



## **Dale at Dale Medfield Campaign**

@daleatdale · Environmental Conservation  
Organization

# Who We Are

- We are Medfield taxpayers who are pro-school and pro-replacing Dale St.
- We are concerned about :
  - The higher costs-- initial and long-term- for adding a new building at Wheelock to our existing building inventory.
  - The process used by the SBC to make the final site selection.
  - The ***total*** impact to our town.
- A failed vote at Town Meeting later in 2021 due to a lack of public support for the Wheelock location.



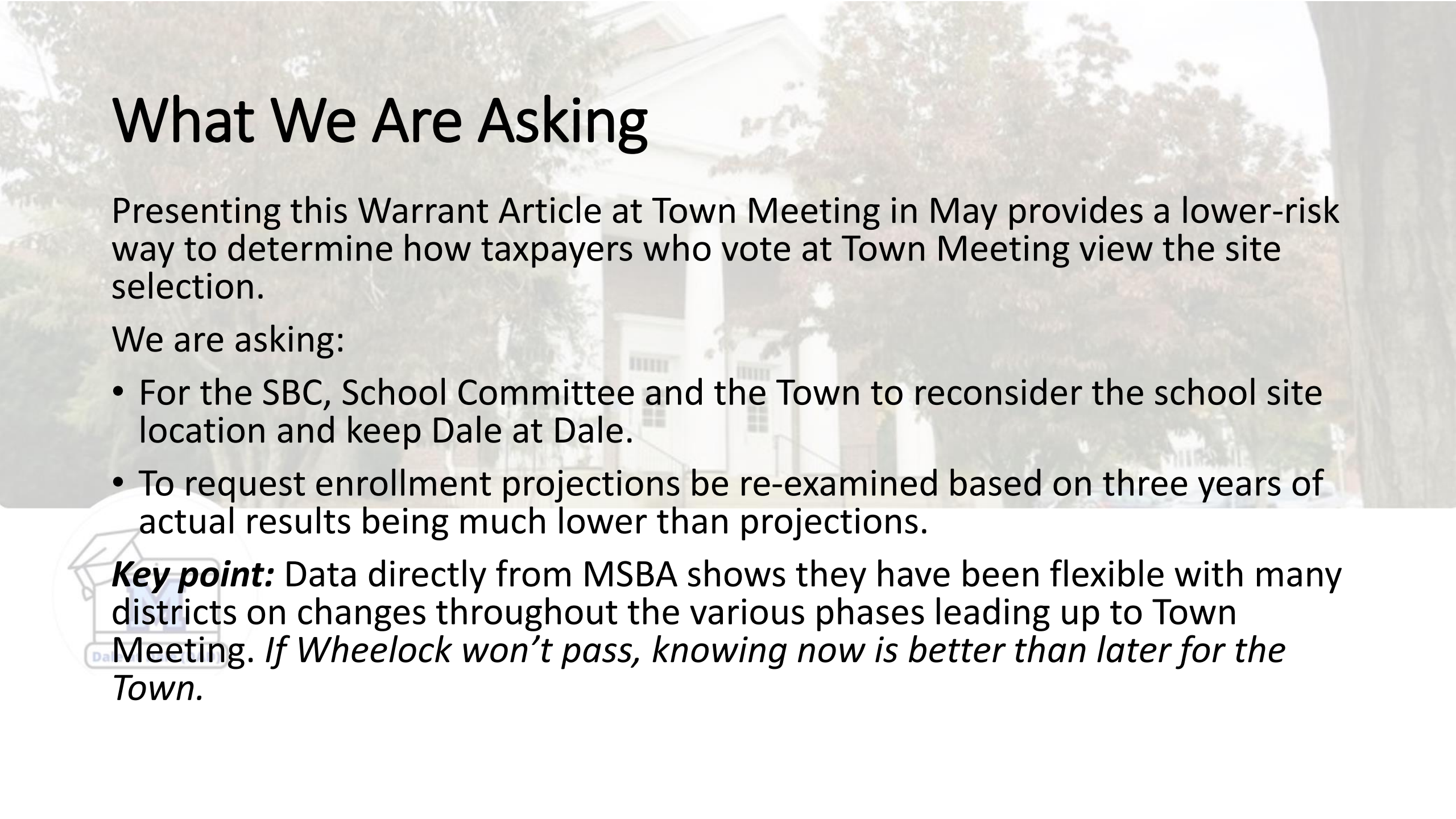


# What We Are Asking

Presenting this Warrant Article at Town Meeting in May provides a lower-risk way to determine how taxpayers who vote at Town Meeting view the site selection.

We are asking:

- For the SBC, School Committee and the Town to reconsider the school site location and keep Dale at Dale.
- To request enrollment projections be re-examined based on three years of actual results being much lower than projections.



**Key point:** Data directly from MSBA shows they have been flexible with many districts on changes throughout the various phases leading up to Town Meeting. *If Wheelock won't pass, knowing now is better than later for the Town.*

# Concerns on Cost

Building at Wheelock is the most expensive option-- upfront and ongoing.

- Adding a new building and related new infrastructure at Wheelock will **increase our existing building inventory**, resulting in higher ongoing maintenance costs, at a time when we are already struggling with capital expenses.
- Renovating Dale will get Medfield a higher reimbursement rate from MSBA and bring the building up to current energy and sustainability standards. ***This is the cheapest way for the Town to renovate/reuse Dale.***
- A new/renovated Dale St. designed with mixed use in mind could also provide Park & Rec facilities AND defray ongoing maintenance by sharing expenses between the District and Park & Rec.

*Bottom line: The siloed approach to Town buildings is no longer sustainable given current revenue sources and projected expenses.*

# Concerns on Process

- The warrant voted on and approved at Town Meeting for feasibility funding was specifically worded with the location at Dale St.
- Projected enrollment numbers are significantly overstated and do not track with actual data (for Medfield and surrounding towns).
- The Dale St. scenarios presented significantly overstated costs and disruption to students.
- The costs associated with the future use of Dale were not considered by the SBC before voting on the Wheelock site.
- Public sentiment has clearly and consistently demonstrated greater support for remaining at Dale St and much greater opposition to Wheelock.
- Site was biased/predetermined to be located at Wheelock before the Permanent Building & Planning Committee or the School Building Committee were authorized to begin the process.





# Concerns On Process: Enrollment

- Current Dale enrollment is approx. 400 students. The projection being used for this project is 575-- a 44% increase.
- Peak enrollment in our district reached 3,100 students in 2005. We had 2,600 students in 2020 and 2,500 students in 2021.
  - We currently have significant excess capacity as follows:
    - Blake can hold 900, we are at 600 (300 under)
    - The High School can hold 1,000, we are at 800 (200 under)
    - Both Wheelock and Dale St are 100 students under 2005 peak levels.
- DESE's projections (for the last two years) were too high--well above actual enrollment. Surrounding towns are all projecting lower enrollment.
- Already faced with excess capacity, building a new school based on these faulty higher projections will cost taxpayers more. Period. ***How can we ask taxpayers to pay more to get to 875 empty seats in our schools?***



# Concerns On Process: Dale & Wheelock Assumptions

- **Dale**

- Costs presented to the public for Dale options were overstated by assuming the need for a significant number of “modulars” during construction, with projected costs in the millions.
- No information/analysis was presented on far less costly and disruptive alternatives such as leveraging excess capacity at Blake and Wheelock.

- **Wheelock**

- All new infrastructure is needed to handle water, sewer, storm water, telecom, traffic and sidewalks. *None of these added costs create educational value.*
- Wheelock has more archaeological and environmental challenges.
- Water treatment and Wheelock projects back-to-back will significantly disrupt Elm St and open space. One project is required, one is discretionary.





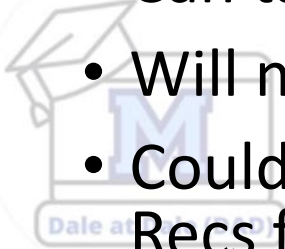
# Why Would We Pay More to Move Away from Downtown?

- Almost half (46%) of those responding to the SURVEY said that downtown improvements were needed (including more parking, more restaurants, etc.). Also, “downtown vibrancy” was listed as being among the “most important issues to consider when planning for the Town’s future by just over one-quarter (27%) of those responding to the survey. Almost one-quarter (23%) said that if they could “do one thing to improve Medfield” they would choose to “improve the downtown.”
- YOUTH SURVEY: Over half (56%) of teens responding to the survey said that the Town Center was among their FAVORITE things in Medfield. Also over one-third (40%) said that downtown vibrancy is among the “most important issues to consider when planning for the Town’s future.” Exactly one-half (50%) said that if they could do “one thing to improve Medfield,” it would be to “improve the downtown.”



# Why Dale at Dale

- Lower cost--upfront and ongoing.
- Aligns with priorities voiced by residents in the Townwide Master Plan (open space, vibrant downtown, traffic mitigation, maintaining town character, protect our natural resources, support great schools)
- Won't require all new and expensive infrastructure (water, sewer, gas, telecom).
- Won't require any additional traffic or safety mitigation costs.
- Can take advantage of higher MSBA reimbursements.
- Will not take away open space or require expensive field replacements.
- Could be designed as a multi-purpose building to address some of Park and Recs facility needs.



# Vote Yes in Support of Petition





## WARRANT COMMITTEE DISCUSSION – March 22, 2021

### Citizens Petition/Warrant Article for 2021 Annual Town Meeting:

To see if Town Meeting will establish a committee charged with creating a Medfield Town Bylaw to govern school building projects, to reflect the School Building Committee appointment process led by Town Moderator (in keeping with Medfield Public School Policy), and to engage citizens-at-large.

#### 1. Why is this bylaw Committee needed?

- **Provide clarity.** It is unclear if the current Permanent Building & Planning Committee Bylaw applies to school building projects – some officials believe it does; others do not. Clarity is needed.
- **Specify appointment process.** It is unclear how members of the School Building Committee are to be appointed, i.e., the process and any restrictions. For example, the PB&PC Bylaw prohibits town employees from serving on its committee; the SBC currently includes a town employee as a voting member (emphasis on “**voting**”).
- **Provide consistency.** The current SBC appointment process (i.e., by Board of Selectmen for the Dale Street project) runs counter to historical practice in which School Building Committee members were appointed by the Town Moderator, per Medfield School Policy (see enclosed).

#### 2. Reconciliation of two state laws are needed; other districts provide great examples (see enclosed).

- Per Medfield Town Counsel: Existing bylaw applies to municipal (owned) property; this includes both so-called school and town property – “it’s all Town property” -- Town Boards don’t own properties under their jurisdiction by statute.

*If this is the case, then the PB&PC bylaw would apply to the SBC.*

- Per M.G.L. c. 71 § 68: “The school committee, unless the town otherwise directs, shall have general charge and superintendence of the schoolhouses, shall keep them in good order, and shall, at the expense of the town, procure a suitable place for the schools.”

#### 3. What are examples of related bylaws and documents in other towns that would help Medfield?

*(See last page.)*

#### 4. Does the MSBA dictate a School Building Committee must be created?

No. [MSBA statute 96B CMR 2.0](#) and committee certification form (see enclosed) assume the appointment of members to the School Building Committee **was made in accordance with Town charter, bylaws, amendments, etc.** The signature of a town chief executive officer on the certification form is akin to notarization. MSBA statutes also do not mandate that certain roles be filled (“it is recommended” that the town “make a reasonable effort to include...”). **In no way does MSBA play a role in determining a member’s voting or non-voting status.**

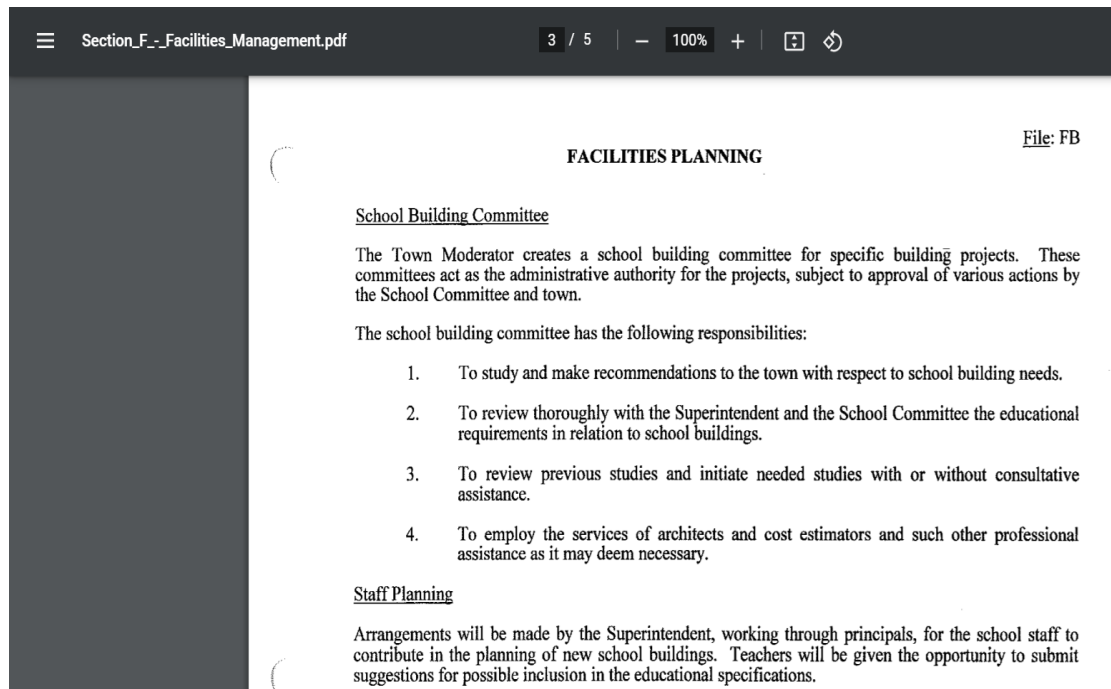
## 5. What are the overarching goals of this effort?

- To convene a committee that will provide clarity with regard to overall school building project governance and process -- either by amending the existing PB&PC Town bylaw -- or creating a new one.
- To ensure that as part of the bylaw committee effort, a process is also put in place regarding how SBC committee appointments are made in accordance with Medfield School Policy (i.e., via Town Moderator – see screenshot below), and to set aside a specified number of seats (e.g., 1-2) for citizens-at-large on the committee to provide diverse representation.

## 6. Why is having some residents-at-large on an SBC important?

- Given average site conditions, what school construction professional will say that building a new school is **more difficult** than renovating and expanding an old school? Unless school construction professionals specialize in historic restoration or renovation, they are typically predisposed to **build new**.
- Medfield residents have said repeatedly via numerous town documents, including old and current Town-wide Master Plan, that they care about historic preservation and the role it plays in protecting town character. Residents-at-large, appointed in the proper fashion, need to have a seat at the table of the SBC to provide balanced perspectives.

### Medfield School Policy – Facilities Management FB





## Additional Background Information

1. Based on **the last two Medfield school building projects** (Medfield High School and Memorial School), which were funded through the MSBA pipeline, the Town Moderator did in fact appoint the School Building Committee members. *(Based on Town Annual Reports; confirmed by one former School Committee member.)*
2. At the Jan. 21, 2020 Board of Selectmen meeting, when questions were raised about the appointments, it was said the current Permanent Building & Planning Committee bylaw (adopted in 2018) does not apply to school projects. If this is true, then **Medfield has no bylaw governing the SBC.**
3. At the same Jan. 21, 2020 BoS meeting, the Board of Selectmen was asked to appoint a second School Committee member to the SBC. This appointment was voted on by the SBC at a previous meeting. At the same time, the Selectmen were also asked to vote on a change of status for a town employee (superintendent of schools) from **non-voting** to **voting** member – an appointment that **was not previously discussed or voted on by the SBC.** (Based on meeting attendance and re-confirmed by meeting notices and minutes.)
4. In 2018 and 2019 (after committee appointments were made), it appears that even within Town Hall, there was lack of clarity about Dale Street Project governance. A number of **meeting notices indicate they were filed under a variety of names**, including Permanent Building & Planning Committee (where Dale-related business was conducted), School Building Committee, and then finally Dale Street School Building Committee (just one sample below).
5. To date, all Dale Street School Building Committee members have been appointed by the Board of Selectmen, **not the Town Moderator**, as dictated by Medfield School Policy, which is governed by Medfield School Committee. (See screenshot of policy enclosed on previous page.)

**NOTICE**

POSTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF M.G.L. CHAPTER 39 SECTION 23A AS AMENDED.

Dale Street School Building Committee  
Board or Committee

<u>PLACE OF MEETING</u>	<u>DAY, DATE, AND TIME</u>
Public Safety Building, Training Room 1 <sup>st</sup> floor	Monday September 23, 2019 @ 7:00 PM

**AGENDA (Subject to change)**

Review Designer submissions

Designer Selection Panel procedures

## Examples of other Town bylaws or documents:

- **Wellesley Policy Statement:** “While school committees in Massachusetts have authority and responsibility under the General Laws for establishment and maintenance of school buildings (M.G.L. c. 71 § 68), the Committee recognizes that the scale of the (school) project requires a broad-based process, involving multiple Town boards as well as interested residents, in order to build consensus around the project. To this end, the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen created the School Building Committee.”

**Wellesley Town Bylaw:** “There shall be a Permanent Building Committee (the “Committee”) consisting of five residents **appointed by the Moderator**, and one or more Temporary Members...Appointments shall be made so that the Committee includes an attorney, an architect, an engineer, and an individual who is primarily engaged in the construction business. **No such member shall be an officer, official, or paid employee of the Town** ...The Committee may appoint, as a temporary additional member or members, one or more individuals who are members or representatives of the entity for which a project is being designed or constructed. A temporary member shall not have a right to vote, and may participate in the activities of the Committee only with respect to the particular project of that entity and only for the period during which the Committee is exercising its functions with respect to such project. **In the case of a School project**, the School Committee shall appoint one of its members, or its designee...” *(Wellesley has more than one School Committee member currently serving on its SBC.)*

- **Needham Town Bylaw:** “There shall be a Permanent Public Building Committee responsible for overseeing the design (including feasibility studies), construction, reconstruction, alteration or enlargement of all buildings owned by the Town or constructed on land owned, leased, licensed or operated by the Town. The Committee shall consist of the Town Manager or his or her designee and six additional members appointed by majority vote of an appointing authority. The appointing authority shall consist of the Moderator, the **Chairman of the School Committee**, the chairman of the Select Board, the Chairman of the Board of Library Trustees, and the Chairman of the Park and Recreation Commission. Each of the members appointed by the Appointing Authority shall be a registered voter of the Town of Needham. **No member appointed by the Appointing Authority shall be a paid employee** of the Town, or serve as an elected official, or elected member of another standing Town board, committee or commission, except Town Meeting, or serve as an appointed member of another standing Town board, committee, or commission directly involved in the design, permitting, and/or financing of public buildings.”
- **Weston Town Bylaw:** Permanent Building Committee regular appointments for school projects made “by the **Board of Selectmen and School Committee acting jointly**”; temporary voting members can be added; town employees (including town administrator and superintendent) must be non-voting members.

*(Additional information has been requested from MSBA regarding school building committee membership and voting status for districts with projects in its current or past pipeline.)*



Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, MSBA Project Coordinator  
Massachusetts School Building Authority  
40 Broad Street, Fifth Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02109

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

In accordance with 963 CMR 2.00, attached for your review and approval is the membership of the School Building Committee for [insert here] School located in the Town of XXX/City of XXX/XXX Regional School District. The Committee was formed in accordance with the provisions of all applicable statutes, local charters, by-laws and agreements of the Town of XXX/City of XXX/XXX Regional School District. Committee Members include the following:

(Please provide name, title, address and phone number of each member, and indicate who the Chair of the School Building Committee is. Also, please indicate whether the member has voting power. Some categories may have more than one name. All members must be included)

Designation	Name and Title	Address	Email Address and Phone Number	Voting Member ?
SBC member who is MCPPO certified*				
Local Chief Executive				

After approval of this committee by the Authority, the (City, Town or Regional School District) will notify the Authority in writing within 20 calendar days of any changes to the membership or the duties of said committee.

Sincerely,

Authorized Signature for the City, Town, or Regional School District

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approved by MSBA                      Date

\* Please attach the certification from the Office of the Inspector General demonstrating completion of the MCPPO Program.  
\*\* "Administrator or Manager" refers to a Town Administrator, Town Manager, or to an equivalent position.