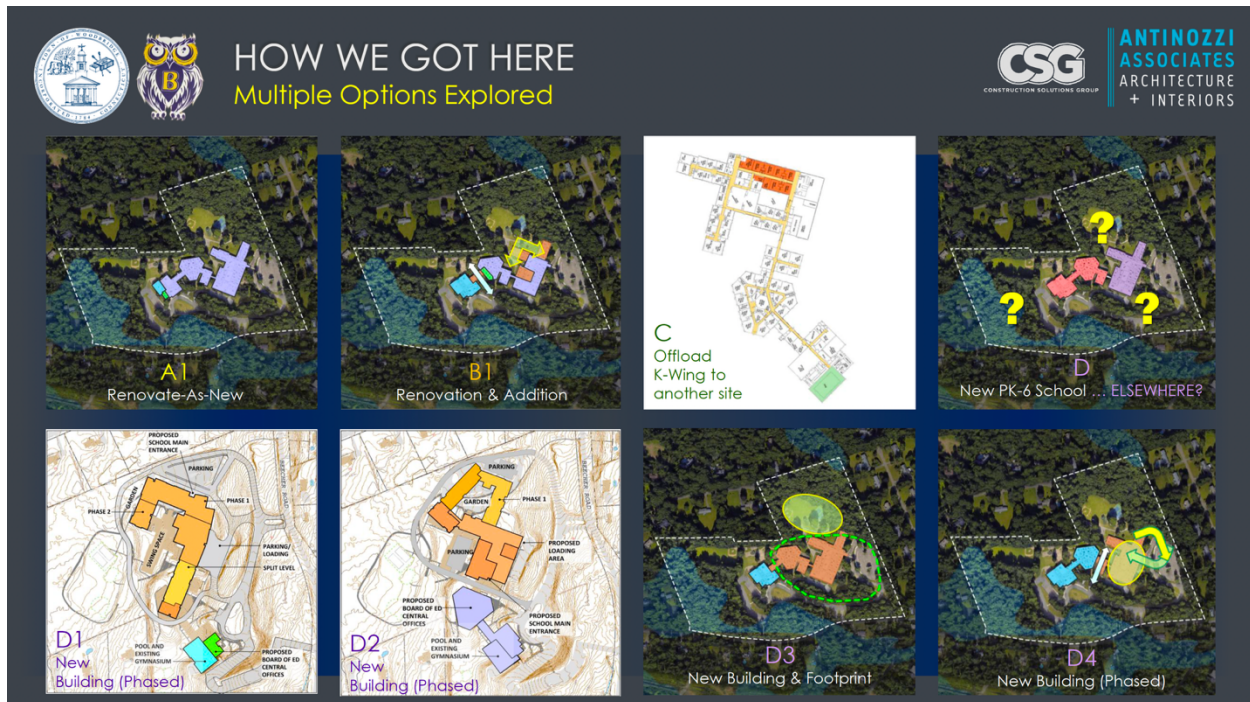


Fact-checking options studied

The B1 option is not the same scope as David Barkin's Better Value option (see following pages).

Town options: Slide 33 of Antinozzi presentation June 2026



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Beecher Road Building Committee
Woodbridge Board of Finance
Woodbridge Board of Selectmen

Via Email

RE: Proposed replacement for the Beecher Road School project

The Beecher Road School undeniably requires major capital improvements. However, the proposed project is not necessary, and a substantially smaller project would meet the school's and community's needs for the foreseeable future. A better solution would be to replace the 1970s rotunda and the other additions with a new wing or wings to better serve our children and teachers. Such a project would be a fraction of the proposed replacement project and could be phased appropriately.

Significant capital investments were made in the late 1990's and early 2000's that added the pre-K wing, the cafeteria, and the media center/library. These spaces are all modern, well-constructed, code-compliant, and in good condition. These building additions were all made to the original school building built in the 1960's. The original school building remains a well-conceived facility, with academic wings radiating from a central administrative hub. Work completed around 2014 included replacing the original 1960s windows and heating systems with new insulated windows and fan coil units, providing integrated heating, cooling, and ventilation throughout the original construction. The community is still paying for these most recent expenditures, and it will continue for another eight to ten years, assuming the bonding was for 20 years. Other recent improvements were also made, sometimes through STEAP grants, to improve the bus loop, resulting in improved parent and student safety.

The parts of the building constructed in the 1970's, however, have many problems identified by the building committee and known by all. Major problems include excessive, inaccessible ramped corridors and irregular classroom shapes due to the unusual and controversial open-classroom rotunda concept. Those classrooms surrounding the previous library were a bad idea at the time and were eventually closed off because our teachers couldn't effectively teach our children. The resultant spaces are oversized and irregular and cannot be fixed. Furthermore, the exterior walls are uninsulated, painted concrete block, an inferior construction technique compared to the original 1960s stone masonry construction.

The most sustainable thing you can do on any project is to continue using and investing in existing construction as long as the building has "good bones". That is clearly the case with the original 1960s building and its later additions. New construction will be better insulated and perform better to meet the current energy and building codes, but it comes at a high environmental cost, as it requires substantial carbon emissions due to the production of concrete, steel, and other building

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materials; the total cost of construction, including the social cost of carbon, must also be a consideration.

Clearly, the current school building committee has done an excellent job maximizing the reimbursement rate, and nothing precludes the town from utilizing the same strategies for a smaller project. The net outcome will be a lower bonded cost and a reduced burden on resident taxpayers. It is unfortunate that interior improvements were not made to the original building 10 years ago, but upgrades can now include improved toilet rooms, interior transom lights, classroom technology, and other needs without demolishing the entire school. It may be a cliché, but it is never a good strategy to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

For those who do not know me, my wife and I have lived in town for 28 years, and I spent nine years on the Woodbridge BOE and chaired an earlier building committee as well. I am well versed in the school's physical plant. As a professional architect who has spent a career designing and overseeing large-scale institutional projects, I am keenly aware of the complexity of a project like this. I respectfully ask you to consider these words in your deliberations.

David H. Barkin, FAIA

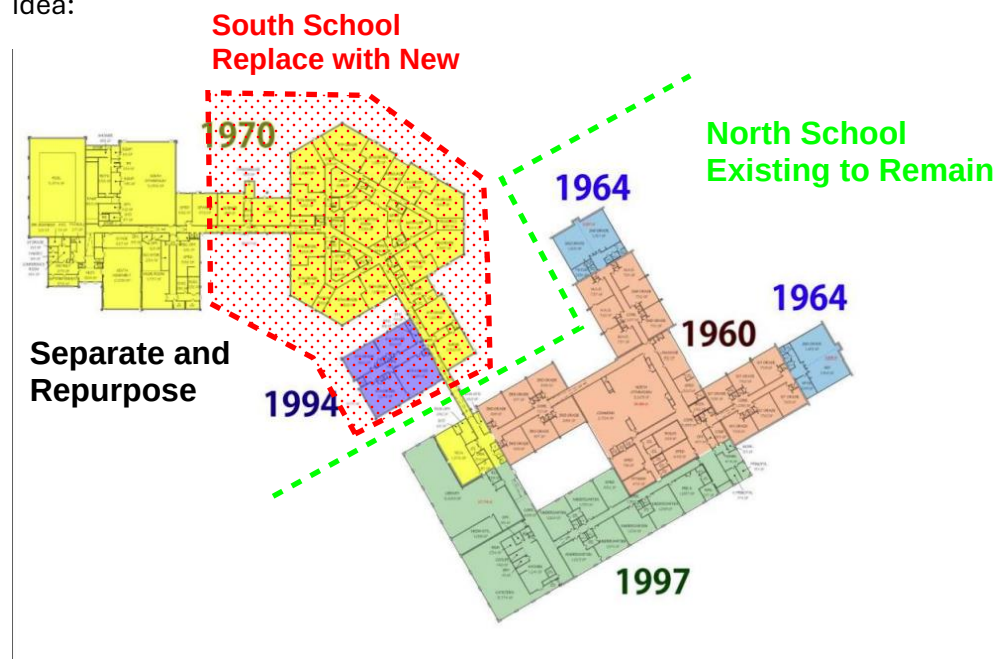
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Via Email

RE: Proposed replacement for the Beecher Road School project-Part 2 – a “Better Value Solution”

As a follow-up to my original email, some folks have suggested that the Beecher Road Building Committee’s options already include the better value solution I am proposing. I believe this is a misunderstanding of the recommended project scope and offer the following diagram to clarify the idea:



There could be many ways of looking at such an approach, including where the new construction could be placed, whether in front of the existing North School, to the side, or to the back. I am not suggesting a finished design or physical layout, as that would be the design consultant's job. Rather, I am suggesting revisiting the premise of the existing proposed project to substantially reduce the square footage of new construction. It should be clear that if you retain 50% or more of the existing school, the resulting project will have significantly less new construction, reducing capital expenditures by tens of millions of dollars, even after reimbursements are factored in.

The 1960 building with its 1964 and 1997 additions, along with envelope improvements (windows) and HVAC upgrades 10 to 12 years ago, can continue to serve the community for the foreseeable future and does not need to be pursued as “renovate as new”. Smaller targeted improvements and renovations could be included or postponed. Such improvements could address interior finishes,

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plumbing changes, technology improvements, security enhancements, accessibility upgrades, and door/hardware updates.

A new two-story grades 4 – 6 addition would be fully accessible and have a more compact footprint than the existing one-story structures.

The committee's consultants can advise on different reimbursement rates for alternate approaches. We shouldn't forget that the town can continue to work with our legislators to submit additional "notwithstanding" language into the biennium State Public Act to further improve reimbursement rates, as has previously been the case.

The current school building committee has done an excellent job maximizing the reimbursement rate. Such efforts could continue with a smaller targeted project that meets all the programmatic and curricular needs of the school. The net outcome will be an excellent, renewed facility with lower bonded cost and a reduced burden on resident taxpayers than the current replacement project dictates.

Respectfully

David H. Barkin, FAIA