In December of 2013, the SMARTR Committee concluded an 18 month-long study of the growing needs of Manchester’s elementary schools including its educational programs and aging school buildings. In May of 2014, the Manchester Board of Education completed its analysis of the study and formalized its recommendations (the Manchester Public Schools 2025 Plan) to the Manchester Board of Directors. Phase 1 of the Manchester Public Schools 2025 Plan was put forward to referendum by the Manchester Board of Directors in November, 2014. Voters approved Phase 1 of the plan at a cost of approximately $81 million. After state reimbursement Manchester taxpayers covered approximately $37 million of Phase 1.

In 2018, the SMARTR2 committee met to build upon the well-vetted and voter-approved guidelines and educational specifications from SMARTR. Current demographic data was gathered and used to complete the elementary school rebuilding project in a manner consistent with Phase 1. The SMARTR2 committee put forth a recommendation for Phase 2, which was adopted by the Manchester Board of Education and Manchester Board of Directors. Phase 2 will go to referendum on June 4, 2019. At the completion, the Manchester Public Schools 2025 Plan will provide upgraded learning environments throughout the district that meet state standards for lighting, air quality, acoustics, and security, and allow for the increased use of instructional technologies.

**PHASE I: 2014-2020**

Phase 1 of the Manchester Public Schools 2025 Plan began in 2014 and included renovation of the Cheney building at Bennet Academy to house grade 5 students and the renovation and expansion of Waddell and Verplanck. To date, the first two parts of Phase 1, the Cheney building and Waddell, are complete. The renovation and expansion of Verplanck will be completed in August, 2019. Students will return to the newly renovated Verplanck for the start of the 2019-20 school year. Phase 1 is 1 year ahead of schedule and approximately $5 million dollars under budget.

**PHASE II: 2020-2026**

Phase 2 includes renovation and expansion of Buckley, Bowens, and Keeney. Renovations will create three schools of 400 students allowing for future district expansion through population growth or returning students. Phase 2 also allows for the opportunity for a second preschool center in the future enabling consolidation of programs from Buckley, Manchester High School, and Keeney. The plan obtains better than 50% state funding while accomplishing community goals. The referendum on the building projects includes funding for partial reuse of Nathan Hale, Washington, and Martin.

**REFERENDUM DATE**

**JUNE 4, 2019**

For more information visit MPSpride.org/District Under Renovations
**MANCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**HOW DOES THE MANCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2025 PLAN DIFFER FROM OTHER PLANS?**

A past proposal to renovate the then 10 existing elementary schools was put forward in 1999. At that time, the total cost of the project, before state reimbursement, was approximately $110 million. That proposal was defeated by residents of Manchester in a 1999 referendum. The current cost to "renovate like new" all elementary schools would be approximately $232 million, with taxpayers paying $125 million after state reimbursement. The Manchester Public Schools 2025 Plan shown on the Manchester Public Schools 2025 Timeline renovates five of the elementary schools and will cost approximately $162 million, with taxpayers of Manchester paying approximately $77 million after state reimbursement. Phase 1 of the Manchester Public Schools 2025 Plan cost approximately $81 million with the taxpayers of Manchester paying approximately $57 million after state reimbursement. Phase 2 will cost approximately $81 million for the three schools with the taxpayers of Manchester paying approximately $40 million after state reimbursement.

**WHAT ARE THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES THAT INFORMED THIS PLAN?**

This plan addresses the following goals and objectives:
- Provide equity relative to learning environments for all Manchester elementary students;
- Provide learning environments that meet State standards for lighting, acoustics, air quality and security;
- Maintain class sizes within the range of 18–22 students;
- Maximize operational conditions and contain costs; and
- Comply with State laws on racial balance in schools.

**DOES THE MANCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2025 PLAN COMPLY WITH STATE REQUIREMENTS?**

The Board of Education must review its attendance and student demographic data every year to maintain a racially balanced school district. In order to maintain state funding for our schools the racial balance plan must be submitted and approved by the state Board of Education. By the completion of the Manchester Public Schools 2025 plan, student’s will be relocated to a school that is most contiguous to their residence which minimizes changes to transportation and maintains racial balance. The Board of Education contracts with the firm of Milone and MacBroom to racially balance Manchester’s schools as required by law. The Manchester Public Schools 2025 Plan provides for racially balanced schools over at least the next ten years eliminating the need to redistrict on a yearly basis.

**HOW COMMON IS A SCHOOL SIZE OF 400 - 500 STUDENTS?**

Among the 169 school districts and 593 elementary schools in CT, 32% have enrollments of 500 students or more, and 20% of the schools have enrollments of 400-500 students.

**WILL CLASS SIZE BE IMPACTED?**

The Board of Education will continue to maintain class sizes between 18–22 students at all schools in Manchester.

**WHAT IS THE PROJECTED ENROLLMENT OF THE MANCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND HOW WILL THAT IMPACT THIS PLAN?**

The Manchester Board of Education commissioned an enrollment projection study in December, 2013 and then again in December, 2017. The K-4 enrollment in the Manchester Public Schools is projected to increase by approximately 200 students by 2025. Architects considered this projected increase and any future additions in the design of these schools. It is also important to note that while this projected increase was considered, the state’s reimbursement formula is predicated on building to a capacity that does not exceed the projected highest enrollment within an eight-year time frame.

**ARE THE BUILDINGS ENERGY EFFICIENT?**

All renovated buildings in Phase 1 meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver standards. LEED is an internationally recognized green building certification system, providing third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance across all the metrics standard. For Phase 2, a 5% increase in cost was added for efforts to optimize energy efficiency bringing the total cost of the three schools to $81 million. However, site size and location restrictions, using existing footprints and buildings, make not zero unlikely.

**IF ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED, HOW WILL THOSE BUILDINGS BE USED?**

Once the Board of Education turns a school over to the Town, the Board of Directors decides if and how a building is repurposed. Examples of repurposing of buildings in Manchester include the current Senior Center, the Lincoln Municipal Center, and the Lutz Children’s Museum. The decommissioned school on Hollister Street was removed to make way for Manchester Preschool Center. Robertson will be used as swing space during renovations. The referendum on June 4, 2019 includes $7 million for repurposing Nathan Hale, Washington, Robertson, and Martin and asks voters permission to also use the $5 million in savings from Phase 1. If granted, the total for repurposing Nathan Hale, Washington, and Martin would be about $10 million - $12 million. It is anticipated that the repurposed funds will be used for, but not limited to, alternative educational, community, and arts programs.