

# **A Grade 6-8 Middle School for A-B: Benefits and Challenges\***

## **BENEFITS:**

### **Instructional**

- Greater alignment with state curriculum standards
- An additional year (6<sup>th</sup> grade) to benefit from the current JH “team model”
- An additional year (6<sup>th</sup> grade) of World Language instruction
- 6th grade students could benefit from current JH academic support model
- Additional instructional time (vs. elementary) for 6<sup>th</sup> graders
- 6th grade program could be unique; not required to replicate current grades 7/8
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers could be subject matter experts instead of generalists teaching multiple subjects

### **Structural and Operational**

- Offers a more common school structure: the 6-8 middle school model is used in many surrounding communities including Concord, Sudbury, Lexington, Wellesley, Littleton, Westford, Weston, Bedford, Burlington, Lincoln, and Newton
- Increased district-wide space capacity and flexibility at all elementary schools
- Current JH model forces nearly continual transition, in from elementary school one year and out to high school the next; a middle school could ease student transitions by providing more time in one school
- Allows for more time to build school community
- Provides 6<sup>th</sup> graders with additional extracurricular activities and programs
- Allows for increased educator collaboration for all 6th grade teachers and between 6th and 7th grade teachers

## **CHALLENGES:**

### **School Size**

- A 6-8 middle school in A-B would be large (~1300 students) and require restructuring how extracurricular activities are designed and offered

### **Health and Developmental**

- Loss of benefits from having 6th graders in the elementary setting (for example, students undergoing early puberty may benefit from groupings with younger peers)

### **Instructional**

- Reduces available choice at elementary level due to fewer schools
- Looping for 5th and 6th grade teachers would be disrupted (one school)
- Loss of collaboration between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers
- Licensure of teachers would need to be examined

### **Planning and Operational**

- Central campus traffic, already burdensome, may be increased
- May delay timeline of addressing pressing elementary building needs
- Potential concerns by property abutters

*\*Developed with Input from Visioning Sessions, District Master Plan Review Committee Meetings and School Leadership Team*

# **An Early Childhood Center (ECC) (Pre-K/K) for A-B: Benefits and Challenges\***

## **BENEFITS:**

### **Instructional and Developmental**

- The facility would be designed specifically for the needs of Pre-K and K students, including a “right-sized” playground
- More Pre-K classes would have “specials” (art, music, pre-K) and those would be tailored for their age
- Increased collaboration between Pre-K and K teachers district-wide
- A later transition to elementary school may benefit some students
- May allow for increased flexibility for those students not ready to transition
- Would allow for increased connections among this age group across the district
- Would allow for extended day programs tailored for this age group

### **Structural and Operational**

- Increased flexibility in optimizing Kindergarten sections and options; we could provide the mix of full- and half-day Kindergarten classes that parents want, and students enrolling late would be easier to accommodate
- May allow the district to know more students at an earlier age and allow for improved planning around placement and special needs
- Will allow for consolidated specialized services (OT/PT, EL, Sp.Ed.)
- Pulling out K classrooms allows our elementary schools to all be “right-sized” for three sections at each grade, and additional space would be available for other instructional needs

## **CHALLENGES:**

### **Instructional**

- Reduces available choice at elementary level due to fewer schools
- Reduced collaboration between K and first grade teachers.

### **Planning and Operational**

- There would be no district Pre-K or K in Boxborough
- Kindergarten teachers may prefer to remain in the elementary schools
- Adds a transition for students attending private preschools
- May be on a different schedule than elementary schools

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