

THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS  
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

March 24, 2010

Katherine Craven, Executive Director  
Massachusetts School Building Authority  
40 Broad Street, Suite 500  
Boston, MA 02109

Dear Director Craven:

Thank you for your diligence in working with the Town of Uxbridge to develop a solution for the Uxbridge High School building project. As you are fully aware, this has been a challenging issue for many town residents. The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) has rightly put the onus on the Town to determine the most appropriate building option. However, we write at this time because we are concerned about and question the need for two of the recent conditions arising from the March 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting with the MSBA, Town of Uxbridge and Legislative Delegation. The two conditions in question relate to the need for affirmative votes from four separate boards for a preferred schematic option of a new high school as well as the need for a nonbinding referendum ballot vote.

As you are aware, several Uxbridge boards have previously voted to support the option to build a new high school. Thus far, the Board of Selectmen has refrained from taking a public position to support a proposal which has been embraced by other town boards. As State officials, we have continued to impress upon local officials the need for them to come together to help lead the community forward in supporting a shared vision and solution to meet the capital needs associated with the Uxbridge Public School District.

We agree with the MSBA that a majority of boards should be on record prior to a binding ballot vote. However, it is not clear to us that such recorded support needs to be done yet again prior to a binding vote. Since several town boards have actually already indicated their positions, we would ask that at this time the MSBA agree to accept those prior votes as an official stance as they have indeed gone on record. Also, since the Board of Selectmen will eventually have to take a position prior to placing a binding vote before the public, the condition will be in fact be eventually met by the existing local governing process. Therefore, we do not see the need for this condition to be met now or prior to the Town Meeting as a requirement to advance the project to meet important pending deadlines. Furthermore, this multi-board repeat voting requirement is not the MSBA's normal procedure, nor is it a requirement routinely imposed on other communities seeking building assistance.

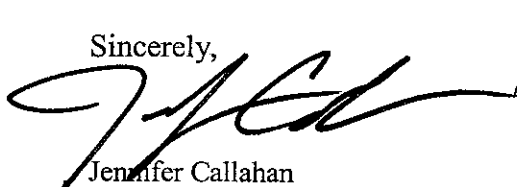
We understand some lingering concerns about the inability to reach consensus at the town board level may have prompted the MSBA to put forth a list of conditions to be met prior to moving forward with a preferred school building option. However, we have significant questions concerning the need for a nonbinding referendum condition as well. Given the history to date, we feel this request is unnecessary. This step is also duplicative because there already is a procedure to place a capital project forward for the town's consideration. Furthermore, we believe this condition may only serve to confuse voters on the town's position and may allow certain local officials to skirt the responsibility of being placed on the record of whether they support a specific proposed solution or not.

Ultimately, the community decides whether or not they support the shared vision and proposed project. However, if local officials continue to refuse to help lead the community to embrace a shared vision and proposal, despite personal differences of opinion, they obviously will have neglected an important and necessary leadership responsibility. Certainly, the imperative and need for local leadership consensus has arrived and will only grow stronger if the project is advanced regardless of the decision on how to proceed.

The time has come for the community to advance a solution, to engage the public in educational forums on the subject and to place the proposal before the public to garner support with the ultimate goal of increasing consensus to build and invest in the community's future vision for exceptional public education. To that end, we respectfully request the MSBA to rescind the requirement of needing additional affirmative votes from town boards as well as a nonbinding referendum from the conditions recently imposed upon the Town of Uxbridge.

It is our sincere belief the community will and can come together to take an official leadership position in an effort to help the townspeople better understand the options and their standing behind a particular solution without requiring these two conditions. Thank you for your attention to this timely and important matter. We welcome any questions or concerns you may have and ask you to please consider removing these two requirements as conditions as soon as possible.

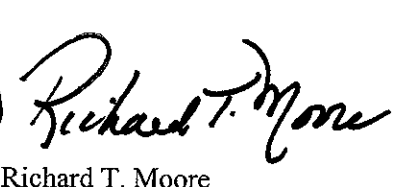
Sincerely,



Jennifer Callahan  
State Representative  
18th Worcester District



Paul Kujawski  
State Representative  
8<sup>th</sup> Worcester District



Richard T. Moore  
State Senator  
Worcester Norfolk District