

ARTICLE 3

ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

This supplemental report covers the “Doggett Amendment” and the Jonas Amendment. The Advisory Committee recommends Favorable Action on both, but the recommendation on the Jonas Amendment only applies if the “Doggett Amendment” (i.e., the Advisory Committee’s recommended motion under Article 3) fails. This report includes the Advisory Committee’s votes and recommendations on both amendments, a further explanation of the “Doggett Amendment,” a minority report on that amendment, and a discussion of the Jonas (“no fossil fuel”) amendment.

*The Doggett Amendment*

SUMMARY:

On December 10, 2018, the Advisory Committee met to potentially reconsider its recommendation on Article 3, which would appropriate schematic design funds for the proposed Baldwin School. The item was placed on the agenda so that the Advisory Committee could consider and respond to the Select Board’s Article 3 recommendation, which differed from the Advisory Committee’s December 4, 2018, recommendation. At the December 10 meeting, the Advisory Committee voted 10–13–1 against reconsideration and therefore continues to recommend the “Doggett amendment” under Article 3.

DISCUSSION:

*The Case for the “Doggett Amendment”*

Advisory Committee members supporting the “Doggett amendment” (i.e., the Advisory Committee’s recommendation under Article 3) viewed it as a more concrete way to tackle the impacts of overcrowding, particularly substandard spaces. It is the amendment’s intent to support the School Committee in efforts to evaluate and prioritize direct and immediate solutions to substandard spaces in specific schools and outline next steps for remediation. It avoids any potential delays due to lawsuits with respect to Baldwin and allows efforts to partner with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) with respect to Pierce to go forward.

It does not invest additional funds in a new school when the Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) enrollment projections show the school population declining in the near future. It also does not involve substantial redistricting and student transfers in an effort to indirectly affect substandard spaces at schools distant from the Baldwin site. Rather, it affords the School Committee the opportunity to lay out a plan, a timeline and a budget for directly addressing substandard spaces.

The explanation of the amendment authored by its sponsor follows:

On June 13, 2018, advised by the Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee, the Select Board and School Committee decided to go ahead with the expansion and renovation of Driscoll, to partner with the MSBA on a Pierce renovation and additions, and build a new school on the existing Baldwin site.

On November 27, 2018, PSB Superintendent Andrew Bott presented revised school enrollment projections, which did not confirm the previous projection of an increase of 374 students in FY22 and the consequent need for an additional 15–30 classrooms. The revised enrollment numbers from PSB no longer project an increase, but rather a decrease student enrollment of 147 in FY22. They also now project a decreasing enrollment after FY23.

The decision to build a new 2+++ school at Baldwin was predicated on flawed data.

The PSB revised enrollment projections suggest that we now no longer need the Baldwin school to address an enrollment problem. PSB has instead repositioned the Baldwin school as the solution for overcrowding and substandard facilities in our schools. The notion that a new school at Baldwin can be the “silver bullet” that solves the overcrowding problems of the remaining schools, or is a timely solution, is over optimistic at best.

The substandard facilities are different in each of our schools. The range includes: shortage of space for English Learner Education (ELE) and Special Education (SPED) programs; substandard classroom sizing; over-loading of cafeteria and gym space; lack of music and art rooms.

Each school has a different problem and needs a different solution.

The plans for rebuilding the neighborhood schools of Driscoll (Warrant Article 2) and Pierce, will provide capacity and right-sizing solutions for those two schools. The capacity increase planned at Driscoll will also provide some relief to capacity problems for Pierce, pending its renovation, but we still need to investigate possible options to reduce or eliminate the substandard conditions of the remaining five schools: Lawrence, Lincoln, Heath, Runkle and Baker, which currently have no plan.

The strategy of adding space to individual schools differs from our previous expand-in-place strategy. The goal of expand-in-place was primarily to address the increasing enrollment by building new core classrooms. Other expansions, such as the need for group breakout spaces, increased small rooms for ELL, SPED, as well as an expansion of common facilities, were not the focus of the strategy.

We now need to change our priorities and pivot.

This amendment is to encourage the School Committee to evaluate and prioritize point-solutions for substandard space relief for individual schools and plan the next steps for remediation. These plans would be for small to medium sized projects that can be done in a relatively short timeframe, maybe in a more cost-effective manner, and without the problems associated with the Baldwin plan viz:

1. The Baldwin plan involves town-wide “cascade” redistricting, from Pierce to Baker via Runkle, Lincoln and Heath. This will be disruptive and essentially abandon the concept of neighborhood schools in the communities surrounding Heath, Runkle and Lincoln. Such redistricting has met with considerable opposition;
2. The residents of Heath School District and neighbors of the Baldwin site, who are the residents most affected, are almost universally opposed to the Baldwin build;
3. The safety of siting a school which requires children crossing Route 9 traffic and negotiating narrow congested streets, such as Heath St, is questionable;
4. Especially for RISE (Reaching for Independence Through Structured Education) children, who are at risk for wandering, any restriction on creating a fenced playground for these children (which may become a legal condition that could be placed on this playground space) could create a safety issue;
5. The suggested fix for the traffic congestion (which would impede children arriving at school on time) is to have an earlier school start time. This has both a problem of inequity with our other elementary schools, and a potential mental/physical health compromise of the children (and parents) involved;
6. The effects of increased traffic, extra commute distance to school, destruction of trees and the reduction of open space will be detrimental to the environment;
7. Overcrowding relief is needed now and the earliest relief that could possibly come from Baldwin would be FY23, and if lawsuits delay building it could be several years later.

The building of classrooms at Baldwin will not relieve pressure on the spaces needed in individual schools for such essential pedagogical needs, as SPED, NLSP (Native Language Support Programs), ELE, small group instruction etc. or administrative offices or expanded localized common facilities spaces, such as cafeterias, gyms etc.

The suggestion that redistricting would address these problems is unrealistic and at this stage is purely hypothetical.

PSB projections do not now support the notion that we are facing a student enrollment crisis. In fact, the prediction is now that we are reaching peak enrollment, after which the curve flattens and decreases. We have time on our side, and we should use this wisely to reassess other opportunities to solve overcrowding and substandard facilities.

The amendment offered would redirect already appropriated money to support the School Committee in efforts to evaluate and prioritize direct and immediate solutions to substandard spaces in specific schools and outline next steps for remediation.

The timeframe for addressing substandard space needs to be shortened. We cannot wait for the completion of a new school at Baldwin in FY23, or even later, to start addressing this pressing problem.

This amendment is an opportunity to offer our children, including our most vulnerable students, quality space in which to learn and flourish.

*Report of the Minority of the Advisory Committee*

Other members of the Advisory Committee offer a minority report that supports the Select Board motion under Article 3:

SUMMARY OF THE MINORITY REPORT

Town Meeting's options for Article 3 are (a) to fund \$1.5 million for the design work needed to build a new school at Baldwin, or (b) spend \$1.5 million on drawings for the expansion of two schools that would provide only provide 40% of the space needed to relieve overcrowding—or fund neither.

Ten members of the Advisory Committee believe that Brookline should go forward with the design work for Baldwin.

BACKGROUND

When Warrant Articles are considered by the Advisory Committee, a subcommittee reviews each article in depth and reports back with a recommendation. On November 29, 2018, the Advisory Committee's Capital and School Subcommittees, meeting jointly, voted 6–3–1 in favor of appropriating \$1.5 million to fund schematic design of Baldwin—per the Select Board's motion on Article 3.

Despite that 6–3–1 subcommittee vote, on December 4, 2018, the Advisory Committee voted 13–10–1 to adopt an amendment (the “Doggett amendment”) to the Select Board's motion under Article 3. The rationale was that we could solve school overcrowding by adding additional classroom, gym, auditorium, and cafeteria space at five K–8 schools, and that doing so would cost less and be faster than building a school at Baldwin.

THE CASE AGAINST “BUILD IN PLACE” AND THE CASE FOR BALDWIN

### Space Needs and “Build in Place”

This “build in place” concept was to add 127,639 square feet of space—about 18% more space than Baldwin—to Baker, Heath, Lawrence, Lincoln and Runkle. The total cost was estimated \$62.7 to \$84.9 million. The range for building Baldwin is \$72 to \$82 million.

*But the rationale that persuaded the Advisory Committee just 9 days ago changed radically as the realization set in that it was not feasible to add space at three of the five schools.* Perhaps that realization came from reading the June 2018 report from HMFH Architects, Inc. HMFH was commissioned by the Town to study the feasibility of some 22 sites for a new school and look at the feasibility of “expanding in place” at the existing schools. It found that “expand in place” would not work at Lawrence, Lincoln and Runkle.

The proponent’s response to HMFH’s conclusions was to inform the Advisory Committee on December 10, 2018, that the amendment would now be intended to cut Lawrence, Lincoln and Runkle out, leaving only Heath and Baker. The 127,639 square foot total suddenly became 50,655 square feet.

What remains is a proposal that would add only 40% of the space originally suggested as the solution to school overcrowding in both North and South Brookline.

### Costs

Apart from the December 10 iteration leaving three crowded schools out in the cold, the amendment assumes that for the additions will be on the order of \$516 per square foot, with a range for the total \$22–\$33 million. There are two problems with this figure.

First, to quote the architect who provided the \$512/square foot number, “[S]mall localized additions and ... renovations are not cost effective. Cost figures taken from wholesale project renovations [like] Driscoll... are not valid for the type of work proposed.”

The second problem relates to accessibility. Quoting the architect, “Where the cost of constructing an addition to a building amounts to 30% or more of the...cash value of the existing building, both the addition and the existing building must be fully accessible.” (Emphasis in original.) That means adding almost 30,000 square feet to Baker and almost 21,000 square feet to Heath is likely to trigger a requirement that the entire building be made accessible in accordance with *current* standards. And adding vertically to a building “would definitely require a seismic upgrade” for the entire structure.

The architect suggests that \$1,000 per square foot is a better planning figure. That would bring the total cost to about \$51 million—and still leave three schools out of the picture.

### Enrollment

Based on the 2018–2019 enrollment report, the Schools now predict a modest decline in enrollment through 2026. If that modest decline matches the latest projection, it will not offset the massive increase in enrollment since 2006. And a slightly different and plausibly more realistic calculation anticipates stable enrollment, not a decline. Either way, without a significant number of added classrooms, common space and space for specialized teaching, for the foreseeable future our K–8 schools will remain overcrowded.

### Overcrowding

In every school except Coolidge Corner there are substandard classrooms—too small for the intended use; lack of soundproofing; lack of facilities. Over the last ten years, 31 classrooms have been carved out of common spaces (libraries, auditoriums, hallways) or by splitting classrooms. That is despite adding 34 permanent classrooms via modulars or expanding Baker, Lawrence, Heath, Runkle, and the Coolidge Corner School, and by taking 11 classrooms away from BEEP (Brookline Early Education Program).

Cannibalizing common spaces to make 31 classrooms left gyms, libraries, auditoriums, and cafeterias smaller even as enrollment rose, which is why schools have four or even five lunch periods starting as early as 10:15 a.m.

Further, spaces for specialized teaching have been lost. The students who suffer most from these conditions are the ones most in need of additional support, because they are often sensitive to noise and crowding. Thus, guidance is offered at a table in a hall. Three reading readiness groups are taught in classrooms built for one. A closet is used as cooling-off space for children who are upset. A less egregious example: in one school, trombone instruction happens in a hallway.

Ten members of the Advisory Committee accept the view that unless we build a new K–8 somewhere, there is no way to fix these problems. Patching the existing leaves 31 substandard classrooms and inadequate common space as the norm, not temporary fix we can live with.

### Time to completion

Some argue that Baldwin construction will be delayed by legal action. Expert outside counsel suggests otherwise. Some argue that the soonest Baldwin would be ready is September 2022, which is true, and that “expand in place” is faster.

But designing and building additions to Baker and Heath would not happen quickly. The Schools and the Building Department have to review or re-work assessments of Baker and Heath, determine priorities, write a scope of work, and evaluate proposals from architects to get their recommendations and cost estimates. Those estimates have to go through the same funding steps that Baldwin has gone through. We would be starting feasibility and design from zero. When we were done, we would still have 31 substandard classrooms and inadequate specialized spaces.

### Baldwin's Impact

How would Baldwin help the overcrowding elsewhere? Baldwin would absorb 450 students including 310 from South Brookline and make room for space-intensive specialized programs from other schools—most notably 45 children from Runkle's RISE program. There would indeed be a ripple redistricting across the schools in North Brookline, but with capacity at Coolidge Corner, new capacity at Driscoll and substantial freed-up space at Runkle, no one from schools other than Heath would be offered the choice of going to Baldwin.

Once these shifts happen, restoring the other schools by removing the temporary walls installed in the last ten years is a relatively simple and inexpensive task. Compare that task to, say, digging under the Lawrence School to add cafeteria capacity, as which has been suggested as a "point solution" at that school.

### Traffic

There is a legitimate concern about the impact of Baldwin school traffic on the neighborhood and beyond. Vanasse and Associates, Inc. (VAi), the traffic engineers who reported to the Baldwin School Building Committee estimates that 121 cars carrying students would be added to the morning traffic pattern.

VAi recommends that the start time for school be set at 7:45 rather than 8:00 a.m. and combined with other measures VAI suggested. The recommendation from VAI's field observations, which are backed up by field observations by at least two Advisory Committee members. The observations show that there is no traffic backup at the intersection of Hammond and Heath at 7:45 a.m. either on Heath westbound or on Hammond northbound (toward Route 9). But by 7:55 a.m., traffic on Heath backs up to the point that it would interfere with parents turning left out of Baldwin's driveway. By 8:20 a.m., traffic on Hammond headed toward Route 9 has built up at the Heath/Hammond traffic signal. Advancing the starting time would clear most parent traffic out of the area before the buildup begins.

One significant traffic issue was not included within the consultant's scope of work—the backups entering Horace James Circle. Many of the cars and any school buses headed toward Baldwin need to traverse the rotary there, adding to the already high level of congestion and delays.

Both the Baldwin School Building Committee and the Advisory Committee discussed the importance of looking at the entire Hammond Street corridor from Horace James Circle to Route 9, not just at the immediate area. One potential way to reduce the stressful and dangerous backups at the Circle would be to install linked traffic lights where streets feed into the rotary. That method is widely employed elsewhere, including in Great Britain at the roundabout on the main approach to London's Heathrow Airport.

Horace James Circle is owned by the State and controlled by the Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR). Brookline would need DCR's agreement to put traffic signals at Horace James Circle. There might be potential to obtain State funding for this and/or other work, but in any case, we would need State permission.

**CONCLUSION**

Ten members of the Advisory Committee recommend voting No Action on the Article 3 amendment that has been recommended by the vote of 13 other members of the Advisory Committee. The ten members recommend Favorable Action on the Select Board's motion to appropriate \$1.5 million for schematic drawings for a new 450-seat K–8 school on the site of the Mildred Baldwin School.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

On December 10, 2018, a motion to reconsider the Advisory Committee's recommendation (the "Doggett amendment") under Article 3 failed by a vote of 10–13–1.

The Advisory Committee thus continues to recommend FAVORABLE ACTION on the following motion (the "Doggett amendment") under Article 3:

VOTED: That the Town re-appropriate and release for expenditure the \$1,500,000 appropriated under Section 13, Special Appropriation No. 65 of Article 7 of the 2018 Annual Town Meeting as provided in said appropriation for plans to address and remediate sub-standard pedagogical and common spaces in the Baker, Heath, Lawrence, Lincoln and Runkle schools, such plans to be consistent with the goal of maintaining Brookline's neighborhood schools.

This vote in favor of this recommendation was 15–9–0 at the December 4, 2018, meeting of the Advisory Committee. The "Doggett amendment" to the Select Board motion had previously passed by a 13–10–1 and was thus incorporated into the main motion for the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

*The Jonas Amendment*

**SUMMARY:**

On December 10, 2018, the Advisory Committee by a vote of 12–10–2 conditionally recommended FAVORABLE ACTION on the Jonas amendment to the Select Board's motion under Article 3. The recommendation is conditional on the failure of the "Doggett amendment" to Article 3. If the "Doggett amendment," which is recommended by the Advisory Committee, fails, the Advisory Committee recommends that Town Meeting support the Jonas amendment to the Select Board motion under Article 3. The Jonas amendment includes language that would prevent using Baldwin School schematic design funds to design building systems that use fossil fuels, except for emergency systems. Similar language appears in the Advisory Committee's recommendation under Article 2



(Driscoll School schematic design.)

BACKGROUND:

As reported in the Combined Reports for the December 13, 2018, Special Town Meeting, the Advisory Committee on December 4, 2018, voted to recommend an amendment to the Driscoll schematic design motion offered by the Select Board. The amended version of that motion includes a recommendation imposing a condition on how the appropriated funds could be spent. This condition would only allow spending schematic design funds to design fossil fuel-free building systems (e.g., heating), allowing an exception for emergency back-up systems. The Jonas amendment inserts the same condition in Article 3.

DISCUSSION:

The Advisory Committee conditionally voted to recommend a “no fossil fuel” amendment to Article 3 for the following reasons, which are the same reasons for the Committee’s similar recommendation under Article 2.

First, the Advisory Committee recognizes that Brookline needs to make a commitment to using non-fossil fuels. Fossil-fuel-free systems are the only justifiable path forward. The Town has as its policy, established in 2012, the reduction of gas emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently reported that to avoid massive environmental consequences, greenhouse pollution must be reduced by 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, and 100 percent by 2050. These findings on climate change will require that emissions decline far more rapidly, and we must make our new and renovated schools fossil-fuel-free if we are serious about achieving town-wide emissions reductions. It would be fiscally and environmentally irresponsible to build a school now, which we expect to be in use to the next 70 years, that we know won’t make the grade in 2050.

Second, buildings, which use nearly 40% of energy, are one of the most obvious places to focus in our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Finally, other communities are already building fossil-free schools. The Maria Hastings Elementary School in Lexington and the King Open and Cambridge Street Upper School in Cambridge are examples. If Lexington and Cambridge are building fossil-free schools now, so can Brookline.

On December 10, 2018, the Advisory Committee considered the concerns of Planning and Building Department staff that there are multiple all-electric engineering solutions, each with different technological benefits and drawbacks and financial implications, which must be assessed via a comprehensive analysis. The Advisory Committee’s motion not only allows for, but assumes that such an analysis will be carried out to determine the best design for the particular building. The Advisory Committee motion requires only that the building systems be designed without the use of on-site combustion of fossil fuels, except for emergency back-up systems.

Some members of the Advisory Committee pointed out the Jonas amendment to Article 3 would not address the problem of carbon emissions from vehicles used to take students to and from the proposed Baldwin School. Others replied that Article 3 only applies to the building system. It would not make sense to oppose a fossil-fuel free building system on the grounds that the Article does not also address vehicle emissions.

RECOMMENDATION:

On December 10, 2018, by a vote of 12–10–2 the Advisory Committee recommended the following *conditional* amendment to the Select Board motion under Article 3 (amendment italicized and in bold print):

VOTED: That the Town release for expenditure the \$1,500,000 appropriated under Section 13, Special Appropriation No. 65 of Article 7 of the 2018 Annual Town Meeting as provided in said appropriation for Schematic Design Services for the Baldwin School, ***with the condition that no funding may be used for the design of non-emergency fossil fuel-operated building systems.***

This recommendation only applies if Town Meeting does not vote Favorable Action on the “Doggett amendment,” which the Advisory Committee is recommending under Article 3. If the “Doggett amendment” fails, the Advisory Committee recommends the Jonas amendment.