

B-SPACE



**PRESENTATION TO
THE OVERRIDE STUDY COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 2013**

What, Why, and Who was B-SPACE?



- **School Committee began response to enrollment growth in 2008 with Facilities Master Plan**
- **Expansion based on that 2008 plan did not keep pace with enrollments**
- **Revised demographic analysis in 2011 identified immediate need to act**
- **School Committee approached Selectmen in 2012 to create a Town/School committee**

B-SPACE Charge



The Committee on Brookline School Population and Capacity Exploration (B-SPACE) is charged with gathering and analyzing data, and guiding a community discussion on programming and space planning that will accommodate rapid and unabated enrollment growth and support the educational goals of the Public Schools of Brookline.

B-SPACE Members



Administrators

Mel Kleckner, Town Administrator (ex officio, nonvoting)
Bill Lupini, Superintendent of Schools (ex officio, nonvoting)

Advisory Committee

Michael Sandman
Neil Wishinsky

Building Commission

George Cole

Community Members

Dr. Lisa Crosley (Physician, Brigham & Women's Hospital)
Dr. Fred Wang (Physician, Harvard Medical School)

Parents

Katherine Craven (Baker School parent; former Executive Director of the MA School Building Authority)
Philip Kramer (Pierce School parent; Architect)

School Committee

Alan Morse, Chairman (B-SPACE co-Chair)
Rebecca Stone

Selectmen

Betsy DeWitt, Chairman (B-SPACE co-Chair)
Ken Goldstein

Staff

Sean Cronin, Deputy Town Administrator (nonvoting)
Peter Rowe, Deputy Superintendent of Schools for Administration & Finance (nonvoting)

Where B-SPACE started



The 2012 demographic update identified four major challenges for the PSB:

- The demographic study showed enrollments growing for several more years before *leveling off at a new, higher level*;
- The school building inventory would soon be “out of room” ;
- **MGT repeated that a new K-8 school would be the most cost-effective response to growth, but there were no good sites for such a school;**
- Brookline needed a more ambitious agenda to enlarge most of its elementary schools, and probably the high school.

Understanding Enrollment Growth: Drivers of Growth



- The 2010 federal census revealed a surge in Brookline's population of children under the age of 9, representing a 21% increase over the prior decade.
- The 2010 census also showed a slight increase both in the live birth rate for this area, and in average family size.
- According to the data informing the BCF's *Understanding Brookline*, the Town added over 1,000 housing units between 1990 and 2010
- Subsequent related data showed large increases in condominiums (new development and conversions from rental) and a related large increase in families living in those condominiums.
- Neighboring areas in Boston as well as Cambridge have been expanding work opportunities in health, higher education, and technology in particular, drawing families who wish to live closer to work to the area.
- Substantial anecdotal evidence from local real estate agents confirms that families with children accept smaller-size housing (e.g. families of four in one and two bedroom units) in order to take advantage of the public schools.

Understanding Enrollment Growth: the space challenge



- Unlike past enrollment cycles which (in K) fluctuated between 300-500 students for 50 years, growth since 2006 has introduced a “new normal” range between 450-650
- Even at 550 students/grade, the PSB would face a severe overcrowding problem in a similar timeframe

Why “Expand in Place?”



- B-SPACE explored 3 options for accommodating enrollments: 1) build new and draw students away from existing schools; 2) expand existing schools to meet demand; 3) lower enrollments by eliminating programs that enroll non-resident students
- 1 and 3 were ultimately rejected after scrutiny, leaving B-SPACE to specify how “expand in place” could work.

Why not a new K-8 School?



- **B-SPACE reviewed several potential sites for a new school, including some options not considered by MGT in its report**
- **Conclusion was that available or potentially available sites failed to meet requirements for a new K-8**
 - Amory Park & Lynch Center sites are flood plains
 - Lincoln School site is too constrained to expand sufficiently
 - Baldwin site would require severe disruption of attendance districts
 - BU properties explored were not for sale

Why not limit METCO & Materials Fee?



- 300 students in METCO (295 in FY 13) @ \$3500/student
- Approximately 170 Materials fee students (168 in FY 13) @ \$2500/student [20% Town staff; 80% Schools]
- Numbers of children from these programs in each grade in each school varies greatly, with as few as 5 materials fee children last year at Devotion (0 in its largest K ever) to 29 at Baker
- In METCO, the range is as few as 19 K-8 at Runkle, and as many as 35 K-8 at Baker; avg =23

METCO & Materials Fee analysis



- B-SPACE looked at the effect on grades and sections of phasing out METCO and the effect of eliminating the program entirely
- Analysis showed that the phase-out approach would cost the operating budget \$3500/student, or approx. \$80,500/year while not reducing sections through consolidations for several years
- Diversity in the PSB would suffer from the loss of METCO. African American students would comprise less than 4% of the population (8% MA; 13% nationally); Latino students would drop to 5% of the population (10% MA; 17% US).

Why not change educational model?



- **Committee also looked at departures from K-8**
 - Build new 7-12; turn BHS into a 7-12 with renovation
 - Use Old Lincoln School as a “concept” school, drawing students from existing K-8s sufficient to relieve crowding
 - Build a 6th grade campus, returning students to their K-8s for 7th-8th grade
- **Consensus of PSB leadership and community was that dramatic changes to the educational program structure could not be justified absent a compelling pedagogical reason; enrollment pressures were insufficient to abandon a successful, popular model**

Thank You



Questions?