

HAMPDEN-WILBRAHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
EXISTING CONDITIONS and FEASIBILITY STUDY
THORNTON W. BURGESS and WILBRAHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study of Thornton W. Burgess Middle School and Wilbraham Middle School is two-fold. The first and most immediate concern is determining the feasibility of development of a single (consolidated) regional middle school, with specific focus on the potential use of modular construction at either Thornton W. Burgess Middle School or Wilbraham Middle School. The second function of the study, and potentially of equal if not greater importance, is the investigation of existing conditions at each facility to comprehensively assess the long term viability of each building and their respective site.

Thornton W. Burgess Middle School and Wilbraham Middle School are separated by one year in age, having been designed and constructed utilizing similar concepts, materials, means and methods. These facts inevitably result in similar findings in terms of architectural and mechanical systems and components, as described in depth in the body of the report. However, as similar as they are, the two existing buildings and their respective sites are also distinctly dissimilar in three distinct and critical limiting criteria imposed by both the primary and secondary focus of this study, namely: building square foot area, building site acreage, and building occupancy capacity.

Having served as the one middle school for the Town of Hampden since 1967, Thornton W. Burgess Middle School (TWB) comprises approximately 77,000 gross square feet on 23 acres with an original design capacity of approximately 250–300 students. In its present grade configuration and physical condition, with prudent and timely implementation of recommendations contained in this report, the existing building would be more than capable of continuing its well-deserved place in the community well into the 21st century. However, the three inherent design limitations noted above, when viewed in light of any proposed middle school consolidation, indicate TWB will require complete renovation of the existing building as well as a significant addition (40,000 SF for the purposes of this study). This significant scope of work would be required to provide the required number of additional classrooms (24 for the purposes of this study – modular or conventional), expanded core spaces (Kitchen/Cafeteria, Auditorium, Gymnasium/Lockers, Library), additional student and staff toilets (including replacement and expansion of the existing septic system), administrative offices and circulation and storage. The resulting 117,000 SF consolidated middle school, with increased paved parking and access drives, will significantly reduce existing grassed areas available for playfields.

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Conversely, having served as the one middle school for the Town of Wilbraham since 1968, Wilbraham Middle School (WMS) contains approximately 94,000 gross square feet with an original design capacity of 625–750 students, situated on a 63 acre site uniquely positioned to serve as a consolidated middle school with minimal building and site improvements. In its present grade configuration and physical condition, with prudent and timely implementation of the recommendations contained in this report, WMS would be capable of continuing its well-deserved place in the community well into the 21st century. However, unlike Thornton W. Burgess Middle School, the three inherent design limitations noted above, when viewed in light of any proposed middle school consolidation at Wilbraham Middle School indicate severely limited renovation of the existing building as well as a small addition (6,000 SF - 4 additional classrooms with student and staff toilets for the purposes of this study – modular or conventional). Also unlike TWB, WMS contains the necessary core spaces (Kitchen/Cafeteria, Auditorium, Gymnasium/Lockers and Library), existing student and staff toilets, administrative offices and circulation and storage necessary to serve a consolidated student population very similar in size to the original design capacity. Finally, the resulting 100,000 SF consolidated middle school, with increased paved parking and access drives, will not negatively impact existing grassed areas available for playfields.

In addressing the primary focus of this study; feasibility of a single regional middle school at either Thornton W. Burgess Middle School or Wilbraham Middle School, a preferred solution in both practicable and economic terms soon becomes readily apparent. The secondary focus of this study, determining the long term viability of Thornton W. Burgess Middle School and Wilbraham Middle School as stand-alone facilities, indicate this goal could also be achieved, but at a significantly higher long term cost to each community, as outlined in graphic detail throughout this report, including estimated costs for both 'renovation' and 'consolidation' scenarios at both facility.

At the time of their original construction both Thornton W. Burgess Middle School and Wilbraham Middle School represented commitment by the citizens of Hampden and Wilbraham to coming generations. Nearly half a century later, the citizens of Hampden and Wilbraham are again faced with the time for a similar commitment to the future. It is believed the findings of this study provide the information and insight necessary for the citizens of Hampden and Wilbraham to make such a commitment.