

To: Finance and Warrant Committee; Capital Expenditures Committee
From: Dr. Ian Kelly, Deputy Superintendent
Date: January 9, 2026
Re: FY27 Proposed School Capital Budget – Overview and Context for Joint Meeting

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an overview and context for the FY27 Proposed School Department Capital Budget, in advance of the upcoming joint meeting of the Finance and Warrant Committee and the Capital Expenditures Committee. This memo is intended to support a shared understanding of the scope, priorities, and rationale underlying the District’s capital request.

Capital Investment in FY26

Over the past six months, DPS has leveraged the FY26 \$2.37 million capital appropriation to advance a coordinated portfolio of facility and capital initiatives focused on strengthening safety, improving functionality, and addressing aging infrastructure across all school buildings. So far in FY26, the District has initiated multiple design efforts—including exterior rehabilitations, controlled entry improvements, fire alarm and emergency egress upgrades, and districtwide electrical and security system planning—to ensure that future capital requests are grounded in detailed analysis and realistic cost projections.

At the same time, the District has continued to execute targeted construction and maintenance projects addressing immediate facility needs, such as lighting and ceiling replacements, electronic access controls, restroom and masonry repairs, playground safety enhancements, and accessibility improvements. Several districtwide studies and procurements, including an electrical infrastructure assessment and a comprehensive security RFP, have now been completed or are nearing completion, positioning the District to move from planning into phased implementation.

As of January 1, 2026, Mr. Haffner and his team have completed 40% of projects funded via the FY26 capital appropriation and are on pace to complete the remaining 60% in advance of the close of this fiscal year.

The FY27 capital request represents the next step in the District’s multi-year facilities strategy. It reflects a deliberate transition from design and assessment phases into construction phase for the District’s highest-priority needs, while maintaining a focus on safety, system reliability, accessibility, and long-term stewardship of school facilities.

Overview of FY27 Capital Request

The FY27 proposed capital budget totals **\$5.82 million** and reflects the District’s ongoing commitment to maintaining safe, accessible, and reliable school facilities for students, staff, and the community. While the District and Town continue to work collaboratively to revisit the Facilities Master Plan and the Educational Model, the School Department must continue to address critical infrastructure, safety, and accessibility needs that cannot be deferred.

Across the public-sector facilities field, it is widely recognized that school districts must reinvest approximately 2–3 percent of the replacement value of their facilities each year to keep buildings in good working condition and prevent the accumulation of deferred maintenance. This benchmark reflects the reality that major building systems—such as roofs, electrical systems, fire alarms, and building envelopes—have finite lifespans and must be repaired or replaced on a predictable cycle.

This guidance is particularly relevant for Dedham, where the school portfolio includes seven buildings ranging in age from 8 to more than 120 years old, with several facilities well into the second half of their expected service life. Older buildings require higher and more consistent capital reinvestment as multiple major systems reach the end of their useful life at the same time.

The FY27 capital proposal is aligned with these industry standards and represents a disciplined, targeted investment focused on infrastructure reliability, safety and security, accessibility, and stewardship of existing assets. Rather than expanding scope or accelerating new construction, the request prioritizes essential system upgrades and life-safety improvements needed to responsibly maintain the Town’s existing school facilities while longer-term planning efforts continue.

Infrastructure, Safety, and Accessibility

A significant portion of the FY27 capital request is focused on districtwide infrastructure, safety, and accessibility improvements that are essential to the safe and effective operation of school facilities. Key infrastructure investments include \$400,000 for a districtwide phone system upgrade to ensure reliable internal and external communications, and \$750,000 for electrical infrastructure modernization at Riverdale, Oakdale, Greenlodge, and Dedham High School. These projects address aging systems and provide critical support for instructional and administrative functions.

Safety, security, and accessibility remain central priorities within the FY27 capital plan. The largest single project is a \$1.8 million investment in controlled entry and front office reconfiguration at Greenlodge School (Phase III – Construction), designed to strengthen building security while improving functionality and visitor management. Additional safety-focused projects include \$250,000 for controlled entry improvements at Oakdale School; \$300,000 for emergency egress upgrades and fire alarm control panel installation at Dedham High School (Phase IIIA – Year 1); and \$170,000 for interior security camera system expansions at Avery, Oakdale, Riverdale, and Greenlodge. The plan also includes \$100,000 for districtwide ADA compliance upgrades, supporting accessibility, inclusivity, and regulatory compliance across all facilities.

Facility Stewardship and Building Envelope

Protecting existing facilities and addressing long-term maintenance needs is another key component of the FY27 request. The budget proposes \$900,000 each for exterior rehabilitation projects at Oakdale and Riverdale Schools, focused on renewal of facades on wings added to the Oakdale (1951) and Riverdale (1952). These projects are intended to preserve building envelopes, extend facility lifespan, and mitigate future deferred maintenance costs.

Athletics and Recreation

The FY27 capital plan includes a targeted investment of \$250,000 for replacement of the poured-in-place playground surface at Avery School. This project addresses safety and accessibility concerns while supporting student recreation and wellness.

Summary

The FY27 proposed capital budget represents a focused and disciplined investment strategy that prioritizes the most critical facility needs across the District. By emphasizing infrastructure reliability, safety and security, accessibility, and long-term stewardship, the proposal supports safe learning environments while protecting the Town’s investment in school facilities.

The District looks forward to discussing this request with both committees at the upcoming joint meeting and welcomes questions in advance.

Dedham Public Schools
Office of Finance and Operations
FY27 School Department Proposed Capital Budget

The table below summarizes the projects included in the FY27 School Department Proposed Capital Budget. Of the total request, **\$750,000** represents new capital initiatives proposed for FY27, while **\$5,070,000** supports the continuation of multi-year projects that began with capital funding approved in FY26.

| Priority Level | Project Description | Estimated Cost |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Urgent - Accessibility | Facility Access and Usability - District - ADA Compliance Upgrades** | \$ 100,000.00 |
| Urgent - Safety | Athletic/Play/Recreation Maintenance and Repair - Avery - Playground - Replace Poured in Place Surface** | \$ 250,000.00 |
| | Communications Infrastructure - District - Phone System Update** | \$ 400,000.00 |
| | Controlled Entry - Oakdale - Reconfigure main entrance controlled access - Phase II Construction | \$ 250,000.00 |
| | Controlled Entry/Access and Front Office Reconfiguration - Greenlodge - Phase III - Construction | \$ 1,800,000.00 |
| | Electrical Infrastructure Modernization - Systemwide - Riverdale, Oakdale, Greenlodge, DHS - Phase II & III- Design & Construction | \$ 750,000.00 |
| | Emergency Egress/Fire Alarm Control Panel - DHS - Phase IIIA- Installation - Year 1 | \$ 300,000.00 |
| | Interior security camera systems - Avery - Phase III - System expansion | \$ 60,000.00 |
| | Interior security camera systems - Oakdale - Phase III - System expansion | \$ 40,000.00 |
| | Interior security camera systems - Riverdale - Phase III - System expansion | \$ 30,000.00 |
| | Interior security camera systems - Greenlodge - Phase III - System expansion | \$ 40,000.00 |
| Urgent - Structural Integrity | Exterior Rehabilitation - Oakdale - Addition Walls/Windows - Phase III - Construction | \$ 900,000.00 |
| | Exterior Rehabilitation - Riverdale - Addition Walls/Windows - Phase III - Construction | \$ 900,000.00 |
| Total | | \$5,820,000.00 |

*** Projects new to the School Department's capital request*