

Four School Building Project
Questions and Answers (Revised 4-15-10)

1. Does the cost of renovating to new the three elementary schools include operating costs?
The Project Costs and Cost to Mansfield indicated in the Family of Options matrix do not include operating costs. However, the anticipated operating costs are included in the Average Yearly Cost/Household under the column titled Financial Impact.

2. Has the committee considered implications of a larger school?
Yes, a group consisting of Mansfield Public Schools' teaching & administrative staff and parents visited 4 elementary schools of similar size.

3. What are the projected class sizes?
The Mansfield Board of Education established class size guidelines in 1999. These guidelines will continue to be followed regardless of the selected option and are as follows:

K-3	14-18
4-5	16-20
6-8	21-23

4. How will the location impact traffic?
The subject project will have some impact on vehicular and pedestrian traffic along Warrentville Road (Route 89) and along local and state roads leading to Warrentville Road. In association with required applications to the Connecticut Department of Transportation and Mansfield Planning and Zoning Commission, existing and anticipated traffic volumes will have to be specifically studied and all anticipated impacts would have to be appropriately addressed to meet applicable approval criteria. Both vehicular and pedestrian traffic will need to be considered. Based on a preliminary analysis, all anticipated traffic impacts would be able to be addressed.

Traffic associated with a consolidated elementary school is expected to be similar to cumulative traffic now associated with the three existing elementary schools and to the traffic associated with the Middle School, which has approximately the number of students that are planned for the consolidated school. Based on a preliminary review by Mansfield's Traffic Authority, Warrentville Road and affected intersections with nearby state and local roads are expected to have capacity to accommodate a consolidated school at this site, The primary traffic issue is anticipated to be the management of on-site traffic associated with school busses and parent pickups. Onsite traffic management will need to be specifically addressed in any site design submitted for PZC approval.

5. Will the cost of busing increase?
There should be no increase in cost due to the change in location from 3 to either two schools (Option C) or one school (Option D).

6. Will it impact students' time on the bus?
We will continue to follow State of Connecticut law which limits the amount of time a child is on a bus to one hour. Buses will be scheduled to leave the Mansfield Middle School at approximately 8:00am and arrive at the elementary location(s) at 8:45am.

7. What will happen to the SE athletic fields?
The athletic fields will remain as is.

8. Will acoustics in the gym be considered?
Yes. Options to maximize space and acoustics will be reviewed with the teaching staff.
9. How is the feel at the larger elementary schools the committee visited?
The schools we visited had a warm open feeling.
10. For the 3 new schools option (Option B), what does the cafeteria do compared to state reimbursement options?
All of the schools exceed the maximum square footage allowed for reimbursement based on projected student enrollment so the cafeteria will increase the total building's square footage and will not be eligible for reimbursement.
11. If the 3 new schools option (Option B) was chosen, does Southeast need the extra classrooms and what is the cost of those if changed back to old district lines before the last re-districting?
If Option B were chosen, each of the three schools would have comparable capacity which would be permanent in nature rather than relocatables, using our current district boundaries. This is not to say that district lines could not be redrawn at some point in the future.
12. Why not decouple the Middle School from the options?
The four schools were reviewed together so that the town could plan for needed additions and/or renovations as a complete group.
13. What are the predictions for energy savings?
A new school will be LEED certified, which should save approximately \$200,000 per year.
14. How will one school solution effect the ratio of special education staff vs. special needs students?
The Mansfield Public Schools will continue to support special needs students in accordance with their IEP.
15. Has there been a cost comparison?
Yes, details are on the School Building Committee website at www.mansfieldct.org.
16. How would the neighborhood school feeling be attained?
The school administration would work with staff and parents to create a warm, friendly environment.
17. What happens if referendum fails?
The Mansfield Town Council in collaboration with the Mansfield Board of Education would analyze the referendum results and develop a plan of action.
18. Over how long a period of time is the financing package?
Twenty years
19. What are the enrollment projections for the one school option?
An enrollment projection study is posted on the School Building Committee website.
20. How do larger schools handle moving children up, ie. friends with friends?

In a similar way our schools do now. Administrators review class placement with teachers and make decision based on feedback.

21. If there is one new school, would it be air conditioned?

Yes, the current plan for option D included air conditioning.

22. How many classrooms at per grade level are there now?

Currently we have K-7, Gr. 1-7, Gr. 2-8, Gr. 3-8, and Gr. 4-8.

23. Why is the cost difference so large between Options C & D?

The cost difference is large because in Option C the renovations and additions total approximately 114,000 square feet between the two schools as compared to constructing a new 100,000 square foot school (Option D). Also, the anticipated state reimbursement is much less for Option C because the proposed square footage exceeds the State maximum eligible for reimbursement by 35% - 40% as compared to approximately 10% for Option D. Thus the reimbursement "penalty" for Option C is estimated at \$14.3 million versus \$2.5 million for Option D.

This is why the net cost for Opt. D (\$37mil) is approximately 43% of Opt. C (\$16mil). This amounts to an annual difference of approx. \$2.2mil in debt service payments. That combined with a reduction in maintenance costs of approx. \$405,000 and a small reduction in school staffing costs of \$70,000 means a difference of \$2,680,000 annually or the equivalent of 2.89 mills.

24. If the State approves the plan, will we get the money they have committed?

Project and funding approval process is as follows:

School District submits the project to the Governor and General Assembly for consideration during the subsequent regularly scheduled session by June 30, 2011

State Dept of Education will notify the School District of the assigned Priority Category by Oct. 1, 2011.

State Dept of Education submits the Priority List to the Governor and Education Committee by Dec. 15, 2011.

Education Committee submits approved or modified Priority List to Governor and General Assembly by Feb. 1, 2012 of the following year with a request for authorization to enter into grant commitments.

Grant commitments become effective only after such projects have been approved by the General Assembly and the bill has been signed by the Governor.

25. Has there been any consideration of the effect on the community well on Pinewoods Lane?

The Pinewoods Lane community well was considered in association with a septic suitability analysis conducted in 2009 by Anchor Engineering Services, Inc. This preliminary analysis concluded that ground water flows were not toward the community well. Accordingly, the Pinewoods Lane well is not expected to be impacted by a septic system for the new school. The State Department of Environmental Protection Agency permit process for the new septic system is very detailed and this potential impact issue will be studied further.

The new school will need to have an additional well and all Connecticut Department of Public Health permit requirements will have to be addressed. The site is within a designated stratified drift aquifer area and preliminary analysis indicated that the needed volume of potable water could be obtained without affecting the yield of the Pinewoods Lane community well.

26. If one school is built, would the Board consider adding preschool classes and a family resource center in the current Southeast Building?
If one school is built, any plans for the future use of the current Southeast building would be determined after study by the Town Council.
27. How will one school continue to offer the after school programs that are offered at the three elementary schools?
Programs on a variety of topics would continue to be offered by both certified and non-certified staff, as well as outside presenters to all students at a particular grade level(s) as determined by available funding.
28. What if there was an unexpected population boom?
We will continue to monitor birth rates in town, obtain enrollment projection studies, and plan for an increase/decrease in enrollment.
29. Was adding a library media center, cafeteria and gym to Option A considered?
Because the square footage of our elementary schools is already over the State reimbursement maximum, adding to each school would be non-reimbursable.
30. Did the committee do a cost comparison to building 3 brand new schools?
To get State reimbursement, the three new schools would have to be smaller than the existing schools which would not be recommended and the cost to Mansfield would be considerably higher than a single school (Option D).
31. Has the committee considered impact on Southeast students while new school is being built?
The contractors would do everything possible to have as little impact as possible but in all of the options there will be some impact.
32. Have you considered parent pick-up at a larger school?
We have discussed with larger schools how parent/student drop-off and pick-up are handled and would incorporate it into the planning.
33. Are there plans or considerations for the inclusion of a sidewalk on Warrenville Rd. from 195 to the new school site?
Appendix L of Mansfield's 2006 Plan of Conservation and Development lists as a walkway improvement priority "Route 195 to Library". The current (10/08) Priority list for walkway/bikeway improvements identifies this project as the #5 priority (out of 20 listed projects). Of importance, three of the higher walkway priorities have either been built or have funding commitments and an application for funding is being prepared for the remaining project with a higher listed priority. If plans proceed for a new school at the Southeast School site, it is anticipated that this project will be reevaluated and expanded to include access to the new school site.

34. Thank you for researching and considering Option E. My question is: given the land to the north of Vinton is mainly wetlands, where/how would the "new Vinton" be built? Would the plan be to assemble the new SE first, move Vinton students into old SE, raze old and build new Vinton, and move the students back, followed by razing old SE?

It is important to emphasize that all plans for new school construction are preliminary in nature and will be the subject of comprehensive analysis and approval of Town and State officials. As currently envisioned, Option E, which would provide for two new elementary schools at the existing SE School and Vinton School sites, would be implemented concurrently. The Middle School improvements likely would start a year or more after the initiation of the new school construction. The planned sites for the two new schools would be primarily in wooded areas to the east of the existing school buildings. At the Vinton School site, a right of way from Stearns Road likely would be used for construction access and there will be a need to utilize some portion of the existing ballfield area east of the school. Temporary recreation areas likely will be established west and north of the existing school. At the South East School site, construction access likely would be from the adjacent recreation area.

Students would continue to attend school in all three existing school buildings until the two new schools are completed. A concerted effort would be made to separate construction traffic and new school work areas from the existing school activity areas. There will be short term impacts that will have to be carefully planned for and mitigated to the degree possible. All aspects of the school designs and construction processes will be subject to Special Permit approval of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

35. It has been stated that four larger schools were visited by a team from the School Building Committee during the research process. Could you please share which specific schools were visited (I noticed some towns listed in one of the documents on the web, but not the specific school names) and how much time was spent in each school?

School	Dates	Location	Grade Levels	Enrollment	Time
Colchester Elementary and Jack Jackter Intermediate	3/30/09	Colchester	Prek-2, 3-5	871, 853	School day from bus arrival to dismissal
Lt. Eleazer Davis Elementary	4/17/09	Bedford, MA	Prek-5	560	2 hours
Israel Loring Elementary	4/17/09	Sudbury, MA	K-2	605	2 hours
Nayaug Elementary	5/15/09, 11/12/09, 2/1/10	Glastonbury	K-5	675	Bus Arrivals through school lunch waves