

The Maynard Public Schools are committed to high academic standards that encourage students, teachers, and community members to achieve their personal best through lifelong learning.



MAYNARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

12 Bancroft Street
Maynard, Massachusetts 01754

Mark R. Masterson, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
978-897-2222

October 11, 2007

Katherine P. Craven, Executive Director
Joseph Buckley, Chief Engineer
Mass School Building Authority
3 Center Plaza
Suite 430
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Ms. Craven and Mr. Buckley:

Following your visit on August 30, the SVT group had their site visit on September 17. A week later we completed all the responses requested in Katherine Craven's letter of September 11 and mailed them to Mr. Thomas Kazmowski in your office. Our understanding is that all the MSBA requested Maynard High School material is now complete and on file in your office.

On Monday, October 1, a Maynard School Committee member and I attended an MSBA presentation at Assabet Valley Tech, where we received the Maynard High School's "SOI Summary Report", dated 9/20/2007. That report identifies two related facts I would like to address here, 'declining' enrollment and our potential loss of Accreditation. The Summary Report identifies a 10-year enrollment decline of -1.5%, then the last 3 year decline of -4.88%. Maynard is a small community with about 100 students per class in its high school. Recently the High School has struggled very publicly with two problematic issues: a New England Association of Schools & Colleges *probation* status, threatening the school's Accreditation due to facilities problems; and secondly, inquiries by the Maynard School Committee into the possibility of regionalization with one of our surrounding wealthier communities. The surrounding communities have denied Maynard's overtures. Each of these issues, played out very publicly in the press, has caused a loss of confidence on the part of several Maynard families in the viability of our small high school, resulting in more students electing school choice to surrounding regional high schools. Consider our small high school size of 350 students; if 4 students transfer out in a year, we have lost more than 1% of the student body. We have surveyed parents; the major high school issue of concern is our facilities problems and the concomitant potential loss of NEASC Accreditation.

The New England Association of Schools & Colleges has in response to a series of reports and a special site visit criticized the High School for a range of facilities issues detrimental to student learning, among them, inadequate library, science labs, heating and ventilation problems, etc. etc. In order to thoughtfully respond to the range of legitimate NEASC concerns, the District initiated a full facilities review of our High School. (Summaries of those findings were provided to each MSBA visiting team.) As a result of our facilities review, done by Tappe' Associates, we understand that significant renovations to our high school facility are necessary and that the cost of those renovations will approach the cost of a new facility. NEASC, having done their original reaccreditation site visit in 2002 understandably expects more facilities progress than has been possible, thus our probationary status. Consequently, in the absence of MSBA planning assistance, the District faces a real dilemma: If we do nothing we will lose our Accreditation. If we initiate

short-term and costly renovations, e.g. expanding the library, we may literally be pouring good money into a bad facility. In conclusion the “SOI Summary Report” references the NEASC probation letter; however, understanding the NEASC context is critical to MSBA Board’s evaluation of Maynard High School’s facilities needs.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Masterson, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

cc: Maynard School Committee
Maynard Board of Selectmen
John Curran, Town Administrator