

MEMORANDUM

TO: MSBA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FROM: KATHERINE CRAVEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: AYER, LUNENBERG AND SHIRLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
INVITATION TO MODEL HIGH SCHOOL
DATE: JULY 29, 2009

In 2007, Ayer and Lunenburg each submitted an SOI describing substantial challenges with the high schools in their respective communities. The Town of Shirley nearby does not have a high school and currently Shirley high school students "choice" into the Ayer and Lunenburg high schools.

The facilities problems delineated in their SOI are significant enough to warrant consideration by the MSBA for a new, model high school if the three towns officially agree to create a regional high school district. Ayer's high school was built in 1963 and Lunenburg's high school was built in 1957 and neither have had any renovations. The building systems in both schools have reached the end of their useful lives, the facilities do not meet current life safety codes and both schools are experiencing building envelope issues.

Ayer and Lunenburg were two of the nine districts that the MSBA placed in the regional assessment category in 2007, and the MSBA has been working alongside the DESE and the regionalization exploratory committee to work towards the goal of getting an efficient and sustainable long term regional plan for a new district. According to the DESE, this would be the first new true region in 40 years to be created where the districts had no prior permanent relationship.

By taking this vote today to allow a new district of approximately 1000 student high school students to explore the possibility of building a new regional high school under the model school program, the new district would be eligible for up to 13 additional reimbursement points from MSBA: up to 6 additional reimbursement points for forming a new regional school district, up to 5 additional reimbursement points if the newly formed district participated in the Model School Program, and up to 2 additional reimbursement points for choosing the "green" model school. (see attached Reimbursement Rate Summary for a complete breakdown of potential reimbursements points).

The three districts have been working for the past three years on creating a K-12 regional district and have completed a draft Regional Agreement which has been submitted to DESE for approval. The regional agreement will be presented at the three Town Meetings in the fall for approval. The Ayer-Lunenburg-Shirley Regionalization Planning Board has indicated that they feel that evidence of support from its governmental partners is critical in achieving successful votes at their respective Town

Meetings. Moving the districts into the Model School category will go a long way to demonstrate our commitment to furthering their goal of creating a regional school district.

The MSBA and DESE believe that there is a natural synergy to the Ayer-Lunenburg-Shirley regionalization:

- **The three districts would benefit from a more robust educational program as the result of a larger school**
- **Efficiencies will be achieved in administrative functions**
- **The towns would share in the cost of a new/renovated school**
- **As part of a regional agreement, the three towns would share in the administration and governance of the education program**
- **The new district would be eligible for 9-12 transportation aid from the Commonwealth**
- **Regionalization plus utilizing a green model school could yield the district an additional 13% from MSBA to defray the costs of the school**