

# \$325.4 Million + Interest = 36 Years of Debt

THE MOST EXPENSIVE MIDDLE SCHOOL IN MASSACHUSETTS HISTORY

## NEEDHAM ALREADY HAS EXCELLENT SCHOOLS



**POLLARD MIDDLE SCHOOL** Grades 7-8

Ranked #11 in Massachusetts Overall Score **97.9/100**



**HIGH ROCK MIDDLE SCHOOL** Grade 6

Awarded School of Recognition, MA DESE 2025

Ranked #15 in Massachusetts Overall Score **97.06/100**

Why overspend a half-billion dollars on one school?

### WHAT NEEDHAM RESIDENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT THIS PROPOSED \$325.4M SCHOOL?

"High Rock was the best school experience my kid ever had. Then our Pollard teachers taught him well. I want to improve the schools we have now. There has got to be a better way to do this."

"We can't talk about affordability and this project at the same time. I worry I will not be able to live here. It will force people out of town."

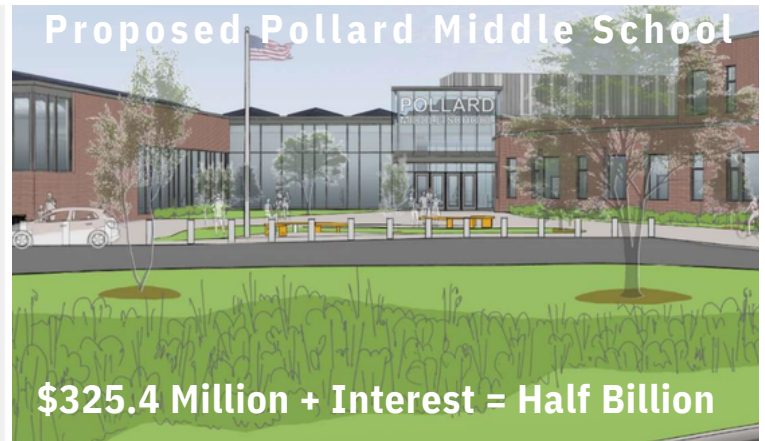
"Resources should go to teaching talent, not inflated buildings."

"There's other deferred maintenance everywhere that should be attended to NOW."

### **BOTTOM LINE:**

**Vote NO in November → to Vote YES in April for a right-sized plan for our town.**

*Review the facts. - Share with 10 neighbors.*



### **WHAT IT WILL COST YOU**

Increased taxes every year until 2064

**Property Taxes + 2.5% Increase Compounded Annually  
+ Proposed Override Costs (see below)**

**\$ 1.541 M**  
Home Value

~\$2,065/year (peak)

**\$ 2.2 M**  
Home Value

~\$2,948/year (peak)

Local businesses face even greater increases

**2028 - 2064 = THREE DECADES OF DEBT**



### **MSBA Memorandum to Needham**

"The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) . . . considers its stance on **core classroom space critical to its mission** of supporting the construction of successful school projects ... that meet current and future educational demands."

The MSBA does not want to see **this critical component of education suffer** at the expense of larger or grander spaces that are not directly involved in the education of students."

July, 2026

# FAQ'S – “Pollard and the Right-Sized Way Forward”

## HOW EXPENSIVE IS THIS PROPOSAL?

### The most expensive tax override in town history.

More than ALL past overrides combined since 1988:  
High School • Sunita • Newman • Eliot • Broadmeadow  
• High Rock • Public Safety Building • Library • and  
more. . . . More than a FULL YEAR of Needham's entire  
town operating budget.

## Do we need to invest in Pollard?

**We do.** We should also meet other town needs-  
Mitchell, Stephen Palmer, roads, bridges, sewer  
infrastructure, and Quiet Zones. Overbuilding a huge  
new middle school crowds out the ability to address  
any other projects- for decades. Affordability is also  
important, to all town residents.

## Why is the current design so expensive?

- **We did not set a budget.**
- It exceeds MSBA size guidelines by 64,575 gs sf.
- \$100,000,000 is non-MSBA reimbursable costs.
- It includes a four story, 42 foot glass walled atrium.
- It includes glass skywalks.

## How big is this school?

- **265,572 gsf - four-stories- 1,335 students.**
- It is 84,700 sf larger than Pollard and High Rock  
combined- a 47% sf increase.

## Are there other options?

**Yes.** Seven other plans were proposed- including  
completely renovating Pollard. In fact, the Select  
Board recommended an option that built a new 6-8th  
grade building quicker, kept students out of  
construction and cost \$45 million less. Even the  
current proposal could be right-sized.

## Are we too far along to change now?

**The "Sunk Cost Fallacy" warns us not to go forward on a  
bad project just because we've invested in it.** Here, the  
cost of staying on course is too high. Much of the completed  
work would still help us move forward. The MSBA could  
allow us to extend our application timeline. The town's  
portion of this project is so high, we could still spend less  
even without MSBA funds.

## Are operating costs included in the override?

**No.** \$1.6 million in operating cost increases have been  
projected so far- without additional school staff or a  
plan to pay the costs.



## THE PROPOSED POLLARD MIDDLE SCHOOL

*Huge Building, Same Educational Program, Less of What Students Need.*

| THE POLLARD PROPOSAL                                                                                                                                                                                             | GUIDELINES TODAY                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <b>1,335 Students</b><br>100's more than peer communities                                                                      |  <b>Fewer core classrooms</b><br>9 fewer than MSBA guidelines<br>Fewer than we have now  |
|  <b>One Huge 6 - 8 building</b><br>265,572 gross sf<br>64,575 sf above MSBA guidelines<br><b>47% sf larger</b> than we have now |  <b>Smaller Cafeteria</b><br>Smaller than MSBA guidelines                                |
|  <b>Same Educational Program</b>                                                                                                |  <b>Smaller Media Center</b><br>Smaller than MSBA guidelines<br>Smaller than we have now |
|  <b>High Rock Shuttered</b><br>With remaining debt                                                                            |  <b>Fewer Art Rooms</b><br>Two fewer than we have now                                  |
|  <b>No Funding for Mitchell</b><br>Or other town projects                                                                     |  <b>Fewer Music Rooms</b><br>Fewer than we have now                                    |
|  <b>42 Foot Glass Wall Atrium</b><br>Suspended glass bridges                                                                  |  <b>No Locker Rooms</b><br>Loss of two we have now                                     |
|  <b>Loss of Trees</b><br>Loss of greenspace                                                                                   |  <b>Larger Class Sizes</b><br>For increased enrollment                                 |



**Letters to Select Board Members, “I am writing  
to express my opposition to the proposal ... in its  
current form.**

While I am a strong advocate for public education, an  
overly expensive facility project is not the best way to  
support student outcomes in Needham.

I would rather see town resources directed toward  
hiring and retaining top-tier teaching talent and  
ensuring any child who wishes to take advanced  
courses has the access to do so. . . “

**Sincerely, Needham Resident** (see more letters at [NRTZ.ORG](http://NRTZ.ORG))