

MOHAWK TRAIL AND HAWLEMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEES VOTE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH SUSTAINABILITY RECOMMENDATION

In separate meetings held the week of May 12, 2025, the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont School Committees each voted to accept the [recommendation of the 2D8T Steering Committee](#) that the districts move forward with additional research, analysis and community outreach toward achieving the “aspirational goal” of a centralized campus at the Mohawk Trail Regional School (MTRS) to serve all PK-12 students in the eight district towns. The School Committees also authorized the 2D8T Steering Committee to continue its oversight of the project.

The recommendation followed more than 16 months of work by the Steering Committee and its consultant, BERK12, to analyze the operating and organizational structures of Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont and explore options to help ensure the highest quality educational experiences for students while also addressing the fiscal impacts of declining enrollment, rising operational costs, flat state aid, and increasing student needs.

The path approved by the School Committees outlines a phased transition to a centralized campus over a 5- to 7-year period:

Phase I

- **Create a single district**, merging Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont.
- **Combine all Grade 6 students into a reorganized middle school** (Grades 6-8) at MTRS.
- **Consolidate some combination of elementary schools.**
- **Apply to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for funding** to create/remodel space(s) on the MTRS campus for elementary school use.

Phase II

- **Move all elementary grades to the remodeled/newly constructed spaces** on the MTRS campus.

Each part of this plan is interdependent, as is the exact timing of implementation. The recommendation represents a blueprint for action while also leaving room to adjust, if necessary, based on further analysis, continued community input, and changing circumstances.

Much remains to be done – most importantly exploring in depth the specifics that are critical to the plan’s feasibility and success including, *e.g.*, the details of educational programming; capital costs to towns and the impact on property tax rates; student transportation and travel times; options for the re-use of school buildings; thoughtful staffing plans that rely on attrition and re-assignment rather than simple reductions in force; and a detailed transition plan and timeline. Over the next few months, all stakeholders will have multiple opportunities – at community meetings, focus groups and other engagement sessions – to discuss the ongoing work, share their aspirations and concerns, and explore potential pitfalls and opportunities.

None of this will be easy, nor is there any guarantee of success. The final decision rests with the eight-town voters. All stakeholders are encouraged to continue participating in

this important process. Everyone's input and involvement is crucial. As the Steering Committee noted:

Change is hard. Our schools are small and expensive. Most of them have deteriorating physical structures, outdated electrical systems, and insufficient technological infrastructure. All of this affects student learning and needs to be addressed, whether we combine and reorganize or not. This plan is designed to better position our schools with more resources and broader social advantages, to give our children the education, support, and choices they need and deserve.