



**Board Questions for Mill Hill Ed Specs
February 13, 2018**

At the BOE meeting of February 8, 2018, the Board discussed the proposed educational specifications for Sherman Elementary School and Mill Hill Elementary School projects.

The following questions were sent via e-mail for further clarification:

1. Parking: How many parking spaces does Mill Hill currently have?

School Parking Comparison	Status	Number of Parking Spots
Riverfield	Current	105
Holland Hill	After Construction	100
Mill Hill	Current	92
Sherman	Current	52

Our goal for elementary schools, based on past experience, is to have 90 to 100 parking spaces. Mill Hill Ed Specs call for 90-100 spaces post construction. Sherman calls for “additional parking.”

2. State Reimbursement: Can you please tell me when the district applied for the state school building grant for HH? We received the approval from BOS to file the grant on January 27, 2016. Was it filed by June 30, 2016 or later?

Fairfield Public Schools provided the Holland Hill application on June 27, 2017. The \$1.24M in planning funds would not have been reimbursed by the state if all three resolutions had not been approved by the BOS on January 2016, prior to any work being done.

In order to achieve maximum state reimbursement for the Mill Hill Project, all three resolutions need to be approved and presented to the State of Connecticut by the June 30, 2018 deadline. As noted in the timeline shown for questions # 3 and # 4, the importance of filing by this June relates to:

- *The \$1.5M in planning funds will not be reimbursed by the state unless all three resolutions are approved by the BOS prior to any work being done. Thus we would lose approximately 21% of the planning funds normally reimbursed by the state. Town bodies have always expected those planning funds to be eligible for state reimbursement.*
- *After the resolutions are approved, it takes approximately 16 months to form a Building Committee, and have the Building Committee hire the development team to prepare documentation for submittal to the state.*
- *A Jan-Feb 2018 approval by the BOS is important to achieve the desired timeline.*
- *Passing the resolutions by June 30, 2018 kicks off the 16 months needed to file with the state by June 30, 2019. A delay may prove detrimental to Fairfield, given the uncertainty of the state’s finances.*

3. Provide a simplified timeline for the project

For the Mill Hill project, we followed the current model. First, we request Project Team Initial Funding and Portable Temporary Classrooms as a start off project, then we ask for a 16-month project before filing with the Office of School Construction Grants. A simplified timeline for Mill Hill is:

	<u># months</u>	<u>From – To</u>
Building Committee formation and their planning work	14 months	February 2018 to April 2019
Approved by town & state, go to bid & award contract	20 months	May 2019 to December 2019
Construction and commissioning of building	20 months	January 2020 to August 2021

Starting the process in January 2018 is needed to ensure that we meet the June 30, 2019 filing deadline and the August, 2021 completion date.

4. What is the schedule for reimbursement?

All construction projects receive progress payments from the state based on completion of required tasks and filing of appropriate paperwork. Mill Hill’s payments will be made against the \$1.5M planning budget, and the final construction budget approved by the town.

Riverfield’s progress payments were received throughout the project, with the final 5% being held until a final audit is completed. Final audits can take 6 months to 5 years after a project is completed.

5. What was the timing on HH? What happened first in terms of process?

The BoS received the HH Ed Spec at the time of the resolutions. In 2017, the Ed Spec was updated to provide clarity as requested by the Board of Finance. However, the specifications were not changed. The simplified timeline for Holland Hill is:

	<u># months</u>	<u>From - To</u>
Building Committee formation and their planning work	17 months	January 2016 to May 2017
Approval by the state, going to bid and award contract	15 months	June 2017 to March 2018
Construction and commissioning of building	18 months	April 2018 to September 2019

6. Capacity: While I see Mill Hill's capacity was changed to 378 on page 2, the information on page 7 contradicts the data presented on page 2. Page 7 states the capacity as 378 with portables, page 2 states that capacity is 378 without portables. I appreciate that there is still some disagreement over what number should be used for Bricks and Mortar Capacity.

Page 2 of the Ed Specs will be revised to conform to page 7.

However, it should be understood, that the original MGT Enrollment projection report and the current Milone and MacBroom enrollment projections report follow professional standards for defining Operational Capacity, Functional Capacity and Theoretical Capacity. Capacity has been reported differently based on school usage at the time of the report. However, the most frequent capacity shown for Mill Hill has been 378 students (18 general education classrooms at 21 students per classroom).

When Milone and MacBroom issued their recent report, they assumed FPS would implement its Facilities Planning Principles adopted in 2010 and reaffirmed in 2015. The two specific principles were:

3 – “Specialized Curriculum – We must provide, whenever possible, appropriate and dedicated spaces for specialized curriculum needs such as special education, art, music and technology.”

8 – “Phase out Temporary Solutions (Portables) – Eliminate the Town’s reliance on portable classrooms as a permanent substitute for brick and mortar classrooms.”

With those two principles in mind, Milone and MacBroom assume all five portables would be eliminated and five of the eighteen current general education classrooms would be re-purposed to meet the specialized curriculum needs of the school. Without an addition, 13 classrooms of 21 students equals capacity of 273. In summary:

***273** Functional Capacity assumes no portables, no new construction, and all specialized curriculum needs are met. Thus only 13 general classrooms remain with 21 students per classroom.*

***336** Functional Capacity assumes no portables, and repurposing 2 general classrooms to resolve specialized curriculum deficits. Thus, only 16 general classrooms remain with 21 students per classroom.*

***378** Functional Capacity has been the most frequent number reported for Mill Hill based on 18 general classrooms with 21 students per classroom. The portables have allowed specialized curriculum needs to be addressed.*

***504** Functional Capacity has been the recommended design standard of 24 classrooms with 21 students per classroom plus additional small sized spaces constructed to meet specialized curriculum needs.*

The building committee works with the architect to construct new spaces and adapt existing spaces to achieve the goals of the Educational Specifications. Town boards may require additional details regarding specialized curriculum needs and additional general classroom space needed beyond the ed spec. The board should address how to present this information to town bodies.

7. If all of 5th grade was housed in the Bricks and Mortar section of the school and the Resource Room, Computer Lab, and MST/LAS had been placed in the portables, would the capacity still be reported as 273? *See response to question # 6. There are fewer large classrooms and smaller spaces available at MH to meet the Ed Spec.*

8. Square Footage of Specialized Spaces: We give size guidelines for homeroom classrooms in the Ed Spec. Are there similar guidelines for OT/PT, resource rooms, MST etc.? *Yes, they are-identified in Educational Specifications as a fraction of an 800 sf general classroom, such as .5 Gifted Room (400 sf) or .25 ELL room (200 sf). Room space is based on different criteria, for example, OT/PT room size is based on the type of swing purchased; other rooms are based on equipment needs, room sharing, and equipment storage location. Building Committees contend with existing conditions. We expect the building committee to work closely with central office and local school leadership to design spaces that meet the intent of the educational specifications.*

9. Are the sizes of Riverfield's specialized spaces being used as a guide for Holland Hill? *Each time we start a school project we look at all elementary schools to see what is working best and share this information with the Building Committee and the Project Team.*

10. What increased cost drivers has the HH building committee encountered that might affect MH? Have we learned anything new from HH?

While still early into the project, the portable temporary classrooms that exist at Mill Hill will create a similar problem as Holland Hill. The Holland Hill Kindergarten playground and temporary classrooms are physical barriers that challenge the new construction work. The site work at Riverfield and Holland Hill is costing more, and there are new requirements for the water meter room. All projects have factors that are unique to the site and existing building. These can only be investigated by a professional team hired with planning funds by the Building Committee.

11. Should we be adding more detail to MH's Ed Specs based on our experience with HH thus far?

The Mill Hill School building is among the smaller buildings when compared to other district elementary schools.

Burr 70,794 sf

Jennings 45,300 sf

Mill Hill 43,229 sf

Osborn Hill 49,146 sf

Riverfield 59,474 sf

McKinley 73,425 sf

By example, prior to construction, Holland Hill was 42,732 sf

As a point of reference:

Mill Hill – 2018 Proposed

Estimated addition of 12-15,000 sf

5 full size classrooms plus 5.5 equivalent full size classrooms for specialized instruction plus 30% planning factor for common space, mechanicals and kitchen as per June 23, 2015 Board approved Facilities Plan.

Stratfield - 2011

Addition added 15,368 sf

8 full size classrooms added plus main office suite, health suite, 7 resource rooms, 1 conference room and misc.

Sherman - 2013

Addition added 1,785 sf

9 spaces added – health suite, 6 resource rooms, 1 office, 1 conference room

Riverfield - 2015

Addition added 15,410 sf

7 (5 NET) full size classrooms added plus main office suite, health suite, 8 resource rooms. 1 conference room and misc.

Holland Hill - 2017

Proposed addition to add 12,015 sf

7 full size classrooms added plus main office suite reno, health suite reno, 7 resource rooms and misc

Mill Hill's APR and kitchen are the smallest in the district.

Mill Hill does not have the number of small rooms like the other elementary schools and will be more in line with the Stratfield/Riverfield experience.

12. Provide some context for the increased cost statement.

In November, 2017 central office staff alerted the Board that Mill Hill, if built to similar specifications as Holland Hill, could cost as much as \$25,000,000. The rationale was:

- *In June, 2015, Holland Hill was estimated to cost \$9,170,527, while Mill was estimated to cost \$13,324,956, or almost \$4,200,000 more due to site conditions and a later construction start.*
- *In Aug, 2017, Holland Hill had been approved at \$18,490,000 (\$1,240,000 planning grant and \$17,250,000 construction budget). At the same time Mill Hill was shown at \$20,220,000 (\$1,500,000 planning grant and \$18,720,000 construction budget), or almost \$2,000,000 difference.*
- *At the September Town Capital Budgeting Workshop, Board of Finance members noted that the BOE used a 3% cost escalation, while recent construction data showed a 4% inflation factor was more appropriate. It was also noted that site costs at both Riverfield and Holland Hill greatly exceeded BOE estimates, as engineering expertise was needed beyond what was originally budgeted. Accordingly, they asked for the budgets to be reviewed and more realistic numbers brought forward.*
- *Therefore, taking into account cost escalation numbers, higher site work costs and contingencies, the central office staff alerted the board the project could cost as much as \$25,000,000.*

However, the real number will not be known until a Building Committee commissions a development team and design development drawings allow for more accurate cost estimating.

This is why the seed money is important to get a solid estimate on costs.

13. What changed from August to February timeline?

See response to question 12, above.

The dollar amount was \$20,220,000 in August when capital planning was discussed with the BoE (seed funding and total project).