



Massachusetts School Building Authority

Deborah B. Goldberg
Chair, State Treasurer

James A. MacDonald
Chief Executive Officer

Mary L. Pichetti
Executive Director / Deputy CEO

November 4, 2024

Mr. Paul E. Cohen, Town Manager
Town of Chelmsford
Chelmsford Town Offices
50 Billerica Road
Chelmsford, MA 01824

Re: Town of Chelmsford, Colonel Moses Parker Middle School

Dear Mr. Cohen:

I would like to thank representatives of the Town of Chelmsford (the “District”) for meeting with Massachusetts School Building Authority (the “MSBA”) staff on August 8, 2024, to review enrollment projections and methodologies for the Colonel Moses Parker Middle School project (the “Proposed Project”) and for the follow-up information provided on August 8, 2024, and on August 18, 2024. As discussed, the next critical step is for the MSBA and the District to agree on a study enrollment for the Proposed Project.

The MSBA works with local communities to create affordable, sustainable, and energy-efficient schools across Massachusetts. A critical early component in achieving these objectives begins with an appropriate design enrollment that positions the District to efficiently meet space capacity needs throughout potential future enrollment variations.

The MSBA uses a data-driven enrollment projection methodology based on the widely accepted modified grade-to-grade cohort survival methodology (the “enrollment methodology”). The MSBA’s enrollment methodology generates a baseline enrollment projection as discussed during the August 8, 2024, enrollment meeting, and as further described on the MSBA’s website found under the ‘Building With Us’, ‘MSBA Enrollment Methodology’ section.

Based on information supplied by the District, data from sources such as the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“DESE”) and Department of Public Health, and discussion with the District, the MSBA has been able to create an enrollment projection for the Proposed Project, as follows.

The Colonel Moses Parker Middle School presently serves the District’s grade 5 and 6 enrollment. The MSBA understands that in addition to the current grade configuration, the District would like the Feasibility Study to also evaluate a grade 4 through 6 configuration (relocates grade 4 students from the District’s four elementary schools to the Parker Middle School) and a grade 5 through 8 configuration (merges the Parker Middle School and the McCarthy Middle School into a single facility). Accordingly, this analysis will be focused on the enrollment projections for grades 4 through 8 enrollment.

The table below illustrates the District's K-12 enrollment during the most recent ten-year period, including enrollment for the school year 2023-2024, as reported by the District.

School Year	K-4	5-8	9-12	Total
2014-2015	1,780	1,566	1,577	4,923
2015-2016	1,766	1,580	1,509	4,855
2016-2017	1,779	1,575	1,483	4,837
2017-2018	1,852	1,531	1,479	4,862
2018-2019	1,861	1,505	1,444	4,810
2019-2020	1,915	1,528	1,412	4,855
2020-2021	1,844	1,498	1,408	4,750
2021-2022	1,918	1,556	1,342	4,816
2022-2023	1,920	1,567	1,367	4,854
2023-2024	1,938	1,579	1,413	4,930

A version of the above table with more detail regarding the District's historic enrollment may also be found in the District's Enrollment Projection package dated August 8, 2024.

The total grade 5 through 8 enrollment in the Town of Chelmsford as reported by the District for the 2023-2024 school year was 1,579 students, which reflects a decrease of 1 student (-0.1%) from the maximum grade 5 through 8 enrollment reported during the preceding ten years. Additionally, the 2023-2024 grade 5 through 8 enrollment reflects an increase of 31 students (+2.0%) from the average grade 5 through 8 enrollment reported during the preceding ten-year period. The MSBA understands that the District is proposing an enrollment to accommodate approximately 1,800 students in grades 5 through 8 at the Colonel Moses Parker Middle School if consolidated with the grade 7 through 8 enrollment currently served at the McCarthy Middle School. The grade 5 through 8 enrollment reported to DESE for the 2023-2024 school year was 1,579 students.

With respect to future enrollments, the MSBA's base enrollment projection indicates the District's grade 5-8 enrollment will continue to trend upward through the 2034-2035 school year. In accordance with the MSBA's Enrollment Methodology, the baseline enrollment is calculated using the ten-year average of projected enrollments. As such, the average base enrollment projections for the Proposed Project through the 2034-2035 school year are as follows:

- Grade 5-6 base enrollment projection: 845 students
- Grade 4-6 base enrollment projection: 1,275 students
- Grade 5-8 base enrollment projection: 1,700 students

As a result of a sensitivity analysis performed by the MSBA on this base enrollment projection and through further discussion with the District, the following adjustment has been made to the base enrollment projection:

Out-of-District Enrollment

- In order to adjust for fluctuations in the out-of-district enrollment patterns of the District's residents over time, the MSBA has made an additional adjustment to the base enrollment projection.
- In order to make this adjustment, the MSBA adjusted the grade-to-grade survival ratios for grade K through 3 enrollment by a total of 3.3% throughout a four-year period in the projection.
- This adjustment added the following numbers of students to the base enrollment projection as compared to the projection without this adjustment:
 - Parker Middle School current configuration of Grade 5-6 enrollment: the adjustment added approximately 20 students
 - Parker Middle School with Grade 4-6 enrollment: the adjustment added approximately 25 students
 - Parker Middle School consolidated with McCarthy Middle School configuration Grade 5-8 enrollment: the adjustment added approximately 55 students

Development

- Based on the discussion between the District and the MSBA regarding new housing developments, the potential zoning changes accommodating transit-oriented development and the development information provided by the District, the MSBA enrollment model has been adjusted.
 - The MSBA's base enrollment model was adjusted to use the five-year 75th percentile cohort survival rate for 2025 and 2026, rather than the five-year average cohort survival rate, which is utilized throughout the base enrollment forecast to account for new students associated with potential impacts related to MBTA Communities zoning changes. This adjustment added the following totals to the projected average for the District's proposed grade configurations as compared to the base enrollment projection:
 - Parker Middle School current configuration Grade 5-6 enrollment: the adjustment added approximately 20 students
 - Parker Middle School with Grade 4-6 enrollment: the adjustment added approximately 25 students
 - Parker Middle School consolidated with McCarthy Middle School configuration Grade 5-8 enrollment: the adjustment added approximately 40 students
- Based on the discussion between the District and the MSBA and a typical level of development in the District, the MSBA adjusted its enrollment projection to account for a potential impact of developments that are beyond that typically experienced in the District.
 - This adjustment added the following totals to the projected averages for the District's proposed grade configurations as compared to the base enrollment projection:

- Parker Middle School current configuration Grade 5-6 enrollment: the adjustment added approximately 45 students
- Parker Middle School with Grade 4-6 enrollment: the adjustment added approximately 65 students
- Parker Middle School consolidated with McCarthy Middle School Grade 5-8 enrollment: the adjustment added approximately 90 students

As a result of the analysis of the base enrollment forecast, the historical enrollment trends of the District, and the adjustments described above, the MSBA recommends for planning and study purposes only, study enrollments for the Proposed Project at the Colonel Moses Parker Middle School as follows:

- Current Parker School Grade 5-6 enrollment configuration: 930 students
- Proposed Parker Middle School Grade 4-6 enrollment configuration: 1,390 students
- Proposed Parker Middle School consolidated with McCarthy Middle School Grade 5-8 enrollment configuration: 1,885 students

Please note that these study enrollment recommendations do not represent an affirmation by the MSBA for approval and/or funding of any of these options and are intended only to provide a framework to inform the feasibility study to be conducted as a means of determining the most cost-effective and educationally sound solution to be agreed upon by the District and the MSBA. The MSBA's study enrollment recommendations assume full utilization of all remaining school facilities.

If the grade 4-6 enrollment configuration or grade 5 through 8 enrollment configuration is determined to be the Preferred Solution, the District will be required to document in the Preferred Schematic Report that the Preferred Solution has been approved by the School Committee and necessary local officials. Further, the MSBA will require a written plan from the District describing the process for determining local support for the preferred grade configuration. Upon approval of the District's Preferred Solution, the MSBA will forward a design enrollment certification that is specific to the grade configuration associated with the approved Preferred Solution.

The MSBA believes that these study enrollment recommendations will position the District to efficiently meet space capacity needs throughout future enrollment variations. Please sign and return the attached certification within 21 calendar days to confirm agreement on these study enrollment recommendations. If the District feels that this study enrollment recommendation does not meet the needs of the District, please respond to this letter via e-mail Nina Pappacostas and propose three meeting/conference call times for which the District can be available to discuss enrollment.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Nina Pappacostas (Nina.Pappacostas@MassSchoolBuildings.org) at 617-720-4466.

Sincerely,

Page 5

November 4, 2024

Chelmsford, Colonel Moses Parker Middle School Enrollment Letter



Michael McGurl

Director of Capital Planning

Cc: Legislative Delegation
Pat Wojtas, Chair, Chelmsford Select Board
Dennis F. King II, Chair, Chelmsford School Committee
Dr. Jay Lang, Superintendent, Chelmsford Public Schools
File: 10.2 Letters (Region 4)