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ARPA: Schools are Our Future

We listened carefully to the community, our School Committee members and our City Councilors about how best to invest the American Rescue Plan Act, a.k.a. ARPA, funds. A common goal was investing in our schools, as they quite literally hold our future, and our children were so heavily impacted by the pandemic.

This spring, I announced that we would use a portion of the ARPA funds to move forward, in partnership with the Massachusetts School Building Authority, MSBA, on the feasibility phase for the Countryside Elementary School Project. The timing was necessary as Countryside had just been accepted into the MSBA Core Grant Program which can help pay up to roughly 40% of eligible project costs.

We are now positioned to use ARPA funds to help move additional important school projects forward:

Lincoln-Eliot (\$350,000) – This funding allows us to continue the schematic design phase for a wonderful facility, new playgrounds, fields, and so much more at 150 Jackson Road. We held a community meeting tonight and our next one will be at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 9. Preregister to attend and speak [here](#).

Franklin (\$100,000) – This funding allows us to begin the feasibility phase for a renovation/addition or new building as well as new playgrounds and fields for the Franklin School and neighborhood. Our first community meeting will be at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 2. Preregister to attend and speak [here](#).

Horace Mann (\$100,000) – Following up on our recent announcement of \$250,000 for a new playground, these funds will allow us to further the design efforts that began before Covid for much needed space while complimenting one of our proud historical facilities. Our first community meeting will be at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 25. Preregister to attend and speak [here](#).

Ward and Underwood – Newton Public Schools began to engage with the Ward and Underwood Parent Task Force just before the Covid-19 pandemic began. This group is tackling the facility challenges that exist at both schools, and how best to address them. I am reserving ARPA funds to make sure that Newton Public Schools and the Parent Task Force have the resources they will need to move this important initiative along once the feasibility phase gets started.