



Massachusetts School Building Authority

Steven Grossman
Chairman, State Treasurer

Katherine P. Craven
Executive Director

September 16, 2011

Dr. Jonathan Landman, Superintendent
Hopkinton Public Schools
89 Hayden Rowe Street
Hopkinton, MA 01748

Re: Center Elementary School

Dear Dr. Landman:

The Massachusetts School Building Authority (the "MSBA") is issuing this letter in response to the Town of Hopkinton's (the "District") letter dated August 16, 2011 relative to the Center Street Elementary School project (the "Project") located on Fruit Street.

The MSBA Board of Directors approved the Project for a Project Scope and Budget Agreement (PS&B) at its February 9, 2011 meeting. The Town of Hopkinton, however, has failed to secure funding for the Center Elementary School Project, once at Special Town Meeting on March 21, 2011 and again at a Special Election on March 28, 2011. By letter dated March 31, 2011, the District informed the MSBA that three reasons contributed to the vote failures: grade reconfiguration, the Fruit Street location, and economics. These three factors were at the core of the decisions made by the District during the feasibility study/schematic design phase and formed the basis of the District's recommendation of the preferred solution. Throughout the feasibility study and schematic design process, the District responded to MSBA inquiries about these subjects with assurances that its recommendations to support grade reconfiguration and neighborhood schools were based on years of work and decisions made by the School Committee originally in 2002 and reconfirmed in the years leading up to this collaboration with the MSBA. And yet, the District cites the same three factors as the reason 72% of the District's voters did not support the Project.

The March 31, 2011 letter also contains the District's plans to conduct public forums and listening sessions to better understand the community's priorities specific to the Center Street Elementary School project. The MSBA strongly supports the District's understanding that this community outreach is essential to moving forward. However, in the March 31, 2011 letter, the District stated, "we will develop a more detailed timeline and process for the building consensus during the next six months. Within the next two

months, we will provide the MSBA with an update on our progress.” To date, the MSBA has not received any updated information relative to an updated timeline or process or the results of any public forums and listening sessions as mentioned above.

We received the District’s August 16, 2011 letter, which states that the District is convinced that the Project will only garner community support if it is re-purposed from a K-5 to a PreK-3 school. In response to the District’s questions (1 and 2) regarding this idea, I have attached the previous position from the District regarding the School Committee’s decisions in 2002 and 2005 to fully support neighborhood schools in a K-5 grade structure. The District’s proposed changes are now contrary to these decisions previously approved by the School Committee, and the MSBA believes that the District must start with a review and definition of its educational objectives. Although the MSBA understands that the District may be able to keep the enrollment and square footage approximately the same by revising the Project to a PreK-3 grade structure, these numbers alone do not inform the question as to whether it is the same Project. The District’s recommendation for a preferred schematic was based on a design associated with a K-5 grade structure, and this grade structure played a significant role in the selection of both the preferred solution and the selected design. In addition, this decision resulted in an analysis, which although not eligible for reimbursement from the MSBA, would have resulted in the need for renovation and addition projects at the Elmwood and Hopkins Elementary Schools in order to support the proposed K-5 grade reconfiguration.

Before the MSBA can provide any further review, the District must present an updated, approved educational plan, one that has been the subject of community outreach and dialogue. The MSBA would need to understand: how the proposed revised educational plan meets the educational objectives of the District, as approved by the School Committee; what evidence there is that this revision is a project that the community would support; and whether this Project, as revised, would still be the most cost effective choice to support the District’s revised educational goals.

Regarding questions 3 and 4 of the District’s August 16, 2011 letter, the MSBA would be willing to understand the proposed revisions noted from the Value Engineering Plan already conducted for the Project as part of the District’s schematic design submission to the MSBA. However, the MSBA strongly suggests that the District should re-consider the design of the Project and look for opportunities to simplify the building layout. As noted during the MSBA review process and during the Facilities Assessment Subcommittee meeting, the selected design has cost implications associated with both the site selection as well as a complex layout. In addition, the District had specifically noted that the building layout was designed to account for groupings of students from K-5, noting the separate building for the Grade 5 students. Under the new configuration of PreK-3, this building layout may not be best suited for the grade levels.

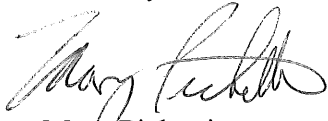
Finally, the MSBA cannot comment on whether the District’s reimbursement rate would change or whether the proposed changes could result in a change to the MSBA’s maximum total facilities grant. However, if the District determines to not move forward with the CM-at-Risk methodology, as noted in the August 16, 2011 letter, the incentive

point initially provided for this methodology would not be included in the updated reimbursement rate.

The MSBA is pleased to continue to work with the Town of Hopkinton as it performs the necessary community outreach noted in its March 31, 2011 letter. Until this information is submitted by the District, and reviewed by MSBA staff, the MSBA cannot comment on how the changes outlined in the August 16, 2011 letter would affect the Project significantly enough to warrant a new SOI submission by the District or if the estimated grant for this Project would change.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at (617) 720-4466.

Sincerely,



Mary Pichetti
Director of Capital Planning

Cc: Senator Karen E. Spilka
Representative Carolyn Dykema
Todd Cestari, Chair, Hopkinton Board of Selectmen
Town Manager Norman Khumalo
Jean Bertsch, Chair, Hopkinton School Committee
Brian Main, Owner's Project Manager
Dave Finney, Design Partnership of Cambridge
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