

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Board of Directors, Massachusetts School Building Authority  
**FROM:** Katherine Craven, Executive Director  
**DATE:** June 3, 2009  
**RE:** Sustainable Building Design

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Since its formation, the MSBA has been a strong supporter of sustainable building design for all MSBA-funded school projects. Not only do the MSBA's guidelines include minimum requirements for sustainable design, but the MSBA also offers up to two incentive points to Districts who pursue and achieve a higher level of sustainability utilizing the Massachusetts High Performance Green School Guidelines.

These guidelines were developed by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC) from California's Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS) guidelines. The guidelines were adapted to fit with Massachusetts code requirements and the New England climate. At the time, this was the only program that had a sustainable policy created exclusively for the specific needs of school buildings. Over the last several years, the MTC has provided educational workshops, technical assistance and, through a contract with CHPS, has managed the registration and verification of green school buildings. In addition, with the assistance of its consultant Cadmus Group, Inc, the MTC performed an assessment of buildings in its pilot program to substantiate the energy efficiency savings of the buildings. The MTC has provided many years of valuable service to the MSBA, Massachusetts communities and Designers, raising the awareness and criticality of sustainable design for schools as well as increasing the knowledge level within this industry.

The MTC has informed us that as of June 2009, they will no longer be providing financial or personnel support for the myriad of staff intensive tasks associated with managing the Green Schools Program. MTC will refocus their efforts toward a core mission of promoting renewable energy systems. MTC will continue to provide grants for renewable technology such as Photo Voltaics, wind and bio-fuels. MTC will no longer provide design grants for MA-CHPS, technical assistance, management of the MA-CHPS guidelines and website or administration of the verification process through CHPS national required for each school building. The MTC intends to transition the management of MA-CHPS, (duties as outlined above), to the MSBA.

The MSBA wants to thank MTC for its strong leadership in this critical area and acknowledge MTC's efforts and groundbreaking accomplishments on behalf of the school building industry. The MSBA welcomes this transition as an opportunity to review the current technology, available resources and industry practices in conjunction with our guidelines and regulations to ensure that MSBA policy provides the most recent thinking to ensure cost effective standards for baseline requirements and incentives for exemplary projects.

The MSBA believes that this transition has multiple challenges:

- 1) The MSBA must research the implementation of sustainable policies in Massachusetts and the requirements imposed by other state agencies in pursuit of compliance with Executive Order 484 to ensure that the MSBA regulations reflect the most current and appropriate base design principles. MSBA staff have met and will be meeting with staff from DCAM and the City of Boston to more fully understand their implementation of LEED guidelines. MSBA staff will continue to meet with MTC staff who have been working diligently to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities from MTC to the MSBA as of June 30, 2009.
- 2) The MSBA must complete a thorough review and comparison of the MA-CHPS program and the LEED for Schools program to completely understand the technical and administrative differences to ensure that the MSBA is utilizing the best means possible for the construction of sustainable school buildings. The MSBA must review the options associated with taking ownership of MA-CHPS and/or redirecting its sustainable policies toward a third party organization such as the US Green Building Council, using its LEED for Schools system.
- 3) The MSBA must assume the leadership role for educational workshops, technical assistance and management of the MA-CHPS guidelines and the verification process for those school buildings registered with MA-CHPS.

The MSBA has been working and meeting regularly with MTC over the last several years and is a member of the CHPS Board of Directors. The MSBA is ready to take on the responsibility to advance the sustainable qualities of the schools in Massachusetts. As an immediate next step, we will be issuing a Request for Responses to select a consultant to assist in the ongoing review of the best sustainable policies for the MSBA to include the review of baseline green requirements and for major MSBA projects as well as those that may apply to all projects. MSBA welcomes the opportunity to manage this important program that will encourage cost-effective buildings designed to be less environmentally demanding.