members welcomed public comment listening to concerns expressed about the plans for the current Greenlodge space, concerns raised about the proposed 550-student population and support for continuing to move forward with plans to ensure the Town updates our school buildings as quickly as possible. Remarks made by committee members and the Superintendent expressed their appreciation for the level of input shared from across the Dedham community with regards to the project. Members noted that they have read and taken all the emails received into consideration, acknowledging the passion and strength of approval for Dedham Public Schools overall. Member comments further called out key considerations that weighed heavily in their decisions to approve.

Committee member Stephen Acosta voiced that not only did public input factor into his decision, but personal experience as well. "I'm a 5th generation Dedhamite, and my family has experienced Dedham Public Schools going back 4 generations," Acosta noted. "From my experience at the old Avery, I know all about substandard elementary school facilities. It weighs very heavily on me that 700 of our roughly 1000 elementary school students are located in substandard facilities, which the Greenlodge School is...The vote to confirm the PSR tonight will allow us to get over 500 of these 700 students out of substandard facilities in a timely, cost-effective manner."

Members called attention to the variety of factors taken into consideration with their votes, including town geography, escalating building construction costs, and the risks inherent in waiting to try and pursue a different or future project opportunity with state funding support.

“This is the 4th time that we have been invited to the MSBA process, and there are community members who feel that we might be invited to the process again for Riverdale and Greenlodge. Given the 351 communities in our state with multiple high needs facilities, the rising costs of construction, and our high number comparatively of acceptance into the MSBA process, for me this is a risk that is too high to bear. Again, from my experience at Avery, it’s a very quick turn from a facility being substandard to wholly inadequate,” concluded Acosta in his remarks.

Next Steps:

With an approved PSR submitted to the MSBA, the project will continue to move forward with ongoing design updates, including in-depth reviews of the PSR report, formal traffic studies, building systems and more.

Updated Project Name:

The School Committee also voted to update the project name moving forward, shifting from the “Oakdale Elementary Building Project” to a new project name reflecting the decisions that have now been finalized, making it the “Greenlodge-Oakdale Elementary Building Project”.

Dedham members of the community are encouraged to continue following this project. Anyone interested in learning more about the project, or following the latest project developments can subscribe for updates at the Town of Dedham web page under Services/Subscribe. Additionally, questions or comments can be directed to the project team, including the SBRC and all school committee members via email at Greenlodge-OakdaleProject@dedham.k12.ma.us

Media Contact:

Sara Errickson
Communications & Community Engagement Coordinator
Dedham Public Schools
serrickson@dedham.k12.ma.us