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Overview

Q1. What is the plan for Asa Messer Elementary School?

A. As part of the District's strategic buildings plan to have new or like-new buildings for all students by 2030, the City and District are investing \$62.5 Million in a rebuild of Asa Messer Elementary School to bring together both Asa Messer and West Broadway Middle School into one shared campus as a Pre-K through Grade 8 school. The school will be constructed at the site of the current Asa Messer Pre-K to Grade 4 Elementary School.

Q3. How was Asa Messer identified for this investment? How is it funded?

A. The District is in the process of a district-wide capital plan with a goal of having enough seats in new or like new schools by 2030. As part of that plan and in response to community listening sessions and the District's Turnaround Action Plan, key goals of the capital plan are to expand access to high quality pre-kindergarten and to reimagine the middle school experience by expanding the number of schools with Pre-K through grade 8 options. Projects in the capital plan have been approved by the City Council, Providence School Building Committee, and Rhode Island School Building Authority. Messer and West Broadway were identified as a priority for the next phase of construction based on the quality of West Broadway's current facility, current enrollment and a strong feeder pattern between Asa Messer and West Broadway, and the ability to use the existing Asa Messer site for a Pre-K through 8 school.

The Transition Plan during Construction

Q1. Where will Asa Messer students go during construction? What is the timeline for construction and for moving to swing space?

A. Asa Messer students will temporarily relocate to a swing space for two years, Fall 2025 through Spring 2027. The swing space the District and City have currently identified is the former Lauro Elementary School at 99 Kenyon Street, Providence, RI 02903.

Q2. What is being done to support specialized student populations (e.g., pre-kindergarten, special education) during this transition?

A. As part of work to improve Lauro as swing space, work will be done to make the building more accessible, including an exterior ramp. That said, we will likely need to temporarily relocate five pre-kindergarten and special education classrooms to the newly renovated Narducci Learning Center while construction is performed at Asa Messer. This proposed temporary relocation will ensure that students are in a facility aligned with their needs, and will enable the District to do the necessary work at Asa Messer to ensure the new building is accessible for all students grades Pre-k through Grade 8.

We are still exploring whether there are options to have some of these five classrooms transition safely to Lauro, and expect to have updates in the coming weeks.

It is important to note that one benefit of this construction project is that students will be able to remain together through 8th grade; currently, some students with accessibility needs are unable to transition with their classmates to West Broadway.

Q3. Will families be able to see the Lauro building prior to students moving in?

A. Tours will be available to Asa Messer families of Lauro in late Spring as well as late Summer. We will be bringing in a group of parent and school ambassadors in January to see the building as well.

Q4. What work is planned for the Lauro building to ensure it is ready to welcome Messer students in Fall 2025? What is the current condition of the former Lauro Elementary building?

A. The City and District's facilities team, alongside the academic leadership teams, have done walkthroughs of the Lauro building to assess needed repairs, upgrades, and reconfigurations to appropriately welcome Asa Messer students and faculty. The current plans will house Asa Messer Elementary using one side of the building for swing space, the portion of

the building which was most recently used as swing space in the 2022-2023 school year for D'Abate Elementary School. Significant improvements were made to the building prior to the 2022-2023 school year. In anticipation of reopening the building, the City and District have planned additional repairs and updates. The construction is anticipated to begin in January 2025 and be ready by Summer 2025 for move-in. The academic and school leadership team will continue to work closely with facilities experts to guide refurbishment of the building. Key areas of work to be performed include:

- Repairs to masonry, flooring, windows and ceilings
- Painting
- Improvements to parking lot and installation of exterior service ramp
- Replacement of all door hardware/locks
- Ensure all core building systems (e.g., electrical, plumbing, heating) are operational
- Radiator cover installation
- Bottle filling station installation
- See [the scope of work here](#)

Q5. Is Lauro the closest swing space facility that there is for students who live around Messer? Is there another option other than Lauro?

A. Yes, Lauro is the closest swing space . The other identified swing spaces are:

- Narducci Early Learning Center, the former Windmill school at 110 Paul Street, home to Kizirian Elementary School through Summer 2026
- The former Spaziano building at 85 Laurel Hill Avenue, home to Fogarty Elementary School students through Summer 2026
- A portion of Hopkins Middle School at 480 Charles Street, anticipated to be home to Kennedy Elementary through Summer 2027

Q6. What is the status of the request for proposal (RFP) with the City of Providence for the Lauro building?

A. The City of Providence has received bids back for the RFP on swing space improvements and plans to award that contract to a vendor in the coming weeks.

Q7. How can families and teachers weigh in on priorities for Lauro renovations? Will families be able to see the building prior to students moving in?

A. The District and City will continue to hold community meetings in January 2025 regarding swing space and plan to host a tour of the Lauro facility with teacher and parent representatives. Once the repairs and renovations are closer to completion, the District will offer tours of the swing space to Messer staff and families.

Q8. Will students receive transportation while the school is in swing space?

A. The same transportation policy will be in place while the school is in swing space. That is, at the elementary level, if a student lives a mile or more from their school, they are eligible for yellow bus transportation in addition to students who qualify due to an individualized education plan or other special circumstance. Students who currently live less than a mile from the current Asa Messer facility but more than a mile from the Lauro facility will be eligible for transportation.

The future PreK-8 School

Q1. Why start construction now?

A. The sooner construction begins, the farther the dollars go. In addition, Rhode Island has time-limited state funded bonus incentives that expire in June 2029. With these bonuses, the state pays up to 90% of construction costs. This

reimbursement rate makes these buildings possible and without it the District would not be able to have all students in new or like-new buildings by 2030.

Q2. What are the benefits of a PreK-8 school model?

A. The PreK-8 model keeps students together with trusted adults for longer, helping them through the transition to middle school grades with maximal stability, and leading to stronger academic outcomes. Older siblings are able to stay with younger siblings for longer. In addition, in Providence, adding PreK-8 schools will expand the number of middle grade options from the current structure of just six large middle schools to more smaller schools, closer to home.

Q3. Will Pre-K - 8 schools have the same start and end times?

A. Unified PreK-8 schools will have the same start and end times, allowing the school community to have an aligned schedule and for families to keep siblings together.

Q4. Will class sizes increase in the new PreK-8 model? How many students will be at the new Asa Messer / West Broadway PreK-8?

A. Class sizes will remain the same. The pre-K through Grade 8 model does not affect class sizes. The new Asa Messer / West Broadway PreK-8 is planned to have roughly 4 classrooms per grade, for a total of roughly 900 students.

Q5. Will parents and staff be able to provide input into the facility construction plans?

A. Yes! The design process, which will continue throughout Spring 2025 and into Fall 2025 will include multiple engagement sessions for feedback and tours of other new buildings throughout the District.

Engagement sessions will be communicated with families through ParentSquare. The builders and architects will be present at scheduled sessions to gather feedback on project plans and implement potential changes. We take community feedback seriously.

Q6. How are you going to incorporate safety measures with children that are much older than the younger children? How are you considering outdoor play areas?

A. In designing these buildings to be purpose-built for the PreK-8 model, the District can plan for important separations between each level. There will be separate bathrooms, entrances, and play spaces for younger and older students, with these levels staying largely separately throughout the day.

At Asa Messer/West Broadway, the initial designs have the youngest students on the lower floors with the middle grades on a new upper level.

Q7. If we knew Asa Messer was going to be renovated from 2023, why did you make renovations such as the new library, roof, and boiler system?

A. As we work to renovate or rebuild schools across the District, the District and City will continue to use the Capital Revolving Fund and Rhode Island Department of Education grant funding to ensure that all students are in 21st century buildings. The new media center at Asa Messer Elementary was funded by a statewide Facility Equity Initiative grant and was selected prior to Asa Messer being identified for rebuilding. Given that timeline, the new media center renovations were designed to focus on furniture, technology, and transportable finishes.