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Massachusetts School Building Authority

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Executive Director

November 16, 2009

George Zini
Superintendent
Uxbridge Public Schools
21 South Main Street
Uxbridge, MA 01569

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN
UXBRIDGE, MA

RE: Preliminary Evaluation of Feasibility Study
Uxbridge High School – Uxbridge, MA

Dear Superintendent Zini:

The Massachusetts School Building Authority (the “MSBA”) is reviewing the Town of Uxbridge’s Feasibility Study submittal dated October 9, 2009, prepared by Raymond Design Associates, Inc. (RDA). In November 2007, the MSBA’s Board of Directors had invited the District to conduct a feasibility study for the high school. The District filed a Statement of Interest (SOI) for the high school and selected the high school as its priority, and it did not submit an SOI for the elementary or middle school. Based on our preliminary review, however, it appears that the Feasibility Study recommends the construction of a \$51 million new building to accommodate 600 students, at a new site on Quaker Highway. The selection of this alternative appears to be strongly influenced by the benefits of a district-wide solution, which addresses the needs of the elementary and middle schools as well as the high school. As discussed this morning, although the MSBA does not believe that the Feasibility Study currently provides sufficient data and supporting analysis to allow a conclusive recommendation for a preferred schematic of new construction, we are committed to working with the District to support its project schedule. We would like to schedule a visit to your District to outline the work required to reach a mutually agreed upon solution that could cost-effectively support the educational program for the Town of Uxbridge and ultimately receive the support of its community.

The MSBA offers the following comments and questions, some of which were raised in our November 9th teleconference, for your consideration. We thank you for your November 13th e-mail which begins to address some of these concerns. The MSBA will review these documents in preparation for a visit to your District.

- The Feasibility Study indicates that the District’s selection of its preferred alternative is Option 3C-3, a \$51 million proposed project for the construction of a new building for 600 students at the Quaker Highway site. As discussed, this new site does not

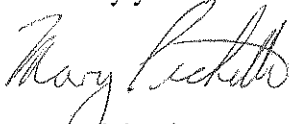
have existing infrastructure, utilities or sitework to support a new school, and therefore the sitework costs for this alternative would not only be substantially higher than the other alternatives, but an initial evaluation of the costs shows that approximately \$5 million may be over the MSBA's cap for eligible sitework costs and therefore ineligible for funding.

- The Feasibility Study does not include the study of an option to address the issues at the high school by building a new high school on the existing site, demolishing the existing school and replacing the athletic fields as may be required. Instead, each option incorporates a district-wide solution based on grade restructuring that would be facilitated by the addition of a new building to the school system. Options that study the solutions to the identified priority school, the high school, should have been included as part of the agreed-upon study for the high school and, at a minimum, are required as one of the essential components needed as a base comparison for the study of a district-wide solution.
- Although the MSBA and the District have agreed upon a design enrollment for the high school, we have not reviewed enrollment projections for the District's elementary or middle schools and have not performed a capacity analysis. There is no supporting evidence that the preferred solution, new construction on a new site, is the most cost-effective way to resolve the District's overcrowding issues at its other schools. Enrollment data should be provided to prove that overcrowding exists at the elementary and intermediate levels and enrollment projections should be reviewed in terms of system-side capacity.
- The Feasibility Study does not include a review of the existing conditions or identify educational program deficiencies at the elementary or the middle schools. Before the MSBA could consider whether reuse of the existing high school for a middle school is a cost effective and educationally appropriate solution that should be considered in the alternative analysis for the high school, we would need additional information regarding the compatibility of the existing educational spaces in the existing high school facility with the middle school educational program and the extent of renovation that will be required to address physical plant and building issues to ensure NEASC accreditation.
- The Feasibility Study also states that costs associated with converting the existing high school into a middle school would be minimal. However, as discussed on our teleconference on Monday, November 9, the existing facility and code deficiencies are likely to impact the delivery of education whether the facility is being used for high school or middle school students as many of the spaces carried in the MSBA Guidelines for high schools and middle schools are similar.
- Each of Uxbridge's schools has completed an addition/renovation within the last 10 years, with DOE assistance. The Feasibility Study does not describe the extent of the work conducted at each facility and address this work as part of the overall proposed solution.

- The operational budget presented in the Feasibility Study should include three years of historical expenditure data and should project the first year of expenditures following completion of the proposed project. The budget presented shows only the current year and the year the new school is projected to open, with no change to the budget.
- The enrollment projection for the Uxbridge High School project is 600 students, almost thirty percent (30%) greater than the current high school population. The MSBA notes that the operational budget proposed in the Feasibility Study does not change, despite the large jump in student population and a new, larger facility with modern technology and additional sports fields. Please explain how the District plans to accommodate these additional students, larger student population, new educational program and additional sports fields proposed for the new High School with no change in its operational budget.

The MSBA looks forward to collaborating with the District as we advance the Uxbridge High School Statement of Interest through the MSBA process. Please feel free to contact Paul Fowkes (Paul.Fowkes@MassSchoolBuildings.org) at 617.720.4466 with any questions.

Sincerely yours,



Mary Fichetti
Director of Capital Planning

Cc: Senator Richard Moore
Representative Jennifer Callahan
Representative Paul Kujawski
Kevin Kuros, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Michael Szlosek, Town Manager
Ernest Esposito, Chair, School Committee
Don Sawyer, School Department Business Manager
John Higgins, Chair, School Building Committee
Jeffrey Luxenberg, Owner's Project Manager

File: 10.2 Letters (Region 2)