

# Concord Middle School Building Committee to pause work temporarily

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Due to the effects of the COVID-19 crisis, members of the Concord Middle School Building Committee have been evaluating the most prudent course of action related to the CMS building project.

The CMSBC voted at the May 14 meeting to recommend temporarily pausing its work following completion of the preliminary Feasibility Study before proceeding forward with Schematic Design. Based on the CMSBC recommendation, the Concord Select Board voted to pause the work of the Committee.

## Impact of the COVID-19 crisis

The Middle School Building Project is a significant undertaking for the town of Concord, one that is rooted in the critical component of public participation. The impact of social distancing has an unprecedented effect on the building Committee's commitment to public input process as the means to defining the community's desired building attributes and a financial request at the appropriate time.

## Public participation

During an extended period of social distancing, sufficiently including the community in the decision-making processes related to the building would be very challenging. The committee will soon be at the point of finalizing the building parameters to move forward to Schematic Design, which ultimately will be presented to the town for consideration. This is a point in the process where thorough presentations to the community for review and substantial input are required. Given the social distancing necessary during this crisis, the committee does not feel confident that it could execute this review and input phase effectively.

## Timing of a financial request

According to original plans, the Building Committee was scheduled to bring a Schematic Design to the town for approval at a Special Town Meeting in the fall of 2020. With the financial impacts of the crisis as of yet unknown, it is likely that the town may not be in a position to consider a significant new capital expenditure at that point. Members of the committee firmly believe that a new middle school building is critical and they are committed to fulfilling the charge as expressed at the 2019 Town Meeting; however, they feel that the decision to move forward can be more effectively considered once there is a better understanding of our financial situation.

## Interim plan



To date, thanks to the collaboration of the designers, SMMA, and the project management firm, Hill International, the Middle School Building Committee has been operating on schedule. Having recently received cost estimates for four initial design concepts, the committee has almost completed the preliminary Feasibility Study, which creates a natural breaking point in the project timeline. In the absence of the current COVID-19 situation, the next step would be to engage the community in defining the parameters to move forward to Schematic Design. Since this does not seem realistic at the current time, the committee will temporarily suspend activity, meet monthly to re-evaluate timing and plan to resume work as soon as it is deemed feasible.

## Commitment to the project

A temporary pause in progress will in no way change the Building Committee's commitment to complete this project in the soonest time frame possible. Every member of the committee strongly believes that there is a critical need for a new middle school building and that the consolidation of the two current buildings at the Sanborn site is the correct strategy. The committee will continue to monitor the situation closely and will resume work as soon as possible.

Appreciation statement from CMSBC chairs Tim Hult and Dawn Guarriello

“As we take this pause, we would like to thank committee members as well as the project management and design teams for their excellent work and dedication to this endeavor. In addition, we offer our thanks to the many residents who have offered their input on the project and to the educational professionals who have been an essential element in shaping the vision for a state-of-the-art middle school. Until we reach that moment when we are able to resume our work and properly engage in a public dialogue, we appreciate the patience and understanding of the community and we share wishes for health and well-being for all.”

**Concord Middle School Building Committee contact information**

Interested individuals can find all relevant materials regarding the Concord Middle School Building Committee including meeting dates, agendas and minutes as well as reports that led to the Town Meeting Warrant Article at <https://concordps.org/cms-building-project>.

For questions and comments, individuals can email the committee at [msbc@concordps.org](mailto:msbc@concordps.org) or utilize the form online at <https://concordps.org/cms-building-project>.