



Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District

January 2008

Dear Parents, Guardians and Friends,

You may have read in the newspaper that the Minnechaug building project was selected by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to be one of 83 projects statewide to be considered for further study. Of the projects selected, we are among 49 schools classified as either in need of replacement, major renovation or having additional space needs. Officials of the MSBA invited representatives of our District to Boston to discuss the project in more detail and learn the next steps in the new process. I am sure that you and other townspeople are very interested in what happened during our recent visit. Here is a synopsis of the meeting:

1. The MSBA meeting was very informative and clearly began to set a pathway for us to follow. However, there were no promises and no indications of the project's status, but some things were clarified for us and we were given tasks to complete and a direction to take.
2. The MSBA advised us to move forward with hiring the Owner's Project Manager (OPM). Prior to the School Committee stopping the preliminary work on the project due to the building moratorium, which was finally lifted in July, a project manager was selected but not formally hired. Pinnacle One, a major construction/engineering firm, was our intended OPM. The MSBA requested that we provide evidence of the process that the Building Committee used to make the recommendation to the School Committee. Once we do that and the MSBA has reviewed and approved the Building Committee's actions, then we can formally hire Pinnacle One. This will be the first step in beginning the third phase of the MSBA's plan that will conclude with a final decision about Minnechaug's future. This is, in my opinion, a very important step.
3. The MSBA will review our feasibility study in more detail to determine if additional information is needed. This review will follow the hiring of the OPM and I am hopeful that it will begin some time in February. You may recall that the School Committee and Building Committee had a complete feasibility study developed by the architectural firm of Dore and Whittier. The study serves as the basis for much of the work we have done to date as we continue to prepare documents for the MSBA's new requirements.
4. The MSBA will be sending us a new compliance form to complete within the month. Again, this is part of their new process. The form requires us to agree to the steps outlined in the State statutes. It represents our willingness to work with the MSBA and to adhere to the new process.
5. The MSBA requested a copy of our regional agreement, which we have sent them.
6. The MSBA briefly discussed a time line for their new process as it relates to our high school, but they were non-committal. We discussed the fall of 2008 as a target for bringing the project to the two towns for a vote. The MSBA agreed that, as a target, a fall vote was a reasonable timeline to follow. I want to stress, however, that the discussion was tentative and only in the context of setting a potential target for when the project could come before the voters of both towns and nothing has been decided.

For your information, the District's team that met with the MSBA in Boston on December 20th was comprised of Scott Chapman, Chairman of the Regional School Committee; John Lovejoy, Building Committee Co-Chair from Wilbraham; Brian Garbecki, Building Committee Co-Chair from Hampden; Marty O'Shea, Minnechaug Principal; Ed Cenedella, Facilities and Operations Director; and me.

I hope this information has been helpful in bringing you up to date with the Minnechaug building project. As we learn more and reach important steps in the MSBA process, we will keep you informed. In the meantime, feel free to share this information with others and contact me if you have any questions. My e-mail address is pgagliarducci@hwrsd.org.

Sincerely,

Paul C. Gagliarducci

Paul C. Gagliarducci, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools