

BROWN SCHOOL STATEMENT OF INTEREST 2023

The following Priorities have been included in the Statement of Interest:

1. Replacement or renovation of a building which is structurally unsound or otherwise in a condition seriously jeopardizing the health and safety of school children, where no alternative exists.
2. Elimination of existing severe overcrowding.
3. Prevention of the loss of accreditation.
4. Prevention of severe overcrowding expected to result from increased enrollments.
5. Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility.
6. Short term enrollment growth.
7. Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements.
8. Transition from

SOI Vote Requirement

I acknowledge that I have reviewed the MSBA's vote requirements for submitting an SOI which are set forth in the Vote Tab of this SOI. I understand that the MSBA requires votes from specific parties/governing bodies, in a specific format using the language provided by the MSBA. Further, I understand that the MSBA requires certified and signed vote documentation to be submitted with the SOI. I acknowledge that my SOI will not be considered complete and, therefore, will not be reviewed by the MSBA unless the required accompanying vote documentation is submitted to the satisfaction of the MSBA.

SOI Program: Core Program

Potential Project Scope:

Extensive Repair
Possible New School
Renovation / Addition

Is this SOI the District Priority SOI? No

School Name of the District Priority SOI? Winter Hill Community Innovation School

Is this part of a larger facilities plan? No

If YES, please provide the following:

- **Facilities Plan Date:** N/A
- **Planning Firm:** N/A
- **Please provide a brief summary of the plan, including its goals and how the school facility that is the subject of this SOI fits into that plan.** N/A

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Please provide the current student to teacher ratio at the school facility that is the subject of this SOI: 14.5 to 1

Please provide the originally planned student to teacher ratios at the school facility that is the subject of this SOI: 15 to 1

Does the District have a Master Educational Plan that includes facility goals for this building and all school buildings in the District? Yes.

Does the District have related report(s)/document(s) that detail its facilities, student configuration at each facility, and District operational budget information, both current and proposed? No

If YES, please provide title, author, and date of report in the area below.

Please include a hard copy of these report(s)/document(s).

Because the Somerville School Committee believes that no group of students should be disproportionately impacted by district enrollment policies and that all students should have access to support they need, by 2025, we will 1) conduct a district enrollment study to understand the prospective future population of the district and 2) create and begin implementing a strategy for school building development, school assignment, and programming that aligns with the district's equity policy, and which is based on results of the enrollment study and the projected 10+ year plan for school facilities. We will engage students and families in this process to design a school assignment policy grounded in equity and in the values of our community.

Is there overcrowding at the school facility? No

If YES, please describe in detail, including specific examples of the overcrowding. N/A

Has the district had any recent teacher layoffs or reductions? No

If YES, how many teaching positions were affected? N/A

At which schools in the district?

Please describe the types of teacher positions that were eliminated (e.g. art, math, science, physical education, etc.).

Has the district had any recent staff layoffs or reductions? No

If YES, how many staff positions were affected? N/A

At which schools in the district?

Please describe the types of staff positions that were eliminated (e.g. guidance, administrative, maintenance, etc.).

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Please provide a description of the program modifications as a consequence of these teacher and/or staff reductions, including the impact on district class sizes and curriculum. N/A

Please provide a description of the local budget approval process for a potential capital project with the MSBA. Include schedule information (i.e. Town Meeting dates, city council/town council meetings dates, regional school committee meeting dates). Provide, if applicable, the District's most recent budget approval process that resulted in a budget reduction and the impact to the school district (staff reductions, discontinued programs, consolidation of facilities).

The SPS budget is subject to approval by the School Committee, typically in April or May. The budget is then subject to final vote by the City Council during the City's budget process that culminates in a series of public meetings and public hearings in June.

Building and capital projects in the Somerville Public Schools fall under the purview of the City of Somerville's Capital Projects management and overall Infrastructure and Asset Management Department for the City. The City maintains a 5-year Capital Investment Plan that helps drive Somerville's overall capital investment strategy and takes into account both internal and external fiscal factors. Though the City continues to have a strong bond rating and strong fiscal management and performance, we would be prepared to utilize a number of tools to finance a potential new school building within our district that could include a combination of public municipal funds as well as the possibility of a Proposition 2 ½ vote.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

BRIEF BUILDING HISTORY: Please provide a detailed description of when the original building was built, and the date(s) and project scope(s) of any additions and renovations (maximum of 5000 characters).

Built in 1900, the Brown School is the oldest elementary school in Somerville. Six years after the original construction the school was filled to capacity, necessitating expansion. An addition was completed to the east in 1907, mirroring the original primary massing and completing the symmetrical "H" in plan and elevation. The 1901 east secondary stair was demolished, the corridors were extended, and a new stairwell was included in the addition with an at-grade exit to the east. In 2015, a flat section of the roof was replaced following a partial collapse. The collapse was the result of a number of factors including significant snowfall and related weather conditions and wood rafters that were found today to be weakened by pre-existing partial rotting. The current building is a two and a half story, 41,000 square foot brick veneer structure.

TOTAL BUILDING SQUARE FOOTAGE: Please provide the original building square footage PLUS the square footage of any additions.

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41,000 square feet

SITE DESCRIPTION: Please provide a detailed description of the current site and any known existing conditions that would impact a potential project at the site. Please note whether there are any other buildings, public or private, that share this current site with the school facility. What is the use(s) of this building(s)? (maximum of 5000 characters).

The Brown School is located on a 0.6-acre (26,733 sq. ft.) site at the intersection of Willow, Kidder, and Josephine Avenues. It is bordered by these three paved streets and by residential properties on the fourth side. It is the oldest school building in our school district's portfolio and was constructed in 1900 with an addition added in 1907. There are no other buildings that share space with the school facility on this site. The site includes the two and a half story brick school building, a large, paved school yard, and small, fenced, perimeter landscaped areas between the building and the adjacent streets. The Brown School is in the State's Cultural Resource Inventory but is not locally designated.

Of note in a 2022 "Building Renovation & Department Relocation Master Plan," by Beyer, Blinder, and Belle, were the following issues. The main roof is nearing the end of its useful life. Floors are not level and foundation wall cracks have appeared due to structural shifting, there is asbestos flooring that is encapsulated by carpet, and the brickwork needs to be repointed.

ADDRESS OF FACILITY: Please type address, including number, street name and city/town, if available, or describe the location of the site. (Maximum of 300 characters)

201 Willow Avenue, Somerville, MA 02144

BUILDING ENVELOPE: Please provide a detailed description of the building envelope, types of construction materials used, and any known problems or existing conditions (maximum of 5000 characters).

The Brown School consists of structural masonry exterior bearing walls and what are likely wood-framed structural floors. There is a large stress crack in the masonry on the north elevation. The roof is a combination of slate and asphalt, both believed to be original. The brick exterior of the entire structure is trimmed with limestone, and limestone is also used for the window sills and keystones.

The envelope and MEP systems are antiquated and inefficient. An accessible rear entrance ramp was added more recently, and various interiors and equipment were updated through the years, but the building's physical plant has areas of significant age and deterioration that require a comprehensive building rehabilitation.

Radiating zones of distress in the structure, envelope, and granite foundations are observed on the north and east facades, with the origination of these issues located at the north facade of the 1907 addition where it abuts the original structure. There is evidence of cracking in the

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foundation walls, in the adjacent slab on grade as well as significant deflection of the floor structures above.

An estimated 25% of total wall area on the building will need repointing, with limited areas of full repointing. Chimneys are in fair to poor condition and will require full repointing as well as partial to full rebuilding from the roof upwards. The existing windows are non-original aluminum inserts, and the upper third of each masonry opening is infilled with a metal spandrel panel. The aluminum windows are in fair to good condition. The non-original replacement doors are in fair to poor condition with numerous areas of corrosion and signs of heavy wear. The east and west stoops are in very poor condition and require full rebuild. The accessible ramped entrance on the north facade is constructed of concrete masonry units with a flat roof and should be removed with the reconfiguration of an accessible entry sequence into the building.

Has there been a Major Repair or Replacement of the EXTERIOR WALLS? No
Year of Last Major Repair or Replacement (YYYY)

Description of Last Major Repair or Replacement:

Roof Section

Is the District seeking replacement of the Roof Section? No

Area of Section (square feet)

Type of ROOF (e.g. PVC, EPDM, Shingle, Slate, Tar & Gravel, Other (please describe)) EPDM

The main roof is a moderately sloped, hipped design with deep overhanging eaves on all sides of the building. The ancillary shorter two-story toilet wing has a flat roof with parapets. The west wing of the roof is covered with slate shingles. The central and east wings are covered with composite asphalt shingles. There are five large brick masonry chimneys with multiple flues and risers.

The areas of slate roof look to be in fair to good condition overall. The composite asphalt roofing looks to be in fair condition, with visible patched areas where penetrations were re-flashed, and surface wear elsewhere. On the toilet wing, the low-slope membrane and parapet flashing looks to be in good condition, and is presumed to date from the last five years after the roof collapsed in this area circa 2015.

Age of Section (number of years since the Roof was installed or replaced): 8 years

Description of repairs, if applicable, in the last three years. Include year of repair:

In 2015, a flat section of the roof was replaced following a partial collapse. The collapse was the result of a number of factors including significant snowfall and related weather conditions and wood rafters that were found today to be weakened by pre-existing partial rotting.

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Window Section

Is the District seeking replacement of the Windows Section? No

Windows in Section (count)

Type of WINDOWS (e.g. Single Pane, Double Pane, Other (please describe))

Description of repairs, if applicable, in the last three years. Include year of repair:

Under a DCAM Emergency Waiver, the roof was replaced in-kind with new wooden joists and a flat roofing system, and the damage to bathrooms and utility rooms below was repaired.

MECHANICAL and ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS: Please provide a detailed description of the current mechanical and electrical systems and any known problems or existing conditions (maximum of 5000 characters).

The main electrical service panel consists of 400 amperes, which feeds a sub panel on each corridor. There is no sign of surge protection in the building. The heating system is a steam system providing heat through cast iron radiators. The primary heating source for the building is steam radiators. There are two gas-fired low-pressure steam boilers in the first floor mechanical room, which are nearing the end of their service life. The boiler has a Honeywell control system. The condensate receiver and pumps are also nearing the end of their service life. The third floor is not served by the main heating system. Two gas-fired boilers are abandoned in place in the attic, and these spaces, including the library and storage areas, are heated and cooled with Fujitsu mini-split heat pumps with outdoor units on the flat roof.

Only the Basement and Third Floor levels are sprinklered. A "major alteration" will require providing an automatic sprinkler system throughout.

There is no accessible route to any level apart from the basement currently, and no existing elevator.

Boiler Section

Is the District seeking replacement of the Boiler? No

Is there more than one boiler room in the School? No

What percentage of the School is heated by the Boiler? 100%

Type of heating fuel (e.g. Heating Oil, Natural Gas, Propane, Other) Natural Gas

Age of Boiler (number of years since the Boiler was installed or replaced) 6-7 years

Description of repairs, if applicable, in the last three years. Include year of repair:

N/A

Has there been a Major Repair or Replacement of the HVAC SYSTEM? Yes. 5

Supplemental mini-split systems, window A/C units in each classroom.

Year of Last Major Repair or Replacement: (YYYY) 2018

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Description of Last Major Repair or Replacement: A/C units installed in each classroom.

Has there been a Major Repair or Replacement of the ELECTRICAL SERVICES AND DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM? Yes. panel replacement in 2015. Installed additional panels and transformer in 2018/2019

Year of Last Major Repair or Replacement: (YYYY) 2018

Description of Last Major Repair or Replacement: N/A

BUILDING INTERIOR: Please provide a detailed description of the current building interior including a description of the flooring systems, finishes, ceilings, lighting, etc. (maximum of 5000 characters).

The school suffers from several program deficits, including the lack of a dedicated cafeteria or gymnasium, and no building-wide accessibility.

The original architect's floor plan rendering called for three classrooms per floor on the two principal floors with a secondary passageway, intended to function as both a coat room and second means of egress for each classroom. Two play rooms were located in the raised basement level. Currently there are classrooms in the basement level, and these original passageways work as swing spaces for any services students might receive throughout the day, whether occupational therapy, language, or reading assistance. Lunch is held in student classrooms, as are specialist classes such as music, and physical education. The school library is now in the attic space. The school is not ADA accessible.

The interior walls are a combination of gypsum and horsehair plaster. Classroom ceilings are 2'x4' acoustical tiles with suspending grid patterns. The music room and teacher's room are located in the basement next to the boiler room. Most hallway and classroom floors consist of vinyl asbestos and composition tile. Some classrooms have carpeting. Many of the exterior and interior doors need to be replaced. Most fixtures and millwork is consistent with the 1900 model schools décor. Third floor library was renovated in the late 1980s, with built-in skylight throughout.

PROGRAMS and OPERATIONS: Please provide a detailed description of the current grade structure and programs offered and indicate whether there are program components that cannot be offered due to facility constraints, operational constraints, etc. (maximum of 5000 characters).

The Brown School is the oldest school in the district and also the district's only K-5 school. It is home to 211 students:

- First language not English: 28%

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- Economically Disadvantaged: 15.2%
- Multilingual learner: 6.2%
- Students with Disabilities: 8.1%
- High Needs: 26.1%
- Student Population: 211

There is no gymnasium, cafeteria, or areas for full school assemblies. Physical education classes must be held in the school yard, classrooms, or in the library. Students receiving OT or PT services in the school must do so in the hallways due to lack of common space. There is no dedicated art, music, computer lab, or science room. This creates challenges with scheduling and storage. Due to the lack of cafeteria area, students must eat lunch in their classroom, and carry trays of hot food up and down stairs, creating a potentially unsafe situation. Space in the basement floor of the building has been renovated into classroom space, however recent leaks in the basement required the closure of a space designated as an art classroom. The building is not handicapped accessible, and there are limited existing universal accessible routes and entrances. There is no intercom system in the building.

Temperature dysregulation leads to extreme temperatures in the early fall and late spring in third floor classrooms and library space, which is also used for indoor physical education, lunch, and family meetings. There is no private space available for confidential conversations between students and counselors. Loss of rooms due to leaks, temperature dysregulation, and other facility needs has led to a need for art and music teachers to travel throughout the building or offsite to host classes for Brown School students. There is also no dedicated space for afterschool programming at the Brown School, despite significant and increasing over-enrollment in the district's afterschool programs, meaning we cannot provide critical programs for students and families who need afterschool care and child care.

A building addition and/or improvements planned for this site offer a major opportunity to improve site programming for the school. Currently, the school doesn't have a gym and play space is limited to the paved courts (no play structures).

EDUCATIONAL SPACES: Please provide a detailed description of the Education Spaces within the facility, a description of the number and sizes (in square feet) of classrooms, a description of science rooms/labs including ages and most recent updates, a description of the cafeteria, gym and/or auditorium and a description of the media center/library (maximum of 5000 characters).

The basement houses 3 classrooms (each approximately 750 square feet), a food service area, the teacher's room, a boys' bathroom, storage, and the Boiler room. The first floor houses 5 classrooms (each approximately 880 square feet), the girls' bathroom, front office, and a staff restroom. The second floor houses 5 classrooms (each approximately 880 square feet) plus the nurse's office. The third floor has 2 classrooms (each approximately 700 square feet), a library area, and a Resource room. There is no dedicated science lab or classroom, no dedicated

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computer lab, no gym or physical education space, no dedicated art or music classroom, and no common area for assemblies or family meetings. The building is not ADA accessible and presents challenges for students needing OT, PT, or other services. These services are provided in the hallways.

CAPACITY and UTILIZATION: Please provide the original design capacity and a detailed description of the current capacity and utilization of the school facility. If the school is overcrowded, please describe steps taken by the administration to address capacity issues. Please also describe in detail any spaces that have been converted from their intended use to be used as classroom space (maximum of 5000 characters).

Every classroom in the building is occupied and classes are at full capacity, including three modified spaces in the basement. Storage space is very limited, and at times, hallways are used to store equipment or other materials, creating a potential fire hazard.

MAINTENANCE and CAPITAL REPAIR: Please provide a detailed description of the district's current maintenance practices, its capital repair program, and the maintenance program in place at the facility that is the subject of this SOI. Please include specific examples of capital repair projects undertaken in the past, including any override or debt exclusion votes that were necessary (maximum of 5000 characters).

The facility is maintained by the Department of Public Works, Scheduled maintenance of the HVAC system is by outside contracted vendor (J.C. Cannistraro). All other systems receive annual in-house maintenance during summer months when the facility is less active. Unscheduled maintenance is initiated by reports from school or custodial staff to a computerized work order system. Capital improvements such as the aforementioned roof and new boilers are conducted as part of a continually evolving five-year Capital Improvements Plan. All projects are subject to funding availability. No previous work has required overrides or debt exclusion.

The Brown School is under an aggressive mechanical preventative maintenance program including quarterly filter changes, seal and fluid inspections and changes. Capital projects are budgeted based on the subject item's End of Useful Life (EUL) schedule. Currently the building is not slated for any large-scale capital projects.

Capital Projects over the past ten years have include replacement of the electrical system, installation of 5 mini-split systems, boiler replacement, and electrical panel and transformer updates.

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PRIORITY 7: Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs, consistent with state and approved local requirements.

Question 1: Please provide a detailed description of the programs not currently available due to facility constraints, the state or local requirement for such programs, and the facility limitations precluding the programs from being offered.

The Brown School does not have consistent, dedicated spaces for art, music, physical education, a computer lab, or science in specialized learning environments. State Requirements for these programs are for dedicated classrooms consistent with MSBA guidelines. The Brown School is not ADA accessible, prohibiting any specialized program in the district from being located at the Brown. There is no gym which severely restricts the Physical Education program. P.E. classes are held in classrooms or the library, or when weather permitting, outside in a paved school yard. No P.E. equipment is available at the Brown School. While the school department does meet the local and state requirement for P.E. at the Brown School, the program is not able to provide the same type of activities as at other schools in the district. There is no kitchen or cafeteria at the Brown School. Lunches are prepared off-site and students eat lunch in their classrooms. The Brown School is limited in the menu served; for example, all elementary schools in the district provide a fresh salad bar. The Brown School is not able to provide this service. While the school foodservice department is able to meet all state and local requirements, the foodservice department is not able to provide the same type of meals as at other schools in the district.

Question 2: Please describe the measures the district has taken or is planning to take in the immediate future to mitigate the problem(s) described above.

The Brown School does not have consistent, dedicated spaces for art, music, physical education, a computer lab, or science in specialized learning environments. Physical education is taught outside on an asphalt playground during acceptable weather or in the library or classrooms during inclement weather. Lunches are prepared off site, then transported to the school. Students eat lunch in their respective classrooms. Due to the age and condition of the building, opportunities for renovation are limited and will not allow for adequate expansion of operations to accommodate the student population. There are no existing facilities to house students and staff; previously-utilized buildings for other school projects have been exhausted. The former Edgerly School building currently houses the SPS Central Administration Offices, Somerville Parks & Recreation offices and programs for youth of all ages, and a dedicated Teen Center and gymnasium. The former Cummings School houses offices and other spaces for construction projects. Space previously allocated at Somerville High School for temporary classrooms is no longer available with the school's reconstruction. The only available option at this time would be the use of modular units.

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Question 3: Please provide a detailed explanation of the impact of the problem described in this priority on your district's educational program. Please include specific examples of how the problem prevents the district from delivering the educational program it is required to deliver and how students and/or teachers are directly affected by the problem identified.

For art, music, and science, lack of dedicated space prevents teachers from offering a full complement of subject activities that would be equitable and similar to those offered in schools which have such dedicated spaces. The same issues apply to physical education. As stated above, the Physical Education program does not have a dedicated space. The P.E. teacher must provide instruction in classroom spaces that are not large enough or equipped to hold P.E. classes. The inside classrooms are not large enough for students to participate in physical activity. The outside space has no equipment. The school lunch program has worked to bring in attractive and nutritious meals. Special baskets were purchased by the foodservice department to enable lunches to be more easily carried by young students to their classrooms.