



HULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND TOWN OF HULL

***"BEST EDUCATIONAL USE OF SCHOOL
FACILITIES"***

CONCLUDING REPORT
May 2020

PRESENTED BY

THE MARS CONSULTING GROUP



MARS
CONSULTING GROUP

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I. Executive Summary

The Hull Public School District is currently utilizing three separate buildings to educate its 887 students. The district has experienced a 30% decline in enrollment in the last ten (10) years. Current enrollment vs. capacities:

Jacobs Elementary School	785 capacity – 415 students	← 53% of capacity
Memorial Middle School	385 capacity – 185 students	← 48% of capacity
Hull High School	405 capacity – 287 students	← 71% of capacity

This primary factor combined with some public opinion about perceived excess of school space led the Hull Public School Committee to advertise an RFP (Request For Proposal) to study this issue. The Committee subsequently contracted with the MARS (Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools) Consulting Group to address the “Best Educational Use of School Facilities - Planning Services.” Specifically, “Evaluate the educational adequacy of space at three schools.” This study was designed to determine what is in the best interests of the students and the residents/taxpayers of Hull and be “the basis for a long term educational facilities plan.”

The MARS Consulting Group of four retired former school superintendents began this project in November 2019 and continued this process through April 2020 by:

- Visiting the District multiple times;
- Discussing the issues extensively with the District’s Administrative Team;
- Meeting with a variety of constituency groups; and
- Reviewing a wide variety of past and current materials. [Appendix A]

The Consultants focused on the following themes:

- Enrollment – historical and projected;
- Building conditions – all three buildings;
- Financial issues;
- Collective bargaining issues; and
- Educational programs

To address the central issue of the study (i.e., should the District utilize two buildings or three), the consultants deliberated over a number of options. Based on all the input received both from constituents and from documents, we narrowed our focus to the following:

A. Option One: Status Quo

Jacobs Elementary School: PreK-5
Memorial Middle School: 6-8
Hull High School: 9-12

B. Option Two:

Jacobs Elementary School: PreK-8

(A) PreK-8 as single school

(B) Prek-5, 6-8 as school-within-a-school

Memorial Middle School: no longer a Hull school

Hull High School: 9-12

C. Option Three:

Jacobs Elementary School: Prek-7

(A) PreK- 7 as single school

(B) PreK-4, 5-7 as school-within-a-school

Memorial Middle School: no longer a Hull School

Hull High School: 8-12

D. Option Four:

School Department selects option #2 or #3

Memorial Middle School – mixed use with the following conditions

Houses Municipal Offices

Houses special programs (SSEC, and school-related programs)

Implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding

We outlined the advantages and disadvantages of each of these four options. They are the result of our collective knowledge of the schools, the programs, finances and facilities. From a strictly educational standpoint, we believe that Option One could allow the District to continue to incrementally improve the schools and the teaching and learning process that happens there every day. However, the challenges presented by financial sustainability and projections for the next decade indicate an enrollment decline that does not justify operating three facilities.

And finally, we provided a series of steps designed as a transition plan. This at least two year plan would lead to a very careful, thoughtful and transparent process to proceed toward the implementation of the selected option. It will also be important to have this plan developed in conjunction with the Town of Hull.

II. Introduction

A. Why the Study?

Faced with concerns about its future, in August of 2019, the Hull Public School District developed and advertised a Request for Proposals. The RFP was entitled: *Best Educational Use of School Facilities - Planning Services*. The goal for the District was to find a consulting firm that would help develop recommendations regarding the use of the District's three educational facilities as well as its educational programming. Hull has experienced a significant drop in enrollment in recent years and, as a result, they looked for both solutions and recommendations to help them effectively deal with the problem. There was public pressure to develop a workable plan and there was also the realization that something had to be done. Discussions had begun within the school community and with the Town of Hull as to the question of sustainability. Simply stated, everyone recognized that a problem existed but no one had a solution that was agreeable to all. Hull is not alone. School districts all across Massachusetts and throughout New England are struggling with similar issues. Hull therefore sought help from a "second set of eyes" to assist them in planning for their future. Challenges confronted the district and it was time to find solutions.

B. Methodology

After a review of the consultant groups that submitted responses, the MARS (Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools) Consulting Group (MCG) was selected. MCG is a consulting group that was formed over ten (10) years ago to assist school districts with a broad set of issues and concerns including districts experiencing declining enrollment. The group is comprised of retired public school superintendents who have assisted districts across the Commonwealth. A team of four professionals with the support of a separate consulting group comprised the team that was assigned to Hull. The consultants utilized a variety of techniques to reach consensus on a number of possible options and recommendations for the District. Not limited to the following; the consultants would:

- Visit the District numerous times;
- Meet with a variety of constituency groups including School Committee members, Leadership Team, parents, teachers, support staff, Town Manager, and South Shore Educational Collaborative Director.
- Hold extensive discussions with the District's Administrative Team; and,
- Review previous studies and District publications; such as the Hull Strategic Plan, Program of Studies, Massachusetts School Building Authority Statement of Interest, collective bargaining agreements, enrollment reports, and current and previous budget documents. [A complete list is in Appendix A.]
- In the course of our analysis, we used a variety of different sources. We want to note that some of the data points within the report may not be exactly consistent, but they are consistent with the sources that were made available and the trends suggested by the data are also consistent.

The study would last approximately seven (7) months and conclude with a public presentation to the Hull School Committee. It would then be the responsibility of the

Superintendent and the administrative team to make final recommendations to the Hull School Committee who in turn would make a report to the community.

C. Defining Hull

Hull is part of a network of cities and towns that comprise the greater Boston Metropolitan Region. Situated in the Southeastern shore area, Hull sits on a small peninsula that juts out toward the Boston Harbor. Geographically, Hull is isolated from the larger communities that it borders, most notably Hingham and Cohasset. While its location makes it a vastly popular vacation spot, the location also impedes a free flow of traffic and commerce. In short, Hull's geography creates a picturesque seaside community with limited space for development.

Businesses in Hull rely heavily on tourism. In the summer, Hull's population soars with vacationers. Whether it is daily visitors, seasonal renters, or vacation homeowners, the town population changes with each season. The town does not offer significant attractions to support non-tourist development. There is little available land for any type of growth. Importantly, the town is also at the mercy of the Atlantic Ocean and our ever-changing climate. Strong storms and high tides can wreak havoc on parts of the peninsula cutting off traffic flow and creating other potentially dangerous situations. The contrast of a beautiful seaside town with views of the Boston skyline and the never-ending ocean horizons can dramatically change in a moment with dangerous tides and ocean swells that can breach the seawalls that protect the town. There are high and low areas of the town which may make additional commercial development difficult.

Hull has most notably experienced a change in the composition of its full-time population. To escape the busier surrounding communities and take advantage of its affordability, Hull is now seen as a place to retire and/or escape the hustle of the Boston area. In recent years, rather than attracting childbearing families, Hull has increasingly become home to retirees and single professionals. In the non-summer months, by contrast, Hull is a quiet and serene place to live. Its ferry service provides quick access to Boston and its close proximity to social and retail services in the neighboring communities, result in Hull becoming more reflective of fewer children but more adults. There is no question that Hull needs to make decisions regarding the future of its school system. But, as with many other similar towns, the decisions are complex and can have difficult consequences. The challenge then is to find a solution for the District that is sustainable, improves the Town's long-term future, while maintaining the town's long-time commitment to its families, including its children. Hull is a town where people grow up, leave, but often return when their families have grown.

III. Summary Analysis of Study Parameters

Task #1: Collect, review and analyze the existing building condition assessment reports from 2016 provided by the Hull Public Schools.

Response: The entire MARS team conducted walk-throughs of each building to develop a visual awareness of the current conditions. We gave attention to issues found in the 2016 reports. Team Leader Dr. Jay Barry did a more thorough review of the study and submitted a report which is part of the team's final report.

Task #2: Determine how the projected enrollment will impact the need for educational space within the three school buildings.

Response: The team reviewed the current projections as a major component of the study. Discussions were held with members of the administrative team as well as other constituency groups. The findings of the study are based largely on the issue of enrollment, both current and what has been projected.

Task #3: Review how changes in curriculum, programming and educational delivery will impact the need for space for all grade levels.

Response: Curriculum changes will be largely determined by the School Committee's decision to consolidate or not. Additionally, the availability of funds for the annual school budget may also be dependent on the direction the Committee takes. Those two factors will greatly impact the future of curriculum initiatives and programs for students.

Task #4: Prepare space summaries comparing needed vs. existing space using the MSBA Educational Space Standards and Guidelines.

Response: Building plans, floor plans and MSBA guidelines and regulations were reviewed in order to assess the school building capacity and school building use within the Hull Public Schools. MARS consultants toured the schools with and without students in session to learn about the facilities and how they accommodated educational programs. Also, the EMG Facility Condition Assessment reports were reviewed and summarized. Facility assessments and current use of facility space were considered in developing options for consolidation.

Task #5: Analyze and understand the current space usage and future constraints resulting from the need to add programs, change programs and projected enrollment changes.

Response: The team as a whole spent time discussing this issue. Our conclusions can be found in the report. Hull provides a substantial and comprehensive program for a district its size. There are areas of the program that are strongly supported by the

number of staff assigned to specific student services. The hiring of specific instructional staff for specific content offerings (e.g., certified MS Social Studies teachers, Librarians, early math intervention specialists) could enhance the breadth and depth of the District's curriculum. However, the district is challenged to do so by budget constraints.

Task #6: Review the existing space at all three schools to identify underutilized space that can be allocated to support other programs.

Response: The District has used existing space creatively. In fact, there are several examples of space usage that one would not find in other districts. At the Memorial Middle School, there are several "common" spaces that allow students to work on projects and schoolwork outside the classroom. At Jacobs Elementary School, intervention specialists (e.g., reading, special education learning support) have an abundance of space to operate their programs. Again, this issue will be discussed in the report.

Task #7: Identify and evaluate options to address future space needs and effective and efficient use of existing facilities.

Response: The MARS team will submit a number of options to the Hull School Committee. The options are focused on future space needs, and effective and efficient use of space, as well as sustainability issues.

Task #8: Identify cost implications, space implications, educational implications of district consolidation.

Response: The MARS team conducted a review of District finances, staffing and other implications from material provided by the Administrative Team. Additionally, the MARS team has utilized an additional consultant who has done a financial analysis that will be part of the report.

Task #9: Include all costs related to consultants' options and/or results of the study.

Response: Financial issues are presented as part of the report. The MARS team, however, did not make decisions as to the District's curriculum or programs which are issues that are very much dependent on the finances of the Town and the District. The Town Manager has offered the likelihood of 2% increases over the next several years. The MARS team believes that this limitation will impact future decisions that will rest with the District's Administration and School Committee.

Task #10: Incorporate the Districts' educational program and priorities into the process, using the Hull Public Schools Strategic Plan.

Response: The report in Section E summarizes the key elements of the District's Strategic Plan and then describes the educational programs offered at each of the three

schools. The MARS Consultant Group noted educational practices that focused on individual students and their learning characteristics at each school, a robust inclusionary special education program and an appropriate and active set of extra-curricular activities. The accommodation of educational programs was a priority in considering best use of facilities.

Task #11: Attend one Leadership Administrative meeting at minimum, to gather input from administrators. Input from Administration should be considered as part of the proposer's recommendations. Develop options for grade configurations.

Response: The MARS consultants had numerous meetings with the District's Administrative Team. We met with the entire group and individually with each Building Administrator and Central Office Administrator. The input that was provided is used in the final report.

Task #12, #13, #14: Identify the benefits, advantages and drawbacks or shortcomings of school consolidation. Identify the benefits, advantages and drawbacks or shortcomings of no change to our district. In other words keeping the district as it is. At the conclusion of the study, proposer to make recommendations to the School Committee.

Response: Section V of the report addresses the issue of not changing grade configurations and the issue of possible consolidation options. This section outlines four options for consideration by the Administration and School Committee. Each option is described and then the educational, space, and fiscal advantages and disadvantages are noted. Under-utilized spaces, facility conditions, campus footprints and educational programs were the factors used for developing the four options. The options are presented in a "table format" but they are also included in Appendix E of the report in an outline format should the reader finds this more accessible.

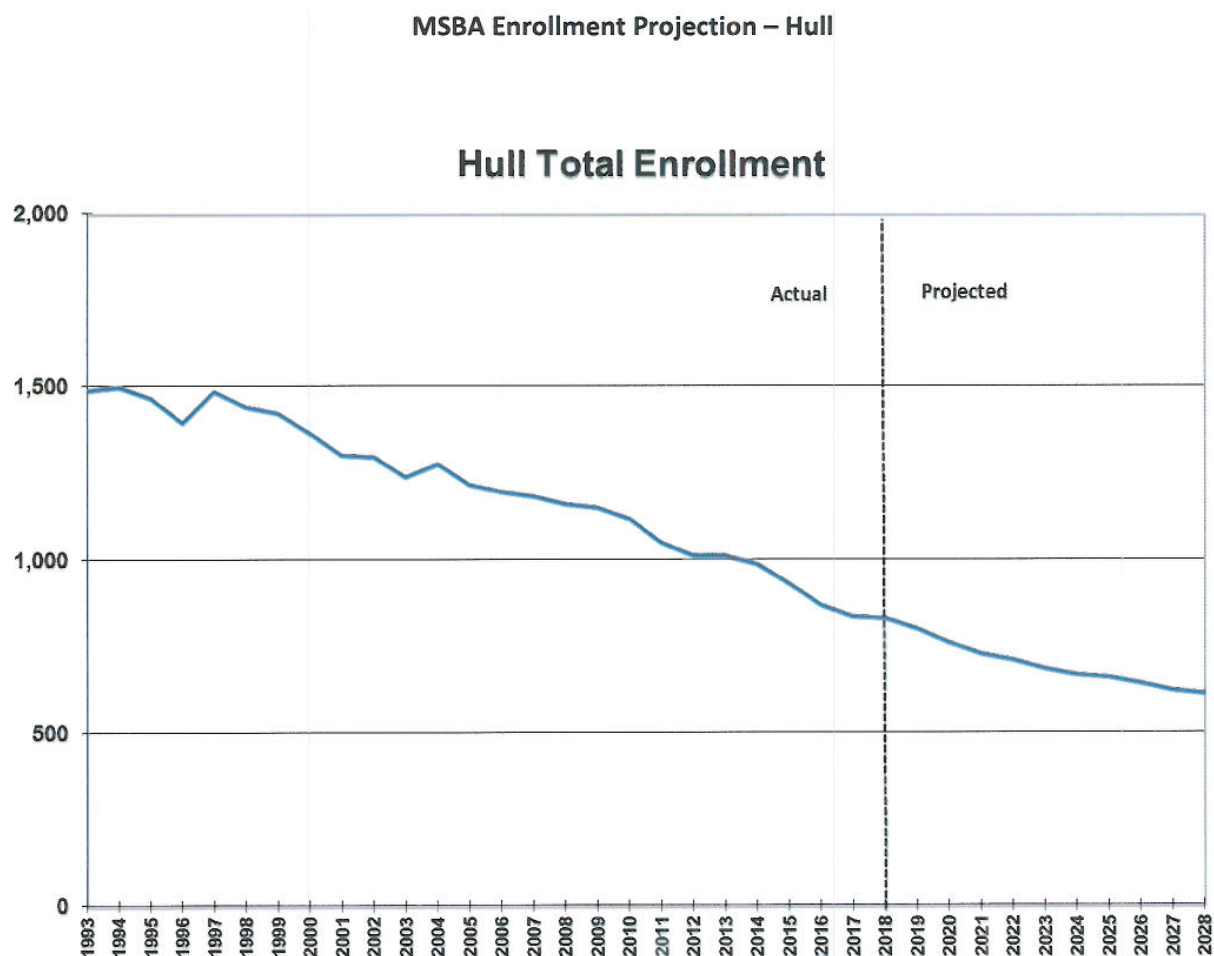
IV. Background Information

A. Enrollment

1. Introduction

What is the adequacy of space within the three Hull Public School buildings:
Lillian Jacobs Elementary School (grades PreK-5)
Memorial Middle School (grades 6-8)
Hull High School (grades 9-12)

The Hull Public Schools have been experiencing a declining student enrollment over the past 10 years. In 2008-09, the enrollment for K-12 was 1,199 and for 2018-19 it was 836 representing a decrease of 30.3%. This decrease has brought forward discussion on possible consolidation from three schools to two schools based on the student enrollment capacity in the three schools.



2. Enrollment Studies

The Hull Public Schools have gathered student data on future enrollment projections. In December 2018, NESDEC (New England School Development Council) provided them with a student enrollment report which began with an historical enrollment for the years 2008-09 to 2018-19 followed by a student projection for 2018-09 to 2028-29. Enrollment projections are based on K – 12.

As indicated in the introduction, there was a decline in student enrollment of 363 students (30.3%) for the years 2008-09 to 2018-19. The projection for student enrollment for 2018-19 to 2018-29 indicates a decline of 182 additional students (21.8%) for a total of 654 K-12 students. This report shows a 30.3% decrease for the past ten years and then for the future ten years it projects a 21.8% drop in the number of students.

Any student projection report raises the following question: How accurate are the projections? NESDEC provided the Hull Public Schools with an updated projection in January 2020 which shows a general consistency with the earlier data. For the ten-year period beginning in 2009-10, the student enrollment was 1,153 and for 2019-20 the student enrollment was 799 for a 30.7% drop. The projection for student enrollment for 2019-20 to 2029-30 is 684 students for a future drop of 14.4%.

The NESDEC report of 12/12/2018 projects a student enrollment in 2028-29 of 654, while the January 2020 report projects an enrollment of 684 for a difference of thirty (30) students. Both reports show that the sharp decline for 2008-09 to 2018-19 does not continue at the same rate into the next ten years. The earlier report indicated a decline of 30.3% while the latest NESDEC projections indicate a 14% to 22% decline. The graph above in the report shows that there will be decline but at a slower rate.

The Hull Public Schools have been working with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) concerning work on the Hull Memorial Middle School. An enrollment study was done as part of working with the MSBA. This is a third study that can be helpful in estimating future student enrollment. When comparing the reports, NESDEC projects 654 to 687 students K-12 for 2028-29 and the MSBA projects 616 students. All three reports show a projected declining enrollment. The NESDEC and MSBA reports are attached as Appendix C.

K-12 Historical Student Enrollment

Year	NESDEC 12/12/18	NESDEC 1/2/20	MSBA 7/19/19
2008-09	1,199		1,163
2009-10		1,153	
2018-19	836		835
2019-20		799	
Total Decline	-363	-354	-328
Percent Decline	-30.28%	-30.70%	-28.20%

K-12 Projected Student Enrollment

Year	NESDEC 12/12/18	NESDEC 1/2/20	MSBA 7/19/19
2018-19	836		835
2019-20		799	
2028-29	654		616
2029-30		684	
Total Decline	-182	-115	-219
Percent Decline	- 21.77%	-14.39%	-26.23%

3. School Attending Children Report [K – 12] (Filed in January of Each Year)

	Data Point 10/1/17	Data Point 10/1/18	Data Point 10/1/19	Change 10/17 to 10/1/19	% Change
Jacobs Elementary School	356	364	348	-8	-2.2%
Memorial Middle School	188	185	177	-11	-5.9%
Hull High School	295	287	274	-21	-7.1%
Totals	839	836	799	-40	-4.8%
Out of District Pub/Voc	20	15	20	0	0.0%
Private Schools	102	87	64	-38	-37.3%
Charter Schools	30	29	30	0	0.0%
Total Students	991	967	913	-78	-7.9%

Looking at the last three years, there is a decline of 40 students enrolled in the Hull schools and an overall decline of 78 students living in Hull. It is noted that the number of students attending private schools has decreased significantly.

4. Monitoring the Demographics of Hull

The demographics of Hull should be studied each year to see how the population and housing might be changing.

- Number of housing permits
- Tear downs and rebuilding
- Aging of the population
- Births
- Recent sales of homes
- Age of buyers for homes

These factors could possibly indicate future changes in the student population of Hull.

5. Enrollment Study Conclusions

Using the two NESDEC enrollment reports, the MSBA enrollment report, and the Student Attending Report, the conclusions follow:

- a. The Hull Public Schools have experienced a steep decline in student enrollment over the past ten (10) to twelve (12) years.
- b. The projections for the next ten (10) years show a continued decline.
- c. The total student population overall is declining as indicated by the School Attending Children report.
- d. An increase of student population in the near future appears not to be on the horizon.

B. Building Condition Analysis

1. Jacobs Elementary School

Facility Condition Assessment by EMG Corp. (2016)

The original facility is sixty (60) years old this year, but a significant renovation/addition project was completed thirteen years ago. The building houses the Elementary School (grades PreK-5), seven (7) SSEC classrooms, the Hull Family Network and the Central Office Administration offices. It is the largest school facility in Hull. EMG rates the systemic condition of the building as “good”. They further report that the building has been well maintained. Painting and masonry repairs are the only short-term recommendations. A facility condition index is used to quantitatively assess the building’s value as it compares to repair needs going into the next several years. This is a ratio of current and ten-year repair costs, compared to replacement value. The current ratio and the ten-year ratio were rated “good”.

As expected with a recently renovated school, the building is accessible, and there are no problems with ADA requirements. There are no building code or fire code violations and the building is sited in an appropriate zoning district and is outside the 500-year

flood plain. Site utilities, drainage systems, outside areas, paving and walkways were rated “good”. Stairs at the front and side entrance were rated “fair”. Exterior lighting, fencing, refuse disposal, and playground equipment were rated “good”. The playing courts were rated “fair”. There were no issues with the building superstructure. The building envelope was rated “good”. Mechanical, plumbing, electrical and emergency systems were also determined to be in good condition. The same was true for interior spaces and finishes.

Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the report is the projection for maintenance and replacement costs out to the year 2036. The total cost of replacement work during this seventeen-year (17) time frame is approximately \$3,000,000. The report does not speak to the feasibility of completing this work, the extent to which municipal budgets will provide funding and the extent to which the MSBA might participate in a grant funded repair project at some point in the future.

MARS Observations

Our tour and review of the building was confirming. The Jacobs Elementary School is, in relative terms, a recently updated building that has been very well cared for by both District staff and, importantly, by the students as well. A sense of pride in the facility was evident as we spoke to teachers, administrators and support staff.

Jacobs Elementary houses seven (7) classroom spaces for the South Shore Educational Collaborative. In addition, there are three open, or partially used, classrooms indicated on the documentation shared with MARS. There are two classrooms dedicated to Kids Care and two classrooms assigned to reading and remediation which are not fully utilized. The Hull Family Network also has classroom and some office space. Our tour and our conversations with staff suggested that the Family Network is a valued program.

It is the sense of the MARS consultants that if school consolidation is implemented by the District, the Jacobs Elementary School facility should be considered for an expanded grade configuration. The building has far more rented space and under-utilized space than the other two schools. It is also recognized that the District’s relationship with the South Shore Educational Collaborative has educational and financial implications which will be addressed later in the report.

2. Memorial Middle School

EMG Report

The original facility, the smallest in the town, is almost eighty (80) years old (1942) but was renovated in 2002. The building houses grades 6-8. The systemic condition of the building was rated between “fair” and “good” according to EMG. HVAC, roof, vertical envelope and structure are rated “fair”. Interiors, plumbing, electrical, elevators and fire safety systems were rated “good”. The current year FCI was rated “good” but the ten-year FCI was rated “fair”. The ten-year replacement needs were estimated at approximately \$800,000. Replacement costs projected out to 2036 are almost \$4,000,000. It is logical that an older building will cost more to maintain than a newer building as it ages.

The building complies with ADA requirements, there are no building or fire code violations and the school is appropriately located given zoning classifications. The school is located in a 100-year flood plain. The condition of building utilities was rated "good". Outside paving and flatwork received a mix of fair and good ratings. The front entry steps were one of the few items rated "poor". Building lighting and outside areas and the foundation were rated "good". The superstructure was rated "fair", but no life cycle replacements were indicated. The primary roof was rated "poor", and the report suggests replacement should be considered. The secondary roof was rated "fair" with no leaking or immediate problems. The exterior walls of the building were also cited as needing repair due to damaged mortar, aging woodwork, rust, limited useful life of the lintels, and aged openings and joints in the exterior walls where "dissimilar materials meet". The heating and distribution system as well as the HVAC system and hot water and plumbing systems were rated "good". There are no recommendations for immediate replacement regarding electrical systems, elevators and emergency systems. The interior of the building was rated "good" with exceptions in the areas of the gym ceiling, carpet and some of the painted drywall. The kitchen was also positively rated.

MARS Observations

Like the Jacobs Elementary School, the Memorial Middle School appears to be very well maintained. Again, we noticed the conscientious approach to maintenance and evidence that students and the community care for and respect the facility. The older classical design of the school was noted and appreciated as this is not often observed as schools around the Commonwealth become modernized. The grades are housed by floor to accommodate team-based communication and curriculum coordination. There is one classroom space on each floor for team meetings and activities. The space is about one-and-one-half of a normal classroom. This space is empty when not scheduled for a special activity. The school also has an auditorium, stage, cafeteria and library which are often used by many middle schools for these same team-based activities. The South Shore Educational Collaborative occupies two classrooms in the school. Class sizes range from 8-25 students and approximately twenty-eight (28) classes have less than fifteen (15) students.

It is recognized that the District has been invited by the Massachusetts School Building Authority to pursue a repair project addressing the building envelope issues noted in the EMG report. The MARS group has noted that this is another example of the District's conscientious approach to the care of their schools.

The MARS group views the Memorial School as a likely facility for closure or repurposing in the event that the District chooses to pursue consolidation and grade re-configuration. If the building is no longer operated by the District, we note that a three-year average of Memorial operating costs is approximately \$80,000. This may be a savings, depending on how the building is used. It is unfortunate that the enrollment has fallen to current levels, resulting in a stand-alone school with approximately 185 students. Having viewed the school with and without students, it is a school facility with an unusually sparse atmosphere because of the square footage and number of staff and students. As an aside, the costs in the EMG reports for replacing an entire school building seem low given what the MARS consultants are currently observing for MSBA school construction project costs around the Commonwealth.

A final point about the MSBA Memorial School Repair Project; during Module One, the District approved and signed an "Initial Compliance Certification" form. Item 16 in that document states the following: "The District hereby acknowledges and agrees that if it sells, leases, or otherwise removes from service an Assisted Facility or portion thereof, that the Authority may stop making grant payments associated with the Assisted Facility, may re-capture the financial assistance that the Assisted Facility has received from the Authority or the Commonwealth, and may decline to approve any future grants for the District."

At this point in time, it appears that moving ahead with the Memorial Repair Project, knowing it could be partially repurposed, would result in complications with the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The District should continue to share all relevant information with the MSBA and consider postponement, until it is certain that the facility will be fully utilized as a school for the foreseeable future. If Memorial continues to accommodate middle grades and other school-related programs, the MSBA repair project makes good sense.

3. Hull High School

EMG Report

The immediate repair costs at the High School were estimated to be \$1.2 million, significantly higher than immediate repair costs at the other schools. Much of this list involves ADA work and repairs to the building envelope. The replacement reserves report projected out to 2034 is also substantially different from the other two reports and a cost of \$9.2 million is noted. The building is sixty-four (64) years old with a complete renovation in 2002 which also added the library. Building systems' ratings varied. Site and vertical envelope were rated "poor". Roof, interiors, HVAC and elevators were rated "fair" and structure, plumbing, electrical and fire systems were rated "good". Current year FCI was rated good and the ten-year FCI was rated fair. Also, unlike the other two reports, the building was not reported to be completely accessible. Needed adjustments are listed in the categories of parking, interior and exterior barriers, lifts, elevators and restrooms, although many of these issues do not appear to be cost intensive. Parts of the property are in the 500-year flood plain and parts of the property are in the 100-year flood plain. Building capacity is reported to be 450 students and fifty (50) staff members. The reports for the other two schools do not include building capacity. Utilities were rated "good", paving and flatwork were rated "fair". Many of the outside areas were rated either "fair" or "good", but construction of an artificial turf field and replacement of the gym floor have recently been completed. The roof is thirteen (13) years old. The building experiences unusual weathering because of its location and not surprisingly, the brick veneer and sealants at transition points are rated either "fair" or "poor". Heating and distribution systems, plumbing and lighting are rated "good". Consistent with the District's careful approach to maintenance, the interiors are rated "good".

MARS Observations

The High School is also a well-cared for school building. The new athletic field and newly replaced gym floor represent significant improvements to the High School for student activities. In touring the school, it was noted that most of the classrooms and instructional spaces are utilized, but small class sizes were noted repeatedly. There are two classrooms at the High School devoted to programs run by the SSEC. Also, following the issuance of the EMG reports, the District completed many of the immediate repairs cited above. Although access issues are noted in the report, the school is presently in compliance with ADA guidelines.

The reported capacity of the building suggests that apart from program and scheduling considerations, an additional 170 students could be housed at the school. The building presents as a facility that is best used as a high school or perhaps a secondary school and the MARS Group does not envision changing the location of grades 9-12 in any consolidation scenario.

There were one or two classroom/shop areas that could be cleaned out and better utilized. Perhaps the District may want to consider offering a Chapter 74 program (vocational) in Marine Technology in the future. The nature of the community and prevalence of ocean-related businesses suggest that this might be a good fit. The only other Marine Tech programs MARS found were on the Cape or in New Bedford. It is recognized that the District is currently attempting to expand internships with local businesses. The MARS Group understands the significant capital investment and grant funding that this Chapter 74 program would require if implemented properly.

Clearly, the decision regarding the “Best Use of Educational Facilities” is a priority of the District, but the cost of long-term repairs of the High School might be addressed at some time in the future. Following the implementation of a consolidation model, it may be prudent to monitor the building issues noted in the EMG report. Whether this reaches the level of application to the MSBA is an administrative and School Committee option.

4. Comparisons with Space Guidelines from the Massachusetts School Building Authority

The District reports that the student capacity for each school is as follows:

	100% Capacity	Enrollment	Excess Capacity
Jacobs Elementary:	785	415	370
Memorial Middle School	385	185	200
Hull High School	405	287	118

This number is a simple arithmetic calculation. It is not necessarily a worthwhile planning number when considering consolidation options because school facilities should accommodate educational programs in a manner that enhances student learning. Filling school buildings to capacity is not necessarily optimal.

According to 963 CMR 2.00, the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) space standards are listed as gross square feet per student. The Jacobs Elementary school's enrollment of 415 students calls for 167 square feet per student. The gross square footage of the building is reported by the MSBA 2016 study to be 116,371 square feet which leads to 280 square feet per student. This is well above the MSBA standard for new construction.

The Memorial Middle School has 67,546 square feet and 185 students. The current enrollment is too low to be listed in the MSBA guidelines. The minimum enrollment for middle schools is 400 and calls for 190 square feet per student. The current square footage per student is 331 using actual enrollment (185) and is again, well above the MSBA standard.

Finally, the High School square footage is noted to be 102,136 (by the MSBA) with an enrollment of 287. Similarly, MSBA guidelines do not include a standard for this smaller enrollment number. The lowest enrollment number is 600 and with this student population the guidelines call for 226 square feet per student. Using actual enrollment, there are currently 356 square feet per student.

At the high school level, the MSBA also includes a grossing factor and the maximum grossing factor allowed is 1.5. This is the net to gross square footage ratio. In order to reach this allowed maximum, Hull High School would need to reduce current square footage per student by 70 square feet.

Clearly, the current enrollments and the size of the Hull school buildings, in terms of square feet per student, are well above (more generous than) the requirements in the MSBA Standards. It is also important to note that the MSBA Educational and Space Standards are intended for projects that involve new construction. The regulation also states that the standards "should not be used for assessing safety standards or education adequacy of existing facilities that were constructed in accordance with standards and guidelines that prevailed at the time of construction." This is stated so that the standards are not used inappropriately for existing fully enrolled schools that may have square footage numbers that differ from the current standards. It is also noted that the regulation clearly authorizes the Authority to make case-by-case determinations for smaller schools. Therefore, while the objectives in the Hull study call for this comparison, it should be used only as an additional point of information.

5. Core Classrooms

Elementary School, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Core Classrooms (grades 1-8):

The MSBA core classroom space standards for elementary schools can include grade spans as large as 1-8 but may also be applied to more limited spans. Keeping in mind the qualification stated above and remembering that this standard is used primarily for new construction, the elementary minimum is 900 square feet and the maximum is 1,000 square feet. The School Department reports that classrooms at the Jacobs school are 852 square feet.

Middle School Core Classrooms:

The MSBA core classroom space standards for middle schools and junior high schools is a minimum of 850 square feet and a maximum of 950 square feet. The Memorial School classrooms are reported to be 940 square feet.

High School Core Classrooms:

The MSBA core classroom space standard for high schools is a minimum of 850 square feet and a maximum of 950 square feet. The typical classroom at the High School is 650 square feet. This is smaller than new construction guidelines from the MSBA but the High School has small class sizes and was built in the 1960's. We did not observe that core classrooms at the High School were undersized.

6. Underutilized Space

Underutilized space was first determined by reviewing labeled floor plans for the three schools. Subsequently, consultants walked the school buildings (Jacobs and the High School) with the Principals to determine frequency of use and obtain answers to any related questions. The list that follows outlines what we determined to be underutilized spaces and this data was used in considering the options for consolidation.

Jacobs Elementary School (Pre-K – 5)

Building Capacity: 785*
Enrolled: 409

Notes

C103, B213, B114	Under-utilized classrooms
C143 & C145	Labeled as reading classrooms, but they are open
C147 & C148	Specialist spaces – one classroom could be re-purposed
B121	Computer Lab is seldom used and could be re-purposed
C 241	Computer Lab is seldom used and could be re-purposed
C201- C206	Six SSEC classrooms; could be re-purposed
C208/C209	SSEC classroom; could be re-purposed
C245, C246, C247	Team Based Learning; larger spaces than needed
B215 & B219	Kids Care could be located in Cafeteria if rooms needed

Memorial Middle School (6 – 8)

Capacity: 385*
Enrolled: 179

Notes

140 & 223	Could be re-purposed (SSEC spaces)
135, 239, 323	Large Group Rooms (cafeteria, stage, gym as alternate sites)
228	Utilized but not every period
305	Utilized 60% of the day

Hull High School (9 – 12)

Capacity: 405*

Enrolled: 285

Notes

D124 Wave Lab, 50% utilized

D127 Should be cleaned out and re-purposed

B128 Language Lab fully utilized

B122, B212 SSEC classrooms, could be re-purposed

Cafeteria and Gym Have capacity for additional students

(* MARS Consulting Group suggests that best practice is that a school is at capacity when it is 85% full.)

C. Financial Background

The District, for the years FY16 to FY20, has experienced limited budget increases. The increases have mainly covered collective bargaining and contract increases as well as expense operating increases. Besides the percent increases to salary schedules, there are step raises to staff each year. There have been limited funds to increase the number of staff. It should be noted that a declining enrollment does not mean a 1-to-1 corresponding reduction in expenses.

The District Budget summary is presented as Salary and Expenses. The following shows the increases to the overall budget and changes within the two parts in order to stay within the amount that is funded to the schools.

The FY16 Budget

Salary \$10,817,444

Expenses \$3,613,393

Total \$14,430,837

The FY17 Budget

Salary \$10,730,087 -\$87,357

Expenses \$4,099,816 +\$486,423

Total \$14,829,903 +399,066

There was an increase of \$399,066 2.77%

The FY17 Budget

Salary \$10,730,087

Expenses \$4,099,816

Total \$14,829,903

The FY18 Budget

Salary	\$11,227,230	+497,143
Expenses	\$3,963,431	-\$136,385
Total	\$15,190,661	\$360,758

There was an increase of \$360,758 2.43%

The FY18 Budget

Salary	\$11,227,230
Expenses	\$3,963,431
Total	\$15,190,661

The FY19 Budget

Salary	\$ 11,491,417	+264,187
Expenses	\$ 3,999,316	+\$35,885
Total	\$15,490,733	+300,072

There was an increase of \$300,072 1.98%

The FY19 Budget

Salary	\$ 11,491,417
Expenses	\$ 3,999,316
Total	\$15,490,733

The FY20 Budget

Salary	\$11,795,784	+\$304,367
Expenses	\$ 4,008,597	+ \$9,281
Total	\$15,804,381	+313,648

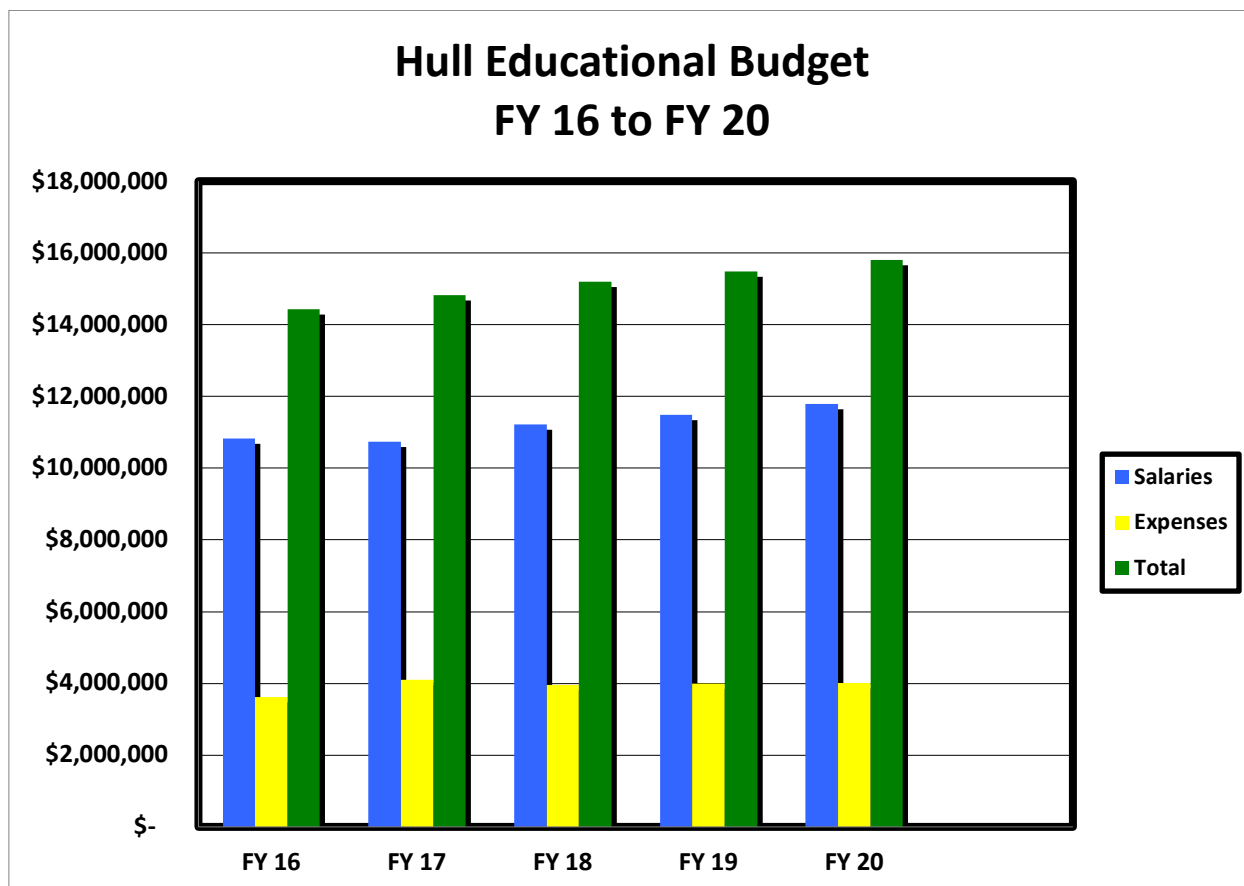
There was an increase of \$313,648 2.02%

When looking at the last four budget years, the District has had to live within limited budget increases which appears to just take care of the fixed cost increases that exist in a school budget. There have been staff reductions in order to stay within the budget increase provide to the District.

	Budget	Increase	Percent
FY17	\$14,829,903		
FY18	\$15,190,661	\$360,758	2.43%
FY19	\$15,490,733	\$300,072	1.98%
FY20	\$15,804,381	\$313,648	2.02%

Each year the Administration creates a list of items they feel would improve the educational opportunities for students but have not generally been able to include them

in the budget because of the limited percent increase to the school budget. The District will most likely find it difficult to continue with these limited increases in future years.



D. Collective Bargaining Agreement – Hull Teachers’ Association

Analysis of the Collective Bargaining Agreement: Hull School Committee and Hull Teachers Association

The scope and impact of collective bargaining will continue to be affected by changes in American social, political, and economic institutions. Collective bargaining history illustrates a pattern that fluctuates with the changing interests of society. Today we find ourselves struggling to balance the challenges of shrinking student populations, high degree of accountability of schools, and fiscal constraints that limit attention to the needs of students as perceived by administrators, school committees and teachers.

The collective bargaining agreement between the Hull School Committee and the Hull Teachers’ Association (HTA) is similar to contracts throughout the Commonwealth. Our assessment has, however, found some potential areas to be at least aware of when discussing the future of the District. If some type of consolidation occurs, we believe that the School Committee should meet with the HTA to discuss potential issues within the contract that might be affected. In doing so, both parties will be able to work together to ensure that new programs or changes are implemented fairly and in a timely manner. The goal would be to avoid costly and lengthy legal disputes. We are including

and highlighting the articles of the contract that we feel are important to the contents of this report.

ARTICLE VII PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

7.1 We recommend that teachers be consulted on new programs or changes made in existing programs.

7.2 So as to promote successful program development and change, the parties agree to be guided by the following principles:

(1) The administration shall seek faculty input when developing a plan of implementation of the changes, which may include prioritizing changes, defining specific goals, determining methods of measuring success in reaching the goals, and establishing progress timelines;

(2) The judgment of all educational professionals, including both administrators and teachers, shall be respected. Input into the process will be welcomed from all participants. The administration will establish methods for seeking and receiving feedback, both positive and negative, regarding the success of the changes. By involving all participants in the change process, the parties hope that all will have a sense of ownership of the system and the changes;

(5) Staff development and in-service training is vital to successful implementation of changes. Appropriate training will be provided to staff who are required to implement changes. Staff who receive training shall be expected to implement the programs and techniques learned in the training.

There is a significant possibility that there will be programmatic changes if some level of consolidation occurs. The language in Article VII indicates that open lines of communication are necessary and strongly recommended. Input from both sides is indicated as well as some level of training to help teachers with any proposed changes.

ARTICLE IX LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY

9.1 Effective September 1, 2016 the teacher workday and the instructional day shall be the following:

	<i>Teacher Starts</i>	<i>Instruction Starts</i>	<i>Instruction Ends</i>	<i>Teacher Ends</i>
<i>High School</i>	7:15 A.M.	7:25 A.M.	2:20 P.M.	2:35 P.M.
<i>Memorial School</i>	7:55 A.M.	8:05 A.M.	2:45 P.M.	3:00 P.M.

	<i>Students Enter</i>				
<i>Jacobs School</i>	8:20 A.M.	8:25 A.M.	8:35 A.M.	3:15 P.M.	3:25 P.M.

If there is a change in the configuration of the schools that cause changes in busing and the teacher work day, the times of the school day will need to be changed. Since the times are specifically listed in the collective bargaining agreement, there will need to be

some form of discussion with the HTA. This can be done through an informal agreement or direct impact bargaining.

ARTICLE XI TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS

11.1 For the purposes of this Article XI, the term "transfer" shall mean any voluntary or involuntary change of the school or teaching discipline to which the teacher is assigned.

11.2 The Committee and the Association recognize that some involuntary transfers of teachers is unavoidable, but they also understand that frequent transfers can be disruptive to the educational process.

11.3 All assignments shall be made known in writing by June 1. These assignments are not to be changed without due notification of the teacher involved and a conference with the Principal if so requested by the teacher. Notice will include the school to which the teacher will be assigned, the grade(s) and/or subject(s) to be taught.

11.10 When a reduction in force in the bargaining unit is determined by the Superintendent to be necessary, volunteers will be given consideration. Denial of the request of a volunteer is not grievable.

11.11 Notice of any involuntary transfer or assignment shall be given to teachers as soon as practical; and not later than June 1 except in cases of emergency.

11.12 When involuntary transfers and involuntary reassignments are necessary for the good of the system, teachers will be reassigned in accordance with the criteria of certification, and qualifications. If qualifications are relatively equal, length of service shall apply. Transfers and reassignments are not grievable unless determined by an arbitrator to be arbitrary and capricious.

11.13 An involuntary transfer or reassignment shall be made only after a meeting between the teacher involved and the principal, at which time the teacher shall be notified of the reason therefore. In the event that a teacher objects to the transfer or reassignment at this meeting, upon request of the teacher, the Superintendent shall meet with him/her. The teacher may, at his/her option, have Association representative(s) present at such meeting(s).

Moving teachers from one building to another will be a natural and an expected operational task. There may be, however, the need to also reduce staff, change staff assignments, or even create new teaching positions or titles. Accordingly, the School Committee will need to follow the appropriate subsections of Article XI. Once again, we recommend a robust level of communication to avoid issues and to implement a fair and just process.

ARTICLE XII CLASS SIZE

12.1 Whenever possible, class size shall be as follows:

Grade Pre-K: Maximum - 17

Grade K - 5: Maximum - 22

Grade 6 - 12: Maximum - 30

The maximum class size numbers are doable under any consolidation plan. To ensure adherence to contract language, MARS recommends input from the teachers and a

coordinated effort with all District Administrators. This would be an essential component to the planning and implementation process.

ARTICLE XXXV REDUCTION IN FORCE

35.1 In the event that it becomes necessary for the School Committee to reduce the number of professional status employees, the procedures set forth in this Article will govern lay-off and recall decisions.

35.2 The Superintendent shall have the sole discretion in determining which positions are to be eliminated.

35.3 No teacher with professional teacher status shall be laid off if there is a teacher without professional teacher status serving in a position that a teacher with professional teacher status is certified to fill pursuant to G.L. Chapter 71, Section 38.

35.4 In determining the layoff of employees with professional teacher status, seniority shall prevail provided the more senior teacher is certified pursuant to G.L. Chapter 71, Section 38, for the junior teacher's position. Effective September 1, 2016, layoffs of employees with professional status shall be conducted within the categories listed in 35.5 based on a teacher's job performance and the best interests of the students.

35.5 Separate Seniority Lists shall be established by the School Committee for professional teacher status employees.

35.14 In the event a reduction in force becomes necessary, the Superintendent will make every effort to notify employees of a potential layoff by June 1. However, the parties agree that there may be unforeseen/extenuating circumstances that would require that notice be provided after this date.

A very defined reduction-in-force (RIF) article exists within the collective bargaining agreement. We have selected a set of key sub-sections. If Hull makes adjustments to deal with its declining enrollment and consolidation is selected as a pathway, reduction of staff may become a reality. Following a consistent process will be important and adherence to the contract will be key. The complexity of the task that Hull faces will demand careful implementation of this article.

As stated in the introduction to this section, the agreement between the Hull School Committee and the HTA is not that unusual or irregular. It does, however, present challenges. It will be very important to all parties to stay focused on doing what is best for the students who attend Hull schools and all parties should commit to maintaining a strong working relationship. It is also important to make sure the general public is aware that any change that is accepted by the School Committee will not be an easy one. There are many complex issues that will need to be addressed. There are laws, regulations and collective bargaining agreements that are in place that must be followed. If there is a lack of commitment to follow this complicated pathway, then the Hull schools will reflect any negative consequences.

E. Educational Programs

All of Hull Citizens have reason to be proud of the accomplishments of the Hull Public Schools. Our students are wonderful young people who, on a daily basis, demonstrate determination, talent, kindness and a strong desire to learn. Our talented educators provide a rigorous course of studies with high expectations, and then provide our students with the supports that they need

to meet these expectations. The teachers and support staff work together to meet both the academic and social/emotional needs of our students. The faculty and staff of the Hull Public Schools care deeply for their students and provide them with an exceptional education. (Annual Town Report 2019)

The Hull schools are committed to the community it serves by providing quality programming to its students. While a relatively small and geographically isolated school district, the results of their efforts have kept the District in line with state and national trends and test score achievements. Hull students perform at or above state MCAS scores and national tests, such as the SAT. According to the “US News & World Report,” Hull High School continues to improve in relationship to all other high schools in Massachusetts.

Hull focuses on all of its students. Programs providing integrated instruction are continually evolving for their students with special needs. Additionally, Hull provides strong programs at the pre-K and kindergarten levels. The District provides tuition-free all-day kindergarten. There is no question that Hull follows and is committed to its vision and mission statements. The contexts of both serve as excellent guideposts for the District’s efforts reflecting a strong working relationship between administration, teaching professionals and a committed support staff all for the benefit of Hull students.

MISSION STATEMENT

Hull Public Schools provide a challenging and supportive learning environment to encourage all students to reach their greatest potential. We foster the growth of creative, curious, critical thinkers who are equipped to succeed as responsible, compassionate, and productive members of a diverse society.

VISION STATEMENT

The Hull Public Schools, in partnership with our entire community, will nurture a culture of personal success, collaboration, and support. We will develop well-rounded, enthusiastic learners and leaders who think critically and innovatively while mastering the essential skills to advance in and contribute positively to our diverse and changing world.

1. Jacobs Elementary School

Jacobs Elementary School offers a focused program beginning at the pre-K level and continuing through grade five. Supported by strong communication within the staff, students are provided with academic programs that reflect current trends and strategies. Beginning with a high-quality early-childhood program and a full-day kindergarten, students are offered instruction in all the basic skill content areas. At the first grade level, students receive leveled reading instruction as students are matched together so they grow and learn their reading skills in a coordinated fashion. The school’s math program utilizes “Everyday Math” as an online support program for all students to use in school and at home. As students advance in grade levels, a robust technology program that features the use of Chromebooks supports them. Numerous activities are also provided that include science fairs, history contests, and the Jasper (Jacobs After School Program for Enrichment and Recreation) program. Other programs such as the anti-bullying Second Steps campaign, Open Gym activities, Keep Going Kidz, and Girls on the Run running club all help to make Jacobs an exciting place to attend school. Teachers have received training in strategies that help students cope with

social/emotional needs. The school has created Chill Zones in each room to provide opportunities for students to practice calming behaviors. Additionally, ToolBox strategies, which are on-line remote resources for families, have been made available. The staff takes pride in the inclusionary model that they promote. The integration of all students with the general school population has proven to be helpful to everyone.

Within the halls of Jacobs lies a community-supported grant program called the Hull Family Network. This program provides services to children and families from birth to age eight (8). While the District does not operate this program, it has become integrated within the schools. The result is that both children and parents are introduced to the school environment at an early age. The close cooperation that exists, clearly enhances the value of the program to the school and to the general public.

2. Memorial Middle School

The student day at Memorial Middle School is focused directly on implementing a middle school model curriculum and schedule. Utilizing the Unified Arts Program, students experience a blended day of academics and support programs, to help enhance their needs as growing adolescents. The objective of making the student day challenging and rewarding for students of this age, is a constant goal for the staff. The school schedule also allows for common planning and discourse time, so teachers can prepare coordinated instruction, while also following the daily performance of the students of each middle school team. There is also a strong emphasis on STEM as a backbone for programs at the school. Students can avail themselves of multiple opportunities to use technology, and there is a unique “maker space” program that allows students to think critically and develop problem solving skills.

Also within the school day, is an active enrichment and intervention program. A thirty-five (35) minute period is used each day to allow students to participate in either a variety of enrichment activities or academic support programs. This period also provides time for the school staff to work directly with students who are at risk for failure or are experiencing discipline issues. In all, the Memorial Middle School meets its challenge to promote the District’s mission and vision statements by creating a student-centered middle school program.

Like many other middle schools, Memorial also offers a variety of after-school clubs and activities. The Jazz Band, Math Team, Newspaper Club, Student Council, Yearbook, Robotics, Diversity Club and Theatre Arts are but a few examples of programs that are offered yearly based upon the interests of the students. Importantly, eighth grade students, under the MIAA waiver policy, are allowed to participate with certain high school athletic teams. The Unified Arts program also enhances the school’s culture and environment. Band, Art, Technology, and Physical Education are all part of a student’s weekly schedule. The results of all this effort, both within and outside the classroom, have led to improved MCAS and PSAT (grade 8) scores. As the District’s “school in the middle,” Memorial administration and staff have worked hard to uphold their commitment to the district’s mission and vision statements.

It is important to note that at both Jacobs Elementary School and Memorial Middle School, the district’s PTO provides critical support. By actively raising funds, they offer a wide variety of enrichment programs to help supplement classroom activities in both

schools. Importantly, they also provide many hours of volunteer work especially in the libraries of both schools. Without this support, the libraries would not be able to support student work.

3. Hull High School

Hull High school strives to provide a robust program for its students. Even though the school's population has diminished, Hull High School has maintained its full accreditation. The school offers two types of diplomas. Requiring 140 credits for a Level A diploma and 114 credits for a Level B diploma, students can select a pathway that will benefit them after graduation. General level, honors, and AP courses are also offered throughout the school's program. All state required content areas are offered as well as the arts, technology, and physical education. The school provides a freshman summer transition program to help all new and incoming students adjust to the rigors of high school. In addition, there is a credit recovery program in the summer for students who do not meet course work requirements during the academic year.

Extra curricula opportunities, athletics, and the arts comprise a well-rounded program to meet the needs of those students who wish to work beyond the classroom. Hull High is a typical small high school in many ways. It has a successful history and continues to serve the community well due in large part to the consistent support of the Hull Boosters. It has been creative in its attempt to maintain a robust program while faced with a declining school enrollment. A committed Hull High School staff and administration have faced this challenge on a daily basis and to date have met this challenge successfully.

4. Special Education Department

Striving to provide an inclusive community, the Hull Special Education Department provides students with an environment following least restrictive guidelines. The department staff provide a continuum of services and have developed several programs to support their goals in the least restrictive environment. Each of these programs are geared to the ever-changing needs of students. The District's programs seek to allow students to be fluid with the services that are available. The goal is that a team of service providers use multiple strategies to work with each student regardless of his/her needs.

- The Team-Based Learning (TBL) program covers grades K through 12. Students with significant needs meet in a substantially separate classroom but are given many opportunities to be part of inclusive settings. They receive behavior intervention support, specialized instruction, and individualized structured programs as needed. The TBL teacher works collaboratively with classroom teachers, in conjunction with a planning Team, to design the individual educational programs for each student. An adjustment counselor works within the programs to provide services to students in the moment and to work closely with families to provide carry-over into the home. The TBL programs have consistent consultation with a clinical psychologist and Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

- TIDES (Teaching Independence and Decision-making through Educational Support) students are housed at the high school. With the focus on older students, this program incorporates academic skills along with supports for students with social and emotional

issues. Academics by content area are provided utilizing a co-taught model which includes a special education teacher and content teacher. The program's goal is provide high school-aged students with skill sets to help them once they leave the high school setting. Nearing graduation, the focus activities become transitional for students preparing them for the workplace or other post-secondary experiences. The TIDES program staff has regular consultation with a clinical psychologist and Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

- The Satellite Program is a substantially separate and therapeutic program. The program allows students opportunities for online coursework or inclusion, if appropriate. A skilled teacher, a licensed clinician and trained paraprofessional support the students. The Satellite program engages in consistent consultation with a clinical psychologist and Board Certified Behavior Analyst to develop comprehensive interventions for all students during the school day and for carry-over into the home and community.

The Hull schools have maintained a very strong relationship with the South Shore Educational Collaborative. Eleven (11) District classrooms house several of the Collaborative programs. While some students from Hull are served by the Collaborative, the inclusion of the students from the Collaborative in each of the Hull schools makes this relationship of Hull and SSEC special. Walking the halls of all three schools, a visitor can witness the inclusion of these programs in the daily operation of the schools. It is difficult to determine what is a Hull program and what is a Collaborative program. The integration of the students with special needs and disabilities with the general school population is certainly a positive for both programs. This special relationship reflects well on Hull's students, teachers, and administrators.

V. Suggested Options

Earlier sections of this report summarize our review of enrollment information and trends, the educational program, the District's financial status and the facility assessments, as required by the RFP. In off-site meetings, this information was analyzed and revisited many times. It is our sense that the following four options are worth consideration as the Administration and School Committee move toward a decision for school utilization. It is also our sense that some of the options are more suitable than others, but we were charged with developing a number of options for long range facility planning.

Note: In this section we refer to the "school within a school" concept. This generally means that students in certain grades are housed in a distinct part of the school building. In addition, administrative staffing, school policies and educational programming can be implemented in a variety of ways to further the identity of a separate program within a larger school building. For example, the middle school concept could be continued in grades six and seven or grade five could be added to have a three-year "school-within-a-school" middle school.

A. Option One: Status Quo

Jacobs Elementary School: PreK-5
Memorial Middle School: 6-8
Hull High School: 9-12

B. Option Two:

Jacobs Elementary School: PreK-8
(A) PreK-8 as single school
(B) PreK-5, 6-8 as school-within-a-school
Memorial Middle School: no longer a Hull school
Hull High School: 9-12

C. Option Three:

Jacobs Elementary School: PreK-7
(A) PreK- 7 as single school
(B) PreK-4, 5-7 as school-within-a-school
Memorial Middle School: no longer a Hull School
Hull High School: 8-12

D. Option Four:

School Department selects option #2 or #3
Memorial Middle School – mixed use with the following conditions
Houses Municipal Offices
Houses special programs (SSEC, and school-related programs)
Implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding

[There is a bulleted format version of these options in the Appendix.]

A. Option One – Status Quo

Jacobs Elementary School: Grades PreK-5

Memorial Middle School: Grades 6-8

Hull High School: Grades 9-12

SSEC: No Change [South Shore Ed. Collaborative]

<u>Educational Implications</u>	<u>Educational Implications</u>
<u>Advantages</u> With SSEC classrooms in the Town, the District can provide Hull special education students a local program in a familiar setting, successfully addressing the “least restrictive environment” concept in special education regulations. The District will continue to offer a developmentally appropriate middle school model of education for students (and parents) in grades 6 - 8. Existing District/Town programs could continue to operate in their current location, including the Jacobs After School Program, the Hull Family Network, and the unified arts offerings at Memorial.	<u>Disadvantages</u> With low enrollment and three facilities operating, the Town will continue to limit budget increases to 2%, which will likely impact staffing to an extent that educational programs will eventually be negatively impacted. An example of this may be the unstaffed library at Memorial and on-going reductions in full-time equivalents for staff. The Middle School and the High School will continue to have a degree of excess capacity that creates a sparse atmosphere in the schools. Additional resources may not be available to implement new programs or pathways for students.
<u>Space Implications</u>	<u>Space Implications</u>
<u>Advantages</u> Students will continue to be educated in classrooms and school buildings that are generously sized for their enrollment and where there is comfortable space for core programs, specialists, and special education classrooms. The current facilities are designed for the students they currently accommodate. Memorial Middle School can continue to be used for secondary school social activities, summer programs, special events and Recreation Department activities.	<u>Disadvantages</u> Although SSEC provides revenue for the lease of space, these classrooms, particularly at the Jacobs School, are not exclusively utilized by resident students. This possibly strengthens a community perception that the District is not organized in a cost-effective manner. The Town’s stated (or unstated) goal/preference of using space at Memorial Middle School for municipal offices would not be realized. Significant excess capacity in the school

<p>Should there ever be an unanticipated increase in resident student enrollment, or a return to the Hull Schools by privately educated students or charter students, there would be more than enough space to accommodate them.</p> <p>This Option also provides important space for the education of students with serious disabilities from the eleven-town collaborative community, and it also sustains an important relationship between the District and SSEC.</p> <p>There is more latitude, when new programs in oceanography, career pathways, marine environments or marine technology are considered or initiated.</p> <p>Similarly, there would be available space if the District chooses to accept School Choice students from surrounding cities and towns.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cost Implications</u></p> <p><u>Advantages</u></p> <p>Revenue from SSEC continues to offset District costs.</p> <p>Special education placement of Hull students who need SSEC programs can be provided with slightly lower transportation costs.</p> <p>If Memorial continues to be used as a school facility for the foreseeable future, the MSBA Repair Project to upgrade exterior facing, roofs, and window seals can proceed. It is financially advantageous to the Town, if the cost of these repairs is partially reimbursed by the Building Authority, as opposed to being completely funded by resident taxpayers.</p> <p>There is no additional cost for renovations or purchases to</p>	<p>facilities continues to be under-utilized.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cost Implications</u></p> <p><u>Disadvantages</u></p> <p>New cost efficiencies (staffing, operating costs) are not realized, and limitations on annual budgets will continue to result in further reductions in staff, supplies, salaries, and benefits.</p> <p>In the long term, the “do nothing” option may not be sustainable.</p> <p>The budget will continue to fund utilities and facility maintenance for under -utilized school buildings: i.e., Jacobs Elementary (which has the most excess capacity) and the Memorial School.</p> <p>While SSEC provides for a small number of Hull students with disabilities, most SSEC students reside in the other ten surrounding member towns.</p> <p>A political cost (not a dollar cost) may be</p>
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<p>accommodate new grade levels (science labs, lockers, etc.).</p>	<p>that, despite declining enrollment, excess capacity, an outside study, and “Town expectations” to work on cost efficiencies, the District chooses to do nothing differently and will need to defend that decision.</p> <p>Within the community, there may be a sense of unmet expectations if the schools decide not to pursue efficiencies through consolidation.</p>
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B. Option Two

Lillian Jacobs Elementary School: PreK-8

(A) PreK-8 as a single school

(B) PreK-5 & 6-8 as a school-within-a-school

Hull High School:

Grades 9-12

Memorial Middle School:

No longer a Hull School

South Shore Ed. Collaborative:

Reduced to High School classrooms only

<u>Educational Implications</u>	<u>Educational Implications</u>
<p><u>Advantages</u></p> <p>If Option (B) is implemented, the middle school program is sustained but in a new location and, possibly, with some modifications. Teaching teams, cross disciplinary instruction, and advisories may be continued.</p> <p>Of all PreK-12 grades, only two grades (6 & 7) face a change of location in the first year of implementation.</p> <p>This Option uses administrative and support staff in a more efficient manner in that case loads become more typical. Instead of two principals for 570 students, there may be more unified direction and supervision with a principal and an assistant principal in the same building.</p> <p>It is more likely that budget-related staff reductions will be reduced, which would help sustain educational programs.</p> <p>This eliminates issues related to reduced staff at Memorial (librarian and assistant principal). There is potential for a full-time assistant principal and a fully-staffed library.</p> <p>It raises the potential for cross-grade instruction and activities – mentoring, student reading days, music and drama, and restoring the elementary band program at an earlier grade, etc.</p> <p>Students will experience only one</p>	<p><u>Disadvantages</u></p> <p>If Option (A) is used, the middle school program structure may need to be modified. It is less so, with Option (B).</p> <p>The only space for new programs considered in the future, will be at the High School.</p> <p>There might be some licensure issues with special subject teachers who are asked to take on more diverse schedules.</p> <p>If Option (A) or (B) is implemented, the schedule, structure, and layout of the school will need to be organized to provide age appropriate school experiences. Examples might include: separate schedules, separate locations within the building, policies to prevent unsupervised student interaction, etc.</p> <p>Note comments in “Space Implications”.</p>

transition, as they move through the grades – from 8 to 9.

Space Implications

Advantages

From the Town's perspective, this may represent a more efficient use of facilities. This option opens Memorial for possible use by the Town.

The under-utilized space at Jacobs is fully devoted to resident student programming.

Financial Implications

Advantages

The District no longer carries operating costs of Memorial in the school budget.

There may be staffing adjustments/efficiencies since Memorial staff and Jacobs staff are in the same location. Any realized savings may mitigate the

Space Implications

Disadvantages

The number of staff and the number of student programs, classes, and services could be accommodated in the Jacobs facility, but it would not be optimal. Teachers may need to share classrooms during planning periods.

There would be little or no flexible space. The school would be crowded and would feel crowded.

This Option does not take advantage of excess capacity at the High School.

Implementation would displace the Hull Family Network and other programs from their current location.

This Option will displace all SSEC classrooms at Jacobs. SSEC is experiencing increased demand for their programs, and they have limited options about where to re-locate.

The small footprint/campus at the Jacobs School will need to accommodate additional playground use, bus traffic and staff parking.

The Jacobs School was not designed as a middle school.

Financial Implications

Disadvantages

The School District and the Town would receive far less revenue from the lease with SSEC, given that the Jacobs classrooms would no longer be available. It may be necessary to achieve cost savings in excess of lost SSEC revenue.

<p>budget reductions that have been necessary, with a 2% limit on the annual budget increase.</p> <p>The MSBA repair project at Memorial no longer needs to be pursued. The building would be under the auspices of the Town and not eligible for MSBA reimbursement. Withdrawing from this project may result in cost avoidance for the Town and eliminate the accompanying debt service that would have been necessary with the project. The needed repairs would be scheduled according to how the building is repurposed.</p> <p>Both Options Two and Three address the fact that there are “expectations” that the School District take some action to address costs and enrollment.</p>	<p>There may be increased special education costs for students placed in a collaborative program that is no longer located in Hull.</p> <p>There would be a cost for renovating science rooms and bathrooms, and perhaps, adding lockers at Jacobs.</p>
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C. Option Three

Lillian Jacobs Elementary School: PreK – Grade 7

(A) PreK-7 as single school

(B) PreK-4 as school w/in a school

Grades 5-7 as school w/in a school

Memorial Middle School:

No longer a Hull School

Hull High School:

Grades 8-12

South Shore Ed. Collaborative:

Reduced or Eliminated

<u>Educational Implications</u>	<u>Educational Implications</u>
<p><u>Advantages</u></p> <p>The 8-12 grade configuration improves the atmosphere of the High School, (more students) and also provides more extensive extra-curricular and athletic activities for grade 8 students.</p> <p>This option may allow grade 8 students to take advantage of a more diverse set of courses.</p> <p>As with Option Two, there is only one transition for students with this option – the change from 7 to 8.</p> <p>There is potential for extending Kids Care at Jacobs to more students and families.</p> <p>As with Options Two, the potential for cross-grade activities and mentoring exists, but this now includes the High School, as well as, an opportunity to restore the band program at an earlier grade.</p> <p>At the High School there is only one additional grade, and Jacobs has two additional grades, allowing for only two bus runs. Additionally, this option may allow for a later start for High School students.</p> <p>If students become accustomed to the High School in an earlier grade, this may reduce the number of students who leave for a different high school. This grade</p>	<p><u>Disadvantages</u></p> <p>As stated earlier, school structures and policies would need to be in place to ensure that students are in structured, appropriate settings, and student interaction between age groups is supervised and positive. Grade 8 students will be at a different developmental level than students in grades 9-12.</p> <p>Some special education students may need to be served at a facility in a neighboring town.</p>

<p>configuration and the continuity it provides, may also lead to increases in the graduation rate.</p> <p>With more students in both schools, it may be possible to provide certified librarians in both school libraries, which would improve the extent to which library resources are integrated with classroom instruction.</p> <p>With eighth graders at the High School, it will no longer be necessary to operate an after-school shuttle from Memorial to get these students to athletic activities.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Space Implications</u></p> <p><u>Advantages</u></p> <p>As in Option Two, the oldest building in the Town is the one targeted for re-purposing.</p> <p>There are only two (as opposed to three) grades moving to Jacobs, which allows for more space and scheduling flexibility. Teachers and specialists would have their own classrooms and learning areas. From a space standpoint, this option is viewed as more appropriate.</p> <p>The Jacobs School and the High School can accommodate additional students in a more balanced manner leaving both schools with some excess capacity.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p><u>Advantages</u></p> <p>As with Option Two, there may be savings as a result of common location of staff and consolidation of schedules. This may reduce the frequency of budget reductions currently experienced with the 2% annual budget increase.</p> <p>As with Option Two, the MSBA repair project at Memorial could be withdrawn,</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Space Implications</u></p> <p><u>Disadvantages</u></p> <p>SSEC classroom space at Jacobs and the High School would be reduced or eliminated.</p> <p>There would be less available space for any unanticipated influx of students at the High School than in Option Two.</p> <p>Parking at the High School could be challenging with additional staff cars.</p> <p>Parking and playground space at Jacobs will be tight but not to the extent as in Option Two.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p><u>Disadvantages</u></p> <p>The same factors listed in Option Two would apply here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of SSEC revenue; - Expectation that savings must exceed losses; - Increase special education costs for out-of-district students; and
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<p>and the Town would need to decide how to complete repairs.</p> <p>With increased enrollment and the conditions cited in the EMG reports, a future application to the MSBA for a repair project could address issues at the High School.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The need to renovate science rooms, bathrooms, and perhaps, add lockers to accommodate a new grade configuration.
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D. Option Four

The School Department chooses Option Two or Option Three

Lillian Jacobs Elementary School: PreK-8 or PreK-7

Hull High School: Grades 9-12 or Grades 8-12

South Shore Ed. Collaborative: Leased space reduced, not eliminated

Memorial Middle School: Mixed Use Facility with the following conditions:

- The Town of Hull will request and obtain funding for a locally funded feasibility study that will address what is needed at Memorial to convert the necessary square feet (approximately half the building) for municipal offices. This study would also assess what would be needed at Jacobs Elementary and at Hull High School, as they accommodate additional grades and students.
- Subsequent to the completion of this feasibility study, the Town of Hull will request and obtain funding to complete alterations and repairs to Memorial in order to accommodate municipal offices, and to complete alterations and repairs needed at Jacobs and the High School to accommodate new grades.
- A “phased approach” to the renovation work will take place to complete this work, and disruptions to student schedules will be minimized.
- Memorial will house municipal offices for the Town of Hull.
- The remaining space at Memorial will house special programs identified by the District, possibly including but not limited to: Hull Family Network, South Shore Educational Collaborative classrooms, etc., depending on space and needed accommodations.

<u>Educational Implications</u>	<u>Educational Implications</u>
<u>Advantages</u> The following educational advantages noted in Options Two and Three apply to this Option as well: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Efficient use of administrative staff and support staff;- Potential for mitigating frequency of staff reductions;- Potential for fully staffed library and an additional assistant principal;- Potential for cross-grade instruction and activities, starting foreign language instruction and the band program in earlier grades, and extending Kids Care to a wider age group;- The atmosphere at the High School is improved with the addition of more students; and- Students have only one school building transition.	<u>Disadvantages</u> The following educational disadvantages in Options Two and Three apply here as well: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The middle school model for grades 6-8 is changed;- Planning and scheduling at both schools will need to consider age appropriate schedules, activities, interaction, and supervision; and- Any potential educator licensure issues would need to be resolved. The special programs located at Memorial will be in a facility with multiple uses. As with Options Two and Three, there will be a period of change that will need to be well-planned and managed by the

<p>The work to improve the academic profile of the Hull Schools could continue and perhaps expand with this configuration.</p> <p>The educational profile of the Hull Public Schools has been improved over the last several years for a variety of reasons: supportive programs, low class sizes, common planning time, and worthwhile extra-curricular activities. All these programs would be best sustained in current and appropriate facilities with Option Three/Four.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Space Implications</u></p> <p><u>Advantages</u></p> <p>Many of the same advantages of Options Two and Three follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The excess capacity of Jacobs and of the High School is utilized in a more balanced way; - The oldest building reverts to primarily municipal use; and - Jacobs has the capacity to accommodate grades 6 and 7 and continue to maintain an appropriate educational atmosphere. <p>If a drastic increase in enrollment occurs, the space at Memorial can be negotiated and utilized for educational purposes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p><u>Advantages</u></p> <p>The District is viewed as being responsive to the long-standing issue of enrollment decline and excess capacity.</p> <p>The District can allocate Memorial operating expenses to educational matters.</p>	<p>District.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Space Implications</u></p> <p><u>Disadvantages</u></p> <p>The same disadvantages for Options Two and Three follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Space for SSEC classes is sharply reduced; - There is space for new students but not at Memorial; - Parking and playgrounds are tight; and - Programs like Hull Family Network are re-located. <p>Reclaiming educational space at Memorial would need to be done well in advance of when it is needed to give the Town time to plan.</p> <p>Space available to the SSEC would be limited to Memorial.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p><u>Disadvantages</u></p> <p>Some, but not all, disadvantages of Options Two and Three apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of SSEC revenue; - Some slight increase for out-of-district special education costs; and
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<p>Renovations and adjustment work for new grade configurations would be included in the Town's funding for all the changes needed to make the consolidation successful.</p> <p>Any cost efficiencies realized, as a result of consolidation, remain part of the District's base budget, which will continue to be allocated to the District's educational priorities.</p> <p>From a wider perspective, the Town of Hull avoids an extremely expensive capital project involving a renovated or new Town Hall. Further, unlike the schools, this would be a project for which there would be no state reimbursement.</p> <p>The MSBA Repair Project for Memorial could be withdrawn, saving taxpayers their contribution to this work.</p> <p>In the future, an MSBA repair project could be initiated for the High School which, according to the EMG reports, is a facility in need of future repairs.</p>	<p>- There would be facility renovations at Jacobs for science rooms, bathrooms, and perhaps, lockers. Also, there may be renovations or adjustments at the High School to provide a "House" or school-within-a-school for grade 8.</p>
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Memorandum of Understanding

We recommend that a Memorandum of Understanding be written to codify conditions under which the building will operate, if the Memorial Middle School will no longer be used to house Hull regular education students, including the following:

- The District will control the facility. If, in the future, school enrollment increases, there will be negotiations for the expanded use of the building as a school.
- The Town of Hull will pay for operating expenses related to the facility.
- Any savings or cost efficiencies achieved by the District will stay with the District and will not be deducted from future base budgets.
- The Town of Hull will absorb costs created by any loss of revenue, as a result of SSEC losing classroom space in the schools.
- The District will not be penalized.
- Any remaining revenue from SSEC for classrooms at Memorial will need to be defined in the MOU.

VI. Additional Issues

1. Costs Related to the Consolidation Options

As an integral component of the report, the consultant team was asked to place a financial estimate with regard to the options presented. If the School Committee decides to keep the current program and facilities as is, the District will experience no more than a 2% increase in its budget in the years ahead. The financial picture of the Town of Hull will be dependent on State revenue, any increases in property values or any growth in commercial or residential real estate. At this point, the projections are for a modest or no growth scenario. Therefore the schools will experience the projected cap as stated by the Town Manager.

The other options that we list will involve a number of changes to the District which at this point the full impact of financial savings are not known.

1. There will be staff reductions but potentially not as great as anticipated.
2. Staff will follow students. Current staff at both schools cannot accommodate the additional students.
3. Transportation will be impacted, but route changes may not necessarily result in a reduction of buses.
4. Support staff may be reduced but the increase of students at either school will impact the current student loads for a number of positions.
5. Custodial staff may be impacted but again the increased number of students will require some additions to the current staffing at the two remaining buildings.
6. The increased number of students in two buildings may result in the restoration of some of the instructional positions that were reduced from full time to .8 or .6 positions.
7. Any anticipated reduction in administrative positions may not be fully realized. Increases at the elementary school may result, for example, in a principal and two vice-principals.
8. Heat, lighting, and other utility costs may leave the District budget but find its way to the general Town budget.
9. If the SSEC decides to relocate at Memorial School, custodian staffing will be required.
10. If there are some savings in the school budget, the District may first look to restoring programs that have been lost due to budget cuts, especially in the school libraries, technology, and enrichment and intervention programs.
11. Finally, if there is a decision to consolidate, the change will not happen immediately. Our collective experience leads us to believe that there will be a transition period of at least two (2) years from the time of the decision.

The MARS Team is familiar with school closings. The 2020-21 academic year (FY21) will be a planning year. Implementation of a new structure will then begin. Parents will need to be included in any restructuring process, there will be a need to commence discussions and/or impact bargaining with the different units impacted by the changes, bus routes will need to be reconstructed, unemployment costs calculated, issues related to teacher licensing resolved, and transition programs planned to acclimate the students into their new buildings. Our point in bringing this issue to a more general conclusion is that the MARS Team believes that the District will have options. It will be the options

recommended by the Central Office Administration and approved by the School Committee, based upon what is best for the Hull student population, that will determine the entire school program and the staff needed to articulate that program. We can assist with our opinions if needed but ultimately, we cannot recommend specific staffing changes nor can we provide an accurate amount of savings at this time. Changes will occur that will result in staff reductions but the direction that occurs needs to be done internally within the Hull educational system.

2. The Abrahams Group

The MARS Consulting Group regularly partners with other consultants as needed. For the Hull Project, we invited Mark Abrahams of The Abrahams Group to review our findings. Mr. Abrahams has extensive experience in working with communities and school districts that seek solutions to problems dealing with financial issues such as long-term planning, oversight, compliance, and sustainability. Mr. Abrahams reviewed the entire report but more specifically focused on any financial issues that he thought were important to highlight. He confirmed MARS's finding regarding the issue of sustainability.

The financial picture raises the question of sustainability. The "do nothing scenario" as noted in this report illustrates that revenues will not keep up with operating cost increases. The Town Manager has offered the likelihood of 2% increases over the next several years. When looking at the last four budget years, the District has had to live within limited budget increases which appears to just take care of the fixed cost increases that exist in a school budget. There have been staff reductions in order to stay within the budget provided to the District. Without a change in the status quo, the District will need to continue to reduce staff and operating costs, defer maintenance and capital expenditures, which ultimately would reduce educational programs.

3. Additional Implications and Recommendations

Class size was one of our first and most important observations. At the elementary level, the number of students in many classes is too large to combine and too small to be cost efficient. At the secondary level, although the class sizes are also small, the District must continue to schedule small classes in order to provide the breadth and depth of program that parents, and students need and expect.

Classroom spaces at the High School are reasonably well utilized but with small class sizes. In our estimation, the facility is not well suited to adding two additional grades of students who would need more dedicated spaces than are available.

The District should consider becoming a School Choice district and accept students from other nearby communities. It may be that there will be limited interest, but the Hull Schools can offer small class sizes in all grades, extra-curricular activities and athletics where students can fully participate and compete. The facilities are well cared for, appropriate and inviting.

The Hull School District may also consider adding new programs, particularly to the secondary Program of Studies. The marine environment, ocean-related business and the Town's proximity to organizations like UMass-Boston, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Boston Aquarium speak to the possibility of a Chapter 74 Marine Technology program

or oceanography and environmental science courses. The nearest Marine Technology program listed by DESE is in New Bedford and there is one at Upper Cape Cod Tech – not within daily commuting distance for Hull students.

VII. Transition Plan Recommendation

We assume that the District Administration will make a recommendation to the Hull School Committee about the options that have been laid out in this report. The School Committee would then vote to accept one of the options. Beginning then, there needs to be a very careful, thoughtful, and transparent process to proceed toward the implementation of the selected option. This implementation process will need to be thoroughly vetted and included as an important part of the Administration's recommendation to the School Committee. We envision that this process will take at least two years before any concrete implementation will occur.

The Administration and School Committee will primarily consider the implications of their decisions on the current and future students in the District. The initial decision will be the location of each of the grades in the District. Also, prime considerations will be the future educational and financial health of the School District, as well as, the financial implications for the Town in general.

There will need to be much discussion and agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding between the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen. The MOU needs to address short- and long-term implications for the Memorial Middle School building if it becomes a multi-use facility. The MOU needs to address financial implications, responsibility for the building's upkeep, and provisions for possible future needs of the District. This is a critical component of any option that results in the School Committee deciding that the Memorial Middle School building is no longer needed for school use in the foreseeable future.

Following are some of the steps that we recommend the Administration consider, after the official School Committee vote on the specific option. This assumes a consolidation from three (3) school buildings to two (2). We believe that these steps will take at least two years to complete. If there are significant modifications to either building, the actual date to move grades of students to a different building may extend this period.

We recommend that the School Committee establish an ad hoc subcommittee, chaired by the Superintendent, to work through this transition process. This subcommittee could be comprised of Central Office and Building Administrators, teachers, staff, School Committee representatives, parents, town officials and citizen representatives. The tasks of this ad hoc subcommittee might include:

- Review and make recommendations regarding renovations and modifications to be made in the Jacobs Elementary School and the High School in order to accommodate the added grade(s) of students. This will need to be done by architects;
- Determine how and when will these modification be made? How will they be funded?;
- Specifically, what grades will use which spaces in the buildings?;
- What modifications will need to be made in the curriculum to accommodate different levels of students in a different building?;
- How will this change support the 2019 – 25 Strategic Plan?;

- Will some grades (e.g., 5 – 7 or 6 – 7 or 6 – 8) be grouped to continue to provide a middle school concept?;
- How will schedules be adjusted to include more classes in common areas like the cafeteria, gym, media center?;
- How will this impact extra-curricular activities?;
- If the District will share space with the Town Hall in the Memorial Middle School, how will that happen? Which, if any, District or SSEC programs will be in that building?; and
- What steps will need to be taken to mitigate any possible less than positive issues related to the grade level changes?.

At some point in the approximately two (2) years after a decision regarding the options by the School Committee, the Administration, with consultation of the ad hoc committee, would make a recommendation to the School Committee describing how the issues have been, or will be, addressed. Our further recommendation is that a School Committee vote, at any time in the future, to move grades to different buildings should be made prior to a December 31 in order to put that plan into action for the beginning of the following school year in September.

VIII. Concluding Remarks

1. Our Experience Working in Hull

The MARS Consultant Group began work on the District's "Best Educational Use of Facilities Study" in November 2019. The MARS team first visited the District on November 20, 2019, to meet the Central Office staff, obtain answers to our initial questions and to share our strategy for analyzing program, enrollment and buildings.

From the outset, we felt welcomed and valued in terms of the work we were charged to complete. Judy Kuehn and David DeGennaro have been professional, courteous, helpful and generous with their time and with sharing their local knowledge and expertise. To the extent that our report is helpful, it is in large measure due to the support and collegiality of Judy, David and all the members of the Administrative Team: Nicole Nosek, Tony Hrivnak, Christine Cappadona, Dan Mastrogiamomo, and Kyle Shaw, Maggie Ollerhead and the support staff. We greatly appreciated the time and consideration of Town Manager, Phil Lemnios and South Shore Educational Collaborative Director, Rick Reno. Additionally, our discussions with School Committee members, parents, staff, and HTA representatives were critically important to us as we learned about the community and the schools.

2. Education

We have come to know the Hull Public Schools as a vibrant component of the Town. The school staff is genuinely dedicated to serving the students, parents and the wider community. The schools have stayed abreast of regional and national trends in education in terms of the organization of instruction and the focus on the individual learning trajectories of its students. Team-based learning, inclusionary special education, honors and an advanced curriculum for secondary students, and small class sizes are all maintained in a small-town school system that has significantly improved its student achievement profile as well as its public perception. The Town, the District and the taxpayers have all played a part in providing up-to-date and well-maintained facilities for education.

3. Enrollment

The decline in student enrollment, as measured by two different and independent sources with three reports, is approximately thirty (30%) percent since 2008. The MARS Consulting Group more typically advises school districts in western Massachusetts where declining enrollment is more widespread and is, therefore, a frequent component of the studies we complete. We understand that enrollment decline is not anyone's fault and there is no one to blame for this circumstance. It occurs for a variety of demographic and economic reasons that transcend town or regional factors. Projections for the next decade indicate an enrollment decline that does not justify operating three facilities. Nonetheless, the enrollment is still large enough so that consolidation must be thoughtful and be implemented in a way that enhances the educational experience for students. It cannot be done at the expense of program or student opportunity, nor should consolidation jeopardize the good work the schools (and the Town) have done to improve student achievement levels, student outcomes and public perception.

4. The Options

The four options we describe in this report are the result of our collective knowledge of the schools, the programs, finances and facilities. We have deliberated, argued, and analyzed a variety of ideas and we have tried to be honest about the implications of each scenario. It has been clear from the very start of this project that the District wants to place educational factors at the forefront of how the options are assessed and possibly implemented.

Equally important, however, is the challenge presented by financial sustainability, so this also plays an important role in choosing a facilities plan. Consolidation will bring some degree of savings and while it may be that efficiencies will not last well into the future, they will bring near-term relief to annual choices about which programs or staff positions are reduced or kept. It will also be a response to expectations that the District should try to achieve efficiencies in the face of a 30% enrollment decline. The analysis of the options may well be difficult for stakeholders, but that is understandable given the impact on education and the long-term consequences of changing grade configurations.

In the event that a consolidation option is chosen, we want to reiterate some points to keep in mind during your assessment. If there are two operating facilities, students will face only one transition to a new school after initial enrollment. In most consolidation scenarios, two grades need to adjust to changes. The other ten grade levels will experience little, if any change. Parents and teachers appreciate the current small class sizes and there is no need to change this. Additionally, we are suggesting the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee to accompany and support the Administration and School Committee members as they move toward a decision. An important task would be to consider how the educational program could be enhanced. Could foreign language instruction start in earlier grades? Could athletic and extra-curricular opportunities be expanded for grade eight? Is there potential for cross-grade mentoring or instruction? Could the District attract School Choice students from neighboring communities due to your modern facilities, student opportunities, small class sizes and personalized learning? Could the schools offer programs in oceanography or Marine Technology given the unique location and environment of the Town. Could the District restore the band program in grades 3 through 5?

5. Option Four: Town and District Cooperation – An Integrated Approach

In the course of meeting with all stakeholders in Hull, we found the comments and suggestions offered by the Town Manager to be worth serious consideration. It may be that working with the Town may provide one of the better options for the District. A mixed-use facility controlled by the District represents a way forward, providing the potential for more efficient use of resources and better use of existing facilities. Should this option be pursued, it is imperative to have trust, open communication, and a commitment to a mutually beneficial outcome. This option must be accomplished in a manner that leaves both the District and the Town in a better position. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the District would be a significant first step. Suggested components of an MOU are listed earlier in this report.

For the MARS Group, our work in Hull has matched or broken our record for commuting distance, but we did not anticipate how much we would enjoy working on

this project. We are grateful for this opportunity and we have worked diligently to provide you with a document that addresses the implied question - Best Educational Use of School Facilities.

**Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools
Consulting Group**

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