



Educational Program & Grade Configuration Recommendation

Amherst School Committee

October 20, 2015

Educational Plan Contents

- Amherst Public Schools District Mission
- Guiding Principles
- 21st Century Learning Goals
- Grade & School Configuration Policies
- Class Size Policies
- School Scheduling Method
- Teaching Methodology and Structure
- Technology Infrastructure, Policies & Requirements
- Teacher Planning and Room Assignment Policies
- Special Education Programs
- ELL Program
- Transportation Policies
- Lunch Programs
- Functional Relationships & Key Adjacencies
- Security & Visual Access Requirements
- Acknowledgments



ARPS 21st Century Learning Goals

- Empathy, Citizenship, and Ethics
 - Flexibility and community; Social and self-awareness



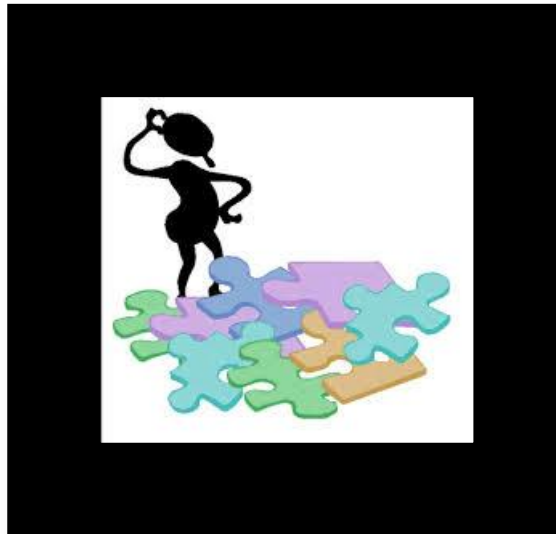
ARPS 21st Century Learning Goals

- Curiosity, Creativity, and Risk-Taking
 - Self-directed learning; imagination



ARPS 21st Century Learning Goals

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving



ARPS 21st Century Learning Goals

- Cultural Awareness and Expression
 - Multi-cultural literacy and Global Awareness



ARPS 21st Century Learning Goals

- Collaboration



ARPS 21st Century Learning Goals

- Effective Oral and Written Communication



Guiding Principles for New Building

Excitement and Engagement

- Students are engaged and excited about their learning
- The learning is authentic, meaningful, and relevant
- All students' needs are met through differentiated approaches
- Students are provided with opportunities to grapple and struggle with new ideas and concepts in effort to foster a growth mindset
- Student voices are heard and learning is visible throughout the school
- Students engage in continual self-assessment



Guiding Principles for New Building

Building Community

- Community-building is a priority within the classroom, across grade levels, within the school, and across the Amherst community
- Students will have a “small school” experience and feel connected and known by peers and adults in the school



Guiding Principles for New Building

Adaptability and Flexibility

- The infrastructure will be flexible and built for the future
- The spaces in the building will support *all* learners to engage in deep thinking and learning
- The building will be green with an eye toward climate justice



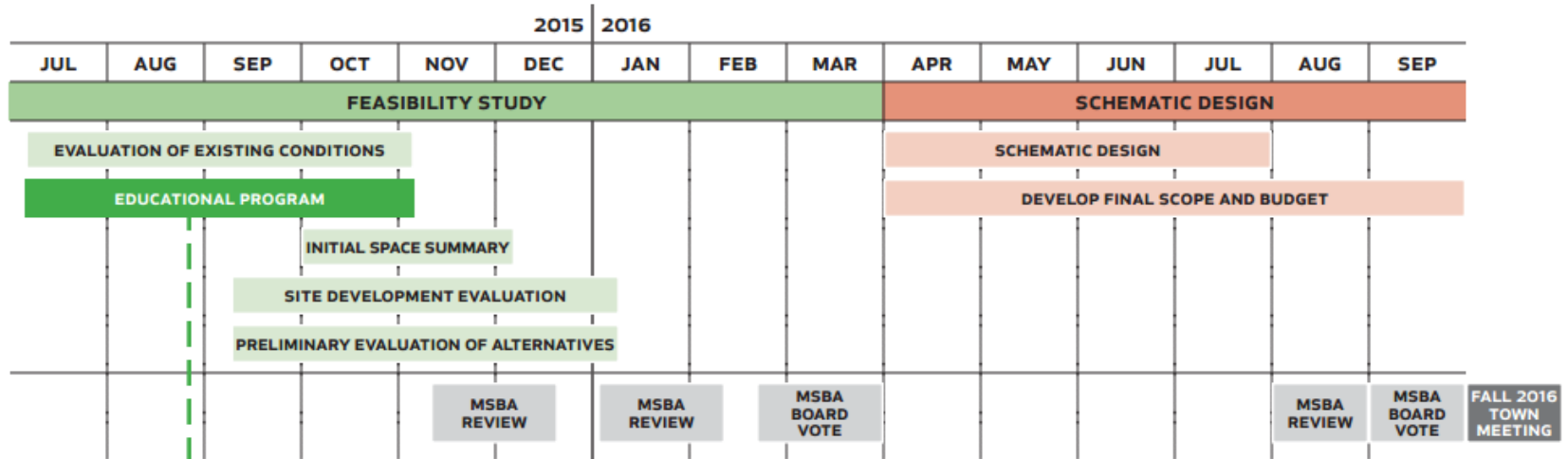
Guiding Principles for New Building

Collaboration and Sharing Expertise

- The physical building will support teacher collaboration (i.e., collaborative work spaces and accessible storage of shared materials and resources)
- Teachers will have ample opportunities to share best practices
- Students will learn how to collaborate and there will be ample opportunities to practice teaming skills



Timeline



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM							
AUGUST 27	SEPTEMBER 21	SEPTEMBER 29	OCTOBER 20	OCTOBER 26	NOVEMBER 3	NOVEMBER TBD	NOVEMBER 2015
SCHOOL COMMITTEE	SCHOOL COMMITTEE	COMMUNITY FORUM	SCHOOL COMMITTEE	COMMUNITY FORUM	SCHOOL COMMITTEE	SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE	MSBA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of Process - Review of Schedule - Next Steps - Community Input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of Process - Review of Current Grade Configuration Challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of Process - Review of Current Grade Configuration Challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of Schedule - Review of Grade Configuration Recommendation /Educational Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of Schedule - Review of Grade Configuration Recommendation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vote to Approve Education Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vote to Approve Submission to MSBA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MSBA Review of Preliminary Design Program Submission Includes Education Program



Communication & Engagement

- **School Committee Meetings** (3/12/13, 2/4/14, 4/29/14, 10/21/14, 11/25/14, 12/16/14, 1/20/15, 2/10/15, 3/17/15, 4/28/15, 5/17/15, 8/27/15, 9/21/15, 10/20/15)
- **School Building Committee Meetings** (10/21/14, 1/26/15, 2/23/15, 3/26/15, 4/8/15, 7/22/15, 9/15/15, 10/15/15)
- **Meetings at Wildwood**
 - PGO (5/26/15, 10/15/15)
 - School Council (4/15/15)
 - Staff Meeting (5/13/15, 10/14/15)
- **Meetings at Crocker Farm**
 - PGO (10/9/15)
 - School Council (4/28/15)
 - Staff Meeting (4/29/15, 9/30/15)
- **Meetings at Fort River**
 - PGO (5/8/15, 10/16/15)
 - School Council (4/30/15)
 - Staff Meeting (6/2/15, 9/30/15)
- **Town Meeting** (5/7/14)
- **Meeting for Families with Preschoolers/Young Children** (10/13/15)
- **Online**
 - Website (started 5/18/15)
 - Facebook site (started 8/5/15)



Communication & Engagement

- **Community Forums**
 - September 29, 3:30 & 7:00
 - October 26, 3:30 & 7:00
- **Amherst Media segments**
 - June 8, 2015: with John Musante, Ron Bohonowicz, Kimberly Stender, Katherine Appy, and Michael Morris
 - September 22, 2015 Joan Temkin with Maria Geryk, Kathryn Mazur, and Michael Morris
- **Daily Hampshire Gazette Articles**
 - 11/26/13, 9/24/14, 9/16/15
- **Email Correspondence**
 - 6/9/15: All Parent email on Building Project (included private Preschools)
 - Supt weekly emails: 9/4/15, 9/11/15, 9/18/15 (w/FAQ), 9/25/15, 10/2/15, and 10/9/15
 - Crocker Farm School Newsletter, 9/18/15
 - Fort River School Newsletter, 10/2/15
- **Visioning Group** of staff, central office administrators, town officials, principals, parents/guardians, School Committee members, community members, and Select Board members
 - 8/24/15, 9/10/15, 9/25/15, 10/14/15



WWSBP UPDATE

May 19, 2015

Recorded by: Sasha Figueroa



The Massachusetts School Building Authority has approved the feasibility study of three options for the Wildwood School Building Project.

- Option 1: Addition/Renovation of current Wildwood School
- Option 2: Build New K-6 School
- Option 3: Grade Reconfiguration

These options will be carefully considered and this flyer will help to clarify what each option entails.

OPTIONS FOR THE WILDWOOD SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT

Crocker Farm example

Newly constructed part of the building



Renovated part of the building

Option 1: ADDITION/RENOVATION

This "add/reno" option is a renovation of the current Wildwood school building. Parts of the existing building would be renovated while others would be added via new construction. This is the option that was chosen for Crocker Farm's project completed in 2002.

Option 2: BUILD NEW K-6



The "build new" option is the building of a new K-6 school. A new building would be constructed, followed by the demolition of the current building.

Option 3: GRADE RECONFIGURATION



Grades 2 - 6 within the new Wildwood

Preschool - grade 1 within Crocker Farm



The grade reconfiguration option would conclude with two district-wide elementary schools. All Preschool through grade 1 students would attend Crocker Farm School, and all grade 2 through 6 students would attend the new Wildwood building. The current Wildwood and Fort River buildings would be closed.

Stay Informed

by scanning the code or visit www.arsps.org



Communication with other Districts with Early Childhood Models

(70 MA districts use this model)

- South Hadley
- Holliston
- Weston
- Ludlow
- East Longmeadow
- Springfield, VT



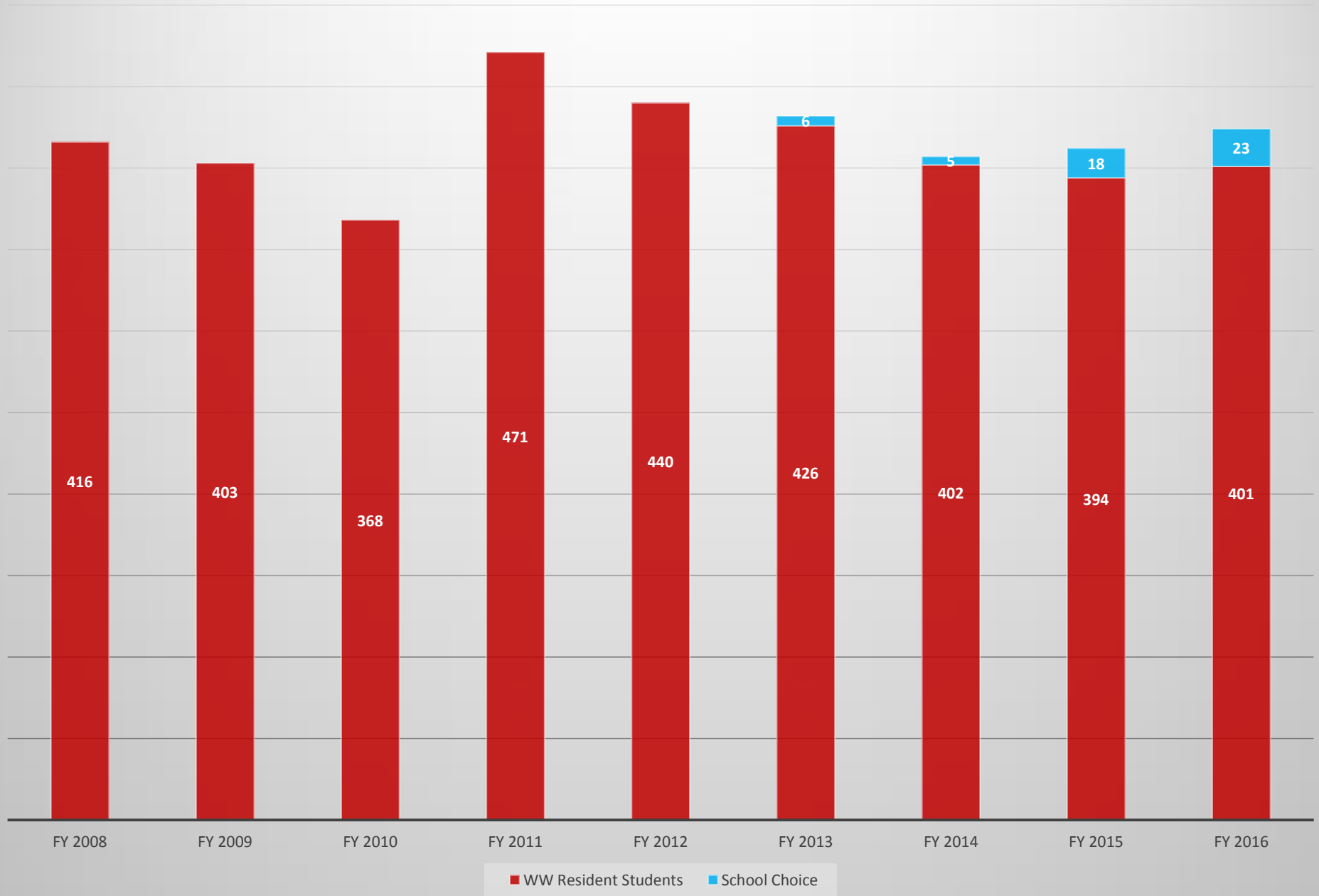
Infrastructure: Wildwood

- Built in 1970; Open classroom concept (outdated)
- Issues with HVAC and moisture
- Accessibility issues throughout the building
- Qualified for MSBA process
- 24% of Wildwood teachers agreed with the statement, “The physical environment of classrooms in this school supports teaching and learning” (compared to 83% state average for elementary schools)*
- 25% of Wildwood teachers agreed with the statement, “Teachers and staff work in a school that is environmentally healthy” (compared to 72% statewide)*
- Relatively stable enrollment, somewhat due to school choice (see next slide)

*TELL Survey Results 2014



Wildwood Enrollment K-6



Wildwood School Pics



















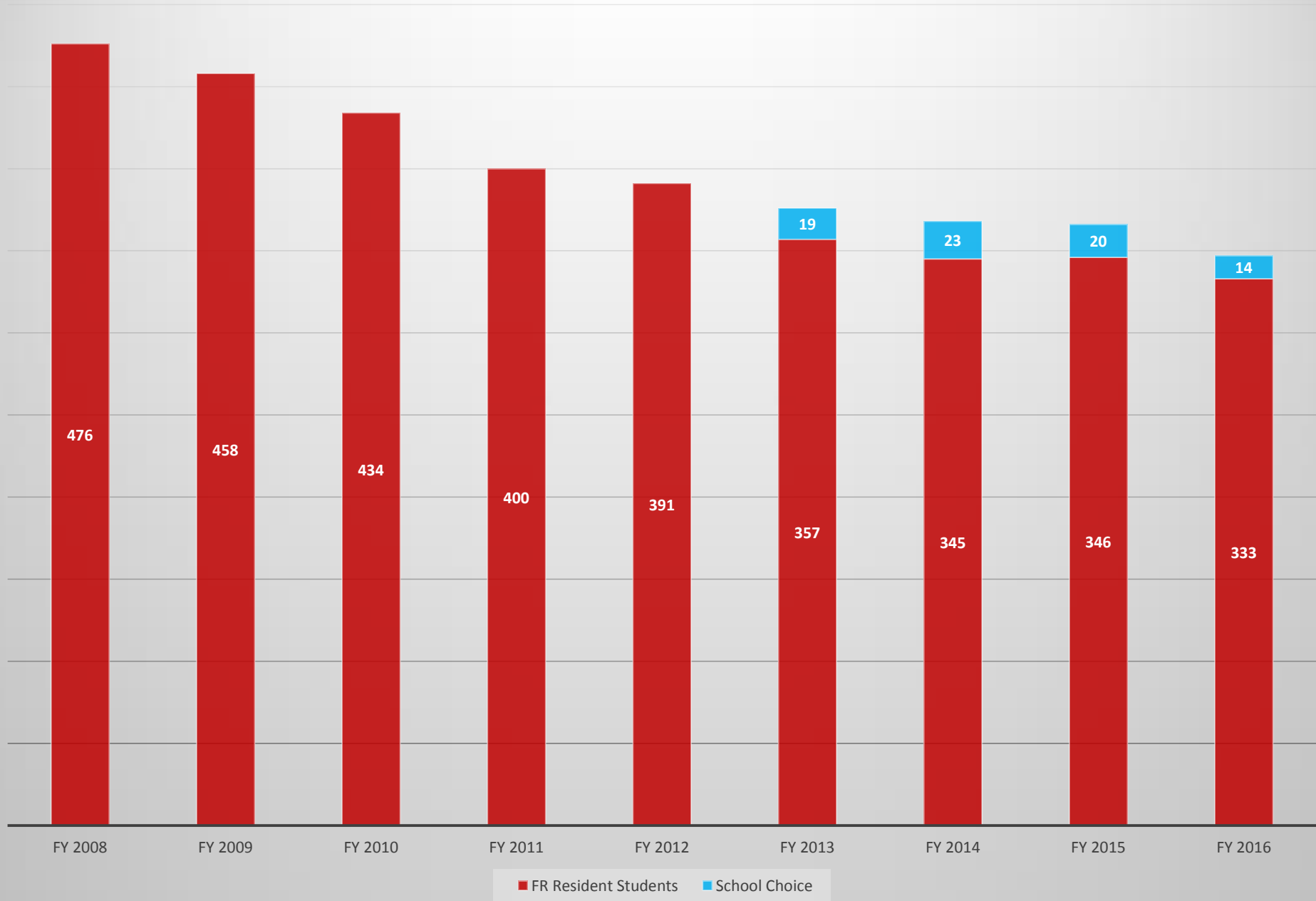
Infrastructure: Fort River

- Built in 1973
- Open classroom concept (outdated)
- Issues with HVAC and moisture
- Accessibility issues throughout the building
- 9% of Fort River teachers agreed with the statement, “The physical environment of classrooms in this school supports teaching and learning” (compared to 83% state average for elementary schools)*
 - *This ranks 990th out of the 992 Massachusetts schools who completed the survey*
- 18% of Fort River teachers agreed with the statement, “Teachers and staff work in a school that is environmentally healthy” (compared to 72% statewide)*
 - *This ranks 968th out of the 992 Massachusetts schools who completed the survey*
- Significant reduction in student population in past 8 years (see next slide)

*TELL Survey Results 2014



Fort River Enrollment K-6



Fort River School Pics













BOYS





- 1) Swing
- 2) bean bag
- 3) hop ball

- 1. red rocker
- 2. ball bag
- 3. deep pressure











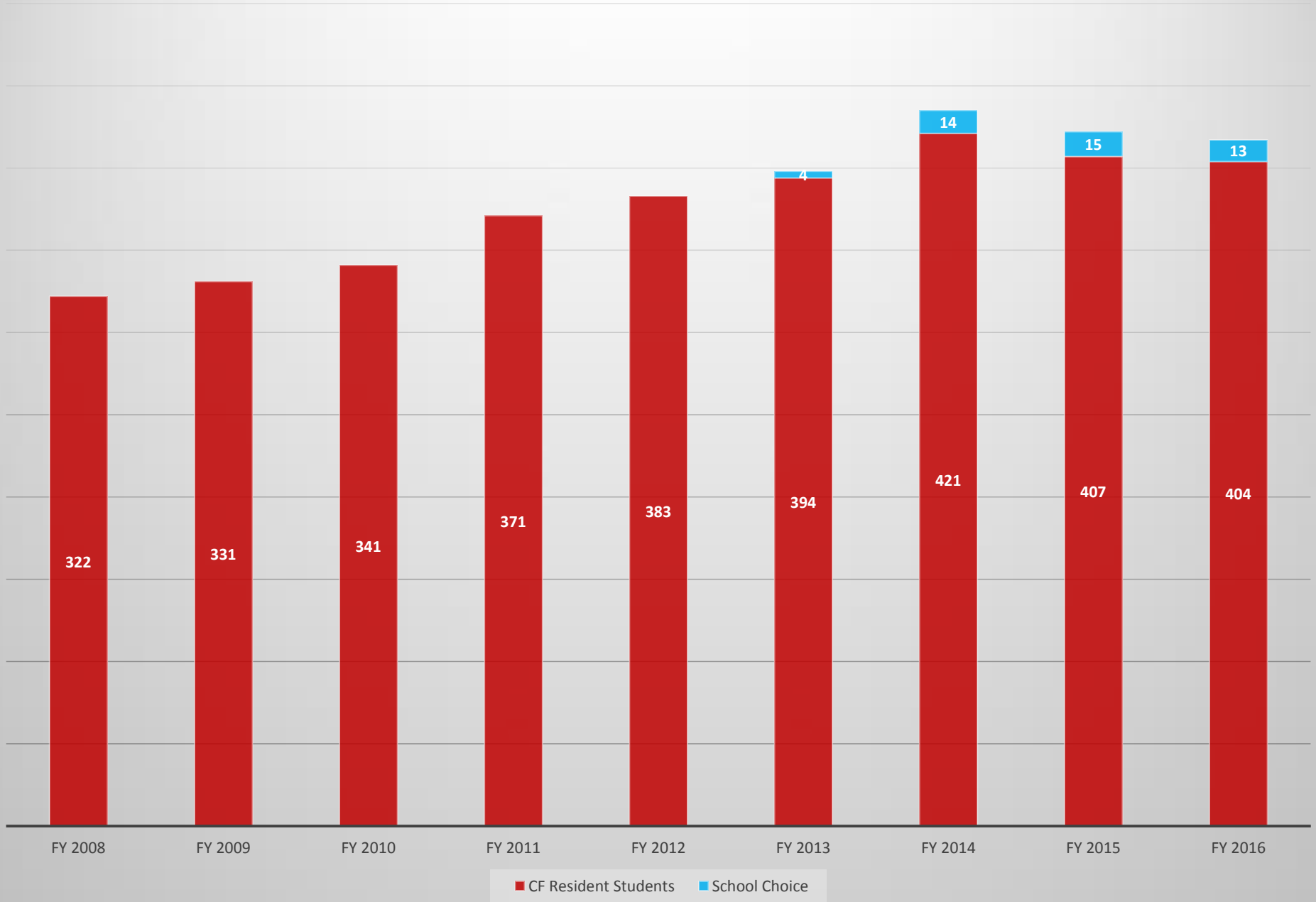
Infrastructure at Crocker Farm

- Renovated in 2002; Award-winning building
 - 96% of CF teachers agreed with the statement, “The physical environment of classrooms in this school supports teaching and learning” (compared to 83% state average for elementary schools)*
 - 87% of CF teachers agreed with the statement, “Teachers and staff work in a school that is environmentally healthy (compared to 72% statewide)*
- Significant issue with overcrowding due to increasing student population in past 8 years (see next slide)
 - Due to overcrowding, spaces have been repurposed (Community Room is now an instructional space, shared instructional spaces for ELL/SE/Title I, etc.)
 - The overcrowding may need to be addressed as soon as next year if 3 Kindergarten classes are needed based on enrollment; redrawing boundaries will need to be explored

*TELL Survey Results 2014



Crocker Farm Enrollment PreK-6



Crocker Farm School Pics





Open House

WELCOME TO
CROCKER FARM

CAUTION
WET
FLOOR





BIRTHDAYS
October Birthdays

- 1. Christopher A. Becky D.
- 2. David G. Tognoli K.
- 3. Dominic L.
- 4. Cassia (Alex) J. My Bradbury
- 5. David C. Jordan D. Eric D. Jordan
- 6. David M. Mary Jane A.
- 7. Nicole L. Lucia L. Juliana S. My Anderson
- 8. Sydney B. Lindsay R. My Duane Gault
- 9. Anthony R.
- 10. Angel C. Jordan S. Messiah T.
- 11. Myrlandell
- 12. Myrlandell
- 13. Myrlandell
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- 26. Myrlandell
- 27. Myrlandell
- 28. Myrlandell
- 29. Myrlandell
- 30. Myrlandell



AMHERST ABC
Foliage
Week of
OCTOBER 17



















Teaching and Learning Implications

Reconfiguration

- Regular job-alike collaboration time on a weekly basis across all teachers
- All schools would have modern classrooms ready for project-based learning
- Early childhood center customized to the developmental needs of students in PreK-1
- Clustering students with similar strengths and challenges to better address student needs
- Newcomer ELL program becomes viable
- Professional development model more targeted

K-6 Model

- Six hours of time per year for job-alike collaboration across all teachers
- Two schools ready for project-based learning; program would need to be adjusted for Fort River students and teachers
- Maintains a seven-grade classroom span, which contributes to mentoring opportunities
- Teachers have easy access to students' former teachers to learn about learning profiles (across 7 grade levels)



Evidence Base on Teaching and Learning Issues with Current Infrastructure

- **Academic Achievement**
 - Uline & Tschannen-Moran (2007)
 - Tanner (2008)
- **Acoustic Privacy**
 - Evans & Maxwell (1997)
 - Maxwell & Evans (2000)
- **Natural Light**
 - Heschong Mahone Group (1999)
 - Kuller & Lindsten (1992)
- **Teacher Morale & Retention**
 - Schneider (2003)
 - Buckley et al (2004)



Continuity/Connections

Reconfiguration

- All students would transition from Crocker Farm to intermediate school after Grade 1
- Specialized special education programs would need to be present in both buildings
- Town-wide or unified schools (not tied to specific area of town)
- Sense of community would need to be rebuilt at all three schools given the changes of student and staff population

K-6 Model

- Some students would transition during the redistricting period in 2019 from Crocker Farm and Wildwood to Fort River (unless CF redistricting is needed to be completed earlier)
- Specialized special education programs would likely be moved from Fort River to Crocker Farm or Wildwood to provide an appropriate learning environment
- Schools would have attendance zones defined a specific area of town (neighborhood schools), making walking to school more likely for a greater number of families



Efficiencies/Costs

Reconfiguration

- Reductions
 - 585k for staffing (fewer custodial, classrooms, one less administrator) *mostly or completely done through attrition*
 - 75k for health insurance savings
 - 35k for cafeteria closure
 - **Total: 695k**
- Additions
 - **55k-165k** for transportation costs
 - World Language?
 - Preschool classroom(s)?
 - Smaller class sizes?
 - Prevent budget reductions?

K-6 Model

- No significant changes in either reductions or additions
- Transportation costs remain lower than in reconfigured model
- Families with multiple children at the elementary level would have them at the same school for their entire elementary experience



Transportation

Reconfiguration

- If new/renovated school is at Wildwood and we maintained 19 runs (no additional cost):
 - 36.8 min (AM)
 - 33.8 mins (PM)
 - If three runs are added (165k):
 - 30.8 mins (AM)
 - 27.8 mins (PM)
-
- If new/renovated school is at Fort River and we maintained 19 runs (no additional cost):
 - 30.8 mins (AM)
 - 27.8 mins (PM)
 - If one run is added: (\$55k):
 - 28.8 mins (AM)
 - 25.9 mins (PM)

K-6

In our current K-6 model (19 runs):

- 28.3 min (average) in AM
- 23 min (average) in PM



Operational Efficiencies/Lifecycle Costs

Reconfiguration

- Operational efficiency with new school through:
 - Reduced total square footage of building. Existing Fort River and Wildwood are 216K SF combined; whereas, proposed new school building area approximately 109K SF.
 - New high efficiency mechanical equipment.
 - New high performance exterior door, roof, wall and window systems.
 - Projected costs to be determined once a design and mechanical systems have been approved

K-6 Model

- Future need to renovate/replace Fort River
- Anticipated costs would be similar to the Wildwood project plus an additional 3-4% annual escalation
- Fort River will need capital improvements prior to a construction project



School Size/Predicated Enrollments in FY19

Configuration Change, school split 2-4; 5-6

Crocker Farm: 292 K-1
students (359 total), 15 K-1
classrooms; classes btw 19-
20

New School: grades 2-4 wing
would have 451 students, 22
classrooms between 20-21
students per class

New School: grades 5-6 wing
would have 305 students, 15
classrooms between 20-21
students per class

Configuration Change, school split into grade 2-6 wings

Crocker Farm: 292 K-1
students (359 total), 15 K-1
classrooms; classes btw 19-20

New School: grades 2-6 wing
“A” would have 388 students,
19 classrooms at between 20-
21 students per class

New School: grades 2-6 wing
“B” would have 368 students,
18 classrooms between 20-21
students per class

or

or

New/Renovated K-6 Wildwood*

Crocker Farm: 363 K-6 students (430
total) 20 classrooms K-6, average class
size of 18/range from 16-22)

Fort River: 301 students, 15 classrooms,
average class size of 20 with range
from 17-23

Wildwood: 384 students, 21
classrooms, average class size of 18
with range from 17-21

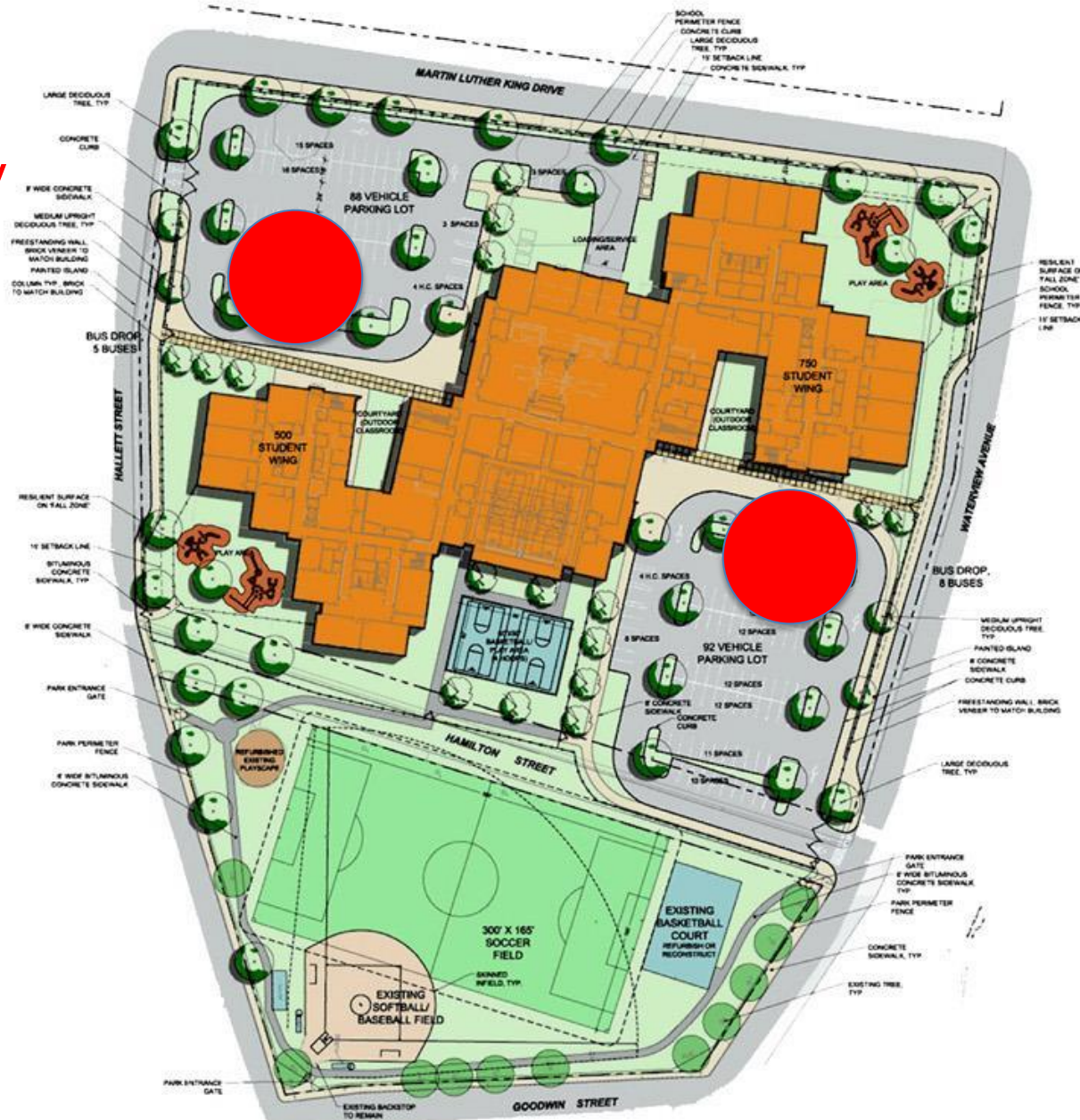
***However, this scenario would need to be
adjusted. CF cannot hold 20 K-6
classrooms and the MSBA will only
support a 360 student WW, so significant
redistricting would need to occur to send
more students to FR from CF and WW.**



SCHOOL WITHIN A SCHOOL

Wildwood School, Amherst, MA

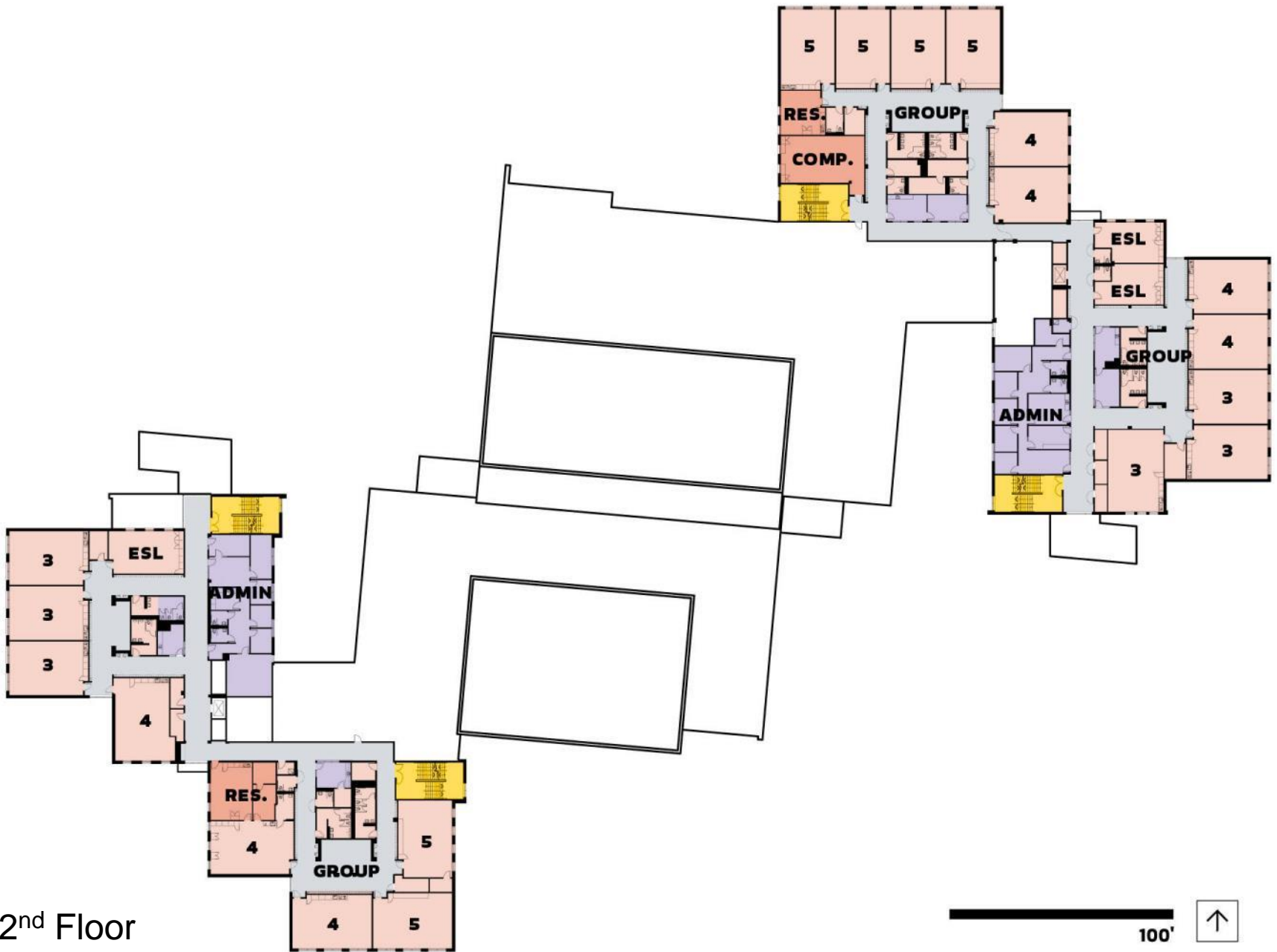
Waltersville
School entry



Barnum
School
entry

Barnum / Waltersville Schools





2nd Floor
Barnum / Waltersville Schools



Barnum/waltersville school, bridgeport, ct



West Woods Upper Elementary School

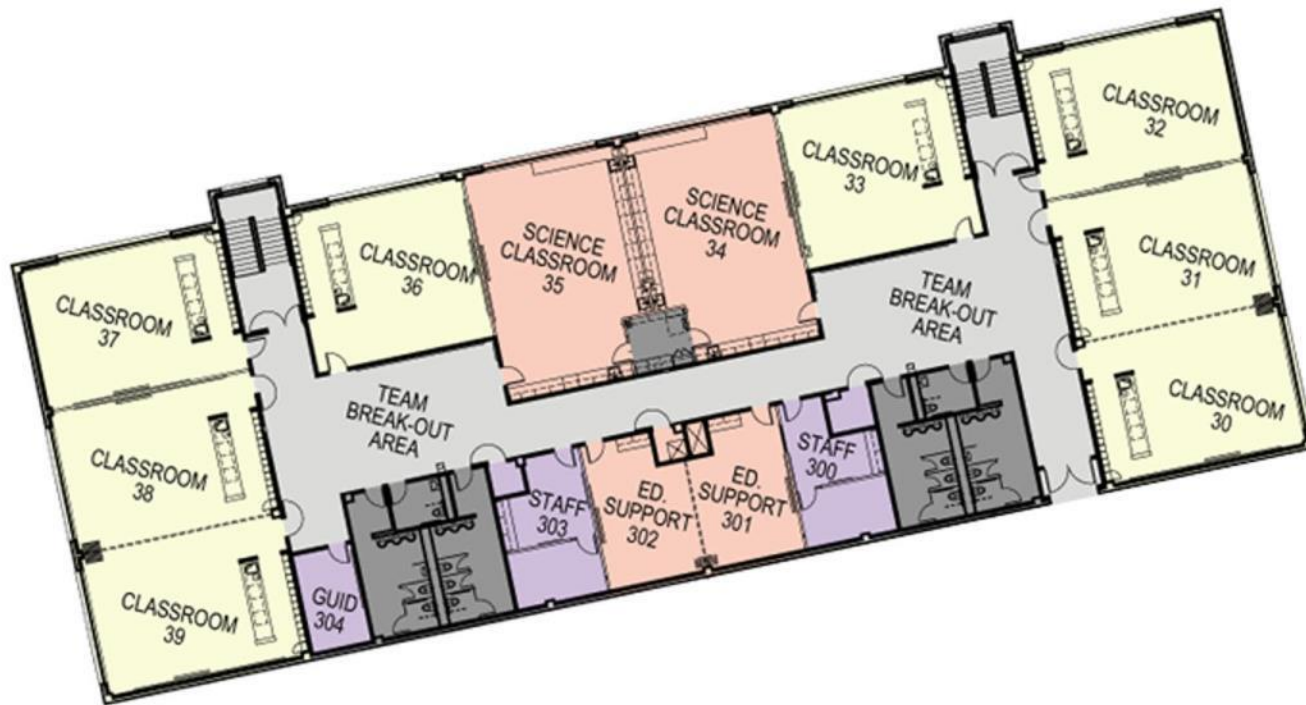
5th Grade Cluster

6th Grade Cluster



Floor plan

West Woods Upper Elementary School



Classroom cluster
West Woods Upper Elementary School



West Woods Upper Elementary School



West Woods Upper Elementary School



West Woods Upper Elementary School

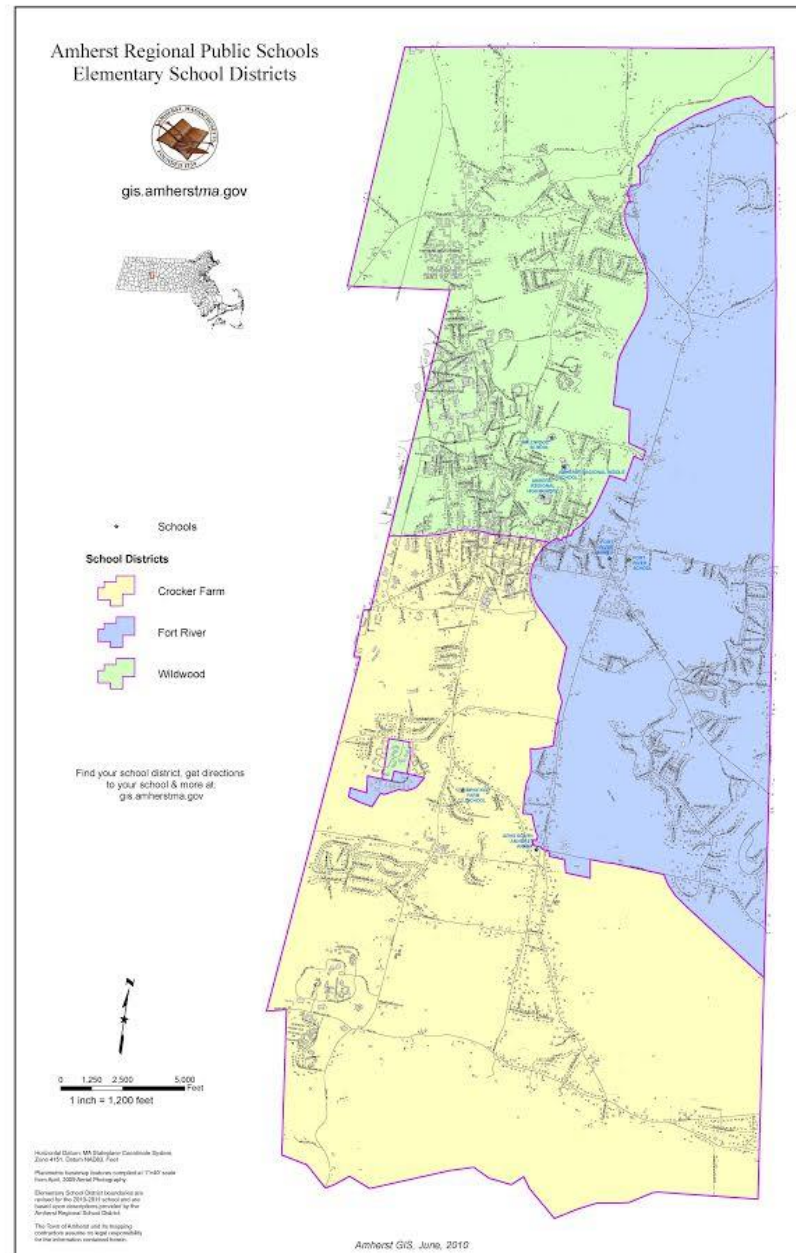


West Woods Upper Elementary School

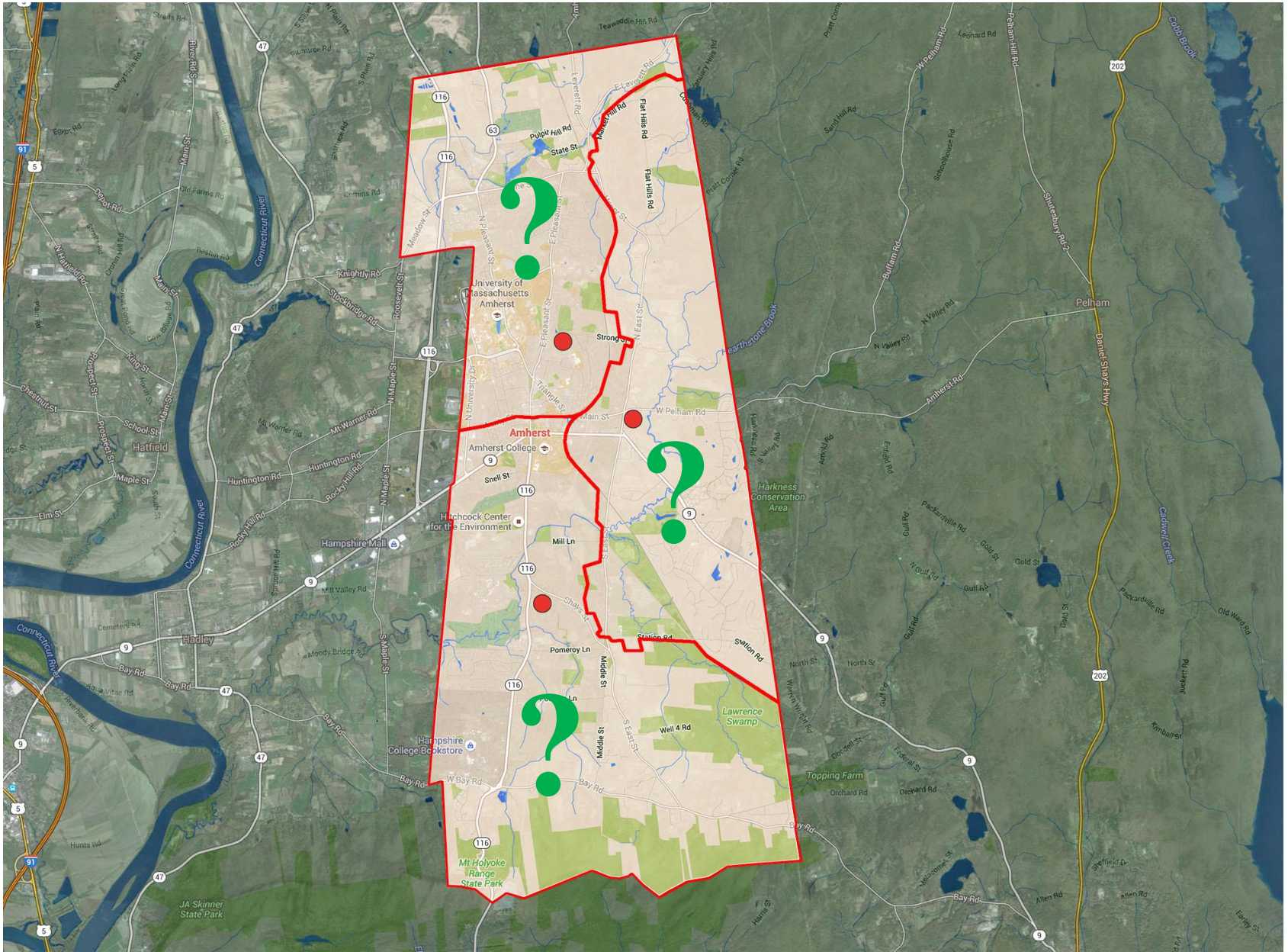


West Woods Upper Elementary School

Current Enrollment Map

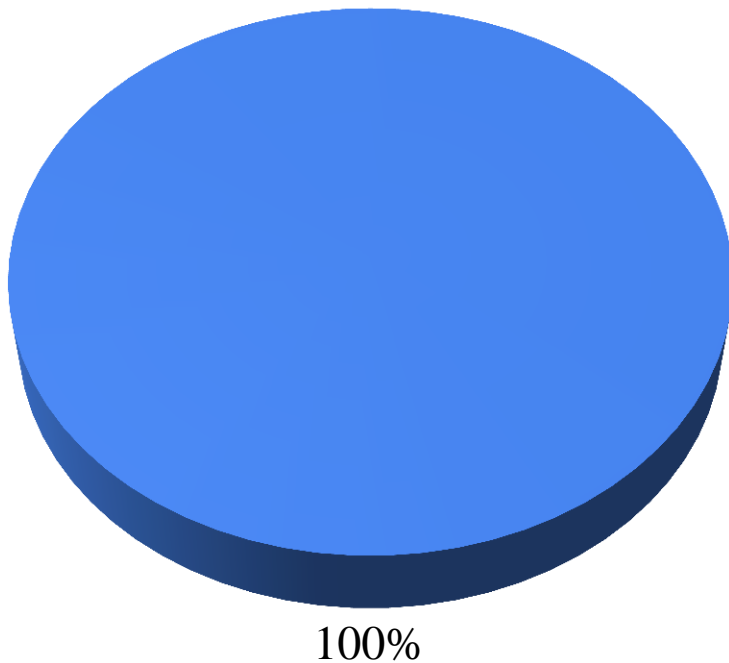


Redistricting

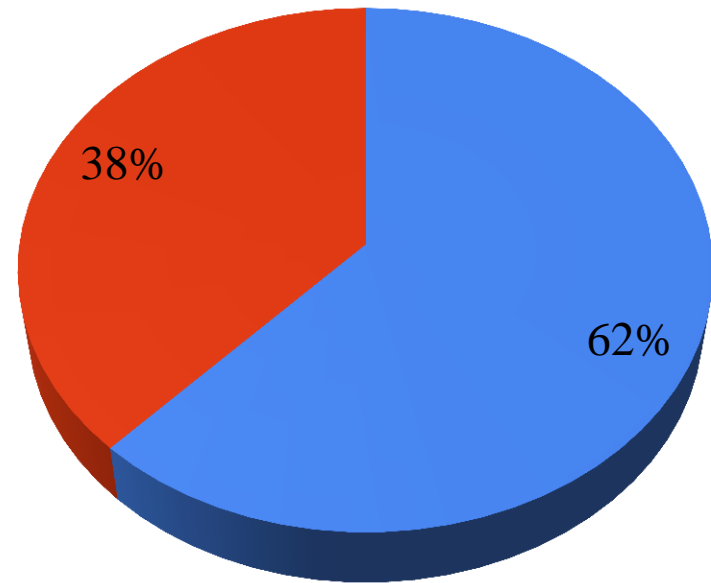


Percent of Students in High-Quality, ADA-Compliant School Environment

Reconfiguration



K-6 Model



Equity

Reconfiguration

- All elementary students would attend healthy classrooms with:
 - infrastructure to support 21st Century Teaching & Learning
 - acoustic privacy, critical for all students but especially students with ELL and special needs
- Funds could be redistributed to introduce world language program, add an additional early childhood classroom(s), or other in other ways that benefit students
- A newcomer ELL program could be supported
- By default, demographics of students will be balanced; imbalance of poverty rates is starting to be seen again (35.8% CF, 44.4% FR, 43.4% WW)

K-6 Model

- 62% of elementary students would attend healthy classrooms with:
 - infrastructure to support 21st Century Teaching & Learning
 - acoustic privacy, critical for all students but especially students with ELL and special needs
- Redistricting would need to occur
- In the past, the Amherst School Committee has requested that demographics of students be balanced; imbalance of poverty rates is starting to be seen again (35.8% CF, 44.4% FR, 43.4% WW); this may drive redistricting efforts



Likelihood of Fort River School being Renovated/Rebuilt if K-6 Model is Chosen



Massachusetts School Building Authority

Funding Affordable, Sustainable, and Efficient Schools in Partnership with Local Communities

- 109 applications (statements of interest) went to the MSBA this year; they expect to select 15 to enter into the process
- The MSBA has an interest in ensuring that a wide range of communities get into the pipeline, so the fact that the Wildwood project was accepted makes getting into the pipeline for Fort River less likely
- Funding the project without MSBA support would have very significant funding implications for the town



Likelihood of Fort River School being Renovated/Rebuilt if K-6 Model is Chosen

- In addition, the town has multiple significant capital projects that are under consideration or exploration (Jones Library in feasibility study; Department of Public Works; Central Station Fire Station)
- If these projects are funded, they will fill a significant part of the town's capital expenditures for an extended time period since projects of this scope are typically paid off over a 20-30 year time period (even if we were fortunate enough to get into the MSBA process for Fort River)



Financial Information

■ Reconfiguration (750 students)

- Total project cost estimate between \$47-53 million
- Effective reimbursement rate of 58%*

**Total Cost to Amherst taxpayers:
\$19.7-22.3 million**

*The MSBA Reimbursement rate is 68% of eligible costs. However, many project costs are not eligible for MSBA reimbursement, hence the effective reimbursement rate is estimated to be 58%

■ Replacing Wildwood (360 students)

- Total project cost estimate between \$29-33 million
- Effective Reimbursement rate of 58%*
- Cost to Amherst taxpayers ranges from \$12-14 million

■ Replacing Fort River (390 students)

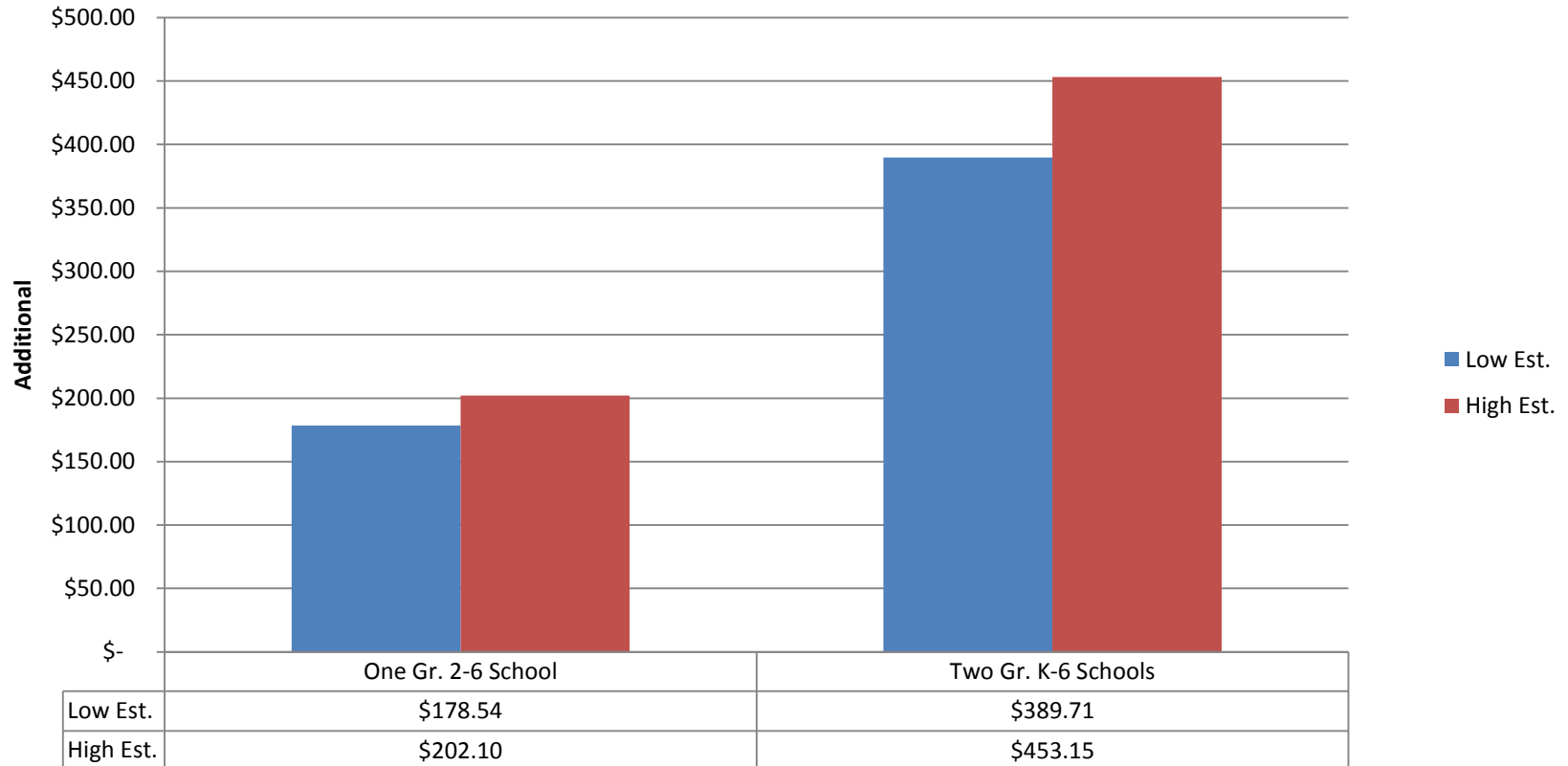
- Total project cost estimate between \$31-36 million
- No reimbursement
- Cost to Amherst taxpayers of \$31-36 million

**Total Cost to Amherst Taxpayers:
\$43-50 million**



Debt Exclusion Financial Information

Average Annual Impact on Property Taxes on Median Amherst Home



Waiting for the MSBA for Fort River: Additional Challenges

- Capital Projects needed for Fort River in next five years total \$1.5 Million:
 - Generator (\$85,000)
 - Roof (\$1.3 million)
 - Parking Lot (\$71,000)
 - Exterior Doors (\$47,000)
- The MSBA process lasts for six years from acceptance to new/renovated building
- Not likely that Fort River will be accepted in the near future
- Town capital projects may be at capacity by that point in time



Recommendation

The Superintendent recommends that the Educational Program be accepted with a reconfiguration of Crocker Farm to be a PreK-Grade 1 school and a new school to educate all Grades 2-6 students



Next Steps

October 26th, 2015

Community Forums

3:30 & 7:00 pm (two sessions)

November 3rd, 2015

School Committee Vote

Future Forums & Dialogue

More specifics and feedback on aspects and design of the school (regardless of configuration option) as well as costs

