

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors, Massachusetts School Building Authority
FROM: John K. McCarthy, Executive Director
DATE: January 22, 2014
RE: Recommendations for Process Improvements
Introduction of an Educational Profile during Eligibility Period
Introduction of a Maximum Term Duration for the Feasibility/Schematic Phase

To maximize resources and further define its grant process, MSBA staff has been reviewing two staff recommendations for process improvements aimed at formalizing and streamlining the beginning phases of its grant process. This memo reviews both of these staff recommendations and outlines the benefits to the district and the MSBA. Both recommendations will assist the MSBA in managing its financial resources by further outlining the work required in the Eligibility Period and Feasibility Study/Schematic Design phases, clearly setting expectations, and defining the durations.

Introduction of an Educational Profile during Eligibility Period

At its January 25, 2012 meeting, the Board of Directors (“Board”) established the Eligibility Period as a new phase in the MSBA grant program. The Eligibility Period is a means to streamline the beginning of the grant process by creating a 270-day timeframe in which districts must complete a set of preliminary requirements to indicate local readiness to proceed, prior to an invitation to the MSBA’s Capital Pipeline. Over the last two years, thirty districts have received an invitation into Eligibility Period. Twenty of those districts completed all requirements within the established timeframe and subsequently received an invitation to the Capital Pipeline. Eight districts are continuing to work within the established timeframes of the Eligibility Period. Two of the thirty districts have chosen to withdraw their Statement of Interest (“SOI”) requests and re-file at a later time when the community is ready to proceed. The process and requirements of the Eligibility Period have been, and continue to be, useful tools in helping districts assess their readiness to proceed with a project.

As initially proposed, the Eligibility Period requirements focus the district’s attention on defining enrollment, understanding the MSBA grant process, assessing community support, and clarifying local financial capacity and timing. The introduction of the Educational Profile is meant to supplement the above readiness factors with a district questionnaire focused on the district’s existing educational program and its proposed needs. The Educational Profile compliments the enrollment process by providing a more comprehensive description of the district’s intentions as they relate to a proposed building project with the MSBA. The Educational Profile will prompt the district to further understand the work and critical decisions that will need to be made within the next phase of the MSBA’s Capital Pipeline and will allow the district to plan accordingly.

Staff has prepared a draft template questionnaire (Attachment A) that would be adapted by the MSBA to the proposed grade structure for an invited SOI and given to a district to prepare as its Educational Profile. Pursuant to discussions with and input from Board members at the December and January Facilities Assessment Subcommittee (“FAS”) meetings, the Educational

Profile questionnaire would be issued to districts invited into Eligibility Period commencing with the January Board meeting. Going forward, the MSBA will request that districts complete and submit the Educational Profile questionnaire along with the enrollment information. Staff would review the information and incorporate these components into the planning discussion during the standard enrollment meeting between the MSBA and district officials. As this profile will be completed concurrent with the existing enrollment process within the Eligibility Period (Attachment B), an extension to the existing 270-day duration for the Eligibility Period will not be required.

Over the course of the next two years, staff will work with districts and seek feedback regarding the information that is being requested to determine if additional or revised information is necessary and to review the benefits of this initial questionnaire on the final education plan submitted at the end of the Feasibility Study phase.

Introduction of a Maximum Term Duration for the Feasibility/Schematic Phase

Pursuant to discussions at the April 3, 2013 Board meeting and a preliminary presentation at the June 26, 2013 FAS meeting, the MSBA has completed its review of core program project data to better understand the amount of time districts have taken to complete the requirements of the Feasibility Study and Schematic Design (“FS/SD”) phases in the MSBA’s overall grant process. These phases commence with the district’s procurement of an Owner’s Project Manager and a Designer and are governed by the conditions specified in the MSBA’s Feasibility Study Agreement along with the specific deliverables identified in process Modules 3 and 4. Completion of these phases culminates in the MSBA’s vote to approve the district’s project as well as an Estimated Maximum Total Facilities Grant and a Maximum Total Facilities Grant.

Staff reviewed a total of 125 core program projects, including 19 projects that entered the MSBA’s Capital Pipeline through the Eligibility Period process, which was established in January 2012. The MSBA found that, on average, districts required 19.5 months to complete the FS/SD phases. The analysis found that 90 percent of districts are able to complete the work and approvals associated with the FS/SD phase within 28.6 months (Attachment C). Over the last five years, several districts have taken significantly longer than the average to complete the FS/SD phase.

Prior to the introduction of the Eligibility Period, the Feasibility Study Agreement (“FSA”) could be issued at different times in the course of the project dependent on the timing of the district’s local appropriation vote. The schedule durations included in the FSA could vary from 12 months to 24 months and the FSAs often required amendments to adjust to the district’s actual schedule. As a result of the introduction of the Eligibility Period, Feasibility Study Agreements are now all issued at the end of the Eligibility Period. Based upon staff analysis of the core program project data, staff recommends a standard duration for all Feasibility Study Agreements with a maximum duration of 30 months to complete the requirements of the FS/SD phase. Like Eligibility Period, districts will proceed based upon the individual schedules developed in conjunction with their consultants. It is the MSBA’s expectation that a majority of districts will complete this phase in less than the maximum duration of 30 months.

Staff believes that the implementation of a standard maximum term duration for a Feasibility Study Agreement will:

- Support districts in planning for a potential school project when filing a Statement of Interest with the MSBA;
- Set expectation for potential durations of work for local officials and committees;
- Assist districts with a better understanding of durations and reasonable project schedules when budgeting for and negotiating consultant contracts;
- Allow districts to further understand and plan for community outreach associated with seeking local project authorization;
- Simplify management of ongoing agreements between the MSBA and the district;
- Focus the MSBA's available funding on projects in districts that are able to proceed in a timely manner; and
- Improve the MSBA's ability to forecast its estimate of committed funds and utilize this information to assess financial capacity for future projects.

The MSBA understands that some districts may still encounter unforeseen challenges during the FS/SD phase that could impact its timelines and potentially result in additional, unplanned consultant costs. Should a district encounter an unforeseen challenge that prevents continued development of the project and jeopardizes the completion of the work within the 30-month duration, the district would follow current practice and notify the MSBA that it has had to suspend project activity to resolve a local issue. Based upon a review of the identified issues and discussions with the district, the MSBA may take one of three steps:

- 1) The Executive Director may, at his/her sole discretion, authorize one extension up to an additional six months.
- 2) The Executive Director may recommend an additional extension beyond the duration of 36 months, which is the original 30-month term plus one six-month extension, for consideration and authorization by the MSBA Board of Directors.
- 3) The MSBA may forward to the Board of Directors a request to remove the project from the Capital Pipeline based on a district's decision to remove its Statement of Interest from the Capital Pipeline.

Summary Recommendations:

- 1) The MSBA recommends the introduction of an Educational Profile during the Eligibility Period to be completed by districts concurrent with the existing enrollment process. MSBA staff will request that districts receiving an invitation to Eligibility Period as of January 1, 2014 will complete the Educational Profile. Over the next two years, MSBA staff will monitor the information received from the Educational Profiles, seek input from districts regarding the information requested, and assess the impact of the Educational Profile questionnaire on the final education plan submitted by the district at the end of the Feasibility Study phase.
- 2) The MSBA recommends establishing a 30-month term duration for Feasibility Study Agreements and authorizing a one-time extension of the term duration for up to an additional six months (for a maximum term duration of 36 months), at the discretion of the MSBA's Executive Director. Additional extensions beyond this period would require

review and authorization by the MSBA's Board of Directors. Staff proposes that the recommended term duration for Feasibility Study Agreements become effective for all districts receiving an invitation to collaborate with the MSBA to conduct a Feasibility Study as of January 1, 2014.

ATTACHMENT A

RESERVE HEADER SPACE FOR MSBA LOGO

Massachusetts School Building Authority School District Profile	
Date _____	
Name of School District _____	
District Contact (Name, Title) _____	

As part of the District’s invitation into the Eligibility Period, the MSBA is seeking the following information to further inform our understanding of the School District’s facilities, teaching methodology, grade configurations and program offerings.

SECTION ONE: Facilities

Please confirm the following MSBA 2010 Needs Survey information for all public schools in the District using a “Y” for accurate and “N” for not accurate: (*staff to pre-populate chart*)

District	School Name	Type	Year Founded	Last Reno.	GSF

RESERVE PAGE ONE SPACE FOR NEEDS SURVEY CHART

Using the Chart below list Charter Schools (Commonwealth, Innovative, or Horace Mann) and private schools located in the District.

Name of School	Type of School	Year Established	Grades Served	Current Enrollment

SECTION TWO: Current Program, Grade Configuration, Teaching Methodology

In the Chart below provide information about the grade configuration for each (public) school facilities (including the District’s priority SOI). **For elementary and middle schools only** check the boxes provided to indicate program offerings at each facility.

Name of School	Grades Served	Art (Performing and Visual Art)	Music	Physical Education (Adaptive PE)	Extended Day Care	Number of hours/days offered

For high schools attach to this questionnaire **current** program/scheduling information (core, non-core, enrichment and vocational).

Does the District belong to a Collaborative? Y or N

Does the District host a Collaborative? Y or N
 If yes, please provide the name of the Collaborative _____

Does the District provide Pre-Kindergarten? Y or N

Is Kindergarten fee based? Y or N
 If yes, please provide the fee structure _____

Does the District provide transportation? Y or N
 If yes, please provide the name of the provider (District or vendor) _____

Using the space below provide information about the District’s teaching methodology (i.e. self-contained classroom, team teaching, departmental, or cluster). Include class-size policy and if applicable, scheduling particulars.

In the Chart below provide information about the technology offerings in each grade:

Grade	Desktop Computers	Laptop Computers	Tablets	Smart Board/ Smart Projectors	Printers	WiFi WAN/ LAN
Pre-K						
Kindergarten						
Grade 1						
Grade 2						
Grade 3						
Grade 4						
Grade 5						
Grade 6						
Grade 7						
Grade 8						
Grade 9						
Grade 10						
Grade 11						
Grade 12						

If needed, space for additional related comments/information.

SECTION THREE: Proposed Program, Grade Configuration, Teaching Methodology

Using the Chart below indicate changes to the information as provided in Section Two.

Name of School	Grades Served	Art (Performing and Visual Arts)	Music	Physical Education (Adaptive PE)	Extended Day Care	Number of hours/days offered

For high schools attach to this questionnaire **proposed** program/scheduling information (core, non-core, enrichment and vocational).

Is the District considering joining a Collaborative? Y or N

If yes, please provide the name of the Collaborative _____

Is the District considering hosting a Collaborative? Y or N

Is the District considering offering Pre-Kindergarten? Y or N

Is the District considering a Kindergarten fee? Y or N

If yes, please provide the proposed fee structure _____

Is the District considering providing transportation? Y or N

If yes, please provide the name of the proposed provider _____

In the space below expand upon proposed changes to current grade configurations, districting, teaching methodology, programs, transportation, fees and technology. Indicate if any school facility(s) would be vacated, down-sized or re-organized. Indicate if changes to current staffing would result (increase/decrease).

SECTION FOUR: Space - District's Priority Statement of Interest

INSERT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING: ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE OR HIGH SCHOOL INITIAL SPACE SUMMARY TEMPLATE

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Complete information in the table provided below:

<u>ROOM TYPE</u>	No. of Rooms	Comments
<u>CORE ACADEMIC SPACES</u>		
<i>Pre-Kindergarten</i>		
<i>Kindergarten (indicate full or half day)</i>		
<i>Grade 1</i>		
<i>Grade 2</i>		
<i>Grade 3</i>		
<i>Grade 4</i>		
<i>Grade 5</i>		
<u>SPECIAL EDUCATION</u>		
<u>ART & MUSIC</u>		
<u>HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION</u>		
<i>Gymnasium</i>		
<u>MEDIA CENTER</u>		
<u>DINING & FOOD SERVICE</u>		
<u>MEDICAL SUITE</u>		
Nurses' Office		
<u>ADMINISTRATION & GUIDANCE</u>		

If not offered within the District's Priority Statement of Interest, indicate in the space provided below where in the District collaborative, special education, art, music, health/physical education, media center, dining/food service and technology spaces are offered.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Complete information in the table provided below:

<u>ROOM TYPE</u>	No. of Rooms	Comments
<u>CORE ACADEMIC SPACES</u>		
<i>Grade 6</i>		
<i>Grade 7</i>		
<i>Grade 8</i>		
<u>SPECIAL EDUCATION</u>		
<u>ART & MUSIC</u>		
<u>HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION</u>		
<i>Gymnasium</i>		
<u>MEDIA CENTER</u>		
<u>DINING & FOOD SERVICE</u>		
<u>MEDICAL SUITE</u>		
<i>Nurses' Office</i>		
<u>ADMINISTRATION & GUIDANCE</u>		

If not offered within the District’s Priority Statement of Interest, indicate in the space provided below where in the District collaborative, special education, art, music, health/physical education, media center, dining/food service and technology spaces are offered.

HIGH SCHOOL

Complete information in the table provided below:

<u>ROOM TYPE</u>	No. of Rooms	Comments
<u>CORE ACADEMIC SPACES</u>		
<i>Grade 9</i>		
<i>Grade 10</i>		
<i>Grade 11</i>		
<i>Grade 12</i>		
<u>SPECIAL EDUCATION</u>		
<u>ART & MUSIC</u>		
<u>VOCATIONS & TECHNOLOGY (list programs)</u>		
<u>HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION</u>		
<i>Gymnasium</i>		
<u>MEDIA CENTER</u>		
<u>DINING & FOOD SERVICE</u>		
<u>MEDICAL SUITE</u>		
<i>Nurses' Office</i>		
<u>ADMINISTRATION & GUIDANCE</u>		

If not offered within the District’s Priority Statement of Interest, indicate in the space provided below where the District’s collaborative, special education, art, music, health/physical education, media center, dining/food service and technology spaces are offered as well as any off-site core and non-core programs. Also include where the District’s post-graduate, “school within a school” and “at-risk” program spaces are located.

SECTION FIVE: Safety and Security Statement

Has the District formulated a school specific Multi-Hazard Evacuation Plan (Section 363 of the FY 02 State Budget) for each school under the superintendent's supervision?

“Y” or “N”

What was the date of the last review with local public safety and law enforcement officials?
(Provide date) _____

SECTION SIX: Attachments

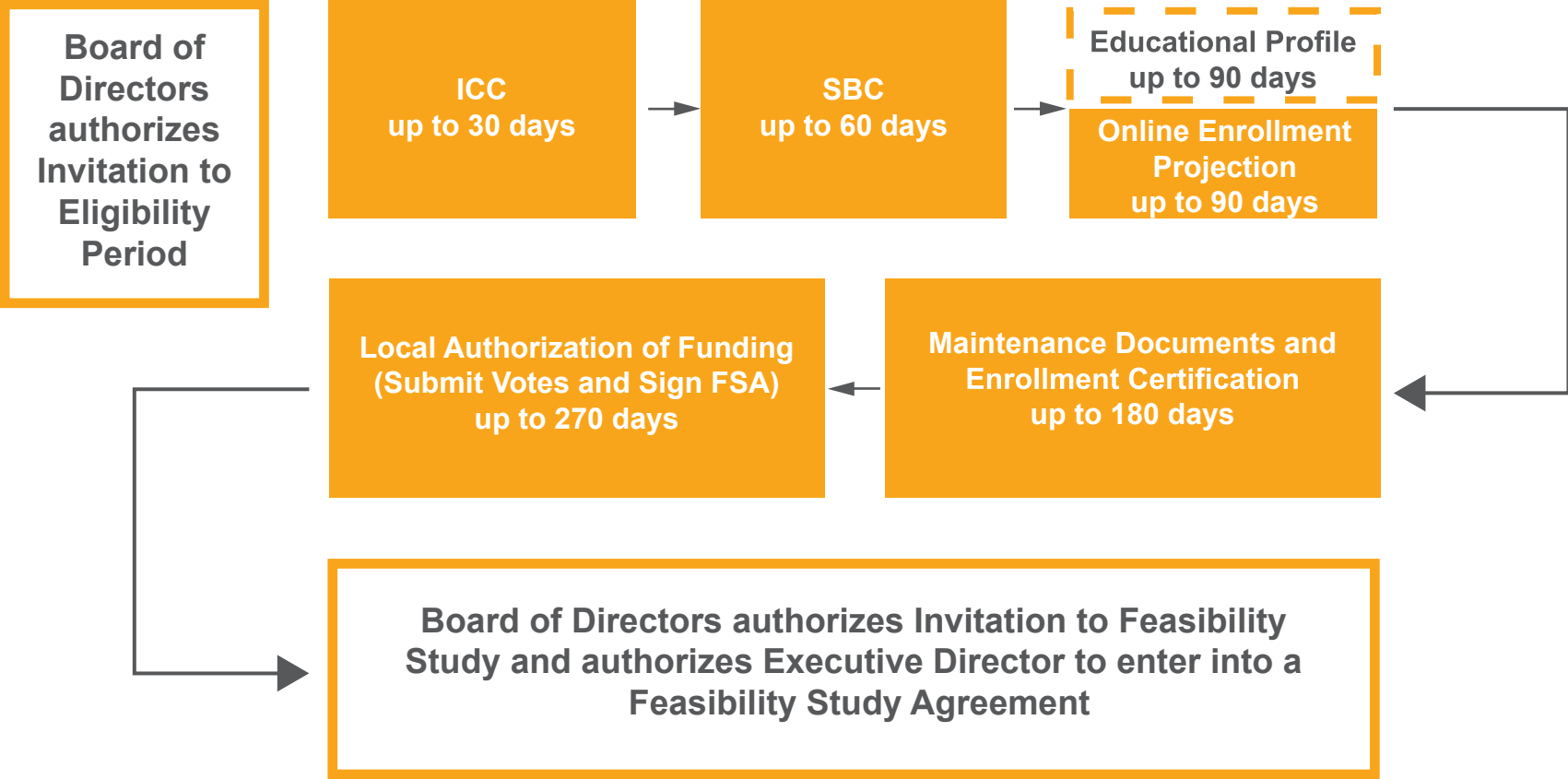
Please attach to this completed questionnaire any reports or studies that relate to accreditation, an assessment of facility conditions and/or findings as issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Should you have any questions about this questionnaire, please contact us at:

Massachusetts School Building Authority
617-720-4466
www.massschoolbuildings.org

Attachment B

Eligibility Period



Attachment C: Durations Taken by Districts to Complete Project Scope & Budget Approval

