

Pre-K Through 5 And Eagle Academy School Pre-Referendum Building Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 27, 2025

The Pre-K Through 5 and Eagle Academy School Pre-Referendum Building Committee held a meeting on August 27, 2025 at Enfield Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT.

1. CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Randy Daigle

2. ROLL CALL
MEMBERS PRESENT

Randy Daigle, Tina LeBlanc, Christine DeBonee, Lauren Andrews, Gina Cekala, Bob Cressotti, Janet Cushman, John Dague, Steve Moccio, Jim Nasuta, Amanda Pickett, Charlotte Riley, Jeff Rousseau, Scott Ryder, Jaclyn Valley, Jeff Wyszynski, Antonia Ciaverella, Justin Hopkins, Chris Cykley

MEMBERS ABSENT

Kate Flanagan

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Tina LeBlanc to Approve Meeting Minutes of August 13, 2025

Seconded by Amanda Pickett

Motion passes by a show of hands

4. ARCHITECTS PRESENTATION

Randy states last weeks presentation was sent electronically to everyone. We are getting to a critical point of what direction we are going.

Jeff states slide deck is printed and handed to committee members. We presented a lot of information at the last meeting and hoping you had time to absorb it. We will give you a quick update on our team activities. We brainstormed about Mentimeter which is an electronic participation tool. We've been using it at community forums, neighborhood meetings, it starts to promote the conversations as we go through the options. We will re-cap the options. There was a conversation at the last meeting about what are other communities doing, we have a slide to show you that. Antonia updated the materials related to the community engagement. We are in the middle of the second step which is options, review, feedback and input. Later into the fall, January and February we will move into refinement. We are still working behind the scenes on existing conditions summary. Next steps we need to have a conversation about Pre-K. We also need to hone in on special education and Eagle Academy. Options, planning and initial thoughts, for those who weren't here at the last meeting, the first initial thought was to marry up the sister schools and looking at the size of the schools without redistricting and as it exists today with capacity. Then we went through how we arrived at the size of the building. For enrollment, we have the demographer actively working and looking at the enrollment, and what is happening in your community. That data isn't going to come for another several weeks. They will also update it for the October 1st survey. We looked at a trajectory increase of 5-10%.

Amanda states I know I brought this up at our last meeting, not just new apartments and housing, but turnover of housing. I wonder as a district, did we look at historically, during the summer what is our new enrollments? Are we going to see an uptick?

Steve states he has not done a historical review. The late update is related to our ability to only register students when secretaries return in late August. There is a way to find it, we can look at our enrollment at the end of June and look what it is in September 1st. I can ask Brad to see if he can pull the information, even if we go back 5 years.

Jaclyn states a lot of rental lease agreements start September 1 and we get new families come to register is August with a lease agreement for September 1st.

Jeff states if there are brokers who specialize in the Enfield market, if you can get the contact information to Randy and we can get it to the demographers. He is also going to speak to the economic planner.

Amanda asks if there is a realtor on retainer for the Town?

Gina states it's for commercial property.

Scott states he can get a list of contacts through the Chamber of Commerce.

Gina states I'm not only worried about a 5 to 10% increase, I'm going to be more comfortable with 10%, it's not only the number, it's how much room some of those kids are going to need. Our special education numbers trended very high.

Randy states that is why it is very important to understand the programming. Each program requires different square footage.

Amanda states we're 25%-ish special education.

Charlotte asks does that come into play when the State does their equation?

Jeff states, the short answer is no. The way it has been typically addressed is through special legislation. We advocate for owners to go for special legislation for a bigger building if it is needed. It is not uncommon.

Amanda states 50% of our district is high needs.

Tina states OGA sends us emails about applying for grants, but then we don't qualify for them.

Jeff states it is likely something that we will need to address through special legislation.

Tina states Representative Santanella in legislation for Enfield and he has done a lot of work for our schools, he is definitely someone we could get on this.

Randy states the reason we accept it at the State is because of programming, it needs to be program required.

Justin states we ended up providing the same level of intensive education spaces to help support the special needs population in both schools we were working on rather than having them centralized in one school. So that modestly increased our square footage above the allowable area. The argument was we are trying to create equity across all the school buildings.

Tina asks when you say special legislation, you mean when they are back in January? And, it wouldn't get approved until the budget passes?

Jeff states yes. Many communities will pass the referendum and go after it retroactively. The next slide are the options. Option A is marrying up the sisters schools. Option B1 is 3 Pk-5. Option B2 is 3 K-5 and a PK building. Option C1 is 4 PreK-5. Option C2 is 4 K-5 and a PK building. Option D1 is maintain existing building without redistricting and Option D2 is Maintain existing building with redistricting. We will articulate the annual maintenance cost and the expected useful life of components of your buildings and the cost related to it. The next slide there are 2 modifications we made. We added an Option C3 as we heard conversations about not liking PreK in all 3 schools. Option C3 shows you could have 2 K-5 and 2 PreK-5. This was the balance of not having the PreK in one facility and cut their travel time.

Randy states when they are starting to make the decisions of the 3 schools vs. 4 schools. Can you give us the ball park dollar amount? My fear is the town's responsibility is \$111 million vs. \$66 million. I'm afraid when they read it they won't understand it's over 7-8 years before we start paying. Every decision has a dollar amount with it. We are going to have to do the best we can with the money we have. One hundred million dollars would be great, but we all know how this works.

Jeff states we have the statistical information and we break down the projects on construction costs, site costs, soft costs, FF&E. Our goal when we show a number is total project costs. It is everything to deliver a building in it's entirety. The additional 15% reimbursement rate for the entire building with the preschool in there, gets up into the low 80's. Four schools vs. 3 buildings is a delta of about \$12-14 million.

Amanda asks how did you work with the town that did the special legislation after the referendum? How did they share that information with the community?

Jeff states every community is different. Cheshire received special legislation for reimbursement first, 2 years before we started the project. Then they went back for the space waiver and the 15%. We probably add we're hoping to get special legislation.

Amanda states with the additional 15% for PreK, since it looks like we're headed towards universal PreK, I'm hoping we'd get the additional reimbursement for all the schools. Where are we as a group in the decision making process? We need to hear from Eagle Academy and Stowe to hear their challenges.

Jeff states we have the month of September and some of October to review the options. We would like to have a general idea of where we're heading before the first community conversation. Nothing is set in stone, we want to hear from the community, what are your thoughts? I think in October we need to start getting real about what option.

Charlotte asks how are we going to make an educated decision on the scenario that we might think would be the way to go when we haven't talked to Eagle Academy. The hope is that's another building.

Jeff states I was hesitant to put a number on that program without a conversation. There is another piece here. I'm hoping to have something modeled out for our next meeting. The building they are in now is about 12,000 SF. If you double that it's not going to add a significant amount. If it's a dedicated building you will likely get the higher reimbursement. If there is dedicated SPED programs to keep students within the district into PreK-5 or K-5, it changes the reimbursement. Next slide shows towns within our DRG and their projects, some with similar size schools. We are seeing a lot of PreK-5, K-5, K-6. It's normal within the last 5 years.

Antonia asks everyone to scan the QR code provided, on their phone to follow the presentation of Mentimeter. Committee members answer questions on their phones. It is a work cloud, with instant results as you go. Mentimeter allows us to collect high quality data points and receive feedback. Committee gives feedback on questions.

Jeff and Antonia put results of questions on chart paper. Comments were: Long term relationships, one common design, sister schools, community space, dedicated PreK school, concern of overfilling buildings (too small), outdoor spaces, unique needs at a big school, lowest cost for town, need swing space, higher reimbursement rate/best option of passing referendum. Larger schools bussing is a concern. Staffing is a concern at large buildings. Is redistricting necessary, convincing the public we need 4 buildings, limited space to build. Renovate to new could have challenges with swing space.

Amanda states the only other comment I have is possibly Include town agencies such as Youth Services to share resources.

Randy states we could consider creating a campus concept, with sports fields.

Antonia states C1 opportunities are a community feel, reduces the number of offerings, manageable number of students. Students feel like they have a home school staying from K to 5, outdoor seating spaces. Challenges are unique needs, redistricting.

Jeff states C1 opportunities - best reimbursement, best option, best value. We need a swing space. Higher reimbursement rate. Better opportunities for mentorship, reduces travel time for Pre-K, students are able to attend a school closer to their home, fewer transitions between schools, same school as siblings. Strong community alignment. Challenges – cost effectiveness, limited site availability.

Antonia states C2 opportunities – PreK has a dedicated space with room to grow, K-5 school overall. C2 challenges – public and cost of this option, more expensive and less funding, lower reimbursement.

Jeff states C2 opportunities – academic opportunities, collaboration/transitions. Have specialized programs in each school. Challenges for C2 – locations, convincing the public we need 5 buildings, limited space to build. Does the one preschool include ECDC?

Steve states that is the Town's preschool program.

Jeff states we talked about that last time. That's why we wanted to have a breakout session on PreK to get a better understanding of the town. What is Town? What is school? We need to learn a little more of how that works.

Chris states just a reminder for that space, though may be part of our overall plan, not directly tied to reimbursement.

Jaclyn states a lot of people love ECDC.

Amanda states we do a lot of things separately, the town and the board of ed, but there are opportunities for efficiencies.

Antonia states C3 opportunities – build long term relationships, common design, better enrollment numbers. Challenges are – not in neighborhood school, redistricting.

Jeff states C3 – shows inequity. This shows we need to have more conversations about what happens operationally. The town will have questions about operational costs.

Jaclyn states we are assuming every preschooler is coming to EPS. There is conversation about is there enough seats at HeadStart and preschool. ECDC has a huge need for infant and toddler spaces.

Jeff states the 15% gives the communities more opportunities to build more space for PreK. We will get more narrative on D1 and D2, we will do the homework. How do we feel about the options?

Christine states we have to have the talks with the teachers if we're going to do PreK-5 or K-5. I think B1, B2 and C1, C2 are viable options. We need to have a talk with teachers to see if we want PreK in the building.

Gina states do we think C2 is a viable option? Do we as a committee think 5 buildings is a viable option?

Randy states why are we leaving it on the table? B1, B2 and C1 should stay.

Jeff states we will talk to the schools about that option. I do want to get a good understanding of the town and the school programs, related to an early learning center. If there is a way to incorporate the space and get it reversed, I

don't know what that looks like now. We may have to have a meeting with the State. We did talk about setting up the think tanks to include students and a cross section of the community.

Antonia states the changes to the small flyer includes the QR code, the website has a QR code. If there are any thoughts, send them to Randy. The boards, too, we included the QR codes. In the idea book the only change was a map. We added the town green with bandstand, we added Connecticut River. Send comments to Randy if you have any changes. No changes to take away card.

Jeff states the idea is to get these board printed and put in an area where there is a lot of traffic, open houses.

Scott states for the Open House it should be passive, you don't need to be there to answer questions. We are rolling it out softly to the parents. We will go to the PTO meetings.

Jeff states we are in good shape with this material. We won't go over too much in detail, all we did for these exercises is take the sites and show building and parking spaces. It gives you a sense of scale and size. We will post and send electronically.

Randy states next meeting is scheduled for September 17th. From here on out, it will be every third week.

Christine states the next night is JFK Curriculum night.

5. COMMENTS

- a. Committee Member Comments**
- b. Liaison Member Comments**
- c. Good to the Order**

6. Motion to Adjourn

Motion made by Christine DeBonee
Seconded by Bob Cressotti
Motion passes by a show of hands

Adjourned at 8:05 PM

Submitted by Ellen Smith