

Executive Summary of Elementary and Middle School Feasibility Study and Enrollment Scenarios

Resources:

[West Springfield Elementary \(3.3.23 *Soft Cost\)](#)

*Soft costs are A/E, OPM fees, Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (FF&E), Technology/Data/IT, construction testing and construction contingency

[Elementary Schools Feasibility \(1/17/23\)](#)

[Middle School Feasibility \(2/22/23\)](#)

[GeoVisual Scenarios \(3/2/23\)](#)

Context

The Mayor and School Committee discussed and ultimately requested the implementation of a feasibility study that would assess buildings' needs and present the implications of the return of kindergarten and English Learners back to their neighborhood schools.

Feasibility Study

The objective of the feasibility study of the elementary schools aims to explore the renovation costs associated with potentially returning kindergarten students to their neighborhood schools. (It focused on Fausey, Mittineague, Tatham, and John Ashley Schools. Memorial had existing plans from 2022 to review.)

CBA's work consisted of reviewing the existing conditions of each school based on three factors: 1) code review, 2) renovations and additions, and 3) recommended upgrades by the administration. (See slide #2 of the 1/17/23 PPT to understand better the considerations of each factor.)

Both CBA and WSPS schools estimated that each site would require additional classrooms, which assumes expansion to the footprints of the existing buildings. (See Diagram A: The Number of New Sections, Classrooms)

Diagram A: The Number of New Sections (Classrooms)						
	JA	Fausey	Tatham	Mittineague	Memorial (2022 Project)	Coburn (New)
CBA's Recommendation based on census data for Kindergarten CR req'd	n/a	+4	+2	+2	+3	6
WSPS's GeoVisual	n/a	4	3	2	2	6

***The core spaces, such as the art room, gymnasium, offices, etcetera are not ideal and would need renovation/updates to accommodate the increased number of students and staff.**

Based on the feedback provided by CBA via the study (see the attached report, West Springfield Soft Costs), it became evident that the cost of renovating certain schools was not fiscally responsible, especially when comparing the overall *Property Values per the WS Assessor Website* with the cost of renovating (see Diagram B) the elementary schools listed below:

Property Values per the WS Assessor Website

MITTINEAGUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Building Assessed Value: \$1,707,700
- Total Property Value: \$2,046,000

JOHN ASHLEY SCHOOL

- Building Assessed Value: \$1,832,000
- Total Property Value: \$2,969,500

TATHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Building Assessed Value: \$1,893,900
- Total Property Value: \$2,067,800

FAUSEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Building Assessed Value: \$3,659,900
- Total Property Value: \$4,798,360

Diagram B: Construction Total (OH&P, Bonds, General Conditions, Contingency, Escalation) w/ Soft Costs	
J. Ashley	\$17,746,700.00
Fausey	\$22,253,770.00
Mittineague	\$19,074,554.00
Tatham	\$12,442,400.00
Memorial	\$12,000,000.00
Total	\$83,517,424.00

Considering the current assessed value of each school, the overall condition of the physical plants, and the cost to renovate each site, CBA recommends the closure of both Mittineague and John Ashley schools.

CBA was asked by the School Committee to expand upon the study by incorporating the middle school because its original design took into consideration future classroom additions. The goals of this were 1) to address the space needs within the present middle school due to the expansion of middle school programs, 2) to review the option of moving the entire 5th-grade class to an addition to the middle school, and 3) to confirm that the original middle school design did indeed include an option for expansion.

Moving 5th grade to the middle would allow us to then move Kindergarten back to each school. CBA's findings did verify that the site can support the addition; however, other spaces such as the cafeteria, kitchen, gym, and library would become overcrowded. Equally important, the renovations at each elementary school to create kindergarten classrooms requires significant and costly code updates.

GeoVisual Enrollment Scenarios

The two primary objectives of exploring the redistricting software platform, GeoVisual, were:

1. We wanted to better understand what the impact would be on the schools **if we were to keep our kindergarten students within their neighborhood schools.**
2. Based on CBA's analysis and findings, we wanted to better understand the impact such recommendations would have on schools.

Scenario A, which aligned with the purpose of the feasibility study, highlighted the prospect of simply returning kindergarten students to Fausey, Memorial, Mittineague, and Tatham. Each site would need to add sections/classrooms:

Fausey	4 sections/classrooms
Tatham	3 sections/classrooms
Mittineague	2 sections/classrooms
Memorial	2 sections/classrooms

School	Kindergarten Population from J. Ashley	Kindergarten English Language (EL) Learners attending Coburn	Sections (w/out ELs)	Class Size (w/out ELs)	Sections with ELs	Class Sizes with ELs
Fausey	75	10 *(80)	4	18/19	4	20
Tatham	46	4 (50)	3	15/16	3	16/17
Mittineague	23	3 (26)	1	23	2	13
Memorial	27	10 (37)	2	13/14	2	18/19
*Sum of ELs attending Coburn and J. Ashley. Coburn already is K-5.						

If we were going to return kindergarten students (ELs included) to their neighborhood schools, you would need to add classrooms to each building; the column in red captures how many classrooms/sections would be needed.

With respect to CBA's assessment, the District explored four iterations or scenarios (B-E) with the understanding that J. Ashley and Mittineague students would attend either Tatum, Fausey, or Memorial school. (See GeoVisual Scenarios 3/2/23 PPT for more information.) A critical takeaway was the significant impact the attendance change would have on the overall scope of the construction work required to the existing footprint of each school in order to accommodate the increase in student enrollment.

Option C (w/ English Language Learners)

Fausey/Mittineague				
Grade Level	EL Population at Coburn	Population w/EL neighborhood students	Sections	Ave. Class Size
k	14	90	4	22.5
1	9	91	(4) 4	22.8
2	7	93	(4) 4	23.3
3	11	93	(4) 4	23.3
4	7	88	(4) 4	22.0
5	3	90	(4) 4	22.5
		(392) 545	+4	

Tatham/Mittineague				
Grade Level	EL Population at Coburn	Population w/EL neighborhood students	Sections	Ave. Class Size
k	5	68	3	22.7
1	4	43	(2) 2	21.5
2	3	64	(3) 3	21.3
3	4	59	(3) 3	19.7
4	2	73	(3) 4	18.3
5	2	65	(3) 3	21.7
		(226) 372	+4	

Memorial/Mittineague				
Grade Level	EL Population at Coburn	Population w/EL neighborhood students	Sections	Ave. Class Size
k	11	42	2	21.0
1	19	62	(2) 3	20.7
2	19	77	(3) 4	19.3
3	20	62	(2) 3	20.7
4	12	58	(2) 3	19.3
5	11	54	(2) 3	18.0
		(193) 355	+7	

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Closing Reflections/Considerations

The main takeaways from the exercise of reconfiguring school boundary lines based on just four elementary schools (Coburn, Memorial, Fausey, and Tatham) can be found in the GeoVisual 3/2/23 PPT and are as follows:

- Each site would require significant construction (minus Coburn because it is new) to address the increase of students and staff. The core spaces, such as the cafeteria and gymnasium, would also need to be addressed in order to support the larger student enrollment.
- When renovating our buildings, it must be understood that much of the older structure remains untouched and visible. The point is that there is often no full appreciation for what the end product will look like; we would not be getting a new building like Coburn. The existing buildings would be getting a minimal expansion for new kindergarten classrooms, significant code updates, and a minimal facelift to each building.
- The cost to renovate compared to building a new school is a significant factor.
 - The cost to renovate all of the schools identified in the feasibility study would be approximately \$84 million. Coburn's cost was about \$56 million at a rate of approximately \$350/SF. Currently, SY23-24 rates are around \$600/SF. It would cost approximately \$92 million to build a new school, similar in size to the new Coburn in today's market.
 - If we closed J. Ashley and Mittineague and renovated Tatham, Memorial, and Fausey to accommodate K-5 students, further analysis would be required to better understand the scope of the work because there would be an increase in class sizes and staffing at each school. The cost to renovate the three schools to accommodate just Kindergarten students was around \$47 million, so we can safely assume the cost was only increased to accommodate additional grades.

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