



**Pawtucket School Committee**  
**Administration Building**  
**286 Main Street, P.O. Box 388**  
**Pawtucket, Rhode Island 02860**  
**Phone: (401) 729-6300 Fax: (401) 727-1641 TDD (401) 729-6338**

February 13, 2023

Honorable Donald Grebien, Mayor  
Mr. Terrance Mercer, Council President  
City of Pawtucket  
135 Roosevelt Avenue  
Pawtucket, RI 02860

Dear Mayor Grebien and Councilor Mercer,

I am writing on behalf of the Pawtucket School Committee to inform you that we, as a Committee, voted 6-0 to re-address with more specificity our request for the authorization of a portion of the voter-approved \$220 million bond for repairs to school facilities. In this case, we are focusing our attention on the identified deficiencies as indicated in the most recent NEASC report for Charles E. Shea High School. As you are acutely aware, NEASC has placed Shea High School on Warning Status for facilities due to these deficiencies.

My colleague and previous School Committee Chairperson, Erin Dube, wrote a letter on behalf of the Committee on December 16, 2022 identifying the needs at Shea High School. In turn, you replied that we needed to create a specific plan and identifiable timeline. The administration has worked diligently to collaboratively create a specific and actionable plan. With that, we are asking for the immediate authorization of \$10 million so that we can begin the work on our first two priorities for Shea improvement.

We feel we are submitting a thorough plan for your consideration. If the city agrees, we would like to move forward as expeditiously as possible on these needed repairs. We are excited about the new Unified High School but our Students must have a safe building to report to for the next five to seven years. These repairs will undoubtedly contribute to that and will show our good faith effort to NEASC so that we may be considered for removal from the assigned warning status.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Grant  
Acting School Committee Chairperson



Pawtucket School Department  
Administration Building  
286 Main Street  
Pawtucket, Rhode Island 02862-0388  
Phone (401) 729-6300 Fax (401) 727-1641  
TDD (401) 729-6338

*JOIN THE EVOLUTION*

**Dr. Cheryl McWilliams**  
Superintendent of Schools

February 13, 2023

Honorable Donald R. Grebien  
Mayor, City of Pawtucket  
137 Roosevelt Avenue  
Pawtucket, RI 02860

Dear Mayor Grebein.

On February 9, 2023, the School Committee voted 6-0 to submit a prioritized letter which will serve as a follow up of their request dated December 16, 2022 for the release and authorization of a portion of the voter-approved \$220 million bond for school repairs specific to Shea High School. This prioritized letter should thoroughly speak to your follow up letter, dated December 22, 2022 in which you indicated that "the Administration would need to understand the specific PSD plan, including timeline and funding sources, prior to the authorization."

As you know, Shea High School's recent NEASC visit and subsequent report, indicated deficiencies in its facilities which has placed Shea High School in *Warning Status* until improvements have been made. To that end and in collaboration with our OPM, Colliers, we have been in contact with NEASC and RIDE so that we could present to the City our plan and timeline as requested to adequately and appropriately address the identified deficiencies. You will see the details of that plan enclosed with this letter.

You will see that we have broken down identified NEASC deficiencies into priorities. We are respectfully requesting that you release and authorize \$10 million so that the Pawtucket School Committee and Pawtucket School Department may begin to address our first two prioritized deficiencies at Shea High School. We recognize that prior to the students and staff of Shea having the opportunity to learn and work in the new Unified High School, more repairs will need to be made. We want to address these first two now and will then begin our work on priorities two, three, and four.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter as we work together to provide the students and staff of Charles E. Shea High school with a warm, safe, and dry learning environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa Benedetti-Ramzi".

Lisa Benedetti-Ramzi  
Acting Superintendent



## NEASC Response Proposal and Rationale

On November 21, 2022, the Pawtucket School Department and Charles E. Shea Senior High School received a letter from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission of Public Schools (NEASC) regarding the Collaborative Conference Visit conducted by the NEASC team. This letter delineated the current condition of Shea High School in both academics and facilities as they relate to the issuance of the school's accreditation.

The Commission commended the school for many facets of the educational and social emotional experiences for the students. It highlighted the growth of the school in the areas of Advisory, CTE programming and a positive and supportive attitude of the teachers and the administration.

Despite the commendations, the Commission expressed concern with regard to the school's alignment to the Standard on School Resources. As such, the Commission voted to place the school on warning for the Standard on School Resources and expects that the school, with the support of the School Department, will make a good faith effort to remedy the identified deficiencies.

The Central Office Team, along with Colliers Project Leaders, and the Shea Administration and Staff met to discuss and prioritize the recommendations made by NEASC for improvements on the Standard of School Resources.

There were a total of ten identified areas in need of improvement. Below you will find our plan to address these deficiencies and in an order of priority. It also should be noted that we are including the state required fire code upgrades that were not identified by NEASC but are requirements of the state and must be addressed.



Priority Ranking	Deficiency & Proposed Action	Estimate
<b>1.1</b>	The auditorium stage and balcony cannot be used due to structural concerns and have been marked with hazard tape for more than a year.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair the roof in the auditorium area</li> <li>• Repair the roof in the stage area w/ concrete deck</li> <li>• Repair the entire school roof</li> <li>• Removed the seating from the first five rows of the auditorium; floor leveled and holes filled **The removed seats will be used to replace any and all damaged seats throughout the auditorium</li> <li>• Purchased and erect a portable stage at the front of the auditorium (this staging will be used for the Shea graduation at the Max Read Field as the city's borrowed stage is no longer something that can or should be used for safety reasons) This will give the school a safe area of assembly until the Unified High School is completed and will also offer a viable area of assembly for the next group of students to occupy Shea High School. ** please note: there is no issue with egress or ada concerns with this plan</li> <li>• New Stage Skirt</li> </ul>	\$450,000 \$1,500,000 \$3,217,500 \$100,000  \$20,000  \$2,000
<b>PSD</b>		
<b>Soft costs for priority 1.1</b>		\$967,900
<b>Total Cost for this priority area</b>		<b>\$5,807,400</b>
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Not a NEASC Recommendation but a required upgrade for safety</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade Fire Safety System throughout the building</li> </ul>	\$3,000,000
<b>Soft costs for priority 1.2</b>		included
<b>Total Cost for this priority area</b>		<b>\$3,000,000</b>
<b>PHASE I: INITIAL REQUEST TO THE CITY OF PAWTUCKET</b>		<b>\$10,000,000</b>

Priority Ranking	Deficiency & Proposed Action	Estimate
2	<p>The temperature in the classrooms that is too cold or too hot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace the Univents throughout the building</li> <li>**Have a professional evaluation done of the existing system for recommendations that may include Univent replacements</li> </ul>	\$6,000,000
3	<p>The school's electrical infrastructure and bandwidth that have yet to meet the needs of a comprehensive high school for using industry-standard technology as a teacher, learning, and communication tool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The electrical infrastructure will be evaluated as identified above but with the decreased number of space heaters, and slight upgrades, is not a priority area at this time</li> <li>The bandwidth will be assessed and increased as needed for better connectivity</li> <li>**bandwidth is currently being evaluated to determine the extent of the concerns with connectivity</li> <li>Replace network switches throughout the building</li> <li>Replace some access points throughout the building</li> </ul>	\$0 \$500,000
4	<p>The electrical issues that can trip circuits causing darkened hallways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will address this issue by hiring an electrical engineer to identify and repair the issue</li> </ul>	\$5,500,000
<p><b>PHASE II: POSSIBLE FUTURE REQUEST TO THE CITY OF PAWTUCKET</b></p>		<p><b>\$12,000,000</b></p>

Priority Ranking	Deficiency & Proposed Action	Estimate
PSD	<p>The back staircase from the gym to the auditorium has inadequate lighting and a loose railing that could cause a stumble</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lighting will be addressed by PSD</li> <li>• The handrail will be secured by PSD</li> </ul>	COMPLETE COMPLETE
PSD	<p>The lockers with open spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove a bank of locker and repurpose the parts to fix the seven lockers identified as being without doors</li> <li>• Add Alternate: Remove multiple banks of lockers and utilize the space with areas to house staff for hallway supervision</li> </ul>	TBD (PSD)  TBD
PSD	<p>The emergency lighting that is inadequate or not available in some areas of the building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade emergency lighting in stairwells and outside</li> </ul>	TBD (PSD)



Priority Ranking	Deficiency & Proposed Action	Estimate
X	<p><b>The windows that are not well-insulated or cannot be opened easily to allow air circulation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This will not be an area to be addressed at this time - although recognized as needed. When the building is repurposed for the next educational use, this repair must be addressed but it will involve extensive collaboration with the historic society. Additionally, with the product lead times, other projects can be completed and make a genuine improvement in the conditions at Shea High School before this would ever be realized ** we will, however, investigate a temporary solution for ventilation</li> </ul>	TBD
X	<p><b>The use of space heaters that draw electricity away from teaching and learning technology due to outdated electrical system forcing teachers to unplug the space heater to use the whiteboard and computers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With the repair to the heating system, this is no longer an issue</li> </ul>	
X	<p><b>The lack of handicap access to the third floor resulting in any unique courses or laboratories are not available to all students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school department has addressed this concern by providing FAPE at Tolman High School. This target area will be addressed as the school building is repurposed</li> </ul>	