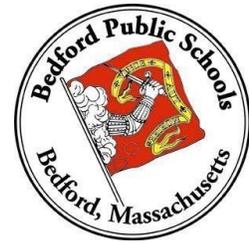


# BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**To:** Members of the Bedford Capital Expenditure Committee  
**From:** Cliff Chuang, Superintendent of Schools  
**Date:** November 22, 2023  
**Subject:** School Safety Capital Request for FY25, Additional Information and Clarification

Pursuant to our conversation at your November 8, 2023, meeting, I am providing additional information about our FY25 school safety capital request of \$925,000 and clarification about plans related to already allocated FY24 capital funds for this project. Please see the attached matrix and corresponding back-up material for full details, but I want to highlight the following:

- After receiving additional clarification about the specificity of the March 2023 Town Meeting warrant language related to our FY24 school safety capital request, **we are no longer proposing to use FY24 capital funds on security cameras.**
- The matrix provides a high-level roadmap to the components we are planning to fund in FY24 and FY25 (with a outyear projection for FY26), along with either an attached quote or information about the status of quotes, with the caveat that the pricing is subject to fluctuations due to timing and supply chain issues. The projects are prioritized based on the risks/threat levels as outlined in the confidential school security physical site assessment reports provided to the Bedford Public Schools in April 2023 by The Edward Davis Company (EDC), an expert security consulting firm. **The absence of security cameras in our schools was identified as the top vulnerability to safety by EDC at each one of our schools.**
- The Town Manager is proposing to fund this FY25 request using available free cash, which will permit the Facilities Department to begin implementation of the camera systems immediately following the March 2024 Town Meeting, assuming Town Meeting approval. This enables substantial progress in security recommendations in the April - August 2024 timeframe, prior to the 2024-25 school year.
- Finally, I want to be transparent and let you know that given our concern about any delay in implementation of cameras at the high school, the School and Facilities Departments continue to explore if non-capital funds can be made available in order to enable progress with limited installation of cameras at BHS this year.

Because most of the FY25 requested funds are focused on the purchase and installation of interior security cameras in our schools, I want to share some information about the use of security cameras to support school safety.

- The vast majority of other school districts in Massachusetts already have security cameras in place to keep their schools safe. I have yet to consult with a colleague, superintendent, or high school principal in Massachusetts that does not have some interior security camera coverage in use. This includes our closest surrounding districts.
- According to the National Center for Education Statistics at the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education report on [Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools in 2019–20 \(ed.gov\)](#), 97% of high schools, 95% of middle schools, and 88% of elementary schools use security cameras to monitor schools.

- The [School Security Best Practices Guide 2022](#) of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association (MCOPA), based on the Partner Alliance for Safer Schools (PASS) [Safety and Security Guidelines for K-12 Schools](#) states:  
*A video surveillance system is a component of any school or district security program, providing deterrence and detection and, in more advanced implementations, enhancing response to a variety of daily challenges experienced at schools. (p. 15).*
- I have partnered closely with Bedford Chief of Police John Fisher since the early days of my tenure, and the lack of security cameras in schools was one of the first concerns he raised. He asked me to share this statement:

*The Bedford Police Department works in close partnership with the Bedford Public Schools to ensure the safety of our students. This is a partnership that is predicated on strong relationships at all levels, but especially between our School Resource Officer (SRO) Justin Brooks and school administrators, as outlined by our SRO Memorandum of Understanding and Policy. A fully functional security camera system is an absolutely essential tool to allow public safety and school officials to effectively collaborate to deter theft, vandalism and other negative behavior, to safeguard people and property, and to monitor unauthorized individuals in or on school property. Countless unnecessary hours have been spent by the SRO, school administrators, and other police personnel investigating incidents that could have been easily resolved or avoided altogether had security camera technology been in place. The inability to hold individuals accountable for their actions contributes to a sense of unease and lack of safety in the school community. I unequivocally support the school department's request for capital funding to install a functional camera system to support our partnership to keep the schools safe.*

— **Bedford Chief of Police John Fisher**

- Stakeholder feedback overwhelmingly supports the installation and use of security camera technology in areas without a reasonable expectation of privacy to improve school safety. The school committee has discussed the issue several times in spring and fall 2023, with no public comment or constituent feedback in opposition, and unanimous support by the committee, including student, Boston METCO, and Hanscom Airforce Base members.

I will be available at your November 29, 2023, meeting to answer any questions you may have, along with Julie Kirrane, Director of School Finance, Ron Scaltreto, Facilities Director, and Heather Galante, Bedford High School Principal.

**Attachments:**

- [FY 24-26 School Security Plan Capital Request Matrix 11.20.23](#)
- [FY25 School Security Quotes #1-7](#)