



August 28, 2015

Mr. Michael H. Harrity
Board of Selectmen
PO Box 378, 11 Town House Road
Weston, MA 02493

Dear Chairman Harrity and Members of the Board:

I am writing to clarify what appears to be some confusion or misunderstanding about plans for a new Minuteman High School which were unanimously endorsed by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) on August 6. I am addressing comments first reported in the Concord Journal on August 3 in an article titled "Minuteman school fight hits Sudbury" and reprinted the following day in the MetroWest Daily News in an article re-titled "Sudbury finds some allies in Minuteman school fight." The article, written by Brittney McNamara, reported on a district-wide meeting hosted by the Sudbury Board of Selectmen.

While I applaud the spirit of Selectman Len Simon's declaration to find a common path forward for the building project, I am compelled to provide some clarification regarding several critical aspects of the discussion:

School Size

It appears that some town officials are still unclear about why we are proposing to build a new school with a design enrollment of 628 students. The number is based on data that was discussed at multiple public meetings. We came to the number, over time, based on our comprehensive review of enrollment trends, labor market data on occupational demand, the specific needs of the career programs we are offering, and input from our member towns, among other factors. In our expert opinion, 628 is also the smallest sized school that allows us to retain the quality of education our communities expect. This size will result in a lower per student operating cost. Further, MSBA's staff and board of directors have indicated that a school of 600 students is the *smallest* they would commit state funds to.

For those seeking a more detailed answer, we have prepared a two-page document outlining how we reached 628. That document can be found on the School Building Committee page under "Latest Updates." See <http://minutemanschoolbuilding.org/>

Out-of-District Students

Minuteman High School has a long, rich history of welcoming students from outside the 16-town district. Benefits of welcoming out-of-district students include: a contribution to operating costs through out-of-district tuition, improved student diversity, and allowing the school to offer a wider range of career paths and electives. For a period in the 1990s, more than 60% of the school's student body came from outside the district. This past year, we were at 43%.

Since I arrived at Minuteman eight (8) years ago, we have been hearing concerns from officials in our member towns that Minuteman was relying too heavily on out-of-district students at the same time the Commissioner of Education was reducing out-of-district tuition rates. We listened and responded. As a direct result, we reduced the size of the planned school, downsized enrollment to 628 students, and initiated plans to more effectively recruit within the district's 16 towns. We conservatively project that more than 500 of the 628 students will be from within the district within a few years of the project's completion.

Change in Regulations

At the same time we were downsizing the school, we were working with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to allow a capital fee be imposed on towns sending out-of-district students. I personally advocated for this change. Up until now, non-member communities paid the state-established tuition fee only, but they were not responsible for paying a share of capital construction costs for the new school. The Minuteman School Committee and I agreed with member town officials that that placed an unfair burden on taxpayers in our member towns. This concern has been fully addressed.

On February 23, 2015, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved revised Chapter 74 regulations. These regulations include a provision allowing a capital fee be added to the base tuition rate set by DESE. Putting it bluntly, non-member communities no longer get a "free ride" when it comes to capital expenditures.

Minuteman's Involvement Moving Ahead

Minuteman would like to be included in future discussions with select boards so that we can discuss the facts and keep misinformation to an absolute minimum. In this regard, Minuteman School Committee chair Jeffrey Stulin and School Building Committee chair Ford Spalding will be in touch soon to inform you of meetings they are arranging to discuss the project and seek your input.

Over the next ten (10) weeks, I will be concentrating my efforts on the design phase of the project and will be meeting with students, parents, staff, business people, and community leaders. I personally welcome the input of all community members, including members of your Board, in providing productive ideas to our Design Team.

Thank you for your support of Minuteman High School and our students.

Very truly,



Edward A. Bouquillon, PhD
Superintendent-Director

cc: Town Administrators/Managers
School Committee Chair
Minuteman School Committee Members