After many years of work, the South Portland Middle School Project will go to referendum on November 5, 2019

➤ Voters will be asked whether they authorize the construction and equipping of a new Middle School for South Portland with $59.3m funded by the State and $10m being funded locally.

➤ Of the local funding, $8.3m will finance the non-state-funded portion of the Middle School Project and $1.7m will support relocation of the School Department’s central receiving and facilities office and renovation of the transportation facility.

➤ If approved, this will be the first state-funded major school construction project in South Portland.

➤ The Middle School design preserves the feeling of a smaller school and includes separate Grade 5-6 and Grade 7-8 schools with start times staggered by at least 45 minutes within the overall design.

➤ A Grade 5-8 configuration also allows for expansion of our Pre K program without the need for new construction at our elementary schools.

The new Middle School will serve the needs of all South Portland students for decades to come.

For the latest information about the project, visit: tinyurl.com/spsdms
1. **What will the November 5 referendum ask the voters of South Portland to approve?**

At the November 5th referendum voters will be asked whether they authorize the construction and equipping of a new Middle School for South Portland with $59.3m funded by the State and $10m being funded locally. Of the local funding, $8.3m will finance the non-state-funded portion of the Middle School Project and $1.7m will support relocation of the School Departments central receiving and facilities office and renovation of the transportation facility.

2. **What happens next if the voters approve the referendum?**

If the voters approve the referendum, the project would move forward and the State will reimburse the city for $59.3m of the approved bond. After design development is complete, the project will go out to bid in late 2020 with construction set to start in late spring/early summer of 2021. We expect building occupancy by July of 2023 and opening for students in September 2023.

3. **What happens if voters reject the bond for a new 5-8 middle school?**

If voters reject the bond then South Portland will lose the opportunity for $59.3m in State funding for a Middle School Project. Critically necessary maintenance and renovations to both middle schools would be at local expense.

4. **How did we arrive at the recommendation for a 5-8 Consolidated Middle School?**

The State required us to conduct a “New versus Renovation” analysis of Mahoney. They also required us to look at the needs of the Pre K-Grade 8 students districtwide and not limit our analysis to only Mahoney.

Based on the “New versus Renovation” analysis and the input received from the community, the staff of Mahoney and Memorial, the administrators, and the Middle School Building Committee
recommended that the district move forward with a plan for a Grades 5-8 Consolidated Middle School. We are confident and committed to a design that preserves the feeling of a smaller school, which will include separate Grade 5-6 and Grade 7-8 schools with start times staggered by at least 45 minutes within the overall design.

5. **What about Pre K?**
A Grade 5-8 configuration allows for expansion of our Pre K program without the need for new construction at our elementary schools.

6. **What are the benefits of the new middle school?**
The new middle school design provides exciting new possibilities to provide equitable educational opportunities for all students.

- Allows for design of “purpose built” smaller, separate learners communities for Grades 5 & 6 and Grades 7 & 8 with some shared services in one campus
- Design and layout develops strong “learning communities” on each level of the school with more seamless access to Special Education and English Language Learner (ELL) services and supports
- Sustainable design features (geothermal heating and cooling, solar power) allows year-round use in a comfortable and healthy environment
- Excellent visual and performing arts classrooms provides space for our programs to thrive
- Richer and more diverse options for sharing services, teaming and learning for students and staff
- Larger gym with dividable spaces and multipurpose room provide great space for physical education, after school athletics and community use
- Expected to allow renovation of all fields on site for maximum utility
- Provides an opportunity to rework traffic flow for the entire site, solving major problems for current middle schools and improvements for Skillin
- With new development on the West End driven by the new master city plan, the location is expected to be closer to the demographic center of South Portland in the future

7. **Where are we in the State’s timeline?**
We are at step thirteen of a twenty-one step Maine Department of Education process. Following a community meeting in April and two community information meetings June 11 and 12, a straw poll vote on the concept design plan was held on June 20 showing strong support for the project. The State Board of Education then approved our Concept Approval Submission on July 10, 2019 for a combined Grade 5-8 middle school on the Wescott Road site. We are working towards a referendum on November 5, 2019. Once construction begins, the project is expected to take approximately 30 months to complete. More information may be found on the timeline on the Middle Schools Project website: tinyurl.com/spsdms.

**The time to get involved is now!**
As the Middle School Project heads to referendum on **November 5** and we continue the work to move from concept to final design, this is a great time to get involved! Please contact Kathy Germani for more information (germanka@spsd.org or 871-0555).

**For the latest information about the project, please go to:** tinyurl.com/spsdms