



## LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

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To: Dr. Salah Khelifaoui, Superintendent  
From: Jennifer McCrystal  
Date: March 5, 2018  
Ref: Lowell Day School on Broadway, location options  
Time Spent Preparing this Report: 45 Minutes

The LPS day school on Broadway in Methuen currently provides services to 34 students who have been diagnosed with autism and who the district has determined requires instruction in a more restrictive setting than available in other programs in Lowell. This substantially separate day school has saved the district over 2 million dollars this year alone in out-of-district tuition. The city manager has expressed interest in building a school within the city limits to house this school.

While the city continues to explore options for potential buildings, the day school will continue to provide services to the students and families of Lowell and can remain in its current location for the next school year. The two buildings that we currently occupy have been sold, but the new owner is willing to rent the space to LPS for an additional year. It is important to note that should we remain at the current location, there would be no possibility of classroom expansion. Therefore, there would be very limited growth possibilities next year to provide services to students that require out-of-district placement with autism. It is anticipated that there are at least 13 students that could be returned from out-of-district placements to Lowell's day school and there are likely new students into the district requiring intensive supports. If we have additional classroom space this would generate approximately one million dollars in savings in the out-of-district budget. However, without any expansion these students would need to remain and/or be placed in out-of-district schools resulting in no cost savings for Lowell next school year.

Additionally, the city has put forward an RFP for a three-year lease for a building in or near the city limits. The goal of the RFP is to find a location that is move-in ready for the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year, while adding two additional classrooms and two additional rooms that address sensory needs. This expansion could result in additional cost savings in the out-of-district budget as well as allowing the students and families to remain in their community. The second year of the lease would add additional classroom space allowing for expansion of the program to ensure that students can receive services there through the age of 22, again resulting in an additional cost savings. The optional third year of the lease would allow for additional classroom expansion which could ultimately provide the district additional space to begin to tuition students into the day school from surrounding communities. The RFP will be opened on April 4, 2018, so that the city and school department can examine the feasibility of this option prior to the end of the school year. In summary, the school department has a one-year option and the possibility of a three-year option to continue to support the students and our day school while the city explores the possibility of building a new school within the city limits.