

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors, Massachusetts School Building Authority
FROM: John K. McCarthy, Executive Director
DATE: January 7, 2015
RE: Update on Sustainable Building Guidelines and Policy Recommendations

As discussed at the Massachusetts School Building Authority's ("MSBA") Board meeting on March 26, 2014, staff had reviewed the increasing levels of energy efficiency required by existing and pending changes to state and federal standards and updated its sustainable building policy accordingly to require projects that submit for Preferred Schematic approval after the June 4, 2014 MSBA Board meeting to register with United States Green Building Council ("USGBC") LEED-S version 4. At the time of this recommendation, updates to the Massachusetts Collaborative for High Performance Schools ("MA-CHPS") guidelines and the Massachusetts "Stretch Energy Code" were still under review by others and, therefore, staff recommended adoption of the revised LEED-S criteria as its only sustainable criteria until such time that the other updates were final. Based on the information available previously, MSBA staff anticipated these criteria would become available and the MSBA could complete its review and make final recommendations at the January 2015 Board meeting. This memorandum summarizes the status of the MSBA's review.

Update

Potential updates to the Massachusetts "Stretch Energy Code" may be forthcoming pending the outcome of ongoing efforts by the State to update current energy efficiency standards. However, if and when proposed changes may be implemented is unknown at this time.

The Collaborative for High Performance Schools ("CHPS") did not update its MA-CHPS criteria but did introduce Northeast CHPS ("NE-CHPS") Version 3 in 2014, with levels of efficiency and sustainability well above previous standards, as a replacement to the outdated 2009 MA-CHPS guidelines. Staff has been reviewing NE-CHPS as a potential alternative to reintroduce the CHPS design criteria by adopting NE-CHPS 3.0, in lieu of an updated MA-CHPS, as an additional sustainable criteria to LEED-S V4 for MSBA-funded school projects. By the MSBA recognizing two approaches as allowed in the previous MSBA policy, districts and their designers would have the flexibility of two options to achieve MSBA's commitment to sustainable schools.

MSBA staff, with assistance from one of its consultants, has assessed these changes and performed the following tasks since the March 2014 Board meeting:

- Reviewed the new 2012 International Energy Conservation Code ("IECC"), LEED-S Version 4 and NE-CHPS Version 3.0 including comparisons to previous editions.
- Determined equitable levels of achievement and requirements between the new NE-CHPS and LEED-S criteria.

- Evaluated minimum “best practices” standards for all Core Program projects and potential additional reimbursement for Districts that elect to achieve higher levels of energy efficiency.

Staff intends to conclude this analysis by conducting outreach meetings with design consultants and related organizations to receive feedback from professionals that have direct experience with these sustainable requirements. Staff anticipates forwarding updated recommendations to the MSBA Board of Directors for approval in the spring of 2015.