HHU Parent Advisory Committee to School Committee
Meeting 7
January 21, 2016
Kingsbury Room, Wellesley Police Station

RECORD OF THE FINAL ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE HHU PAC

The seventh and final meeting of the HHU Parent Advisory Committee convened at approximately 7:05 pm.

In attendance: Facilitator Lisa Hicks; School Committee Chair Matt Kelley, Vice Chair Wendy Paul, Secretary Sharon Gray and members Patti Quigley and Tony Bent; Superintendent David Lussier and Asst. Superintendent Judy Belliveau; Karen Briggs and Tam Kennedy from Bates; Jessica Graham from Fiske; Maria Davis and Ingrid Houghton from Hardy; Michael Batka and Sarah Kulka from Hunnewell; Kristen Whitaker and Beth Willett from Upham; Megan LeBlanc and Jenn Fallon from PAWS; Jackie Hoglund and Julie Crafton from Schofield; Brook Rosenbaum and Michael Rodman from Sprague. Absent: Lou Madge

APPROVAL OF Minutes – January 6, 2016

Edits:

1. Megan Leblanc's name isn't spelled with an h (Meg~~h~~an)
2. Page 8 – remove "500 words" from:

   "Quantitative vote on 3-5 buckets and include the qualitative element where every member gets to write 500 words with their personal statement that is combined"

HHU PAC - Ms. Leblanc made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, Mr. Batka seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE ON STATEMENT OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Vote:
Motion to approve the HHU PAC Guiding Principles document with the edits discussed and read aloud. Ms Hoglund motioned and Ms Kulka seconded. It was approved unanimously. A copy is attached hereto.

VOTE ON SFC RECOMMENDATION TO SC

1st Bucket – Accept the SFC Recommendation as drafted

Ms. Whitaker made a motion to accept the recommendation, Ms. Willett seconded

In Favor – 3
Opposed – 9
Abstain - 3

2nd Bucket – Subject to Feasibility enrollment study corroborating current projections, support consolidation and closing a school with additional data to determine which school

Mr. Rodman made a motion, Mr. Rosenbaum seconded

In Favor – 7
Opposed – 4
Abstain 4

3rd Bucket – Support continuing effort to find a seven school solution

Ms. Houghton made a motion, Ms. Graham seconded

In Favor – 4
Opposed - 8
Abstain - 3

Vote on Final Product including Recommendations, Guiding Principles & Individual Statements

Vote to accept the 15 individual statements
Motion – to accept as part of the PACS final deliverable to the SC
Unanimous

A copy of the recommendations and individual statements is attached hereto.

ADJOURNMENT
At approximately 7:45 pm,
Ms. Houghton made a motion to adjourn and Ms. Crafton seconded the motion, the Committee ***voted unanimously*** to adjourn.

Hunnewell, Hardy Upham (HHU) Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) Guiding Principals

The purpose of this statement is to communicate to the School Committee the HHU PAC's shared tenets and beliefs, even as we may not be entirely aligned in our assessment of the direction the town should take in addressing the town's school facilities' needs. They also reflect the charge the PAC set out at the start:

"Provide a recommendation to the School Committee for a comprehensive town-wide solution to facility needs at Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham based on School Committee guidelines and previous School Facilities Committee work."

The PAC recommends that the School Committee take these guiding principles into account when making their final recommendation(s), and the final proposal should:

- Allow for school size and structure, and "value" that provide an optimal environment for learning
- Take a long term perspective, acknowledging short-term pain for any solution
- Work to balance the needs of the entire elementary school population
- Be sensitive to the emotional impact if closing a school
- Follow a transparent and open process

Guiding Principals

- Any solution must include a clear plan for swing space that minimizes disruptions to students, faculty, and staff. The plan should include identification of swing space, student placement plans and transportation plans.
- A new enrollment study should be performed to provide the most accurate, up-to-date projections, ideally using multiple or different methodologies.
- The solution should provide for more flexibility relative to the ebbs and flows of enrollment year to year and ensure capacity for future needs in order to limit redistricting in the future.
- Preserve the town-wide concept of neighborhood schools.
- In order to ensure community buy-in, the process should be transparent to all town citizens, and especially to those most affected (whether through closure, rebuilding, or redistricting). Methods could include forums for community input, more broad communication of open meetings and other grass roots efforts.
- If the final recommendation is to close a school, recognize the emotional impact of the decision. In addition, emphasize the importance of maintaining the building and/or fields as a community asset and make efforts to get a commitment from the town that they will remain as such.
- Provide a recommendation that the School Committee is most confident will be supported town-wide, and balances the educational needs of Wellesley's students with being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers in Wellesley.
- Revisit the traffic impact to the neighborhoods surrounding all affected schools, including the impact of closing the school, of opening a larger school at an existing location, and additional ways to alleviate traffic issues around the affected schools.

HHU Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) Individual Statements

Individual statements of the following members are included in this document:

1. Mike Batka, Hunnewell
2. Karen Briggs, Bates
3. Julie Crafton, Schofield
4. Maria Davis, Hardy
5. Jenn Fallon, PAWS
6. Jessica Graham, Fiske
7. Jackie Hoglund, Schofield
8. Ingrid Houghton, Hardy
9. Tam Kennedy, Bates
10. Sarah Kulka, Hunnewell
11. Megan LeBlanc, PAWS
12. Michael Rodman, Sprague
13. Brook Rosenbaum, Sprague
14. Kristen Whitaker, Upham
15. Beth Willett, Upham

To: School Facilities Committee, Town of Wellesley

From: Mike Batka

Date: January 18, 2016

Re: Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham Parent Advisory Committee - Personal Statement

As a member of the Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham Parent Advisory Committee ("PAC"), I was charged with evaluating the recommendation concluded by the School Facilities Committee ("SFC") to rebuild Upham, renovate / expand Hunnewell and close Hardy. During the PAC evaluation process, additional improvement scenarios were discussed, several crafted with the primary objective of maintaining all seven of Wellesley's elementary schools. In the spirit of full disclosure, it was my strong preference and hope that the PAC would ultimately be in a position to substantiate a case for preserving Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham. It's clear that all PAC members recognize that our town includes many distinct neighborhoods each with its own identity, sense of place and sense of pride that is understandably centered around its respective elementary school. I have a deep appreciation for retaining this type of neighborhood dynamic; and thus, I philosophically don't support measures that could potentially compromise it. However, given the logical conclusions that can be drawn from the significant amount of due diligence work conducted by the SFC, supporting a case to keep Hardy open does not appear to be in the best longterm interest of all students in Wellesley.

During this evaluation process, I remained open-minded yet conflicted in trying to arrive at a fiscally responsible decision that was consistent with my personal guiding principles, which again initially supported a seven-school solution. Options explored for a seven-school solution ranged from a "repair-only" scenario to ground-up new construction and mostly new construction for Upham and Hardy, respectively. Given the current structural limitations of and mechanical conditions at Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham, salvaging all three schools through a "repair-only" plan appears to be a fiscally irresponsible option. Aside from delaying the inevitable, this plan would cost the taxpayers, on an inflation adjusted basis, $64.1mm ($6.6mm of which is unproductively invested in temporary modular space) and would still not provide students with an ideal 21st century learning environment. Specifically, this solution does not ensure capacity for future enrollment needs, provide flexible learning spaces, include technology and/or infrastructure to support innovative teaching and most importantly it does not provide a safe and healthy learning environment (plenty of natural light, climate controlled rooms, proper ventilation / clean air).

In the event the revised enrollment forecast supports a materially increase in projections (> 500 students), I am in favor of a long-term solution that includes extensive renovations (w/

appropriately-sized additions) to both Hardy and Hunnewell and rebuilding Upham. Since enrollment projections are at the absolute crux of assessing the town's elementary school needs, I strongly encourage the SFC to have Cropper GIS update their enrollment projections and engage a second firm to prepare an independent analysis using the same scope. These two consulting firms would then be tasked with reconciling them and reaching a consensus on enrollment projections.

Absent a material increase in the updated projected enrollment figures, I support the SFC's decision to pursue a six-school solution where Hardy is closed, Hunnewell is extensively renovated and Upham rebuilt. This solution would restore logical boundaries for the school districts without contributing more traffic congestion on Weston Road. If this is the ultimate path taken by the SFC, I genuinely don't believe it will compromise the neighborhood school model, but rather will prove to be the most equitable solution for all students impacted by this decision as well as the most fiscally responsible choice for all taxpayers.

Summary Statement from Karen Briggs, HHU PAC Representative from Bates

We are fortunate to have a strong School Committee and Superintendents office that have the Town of Wellesley and our children's academic success as their primary goal. The School Committee presented a well thought out plan based on Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham sites, the condition of each school and the academic goals outlined in the Town's strategic five year plan.

The plan as presented was conceived before the acquisition of The North 40. Per documentation from the Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham Recommendation, the case was presented based on the documents at the bottom of this statement.

The recommendation references the North 40 but does not contain supporting documentation. When considering the history references for this report, it seems clear that the recommendation was based on data/information prior to the Town's purchase of the North 40.

Without seeing a more viable option that takes the development of the North 40 into consideration, coupled with outdated population trends, I must abstain my vote.

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Documents for reference:

Capital work on elementary schools a decade ago 2005 Symmes Maini & McKee Associates (SMMA) study 2007 Town Meeting approval of a bundle of interim projects Stopgap measures while addressing new high school project SFC (and previously SFMP Task Force) charged with: Developing a prioritized program of school facilities capital maintenance projects Initiating the development of a long-term school facilities master plan SMMA engaged in 2012 Conditions Assessment and Feasibility Study All school buildings except the High School

Full presentation can be found at:
http://www.wellesley.k12.ma.us/sites/wellesleyps/files/file/file/hhu_presentation_final.pdf

Julie Crafton - HHU PAC, Schofield representative
Individual Summary Statement

To: Wellesley's School Committee
Re: School Facilities Committee (SFC) Recommendation
Date: January 18, 2016

Being very new to both the town of Wellesley and the Wellesley Public Schools, this opportunity to be a member of the PAC has provided great insight into how intensive a process is required when making critical decisions about the future of our schools. With respect to the SFC's current recommendation pertaining to Hardy, Hunnewell, and Upham (HHU) there are endless data points for consideration, different interpretations of that data in some cases, and significant emotional collateral to consider as well. It has all led me to feel quite conflicted about my personal recommendation to the school committee relative to the HHU topic at hand.

That said, and having to put emotions aside to get there, if the enrollment forecast we are currently in possession of is verified by a planned follow up third-party enrollment forecast with similar results, it then seems like consolidating to two schools from three is a prudent decision and one that I would support. For noticeably less money, according to the estimates we have been provided during this process, the town would receive two new modern schools - one brand new and one almost new – with more overall space and flexibility and significantly greater/improved resources (at both the facilities and program/curriculum level including creative, extra-curricular and special education activities). This feels like a win for the overall Wellesley Public School system.

I am NOT convinced however that Hardy is the school that should be closed at this point and believe that more investigation is needed to determine which school closing would have the least impact on the town from an overall redistricting perspective.

With respect to keeping all three schools open, as much as I came into this process wanting to vote in favor of that option because I believe that closing a school IS a big deal to a community, it is extremely cost prohibitive to the town given the estimates we have been provided for keeping all 3 schools open. We will have a big enough challenge getting the $96M approved by Town Meeting…not sure how realistic it is to think we would get a number closer to $125-$140K approved especially without any reduction in overall annual operational costs (like the $500K/year that consolidating to two schools from three will save the school system).

Additionally, I find myself believing that having schools with at least 3 sections is also a better overall structure for both the students and the teachers on many fronts. Our family's current school (Schofield) is a 3-section school and I find the size to be ideal; plenty of flexibility, sharing of ideas among like teachers, yet still an extremely intimate and comfortable environment for young children. I also don't feel that having one more class per grade (thus a 4-section school)

would feel too large either which is why I am open to one new school being built with capacity for 4 sections (to allow for any unanticipated ebb and flow in enrollment numbers) IF the decision is made to consolidate from three schools to two.

Finally, I believe it would be also be a grave mistake not to factor in the PAWS program, long term, into the overall elementary schools facilities and space planning activities. It is a critical part of our public school program and is growing rapidly with significant spikes in enrollment anticipated over the next couple of years.

Let's be smart about how we, as a community, continue to invest in our schools and make any and all improvements and advancements we can to the quality of education provided to our children through the Wellesley Public School system.

To: **Wellesley School Committee** ("SC")
From: **Maria Vijil Davis, HHU Parent Advisor Committee** ("HHUPAC")
Date: **January 18, 2016**
Re: **HHUPAC Recommendation**

I do not support the current School Facilities Committee ("SFC") recommendation because it:

- Changes the nature and quality of elementary education;
- Is not fiscally responsible;
- Has a high environmental impact; and
- Did not include an open process with input from the community.

Nature and Quality of Elementary Education
Wellesley has a long history of providing exceptional education to elementary school children, characterized by small class sizes, small nurturing environments, and high quality educators. The current SFC recommendation affects more than the facilities where education takes place; it affects the nature and quality of elementary education.

There has been little discussion of what is best for elementary aged students. Some people cited social life and gender inequities[1] (which were the exception rather than the norm) as reasons to build larger schools. There are likely more creative and less expensive solutions to these issues than building a new four-section school[2].

There is sufficient research to show that smaller, nurturing environments are better for five-to-ten-year-old children. Kids who attend smaller schools are more likely to master curriculum, receive more attention, and develop stronger relationships with other students and school staff. These smaller environments are more secure and permit small children to feel safe and not overwhelmed. There are other benefits of small schools as well: there is more community and parent involvement, teachers are happier, and costs are lower due to fewer layers of bureaucracy.

I understand that bigger schools are easier to manage for administrators; however, if we need to sacrifice our children's education, then the justification needs to be more than administrative ease.

Fiscal Responsibility
I do not believe that Town Meeting would support the current SFC recommendation as it is too costly and the operational "savings" of running 6 instead of 7 schools are insignificant compared to the expenditure. Moreover, the savings do not justify the loss of educational value that would come with a four-section school.

I strongly urge the SC to seriously consider a plan that uses redistricting, renovates the existing buildings, adds modular structures, and incorporates the PAWS program into the existing buildings.

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[1] Creative Solutions: K1 classrooms to alleviate gender inequities.
[2] Although the concern about teachers needing a larger cohort was brought up several times, I have not heard this complaint from any of the Hardy teachers. I heard the opposite. The larger the school, the more teachers seek out smaller groups to work with. They usually prefer to work one-on-one with another teacher. Should a teacher want a bigger group of educators to assist them, then mentoring programs with other teachers in WPS can resolve the problem.

Environmental Concerns
The current proposed SFC recommendation is environmentally irresponsible. It proposes the cutting down of hundreds of trees, changing the topography of an area by blasting a ledge, and building a large school in a location that will decrease the walkability of children to their school. The proposal has the potential to subject the Town to costly litigation from neighbors and environmental groups (depending on the impact of the ledge/forest/etc.).

The current recommendation will also result in more traffic moving across Weston Road and through quiet neighborhoods (including Avon Road, Ivy Road, Weston Road, Shirley Road, Cleveland Road, etc.) I urge the SC to seriously consider these environmental factors.

Community Involvement
I have written to the SC in the past about the importance of transparency and community involvement in this decision. In my opinion, the process has fallen short in these areas, and we must still strive to address that. Without resident involvement, any proposal the SC chooses to bring forward will be questionable. I urge the SC to improve in this area.

I understand that the SC's creation of this HHUPAC was an attempt to rectify the exclusion of parents; however, it has been problematic for the following reasons. The HHUPAC was created hastily giving schools and parents a limited time to find representatives that could attend meetings during the holidays. This issue resulted in a non-Wellesley resident and WPS employee being part of the committee, as well as, a shortage of one school representative. The HHUPAC was then required to have all its meetings in conjunction with SC (including three of members of the SFC). The SFC then began its presentation to the HHUPAC defending their recommendation. These presentations amounted to approximately 85% of the HHUPAC meeting schedule. The HHUPAC was unfunded and thus had no money to engage experts. When members of the community (parents) wanted to address the HHUPAC in a presentation, it was denied because the member was not an "expert". These issues resulted in this style of recommendation being put forth to the SC.

On the positive side, the HHUPAC did bring attention to the SFC recommendations in many communities that were unaware of it. It allowed residents to voice concerns during the brief Citizen Speak opportunities. I hope that the SC noticed that no person spoke in favor of the SFC recommendation during any Citizens Speak, in fact, we heard the opposite from the community at large.

I urge the SC to listen to these concerns and read through the 1,200+ petition comments. SC members are all elected representatives of this community and thus have a responsibility to listen and address their concerns.

Note on Enrollment: I urge the SC to look at enrollment projections very closely and critically examine where that data is coming from. Wellesley has under predicted enrollment in the past. Let us look at households rather than cohorts and look at where these changes are occurring before any school is closed.

Conclusion
My recommendation to the SC is to put forth a seven-school renovation/addition plan that is fiscally responsible, in the best interests of the children, considers the environment and includes the

community's input. Should the SC insist on consolidation then I urge the preservation of Hardy School, in particular, for the following reasons.

PROS	CONS
▪ Less disruptive to children (200+ v. 300+ displaced); ½ of Bates moves no matter what ▪ Less disruptive to neighborhood (Upham families can access Bates due to its close proximity) ▪ Location of Upham is in a less dense neighborhood, thus enlarging its size would be an increase in the district and traffic (75% of current Upham parents drive) ▪ Less Expensive ▪ It is located in a denser populated area permitting children to walk. ▪ Hardy's location makes it easier to district as it can take overflow from Bates, Hunnewell and Sprague. ▪ Locations west of Weston Road have potential for more developments and added households. ▪ May have wider Town support due to reduced costs & location ▪ If built along side, the site permits adequate swing space for Hunnewell children ▪ Upham community's neighborhood is not disrupted due to the proximity of an alternate school (Bates) ▪ Less environmental impact ▪ Less likely to produce litigation from residents ▪ Wellesley has not looked to Route 9 as a boundary when establishing schools in the past. ▪ Traffic can be mitigated through its 3 access points.	▪ Traffic (currently Hardy produces 200 additional car trips during school pick up and drop off, collectively) ▪ Boundary Argument (Division of the town by Route 16 and Route 9)

Jenn Fallon, PAWS

My name is Jenn Fallon and I am one of the PAWS representatives on the PAC committee reviewing the SFC's HHU recommendation to the Wellesley School Committee. I was pleased to be part of such a major decision making process for the town, although I did feel that we were playing catch-up based upon the amount of time the SFC had to review the same issue. I was interested in learning as much as possible about all sides, but imagined that we would be spending the bulk of our time crunching numbers to gain as much for the schools at the best possible cost. Unfortunately that was the not the case. But I do want to commend my fellow members of the PAC who I feel worked hard for the town; people were willing to add additional meetings around the busy holiday season and many did copious amounts of research in their free time, which proves how seriously we all took our charge.

At the onset of the PAC I believed that I would be seeing data that would convince me I should vote for the SFC's recommendation. That did not happen. As time went on I became more concerned about the precedent it would set to close an elementary school, the forecasting models used cast doubt about the validity of their conclusions and lastly traffic, the reported game changer, did not strike me as large an issue as it was reported to be.

We moved to Wellesley three years ago for the schools; knowing how highly regarded Wellelesy is I simply cannot foresee a steep drop-off in attendance and feel that it would be shortsighted to build for anything less than a 2500 capacity as we know that there will be an ebb and flow to school population. Most importantly, I have become very concerned that the town will not want to approve even the SFC's lower cost recommendation, putting the schools at risk of having a sub-par solution forced upon them. With all of the false information and heightened emotions swirling around just the school community, I do not feel that we have the necessary base of support from which to convince the rest of the town that we have the right solution at the right time. I wish the PAC could have been the group to craft the right solution, but we didn't have sufficient tools in the time allotted.

In looking at the data, I have come to the following conclusions:

* Enrollment needs to be looked at again and additional models need to be utilized (not just the Cropper model)

* Three 2 1/2 section schools can be supported at Hardy, Hunnewell & Upham with redistricting
  - My rough redistricting exercise made me feel that it can be done in a logical manner

* PAWS should be considered as a viable option for sharing space at one of the HHU schools
- While PAWS will have space needs prior to the conclusion of the HHU process and a temporary solution will not be easy, a long term space that works for PAWS and can utilize space at one of the new schools should be the goal to help Hardy, Hunnewell & Upham gain a new/renovated school that is large enough to support a good sized neighborhood school (2.5 sections) and provide much needed space to our youngest and most vulnerable population, our pre-schoolers.

* A building committee needs to be formed post PAC to dig in to this issue to craft a unanimous recommendation that is fiscally responsible and a plan to market this decision to the town.
- Without a cohesive plan, I have serious concerns that the town meeting will not pass either a two or three school recommendation.

* I am also a Sprague parent and my ideal goal would be to provide 7 schools at the modernization level of Sprague for the town of Wellelsey. With a 50 year time frame, the difference between $96 million and $126 million should not be the sole driving factor, if the higher cost provides the better solution for the town and its students. Although if data presents itself during the building committee that does not support a three school solution with PAWS, that should be explained in detail to the town to garner support (the closing school community should also be made aware of what their school will be transformed into as that was a huge concern for Hardy parents).

* I wonder if when the school committee presents to town meeting, could something like a good, better, best proposal be presented? If the town was aware of all the options and the pros and cons of each, the citizenry could make an informed decision that all could live comfortably with for the next 50 years (or until the next major town building project).

I thank the School Committee members who attended our PAC meetings for their time and patience as we got up to speed on this very complicated issue.

Thank you -
Jenn Fallon

HHU PAC Summary Statement
Presented to Wellesley's School Committee
By: Jessica Graham
1/18/16

I strongly recommend revisiting fixing all 3 HHU schools.

I recently heard the term "tax fatigue" thrown around about Wellesley residents….and that was before asking taxpayers to pay for the Tolles-Parsons Senior Center, 900 Worcester athletic complex, possibly part of the North 40 and the HHU school renovations. In addition, there is already a $5-6m override expected in FY18 and FY19 (not from the schools). With the school population being only 30% of the voting residents, it is essential that a HHU scenario garners as much town-wide support as possible.

The current SFC plan does not have maximum town-wide support. 1) A consolidation would require a 4 section school, and the town has repeatedly voted against 24 section schools in the past. 2) The petition to save Wellesley neighborhood schools has gathered over 1,200 signatures in 4 weeks. These reasons, along with the division of the PAC, make it clear that the SFC recommendation is not supported and a different solution is needed.

Maximum town-wide support:

The SC has not yet done their due diligence on ways to keep all 3 schools open. This fact alone will cause a loss of votes across town. Closing a school should be the LAST option after all other options have been thoroughly investigated. It is therefore imperative to take the time to dig deeper into all 3 school scenarios.

Closing a school automatically alienates a LARGE number of residents both within the district planned to close as well as across town.

Keep the schools small. Wellesley residents place a huge value on their small neighborhood schools, and a 24 section school is NOT small. Wellesley has never had a school larger than 19 sections, and it is my opinion we should never go above that number. Wellesley has a deeply ingrained history of small neighborhood schools. They are our gems, and in this changing country, they should be preserved.

The national average of students in Elementary school is about 480 students (about 440 in MA). *The proposed 4 section school of over 500 students cannot, by definition, be considered small if it is above the national average.*

Benefits of smaller schools: 1) They create more parent involvement, 2) young children are more comfortable and have less anxiety about school, 3) they are safer by knowing neighbors, 4) there is less bullying, 5) children know teachers better, 6) children have better social behavior, 7) students have better attitudes, 8) they cultivate better teacher and administrator attitudes, and 9) there is increased teacher collaboration. The research is pretty clear that 400 students per school is the very high end of what should be considered "small."

Don't anger the neighbors. At Upham, a huge new school, located in the middle of a forest on ledge that both need removal for building, will definitely anger the neighbors. It will loom (yes, loom) over the neighborhood and drastically change the natural surroundings. Building at Hardy makes much more sense. It is a large, flat piece of school property that serves as a magnet for the neighborhood. Neighbors purposely bought homes located near this thriving schoolyard.

Cut construction costs:

One way to get the cost down is with prefabricated building structures and a reduced time line per school of 14 months each. Working from July through the following August not only significantly decreases the impact on the students, but also saves money. Look at companies like: www.gen7schools.com

A review of the HHU buildings with renovation and repair in mind is necessary. Can we use portions of the existing buildings with repairs? This was looked at from a high level, but should be reconsidered in depth before dismissing the idea.

Finally, a review of the SMMA cost estimates from Dec. 29, 2015 is necessary, as there are inconsistencies across the scenarios.

Add Value:

Incorporate PAWS into the HHU buildings. It is incredibly shortsighted not to consider the burgeoning growth of PAWS into the new/renovated school buildings. A conservative estimate puts PAWS at 11 classrooms in less than 7 years. The creation of a PAWS "East" and "West" would alleviate the pressure PAWS places on one elementary school location. A 2.5 section school (15 available classrooms) with the addition of PAWS West (5 available classrooms) gives you a reasonably sized 20 classroom school. The design of the school can positively incorporate the preschool with the elementary children, as was done successfully in the high school building.

Children should come first:

We do not need shiny new schools. A huge, shiny new building is not what the students care about. A new building is appealing to the adults. Children learn because of their excellent teachers, not the facilities they are learning in.

Least disruption to students. Closing a school immediately disrupts 1/7 of our students, displacing over 300 children if you close Hardy! Teaching in a building that is under construction is less disruptive to students and teachers than breaking apart those students and teachers into three different elementary schools.

Small schools are what is best for our children.

Traffic:

Closing a school makes traffic worse. It's that simple.

Enrollment:

Enrollment operates on a sine curve over time. As Wellesley has learned in the past, you should not build for the bottom of the curve, as that will result in the need for modulars again.

I know the report says declining enrollment, but every person I talk to thinks the severity of decline is wrong. We teach children to estimate their answer before solving a problem so that they have a sense of whether the answer they get is correct or not. The severe decline projected just does not match with the level of housing construction around town and the State pressure to increase affordable housing in Wellesley. Our estimate does not match our answer, so the answer is likely wrong and should be recalculated.

We need updated enrollment forecasts using the Housing Demographic Method or Lexington's Housing Units Model.

Recommendation:

Hardy:

Build a new 2.5 section school while creating PAWS West at this location (total 20 available classrooms) on the land behind the current school. If Hardy is built first, the old Hardy can be used for swing space and PAWS can be given the required space as soon as possible.

Hardy's pick-up traffic problem can easily be remedied by looping the carline further back into the school property and taking the cars off of Weston Road.

Hunnewell:

Renovate Hunnewell at 2.5 sections (15 available classrooms).

Upham:

Build on the existing school site. Build a new 2.5 section (15 available classrooms) school.

Redistricting will be required for any option that the SFC puts forth.

IF after….1) thoroughly investigating 3 school scenarios, 2) driving the estimated cost down to a more reasonable level, and 3) bringing a reasonable 3 school scenario to Town Meeting and the town pushes for consolidation and a 24 section school…. *then I recommend closing Upham*.

- Choosing the largest of the 3 schools to close makes no sense.
- It costs less to build at Hardy.
- It's safer to have the increase in traffic at Hardy than the residential neighborhood of Upham. The Upham residential neighborhoods cannot handle and should not be asked to handle such an increase in traffic.
- Each year Hardy's population increases while Upham's decreases.

- The land at Hardy makes much more sense to build on if you are not using the existing site. We can see by comments from Upham residents that neighbors around the school do not want the environment disturbed by a massive new school.
- Hardy has a strong contingent of walk-to-school students that would be forced to drive or bus if attending a different school, and 2/3 of the students currently at Upham drive to school.
- Hardy has the space to design drop-off and pick-up areas that take the traffic congestion off of Weston Road.
- Hardy enrollment looks poised for more growth with new housing construction, new apartments and the potential for more affordable housing to be built in the Hardy neighborhood.
- Upham would rather close than have only repairs.

Our schools and the severity of this decision deserve the time to finish the due diligence on a 3 school solution. School Committee and the town deserve to have three fully vetted, 3 school ideas before coming to the conclusion that closing a school is necessary. Therefore, I do not support the SFC recommendation.

Jackie Hoglund, Schofield

After careful review of all the information that has been shared with the Hardy Hunnewell Upham Parent Advisory Committee (HHU PAC) including information regarding:

- state of the current facilities (Hardy, Hunnewell & Upham) themselves
- enrollment projections based on the Cropper Report
- ideal school size
- needs of a 21st century learning environment
- traffic studies for the areas of Wellesley most affected
- current & future walkability of the Wellesley schools including a map of potential redistricting zones
- swing space availability
- construction costs
- future yearly cost savings of consolidating schools

it is my personal feeling that the School Facilities Committee Proposal (also referred to as Scenario 5) to build a new, expanded Upham School, renovate/build new at the Hunnewell School and close the Hardy School is the best of the proposals we've been presented.

The proposal put forth in Scenario 5 will enable Wellesley to:

1. Build two "**right size**" (in my opinion as an educator and a parent, 3-4 sections of each grade level is ideal and 1-2 sections is severely limiting in many ways including balancing class size, gender, social/behavioral constraints, special education considerations, etc), **state of the art** elementary schools that take into consideration the wants and needs of **teaching in the 21st century**.
2. Have enough **swing space** to accommodate the housing of Hunnewell students during the renovation without the need for a temporary "modular" school.
3. **Continue** to recognize and value a **neighborhood school model** by not significantly changing the overall district-wide percentage of families that live within walking distance of their school.
4. Potentially **house roughly 500 more elementary students than projected** enrollment studies claim necessary. *(I would expect additional enrollment reports, potentially using other methods than only the cohort progression ratio, to be included in the future feasibility study and if any significant changes in enrollment projections were found for this to then be addressed prior to moving forward with the proposal.)*
5. Be **fiscally responsible** to the Town of Wellesley and even see significant yearly cost-savings (up to $500,000/year) in the future by building state of the art, energy efficient schools and consolidating to 6 school buildings.

While it is never easy to close a school (speaking from experience, as my own Newton elementary school closed at the end of my 3rd grade year and I, along with siblings and classmates, was sent to complete my elementary schooling at a different elementary school), I am confident that the faculty, staff and administration of the Wellesley Public Schools working with the School Committee will do everything possible to make the transition as seamless and least disruptive to our students, faculty and the community as possible. And while I do recognize that this proposal could certainly change the feeling in the immediate area surrounding the Hardy School, it is my opinion that this consolidation will not change the "neighborhood" feel of the Wellesley Public Schools as a district.

Jackie Hoglund
Schofield Parent
HHU PAC

To: The Wellesley School Committee
From: Ingrid K. Houghton, Hardy School Representative
Date: January 18, 2016
Re: Parent Advisory Committee Statement

The closing of any elementary school in Wellesley is a grave mistake. Our town has always valued a system of small, neighborhood schools. These small schools are what set us apart from our neighboring towns, and attract young families who support the school system and budget. In 1998, Wellesley refused to build a 24-section school, and our small neighborhood schools have continued to excel since that decision. We should follow the leaders of our past, and support what Wellesley has defined a small, neighborhood school to be by refusing to build a large, 24-section school. If this school is built, we will become just like "any other town" and decrease the value of a Wellesley education.

1. There is NO Financial Advantage

The SFC recommendation to close Hardy, build a new 24-section Upham, and renovate and increase the size of Hunnewell offers our town, and especially our school district, absolutely *no* financial advantage:

Cost of building new, large Upham and renovated, larger Hunnewell = $100 million

$500,000 (cost savings per year) over 50 years (building lifespan) = $100 million

The $100 million cost savings in closing Hardy over 50 years is significantly less in today's dollars because of the *time value of money*. Based on the above math, the proposal is a *financially irresponsible* investment for our town to make.

2. Wellesley Will Lose a Key Educational Differentiator

We cannot make decisions based solely on what people *want*—we *all* want shiny new buildings complete with state-of-the-art amenities. Rather, the decisions must center on what is *best for our children*. One of the top reasons parents choose private over public schools is for small classrooms within small schools. Wellesley elementary schools rival that appeal at their current sizes. The research is clear: it is in our kids' best interests to learn in a small school environment. Meanwhile, the SFC plan creates the largest elementary school Wellesley has ever seen. Keeping 7 schools is the right decision for our kids, and for the long-term value of our town.

3. Loss of "Equal Education" for Hardy Community

In every elementary school district, there is a fair split between those who can walk to school and those who cannot. However, the SFC plan would take an *entire community* of families who *walk to school*, and put them at the furthest points from their new school, rendering them unable to walk to school. Not only is this remarkably unfair, and not in keeping with a "green" town, but also the homes in these neighborhoods would diminish in value, creating an economic discrepancy that does not exist today.

Furthermore, Hardy is an overcrowded community of 308 (and growing) students. Why not build a facility where the growth in students is actually happening? Hardy district pulls from some of the lowest-cost housing in town. It is a neighborhood of varying home prices, and building in the Hardy district is booming. More kids are moving into the Hardy district, and that is a fact.

Hardy is also one of the best academically performing elementary schools in Wellesley. Our MCAS scores are in the highest range for the state, and our teachers are some of the most seasoned staff in town, some with decades of partnership with each other in the Hardy building.

Hardy parents are engaged, involved and financially supportive of Hardy at every turn. In fact, we were the first parents to raise money for Smart Boards. We were also the charter school for Open Circle, Wellesley's social and emotional educational instruction. Our school motto of Respect, Include, Safety & Encourage (R.I.S.E.) is used daily on the playground, in the classroom, and in our homes. Hardy is building the youth that will someday make Wellesley proud.

4. The SFC was Exclusive & the PAC was Limited

The Hardy community was shocked and *completely* unaware that the SFC had even considered closing Hardy. Why? The SFC did not include the very community this would have an impact on before making a recommendation. Parents, teachers, and the community at large were not included in the decision process.

The PAC was only formed after the SFC recommendation was made. (Likely as a defensive measure in response to the outcry from parents.) Furthermore, PAC meetings were scheduled at inconvenient times that conflicted with families trying to celebrate the holidays. The PAC meetings were almost completely taken up by SFC-contractors hired to provide data that supports what the SFC had already decided. In addition, parents and the PAC continually asked for additional data and research that was never provided.

Currently, a town-wide petition has garnered over 1,200 signatures (and growing) from voting members of the town of Wellesley stating they support keeping all 7 elementary schools open. How can we, in good conscience, ask the taxpayers to support a $100 million dollar project to close a school when 1,200 people in town have already stated they do not support that decision?

5. The Best Solution for Wellesley is to Keep All 7 Schools Open

Building a large school at Upham requires the blasting of ledge and the removal of a small forest. Wellesley is a "green" town. Destroying the ledge and a forest that has provided decades of beauty and recreation for Wellesley is irresponsible.

One of the stated goals for the SFC was to "minimize disruptions to students and learning." Closing the largest of the three HHU schools would impact more students than closing the smallest. In addition, keeping all three schools open would impact the least number of children as less children would need to be redistricted across town so that the Hardy children can be placed in three different schools. *A 7*

school solution, even if it is simply to renovate and repair, is better for our children and our communities, and our teachers agree:

"The relationships fostered by a small, community school make home-school communication easier and more comfortable. Teachers get to know children at all grade levels. Teachers are not only professionals, but also people who know the children well and care about the whole family. That trust is felt by the students, making it a wonderful community in which to teach and learn."

"Small schools make dealing with student conflicts easier. In our small and supportive setting, issues are discussed and resolved, often using R.I.S.E. A large, 500+ school would lose that intimacy and supportive setting."

One Hardy 5th grader stated:

"What are the benefits of closing Hardy? Well, there are none for Hardy kids."

Wellesley prides itself on small, neighborhood schools. The SFC plan fundamentally changes that structure. A 24 classroom, 500+ student school would not be a small, neighborhood Wellesley school, it would be the *largest elementary school Wellesley has ever built*.

So, as a Wellesley resident for 15 years, taxpayer, professional educator, and mother of three kids in the Wellesley Public Schools,

I do not support the SFC recommendation as it is not in the best interests of our children or our town.

Tam Kennedy, Bates

At the conclusion of six PAC meetings regarding the School Facilities Committee (SFC)'s proposal for Hunnewell, Hardy and Upham, I find myself conflicted in terms of my support. This is indicative of the impasse at which our committee currently finds itself. I do not wish to support the closure of Hardy. Even before the SFC proposal was made, it was clear that Hardy was an integral part of its neighborhood. While my children attend Bates, we leave in close proximity to Hardy. My family frequently uses the playgrounds and fields and I have heard nothing but high praise for the teachers and the school culture from the Hardy community. This feeling is strengthened by the support we have all seen and heard in recent weeks: the formation of the Save Our Schools Committee, the popular petition that has circulated town-wide and, most effectively, the powerful statements made at PAC meetings by the Hardy community. Hardy is clearly treasured. My dream scenario would be to keep all seven schools, providing that the schools are renovated, expanded, and include three sections each.

However, looking at the data presented by the SFC, it is unclear whether Wellesley's population will be able to support that model. A seven-school plan would likely need to include schools designed for two sections per grade level. While the two-section school model can work beautifully for many students, it can be limiting for many others. It also leaves room for the possibility, as proven by the current Upham kindergarten class, for a one-section grade level. This is a situation that is likely to provide a less than optimal learning environment for students and teachers alike. While I agree that educators are generally a collaborative population and do support each other across grade-levels, teachers work day to day and often minute to minute with their grade level colleagues. The potential for a one-section school would be isolating for teachers and that has a direct impact on student learning. Having taught middle school for a decade, I have seen the three-section model at work and deem it to be the ideal size.

This is a difficult decision and I find myself not wanting to strongly place my support for or against the SFC proposal. With the data given, the SFC proposal does make sense. It would provide Wellesley with state of the art educational facilities, it is cost-effective, and would appear to remain true to the neighborhood school model that makes Wellesley so unique and valued. However, while the proposal does make sense on paper, the following concerns remain: the huge emotional impact on the Hardy community, the accuracy and need for confirmation of the Cropper Report, and the lack of transparency for the public on this issue to date. In order for the SFC proposal to garner town-wide support, the School Committee needs to make an

active effort to inform and include the public in the process going forward, especially in regards to town-wide redistricting, the confirmation of the population forecast showing the need for a six school model, and plans for future use of the Hardy site. If these concerns were adequately addressed, I could support the current SFC proposal.

Hunnewell, Hardy, Upham Parent Advisory Committee
Sarah Kulka Statement

First, a sincere thank you to my fellow PAC members, the School Committee, and the Wellesley Schools administrators for devoting their time to this effort.

Our charge was to: "Provide a recommendation to the School Committee for a comprehensive town-wide solution to facility needs at Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham based on School Committee guidelines and previous School Facilities Committee work."

While we were unable to come to a consensus recommendation, my key take-aways from this work were:

- The School Committee's recommendation needs to be one that they believe will both secure Town Meeting support and a town-wide vote; otherwise we all lose, with a "Band-Aid" solution for three schools that are well beyond their life span. There are two key elements to securing the vote:
    - A fiscally responsible recommendation for the taxpayers in Wellesley
    - Grass roots neighborhood support
- Wellesley citizens are passionate about education – it's a principal reason many of us live in the town. Therefore, any solution needs to provide an in-school environment that provides the optimal learning opportunities for all of our children across the town.
- Communication, education and full transparency are critical during these kinds of processes. In particular, the decision to close an elementary school is a divisive one and should not be taken lightly. Recognize the emotional impact of closing a school, and help the community through the process.
- Enrollment projections are the critical piece of data in this decision. An updated enrollment study, potentially comparing methodologies, is paramount during the feasibility phase before implementing any final decision.
- A recommendation should design and manage schools with an overall goal of 3-4 classrooms per grade, strive for equity in class size across all elementary schools, and maintain current class size guidelines.
- The current strawman redistricting (based on six elementary schools) does preserve the concept of town-wide neighborhood schools (defined by one-mile walkability changing only 1%).

Megan LeBlanc, PAWS

Based on the information that we currently have, I do not support the SFC recommendation to renovate Hunnewell, rebuild Upham, and close Hardy. Generally speaking, I am not opposed to the closure of a school if it is necessary due to low enrollments. That said, I believe that the enrollment projections need to be performed again, using alternate methods. I do not have confidence in the Cropper projections that we currently have. Additionally, I am not in favor of one school being much smaller or larger than the other elementary schools (such as Upham being smaller at this time, or the new Upham being larger as proposed). I believe that each school should be a 3 or 4 section school.

To: Wellesley School Committee

Fr: Michael Rodman, HHU PAC Sprague representative

Re: SFC recommendation

Dt: January 19, 2016

Before providing my thoughts and explaining the rationale for my perspective, I wanted to take the opportunity to thank you for assembling this committee and providing us with the resources and time to weigh in on your decision. I appreciate the difficult task you have ahead of you and hope my thoughts are helpful.

After much consideration, I believe that Wellesley will need to close a school; however, the information presented to the HHU PAC does not convince me that the school to be closed should necessarily be Hardy.

Why do I believe a school should be closed?

I feel comfortable saying that there is a consensus that the conditions of Hardy, Hunnewell, and Upham dictate that significant renovations and/or reconstruction are necessary. Given the outlay required to do this work, it is prudent to evaluate whether there are approaches that will better enable to the town to provide students with an exemplary education in a cost-efficient manner

Though some are uncomfortable with the numbers in the Cropper report, I am not. (Of course, I'm not a professional demographer, so my standing here might not be great.) Cropper is an independent firm that has no stake in this other than getting it right. They are not a firm brought in to reach a specific conclusion (like Exponent, for the Patriots fans reading this). In some towns they have predicted increases in enrollment and in others they have predicted drops. I haven't seen an example in which they have been egregiously incorrect.

The situation in Lexington is often used as an example of a town the relied on an incorrect enrollment projection and ended up with an overcrowding crisis. To me, this is a bit of a red herring. First, Lexington did not use an external firm. In fact, people in the town were urging the superintendent to hire an outside consultant. Second, Lexington used a different methodology to develop their enrollment projections. Third, Lexington's profile is different than Wellesley's, with more high-density projects quickly skewing the expected number of school-aged children.

The revised Cropper estimates have thus far predicted less of a decline than has actually occurred. This is good. However, even if the actual decline proves to be less severe than anticipated, the various two-school recommendations allow for significant error in the projections without producing overcrowding.

Of course, consolidation is not the only solution even if one has a high level of confidence in the enrollment projections. Smaller schools could always be built. I reject this option primarily because I am convinced that a three- to four-section school is best for both students and teachers. For students, it provides enough classroom options so that any potential conflicts can be addressed without forcing children to remain in problematic classroom situations. For teachers, it provides a teaching cohort within each grade. The increased professional development and collaborative opportunities this presents for teachers will ultimately benefit the students as well. And, finally, the issue of cost cannot be ignored. Smaller schools cost more per student to operate. If this led to better learning and teaching opportunities, I'd argue that it's a cost well paid. But I believe the opposite to be true.

For all these reasons, I firmly believe that Hardy, Hunnewell, and Upham should be consolidated into two schools.

Which school should close?

Obviously the decision to potentially close a school can be an extremely painful one for a town. In many ways, the local school is the center of community and social life. We have heard from countless Hardy parents throughout the past months about their love of Hardy and the devastation its closing would cause for the community. Their appeals are moving.

While listening to the Hardy parents during Citizen Speak and the Hardy parent representatives during our meetings, I couldn't help but think about the parents who lived near other Wellesley elementary schools that have closed. Surely they too felt pain, yet the community was not destroyed. As we heard repeatedly, people move to Wellesley because of the schools. So it is possible to close a school and not destroy that which makes Wellesley special. But it needs to be a well-considered decision.

In this case, I find the justification for closing Hardy far less compelling than the justification for closing a school more generally. The traffic studies do indicate a reduction in traffic (and more than is often noted by those who look at the number of car trips for the entire day, rather than just for the peak periods). However, I don't think we really have compelling data to compare a potential larger Upham school with a potential larger Hardy school.

In addition, the Upham parent representatives indicated that they weren't sure that the reaction to the Upham community would be as negative to a potential closing as the reaction

from the Hardy has been. This is important and something I think the school committee should try to learn more about. If the traffic differences are slight and the community reactions are significantly different, why the push to close Hardy rather than Upham?

One additional factor in favor of Hardy is that closing Hardy (scenario 5) costs $5 million more than closing Upham (scenario 3). Again, I don't think cost should be the overriding factor if there are truly compelling arguments on the other side, but in this case I haven't really heard those arguments.

All this is not to say that I think Upham should close. Rather I believe more information is needed—more traffic information and, most critically, more information about how the impacted communities would respond to the potential closings. (And it shouldn't just be limited to the Upham and Hunnewell communities. Other schools—notably Bates—would be significantly impacted depending on which school is closed.)

I hope this is helpful as you continue your deliberations. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Brook Rosenbaum, Sprague

The members of the HHU Parent Advisory Committee were charged with providing a recommendation to the School Committee for a town-wide solution to facilities needs at Hardy, Hunnewell, and Upham Schools. After much consideration, I have concluded that the most prudent and appropriate course of action is to close one of these schools. This reflects: 1) the most recent projections for the Wellesley K-5 enrollment populations over the next several years; 2) a mandate of fiscal responsibility; and 3) a belief that a three-section-per-grade school is the ideal size for Wellesley's K-5 students.

At the same time, it is far from clear to me that a School Committee proposal to Town Meeting that calls for consolidation of the K-5 schools by closing Hardy will receive sufficient support to move forward. Furthermore, the funding necessary for the capital projects for virtually all of the scenarios will require that Wellesley voters support an override. This is by no means a sure thing, particularly if the Hardy community opposes the override.

As we have heard throughout the PAC meetings, Wellesley residents cherish their neighborhood schools. The emotional attachment that we all feel toward these institutions should not be ignored. And while I don't believe that any solution short of keeping all seven schools open will have overwhelming support, I do think that the School Committee would do well to back away from the School Facilities Committee recommendation of closing Hardy. While that may ultimately be the scenario that is put to Town Meeting and town voters, a more palatable position at this stage might be to recommend a feasibility study that does not identify a specific school to be closed. Indeed, I believe Wellesley voters would be more supportive of consolidation if they did not think that the decision to close Hardy (or any other school) was a foregone conclusion pre-determined by a subcommittee in a process that many see as lacking sufficient transparency. And perception, whether correct or incorrect, is critically important to what happens at Town Meeting and beyond.

For this reason, my recommendation is for the School Committee to seek funding from Town Meeting for a feasibility study that will: 1) conduct another school population study, and if the new population study shows a similar trend in enrollment projections as is contained in the Cropper study; 2) provide for an independent review of the consolidation scenarios in the SMMA materials to determine which makes the most sense. I believe that this approach, though less direct than endorsement of the School Facilities Committee recommendation, is more likely to garner support across the town because, frankly, it is similar to the journey I have taken as a member of the PAC.

When I first sat down as part of this committee, I wanted to find a way keep all seven existing schools open. But the more I spent time with the enrollment data and considered implications

of keeping smaller schools open in the face of a declining number of students, the more I came around to the idea of consolidation. It will provide a better educational experience for Wellesley students and it makes more financial sense. I am confident that members of Town Meeting and Wellesley voters are also more likely to accept consolidation if they feel that they are included in the decision making process.

Best regards,

-Brook Rosenbaum

Opinion Statement

Kristen Whitaker, Upham Representative

Hardy Hunnewell Upham Parent Advisory Committee

I believe the School Facilities Committee (SFC) did thorough research over an extended timeframe tackling a tough, complex problem and ultimately coming forward with a clear and logical path forward.

I believe the two-section-per-grade school model is no longer an effective model for Wellesley to run its elementary schools. The variation in class size from year to year (with an increased potential for one-section grades as enrollment is projected to decline) and boy/girl gender imbalances (i.e. the current one-section K class at Upham made up of 17 boys and 4 girls) make it a challenging environment for children to learn. Furthermore, a two-section school is a less collaborative environment for teachers as compared to a three-or-four-section school. A simple review of surrounding towns' elementary school enrollment indicates Wellesley is holding on to a model that is no longer viable.

I believe Upham is a more desirable location on which to build a new school due to the residential nature of the lot and its larger size (Upham has 12 acres as compared to Hardy with 8 acres). Also, Route 9 is a significant traffic barrier and the less elementary students that have to travel on foot or by car either over or under that thoroughfare the better. In addition, the Hardy site is located on a road with heavy commuter traffic. Adding additional school traffic to a site plagued with traffic problems is nonsensical given the option of building on a site that doesn't present those issues.

I believe the SFC diligently looked at myriad options that would have kept all three schools open but dismissed them due to forecasted declining elementary enrollment, which makes the increased taxpayer expenditure both unnecessary and shortsighted.

The SFC's plan is the most logical and clear path forward to address the town's significant problem with the state of disrepair at Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham.

Beth Willett, Upham

Wellesley School Committee,

I vote to support the SFC's recommendation to close Hardy, build a new Upham, and renovate/add onto Hunnewell. I believe that the SFC developed a comprehensive town wide solution based on the projected enrollment data of K-5 students to be less than 2000 students by 2023. Building the two schools so that the total town capacity for K-5 will be 2500 students which will cover the possibility of the enrollment projections being low by 25%. I agree with building a new Upham to a capacity of 536 with the expected enrollment of 425-475 (80-90%). Sprague and Bates, at 398 and 391, have proven that 3-4 section neighborhood schools work well in Wellesley.

Upham as a two section school is dysfunctional with over enrollment in two grades and just one section in kindergarten. The two section school in a declining enrollment environment does not provide an adequate 21st century learning environment for our students. It's best to bring the three schools down to two to eliminate these operational issues. I don't think a larger school should be built at Hardy. Weston Road is already over capacity at rush hour so we don't need to add to that problem.

I appreciate the time that the SFC has spent on this project and that the School Committee will be going to Town Meeting to secure funds to update the enrollment projections and complete a traffic study before proceeding with this recommendation. It is imperative that a comprehensive traffic study be completed for the Upham neighborhood to determine how the increase in traffic can best be dispersed in the neighborhood.

Best,
Beth