

Updated:
September 9, 2016

**Why We Will Fill the New School:
Reasons to Expect In-District Enrollment to Grow
at Minuteman High School**

1. Recognition of and support for vocational technical education is growing across the country.

- “Ready to Work: Reviving Vocational Ed,” American Radio Works broadcast in September of 2014
<http://www.americanradioworks.org/documentaries/ready-to-work/>
- “Rethinking vocational high school as a path to college” which appeared in Marketplace on October 23, 2014:
<http://www.marketplace.org/topics/education/learningcurve/rethinking-vocational-high-school-path-college>
- “Vocational high schools: where job skills are the goal” which appeared in Marketplace on October 24, 2014:
<http://www.marketplace.org/topics/education/learningcurve/vocational-high-schools-where-job-skills-are-goal>
- Broadcast interview on WBRU Radio in Boston which featured Northeastern University’s Barry Bluestone and MAVA President-Elect Robert Dutch, Superintendent-Director at Upper Cape Tech. It focuses on the Dukakis Center’s recent report “Meeting the Commonwealth’s Workforce Needs”. Aired November 11, 2015:
<http://radioboston.wbur.org/2015/11/11/jobs-four-degree>

2. Vocational-technical education enjoys strong support from state leaders. Support is broad and bipartisan, ranging from the Republican Governor to the Democratic State Treasurer.

- Governor Baker Announces Critical Investments in Vocational Education in The Quincy Patriot Ledger on January 25, 2016:
<http://www.patriotledger.com/news/20160126/governor-proposes-critical-investment-in-vocational-education>
- State Treasurer Touts Girls in STEM During Visit to Minuteman:
<http://www.yourarlington.com/search/news-archive/430-schools/minuteman/7932-stem-081215.html>

- Vocational Schools Lobby for Funds on Beacon Hill from WGBH News on March 29, 2016:
<http://news.wgbh.org/2016/03/29/politics-government/vocational-high-schools-make-pitch-solution-mass-workforce-woes>

3. Massachusetts is increasing financial support for vocational-technical education.

- Governor Baker Announces \$83.5 Million Investment in Vocational Education in The Daily Free Press on January 28, 2016:
<http://dailyfreepress.com/2016/01/28/baker-polito-announces-83-5-million-for-career-vocational-technical-education/>
- Governor Baker Announces Vocational Education Initiatives in the Worcester Telegram on January 24, 2016:
<http://www.telegram.com/article/20160124/NEWS/160129525>
- State Announces \$9.3 Million in Vocational Equipment Grants:
<http://www.mass.gov/governor/press-office/press-releases/fy2016/9-3-million-in-workforce-skills-capital-grants-.html>

4. Massachusetts and broad, diverse coalitions such as the Alliance for Vocational Technical Education (AVTE) are pushing to increase the capacity (i.e., number of seats) in vocational-technical schools across Massachusetts.

- <http://allianceforvoeducation.org/>

5. Multiple research studies have demonstrated the importance of vocational technical education to Massachusetts and its students. Here are examples from Northeastern University, one funded by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA):

- “The Critical Importance of Vocational Education in the Commonwealth”, January 2016:
<http://allianceforvoeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/AVTE.NORTHEASTERN-REPORT.pdf>
- “Meeting the Commonwealth's Workforce Needs: Occupational Projections and Vocational Education”, October 2015:
http://www.massschoolbuildings.org/news/publications/Vocational_Workforce_Report_Oct-2015

6. Other districts have experienced increasing enrollment when they built new vocational-technical high schools.

Three new vocational-technical high schools have been built in Massachusetts in recent years: Worcester Technical High School, Roger L. Putnam Vocational-Technical Academy, and Essex Technical High School. Worcester's turnaround story is particularly well known. With the strong backing of local business and political leaders, the City of Worcester built the new school, transforming it from a school of last resort to a "school of choice" where there is "always" a long wait list. To recognize Worcester Tech's achievements, President Obama spoke at the high school's graduation in June of 2014. Putnam, one of six high schools in the Springfield Public Schools, was once viewed the same way as the old school in Worcester. Now, Putnam is described by Springfield's Public Schools CFO Patrick Roach as "one of our flagship schools". He says the school has "a really long waiting list" that "grew significantly" when the new school was built and programs were upgraded. In addition, he says construction of the new school brought increased attention from local businesses who now hire its graduates. The CFO also said he'd now be willing to send his own children there. Another staff member in the Springfield School District says Putnam now has "capacity issues." In Essex's case, the new school merged programs from three different schools: North Shore, Essex Agricultural, and Peabody. The new school increased overall capacity from roughly 1,000 seats to 1,400 seats. Its applicant pool has also increased. According to Mary Kroesser, Administrator of Pupil Personnel Services & Human Resources, the school had 1,000 applications this year for 360 seats in the ninth-grade class.

7. Minuteman is known for its high-quality programs.

A chapter on Minuteman's success was included in *Job U: How to Find Wealth and Success by Developing the Skills Companies Actually Need*, a book by Nicholas Wyman (published in paperback on January 13, 2015) <http://www.jobubook.com/>

8. Minuteman has engaged a national expert (Mark Perna of Tools for Schools) in increasing student enrollment and retention at vocational-technical high schools.

<http://www.tfsresults.com/>

9. With Mark Perna's help, Minuteman is starting to implement a new recruitment strategy and branding initiative.

- See "Minuteman: Brand Construct & Identity Guide," February 2016
- See "Enrollment/Retention 8th Grade Timeline," April 14, 2016

10. Mark Perna and his firm have a record of success at other schools, including Massachusetts vocational schools.

- One example of success: Southeastern Vocational Technical School in South Easton, MA, has 900-1,000 applications for 375 spots.
- Additional examples of the firm's successful efforts to improve student enrollment and retention at vocational-technical schools:
http://www.tfsresults.com/tfs_results/enrollment-retention-strategic-planning-results/

11. Minuteman is experiencing increased interest from 8th graders and their parents.

This year, the first year of implementing a new recruiting strategy, we **quadrupled** the number of students who expressed an interest in visiting Minuteman on Showcase Day.

- See "Middle School Showcase Interest Numbers," November 4, 2015

12. Our new marketing and recruiting efforts are already yielding results.

This year, we saw a **26%** jump in freshmen applications from our member towns, with a corresponding **16%** increase in freshmen enrollment from member towns. We also saw a big increase in out-of-district applications, despite the fact that new state regulations now prevent most of those out-of-district students from being directly accepted at Minuteman while they're in the ninth grade. To translate that increased **interest** into **enrollment**, we will be actively reaching out to tenth-grade students and to ninth-grade students once they complete Exploratory programs in their hometowns.

13. Within our District, there's evidence of increasing demand for Vocational Technical Education.

This was confirmed through a recent survey of Guidance personnel in the middle schools in our sending towns. The survey was conducted by The Education Alliance, a consulting firm based in Natick. More than 70% of the guidance counselors felt that parents would be more willing to send their children to a vocational technical high school in the next five years. Further, more than 71% felt students in their community would be more likely to apply to a voc-tech school in the next five years.

- <http://arlington.wickedlocal.com/article/20151026/NEWS/151028586>

14. Several member towns have noted large increases in their elementary school enrollment.

This fact is well known and has been widely reported in the local press.

15. We are building a smaller school, with a design enrollment of 628 students. The size resulted from years of discussion and debate.

- <http://www.minuteman.org/cms/lib8/MA01907667/Centricity/Domain/81/4.%20628%20Enrollment%20Document%20v8%2009.17.2015%20scs.pdf>

16. The state won't support a design enrollment of less than 600.

- http://www.minuteman.org/cms/lib8/MA01907667/Centricity/Domain/81/MPichetti%20Memo%207.21.15%20Excerpt_MSBA-MM%20Corr%207.28.15.pdf

17. A new school building will attract 8th graders and their parents.

The new school, centered on a Career Academy model, will be a smaller, high-tech school environment with the focus on helping students achieve a significant competitive advantage in college and career. We are transitioning to a more powerful teaching model making a greater academic and career tech impact on students.

18. Parents will be more attracted to Minuteman once member communities end years of in-fighting and rally around construction of the new school.

In recent years, Minuteman has been in the news because of multiple controversies involving the building project. These complex issues covered topics such as finances, out-of-district enrollment, capital fees, school committee voting strength, the regional agreement, district-wide balloting, and many other things. While these public debates have helped to fully vet the project, they have also served to confuse – and alienate – many families in the District who otherwise might have sent their sons and daughters to Minuteman. Once this project is approved, under a new regional agreement, the District is re-organized with a clear focus: providing a competitive advantage to our sons and daughters.

19. A new building will be more attractive because it will ensure continued accreditation by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC).

Right now, Minuteman's accreditation is on "Warning" status, solely due to the condition of the building. A DAPA Research poll showed that maintaining the school's accreditation is critically important to families in the Minuteman district (see Slide 8 of the DAPA Research PowerPoint presentation.) Getting a new building will remove any stigma attached to this "Warning" status.

- <http://minuteman.org/cms/lib8/MA01907667/Centricity/Domain/81/NEASC%20Letter%2011.30.12.pdf>

- <http://minuteman.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=114&ModuleInstanceID=58&ViewID=047E6BE3-6D87-4130-8424-D8E4E9ED6C2A&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=647&PageID=610>

20. Course offerings are attractive and tailored to the interest of students and to the needs of the region’s economy. The new Educational Program Plan was based on labor market research and was scrutinized by the MSBA and DESE.

- See “Educational Program Plan Chart,” including academic programs and vocational programs offered in the Engineering, Construction & Trades Academy and in the Life Sciences & Services Academy
- See “Educational Program Plan Labor Market Analysis” Revised September 2014
http://minuteman.org/cms/lib8/MA01907667/Centricity/Domain/81/20.%20LMI%20EPP%20V6_4%20FINAL%20finalized%202015.pdf

21. The quality of staff and educational programming is widely recognized.

A chapter on Minuteman’s success was included in *Job U: How to Find Wealth and Success by Developing the Skills Companies Actually Need*, a book by Nicholas Wyman (published in paperback on January 13, 2015)
<http://www.jobubook.com/>

22. Exciting new Minuteman initiatives, including the Girls in STEM Mentoring Program and the Girls in the Construction Trades Program, will help attract previously underrepresented female students to the school:

- A news story in *The Boston Globe* titled “Science camp runs on girl power” about the Girls in STEM Camp on February 20, 2015:
<http://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2015/02/19/science-camp-runs-girl-power/MFfTvD7q5e7eGfqjeap2KM/story.html>
- Massachusetts Girls in Trades Conference and Career Fair Attracts 400 Students in the Concord Journal on April 7, 2016:
<http://concord.wickedlocal.com/article/20160407/NEWS/160407526>
- Life Changing Conference Introduces Building Trades to 400 Young Women from Massachusetts, published by the National Building Trades on April 11, 2016:
<http://wepartypatriots.com/wp/2016/04/11/life-changing-conference-introduces-building-trades-to-400-young-women-from-massachusetts/>

23. The four-year college costs and ensuing debt continue to increase.

This has been widely reported and is a universally accepted fact.

24. At the same time, more and more parents are recognizing the “return on investment” from a vocational-technical education.

- <http://arlington.wickedlocal.com/article/20151026/NEWS/151028586>

25. More and more parents are recognizing that a vocational-technical education enables their children to go to college *with a purpose*, not to simply wander aimlessly through an expensive college education.

- Guidance counselors see more demand for voc-tech in The Arlington Advocate on October 26, 2015:
<http://arlington.wickedlocal.com/article/20151026/NEWS/151028586>
- PBS NewsHour Segment Featuring Southeastern Regional Vocational-Technical School on January 26, 2016:
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/should-more-kids-skip-college-for-workforce-training/>

26. Watertown and Everett are likely to continue to send students to Minuteman even when required to pay a new capital fee on top of the annual tuition fee.

This is based on our knowledge of these communities and discussions with community leaders.

27. The six towns which are leaving the district are likely to continue to send students to Minuteman for the foreseeable future.

This is based on our knowledge of these communities and discussions with community leaders as well as vocational-technical superintendents in the region who would be asked to accept students from these towns.

28. The recent decrease in enrollment was planned.

- See the “Fiscal Year 2017 Proposed Budget” document, including the “Executive Summary” on pages 3-4 and the “15 Year Historical Enrollment – October 1 Data” chart on page 15:
http://www.minuteman.org/cms/lib8/MA01907667/Centricity/Domain/12/FY17%20Budget%20Book%20kfm%2003_31%20sw.pdf
- See “Enrollment Resolution Facts: The Determination of the 628-Student Design Enrollment Number”:
<http://www.minuteman.org/cms/lib8/MA01907667/Centricity/Domain/81/4.%20628%20Enrollment%20Document%20v8%2009.17.2015%20scs.pdf>

29. Minuteman's finances are in order. Its most recent annual audit had no findings or recommendations.

- <http://www.yourarlington.com/search/news-archive/430-schools/minuteman/8185-minuteman-112315>

30. Minuteman's operational costs are decreasing. Its FY 2017 budget is smaller than the FY 16 budget. This downward trend will continue as we move toward a smaller school with fewer staff.

- <http://concord.wickedlocal.com/article/20160201/NEWS/160209675>
- http://www.minuteman.org/cms/lib8/MA01907667/Centricity/Domain/14/A.%20FY17%20Public%20Hearing%20SC%20Presentation_20160119%20V2%2001.pdf

31. The per-student operating cost will decrease.

Lower costs make the school more attractive to in-district and out-of-district communities.

32. Reduced district size will reduce transportation costs.

At the present time, Minuteman's transportation costs are huge. With fewer towns, those costs will be reduced. Lower costs make the school more attractive to in-district and out-of-district communities.

33. Discontinued courses will be shut down when students who entered as 9th graders graduate.

Our new Educational Program Plan calls for 16 vocational-technical programs in two Career Academies. Some existing programs are being phased-out and others are being consolidated, but our existing students are entitled to stay in their programs until they complete them. When the programs end, communities will see a benefit. Lower costs make the school more attractive to in-district and out-of-district communities.

34. A professional poll conducted by DAPA Research (nationally-known pollster David Paleologos) confirmed there's strong recognition of and support for Minuteman and its programs by residents in the Minuteman District.

- <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/west/2015/09/23/poll-finds-support-for-new-minuteman-school-project/fTS7LD1gOqxzINpBqEP0H/story.html>

- <http://minuteman.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=114&ModuleInstanceID=58&ViewID=047E6BE3-6D87-4130-8424-D8E4E9ED6C2A&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=647&PageID=610>

35. MSBA has carefully scrutinized the project and has confidence in the school's viability. MSBA is investing more than \$44 million in a new Minuteman facility.

- http://www.massschoolbuildings.org/news_events/Board_1.27.16/Minuteman_HS
- <http://minuteman.org/cms/lib8/MA01907667/Centricity/Domain/81/1.%20MSBA-MM%20Correspondence%207.28.15.pdf>

36. Minuteman enjoys strong state support, with key state leaders publicly expressing support for Minuteman and its building project.

- “Minuteman Gets Final Go-Ahead from MSBA”, quoting the MSBA board chair, in the Lexington Minuteman on January 27, 2016:
<http://lexington.wickedlocal.com/news/20160127/minuteman-gets-final-go-ahead-from-msba-moves-to-seeking-funding>
- MSBA Staff Memo from Director of Capital Planning Mary Pichetti Analyzing and Recommending Approval of the Minuteman Project, July 21, 2015:
http://minuteman.org/cms/lib8/MA01907667/Centricity/Domain/81/MPichetti%20Memo%207.21.15%20Excerpt_MSBA-MM%20Corr%207.28.15.pdf
- See letter of general support for the project and programs from DESE Deputy Commissioner Jeffrey Wulfson, May 11, 2015

37. Minuteman enjoys strong state support, with the state continuing to invest in Minuteman, most recently with a \$500,000 competitive grant to support a new Advanced Manufacturing and Machine Technology program.

- <http://patch.com/massachusetts/concord/minuteman-school-gets-500000-competitive-state-grant-0>

38. We offer a "competitive advantage" for students, whether they plan to attend college or go directly into the workforce.

- <http://www.yourarlington.com/easyblog/entry/4-schools/2104-minuteman-122915.html>
- <http://www.minuteman.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&ModuleInstanceID=555&ViewID=047E6BE3-6D87-4130-8424-D8E4E9ED6C2A&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=414&PageID=1>