



# Massachusetts School Building Authority

Steven Grossman  
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## MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Directors, Massachusetts School Building Authority  
From: John K. McCarthy, Executive Director  
Date: March 27, 2013  
Subject: Recommendation for Invitation to Eligibility Period  
David Prouty High School, Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District

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At the January 25, 2012 Board of Directors (“Board”) meeting, the MSBA presented the establishment of an Eligibility Period to formalize and streamline the beginning of its grant process. As part of implementing the Eligibility Period, staff reviewed the existing capital pipeline for districts that had not yet procured consultants, because they had not completed the initial requirements or obtained funding. Based on this review, staff recommended that seven districts be recategorized into Eligibility Period. To date, seventeen new districts have been invited into Eligibility Period, in addition to those that were recategorized into the Eligibility Period. By identifying early in the process whether a district is ready to manage and fund a capital project, the MSBA is better able to determine a district’s financial and community readiness to enter the capital pipeline. This assists the MSBA in managing its financial resources and monitoring the obligations associated with its capital program on an annual basis while also assisting districts by providing a definitive schedule and identifying local planning and budgeting requirements. Since introducing the Eligibility Period a little over a year ago, sixteen districts have successfully completed the requirements of the Eligibility Period and have been invited to Feasibility Study, one District is on the agenda today for the Board’s consideration, two Districts have requested to withdraw their Statements of Interest, and five Districts are still working within their allowable timeframe to complete the requirements.

Although staff have seen the benefits of the structure introduced by the Eligibility Period, not all of the districts currently in the Feasibility Study/Schematic Design phase of the capital pipeline entered through the Eligibility Period. In addition, staff recognize that even with the early planning and work done during the Eligibility Period, some districts will still encounter unforeseen challenges during the Feasibility Study that may result in delayed completion of the Feasibility Study/Schematic Design phase and additional, unplanned consultant costs.

Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District (the “District”) is an example of a district that was invited into the capital pipeline prior to the introduction of the Eligibility Period and that has experienced unexpected delays during the Feasibility Study/Schematic Design phase. In a letter dated February 12, 2013, the District notified the MSBA that the School Building Committee had voted to postpone project activity to allow sufficient time to resolve operational budget

issues and to fill the vacant positions of Superintendent and School Business Manager. Because both positions are considered critical in the work to establish the educational program, facility requirements, and scope, budget and schedule for a proposed project, the MSBA is recommending, based on discussions with the District, that the Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District be recategorized from Feasibility Study to Eligibility Period to allow the District time to resolve local budget and leadership issues and to plan for the local actions necessary to supplement its Feasibility Study budget.

Staff will work with the District during this period to identify the formal actions required to confirm its readiness to proceed. If the District is able to resolve its issues and appropriate the additional funds it needs to continue forward with the Feasibility Study/Schematic Design phase during the 270-day Eligibility Period, then staff will recommend at a future meeting that the Board vote to issue a new invitation to Feasibility Study. If the District is unable to resolve these issues within the 270-day Eligibility Period, it will have to re-file a Statement of Interest (“SOI”) during the next SOI open period and the Board will have to determine whether it will re-invite the District into the Eligibility Period.

In an effort similar to the approach taken in the review for Eligibility Period, MSBA staff are currently reviewing the status of each of the districts in the Feasibility Study/Schematic Design phase and will review previous projects to better understand the typical timelines required to complete this particular phase in the overall grant process. Given process clarifications that have resulted from the Eligibility Period, staff recommend that the MSBA complete a review of the processes for the Feasibility Study/Schematic Design phase to identify and further clarify, if required, program expectations which may streamline the management of ongoing Feasibility Study Agreements. This review would assist districts by providing a more definitive timeline for the completion of the Feasibility Study and Schematic Design. Staff plan to conduct this review over the next several months and present a summary of recommendations, if any, at an upcoming meeting of the Board.