



LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Buckner M. Creel
Administrator for Business and Finance

September 18, 2008

To: School Committee
Mickey Brandmeyer, Superintendent
From: Buck Creel
Subject: MSBA Statement of Interest

Background. The Facilities Subcommittee of the School Committee has worked for the past four years on a study process to begin charting the best approach to renewing our school facilities. The goal of the Facilities Subcommittee's efforts was to assess the current condition of the facilities and determine whether they support the District's educational programs. Central to their activities was the Master Plan Study conducted by Symmes Maini & McKee Associates (SMMA) last year.

During the past five years Massachusetts has changed the process used to distribute funds to communities for building and renovating schools. The establishment of the Massachusetts School Building Authority and its subsequent development of a structured project management approach marked a significant departure from previous practice. Where towns and districts could previously apply for state aid and "get in line" for eventual assistance, the MSBA now conducts an annual cycle of accepting applications for assistance and reprioritizing all potential projects. This process is described in the attached documents. Page three of the MSBA News from Spring 2007 shows the application phases; a detailed flowchart follows immediately.

SOI priorities. The first step in the process is to submit a Statement of Interest (SOI). The SOI requires the District to assess building deficiencies and describe how they fit into the eight categories established in the legislation setting up the MSBA. These eight deficiency categories, actually legislative priorities, are:

- 1. **Replacement or renovation of a building which is structurally unsound or otherwise in a condition seriously jeopardizing the health and safety of school children, where no alternative exists.**
2. Elimination of existing severe overcrowding.
3. Prevention of the loss of accreditation.
4. Prevention of severe overcrowding expected to result from increased enrollments.
- 5. **Replacement, renovation or modernization of the heating system in a schoolhouse to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in the schoolhouse.**
- 6. **Short term enrollment growth.**
- 7. **Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements.**
8. Transition from court-ordered and approved racial balance school districts to walk-to, so-called, or other school districts.

The Facilities Subcommittee feels the highlighted priorities are those which best describe the deficiencies of our facilities, and began to draft an SOI document per the guidance in place in 2007. The fourth document attached is the current draft of the District's SOI.

Next steps. Last Spring, after the first year of experience with the SOI process, the MSBA changed to an application system which requires much more online input. The revised online system was opened in mid-July. The MSBA will accept new SOI submissions through November 15, 2008 for consideration in the next round of reprioritizing (the "2008 grant period" mentioned in the FAQs).

Critical to the success of the SOI process is community support for the application. As shown most clearly on the very last page of the attached draft SOI, the SOI must be approved by a vote of the both the School Committee and the Selectman, and signed by the Town Administrator and the Superintendent.

The Facilities Subcommittee recommends that the School Committee begin to build a common understanding of the process steps by hosting a multi-Board meeting on October 1, 2008 at 7:00 pm. Following that meeting, we anticipate that the Selectmen and Town Administrator will discuss the SOI and their willingness to sign the document. The School Committee will be asked to discuss and vote their approval of the SOI at their meeting on October 16, 2008.

The Facilities Subcommittee recommends that the Town submit an SOI by November 15, 2008 if all parties concur.