



Massachusetts School Building Authority

Deborah B. Goldberg
Chairman, State Treasurer

James A. MacDonald
Chief Executive Officer

John K. McCarthy
Executive Director / Deputy CEO

March 15, 2023

Mr. Mark J. Purple, Town Administrator
Southborough Town House
17 Common Street
Southborough, MA 01772

Re: Town of Southborough, Margaret A. Neary Elementary School

Dear Mr. Purple:

I would like to thank representatives of the Town of Southborough (the “District”) for meeting with Massachusetts School Building Authority (the “MSBA”) staff on January 19, 2023, to review enrollment projections and methodologies for the Margaret A. Neary Elementary School project (the “Proposed Project”). We also appreciate the additional information provided by the District on January 30, 2023, specific to local birth records. As discussed, the next critical step is for the MSBA and the District to agree on a study enrollment for the Proposed Project.

The MSBA works with local communities to create affordable, sustainable, and energy efficient schools across Massachusetts. A critical early component in achieving these objectives begins with an appropriate design enrollment that positions the District to efficiently meet space capacity needs throughout potential future enrollment variations.

The MSBA uses a data driven enrollment projection methodology based on the widely accepted modified grade-to-grade cohort survival methodology (the “enrollment methodology”). The MSBA’s enrollment methodology generates a baseline enrollment projection as discussed during the January 19, 2023, enrollment meeting, and as further described on the MSBA’s website found under the ‘Building With Us’, ‘MSBA Enrollment Methodology’ section. For specifics on how the MSBA’s methodology impacts the Proposed Project, please refer to the District’s Enrollment Projection package, provided to the District on January 17, 2023.

Based on information supplied by the District, data from sources such as the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“DESE”) and Department of Public Health, and discussion with the District, the MSBA has been able to create an enrollment projection for the Proposed Project, as follows.

The Margaret A. Neary Elementary School presently serves the District’s grades 4-5 enrollment. The MSBA understands that in order to reduce elementary school transitions the District would like the Feasibility Study to include options that consolidate the Margaret A. Neary Elementary School with the Woodward Elementary School to create a school serving students in grades 2-5.

Accordingly, this analysis will be focused on the enrollment projections for grades 2-5. The table below illustrates the District's K-8 enrollment during the most recent ten-year period, including enrollment for the most recent school year (2022-2023) as reported by DESE.

School Year	K-1	2-3	4-5	6-8	Total
2013-2014	216	275	320	522	1,333
2014-2015	226	282	294	494	1,296
2015-2016	249	241	296	479	1,265
2016-2017	250	245	298	459	1,252
2017-2018	250	266	258	460	1,234
2018-2019	244	258	258	431	1,191
2019-2020	257	258	268	415	1,198
2020-2021	246	253	252	381	1,132
2021-2022	231	269	260	383	1,143
2022-2023	260	268	267	385	1,180

A version of the above table with more detail regarding the District's historic enrollment may also be found on page 6 in the District's Enrollment Projection package.

The total grade 4-5 enrollment in the Town of Southborough as reported by the District for the 2022-2023 school year was 267 students, which reflects a decrease of 53 students (- 19.8%) from the grade 4-5 enrollment reported in the 2013-2014 school year, which was the maximum grade 4-5 enrollment reported in the preceding ten years. Additionally, the current year's grade 4-5 enrollment reflects a decrease of approximately ten students (- 3.8%) from the average grade 4-5 enrollment reported during the preceding ten-year period.

The MSBA understands that the District is proposing an enrollment of 556 students in grades 2-5 at a consolidated Margaret A. Neary and Woodward Elementary School to reduce elementary school transitions. The enrollment in grades 2-5 reported to DESE for the 2022-2023 school year was 535 students.

With respect to future enrollments, the MSBA's base enrollment projection indicates the District's grade 4-5 enrollment is projected to experience an increasing trend through the 2032-2033 school year. In accordance with the MSBA's Enrollment Methodology, the baseline enrollment is calculated using the ten-year average of projected enrollments. As such, the average grade 4-5 base enrollment projection for the Proposed Project through the 2032-2033 school year is as follows:

- The average grade 4-5 base enrollment projection is 285 students.
- The average grade 3-5 base enrollment projection is 430 students.
- The average grade 2-5 base enrollment projection is 580 students.

As a result of a sensitivity analysis performed by the MSBA on this base enrollment projection and further discussion with the District, the following adjustments have been made to the base enrollment projection:

- Out-of-District Enrollment
 - In order to adjust for fluctuations to the out-of-district enrollment patterns of the District's residents over time, the MSBA has made an additional adjustment to the base enrollment projection.
 - In order to make this adjustment, the MSBA adjusted the grade-to-grade survival ratios for grades 2-5 by a total of 3.3% throughout a four-year period in the projection.
 - This adjustment added the following totals to the projected averages for the District's proposed grade configurations as compared to the base enrollment projection:
 - For grades 4-5, the adjustment added approximately ten students.
 - For grades 3-5, the adjustment added approximately ten students.
 - For grades 2-5, the adjustment added approximately 15 students.
- Development
 - Based on the discussions between the District and the MSBA, and the anticipated development information provided by the District, the MSBA enrollment model has been adjusted to use the five-year 75th percentile cohort survival rate for fiscal year 2024 rather than the five-year average cohort survival rate, which is utilized throughout the base enrollment forecast.
 - This adjustment added the following totals to the projected averages for the District's proposed grade configurations as compared to the base enrollment projection:
 - For grades 4-5, the adjustment added approximately ten students.
 - For grades 3-5, the adjustment added approximately ten students.
 - For grades 2-5, the adjustment added approximately 15 students.

As a result of the analysis on the base enrollment forecast, the historical enrollment trends of the District, and the adjustments described above, the MSBA recommends for planning and study purposes only, study enrollments for the Proposed Project as follows:

- Grades 4-5: 305 students
- Grades 3-5: 450 students
- Grades 2-5: 610 students

Please note that these recommendations for multiple study enrollments do not represent an affirmation by the MSBA for approval and/or funding of any of these options and are intended only to provide a framework to inform the feasibility study to be conducted as a means of determining the most cost effective and educationally sound solution to be agreed upon by the District and the MSBA. The MSBA's study enrollment recommendations assume full utilization of all remaining school facilities.

March 15, 2023

Southborough, Margaret A. Neary Elementary School Enrollment Letter

If either the grade 3-5 or grade 2-5 enrollment configurations are determined to be the Preferred Solution, the District will be required to establish in the Preferred Schematic Report the proposed future use or disposition of any existing spaces vacated or otherwise reprogrammed by this Potential Project and that the Preferred Solution has been approved by the School Committee and other necessary District officials. Further, the MSBA will require a written plan from the District describing the process for determining local support for potential consolidation. Upon approval of the District's Preferred Solution, the MSBA will forward a design enrollment certification that is specific to the grade configuration associated with the approved Preferred Solution.

The MSBA believes that this study enrollment recommendation will position the District to efficiently meet space capacity needs throughout future enrollment variations. Please sign and return the attached certification within 21 calendar days to confirm agreement on this study enrollment. If the District feels that this enrollment does not meet the needs of the District, please respond to this letter via e-mail to Allison Sullivan and propose three meeting/conference call times for which the District can be available to discuss enrollment.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or (Allison Sullivan(@MassSchoolBuildings.org) at 617-720-4466.

Sincerely,



Mary Pichetti
Director of Capital Planning

Cc: Legislative Delegation
Kathryn M. Cook, Chair, Southborough Select Board
Roger W. Challen, Chair, Southborough School Committee
Gregory Martineau, Superintendent, Southborough Public Schools
File: 10.2 Letters (Region 2)