

## **Longmeadow High School Building Committee Sets the Record Straight**

February 27, 2010

Over the past two years, the Longmeadow School Building Committee (SBC) members have been hard at work developing options for the long term solution to Longmeadow High School (LHS). A critical goal of the SBC was to receive broad based community support for a preferred option. The School Building Committee held a three day educational visioning workshop, informational sessions for town boards, three community forums and numerous public meetings where eight options were presented in order to secure the feedback necessary to guide its decision making process.

It is important that the *facts* about the LHS building project are clearly articulated in order for residents to make an informed decision at Town Meeting on May 25<sup>th</sup> and at the ballot box on June 8<sup>th</sup>. The following is the basis for selection of the preferred option as formally outlined by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) in their letter of recommendation to the Town of Longmeadow in November 2009. The various options and costs explored are noted in the letter, as well as, the basis for the selection of the preferred alternative is outlined.

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*“District: Longmeadow*

*School Name: Longmeadow High School*

*Category: Preferred Schematic*

*Date: November 18, 2009*

### **Recommendation:**

*That the Executive Director is authorized to approve the Town of Longmeadow as part of its Invitation for Feasibility Study, to proceed into schematic design for the construction of a new, 185,000 square-foot facility to replace the existing Longmeadow High School. MSBA staff has reviewed the designer’s options on behalf of the District for the Longmeadow High School and, subject to certain limitations set forth below, accepts the District’s preferred alternative for new construction with renovation to the 1971 portion of the facility as being their preferred alternative to meet the educational program. As discussed more fully below, all costs associated with the renovation of the 1971 shall be borne by the District and shall not be eligible for reimbursement by the MSBA.*

### **Background:**

*Longmeadow High School, the District’s prioritized Statement of Interest, is a 248,000 gross square foot facility on a 44.5-acre campus with a 2008-2009 total enrollment of 1,018 students. The original High School facility was built in 1954, with subsequent additions in 1957, 1958, 1963, 1971, and 2000. The District has identified a number of problematic issues associated with the facility, including but not limited to, the major infrastructure systems. The electrical, plumbing, heating, ventilating and technology networks are mostly original to the building and have exceeded their life expectancy. Structural issues include evidence of excessive movement at both interior and exterior wall locations throughout, resulting in cracking and the need for temporary remediation. Health and safety issues include lack of sprinkler systems, non-compliant accessibility issues, and*

*materials containing asbestos. In addition to these issues, the District has reported inadequate and inefficient space to administer their educational program.*

*In 2005, Kaestle Boos Associates Inc. performed a feasibility study of the Longmeadow High School. The study states that, due mostly to the age of the facility, the systems have deteriorated and have reached the end of their useful life, and due to these conditions the facility is unable to meet the educational program and technological advancements. The study concluded that construction of a new facility was the recommended option. In 2007, Kaestle Boos Associates Inc. reviewed their 2005 study and concluded that the majority of their initial comments remained unchanged and in some cases, systems had further deteriorated due to lack of remedial measures.*

*On November 28, 2007, the MSBA Board of Directors voted to invite the District to conduct a feasibility study for the Longmeadow High School to further study the problems identified with the facility.*

**Discussion:**

*MSBA staff has received and reviewed the Designer's feasibility study submission indicating the options that have been explored by the District and its consultants and the preferred option selected by the District. MSBA staff has reviewed and discussed the options and corresponding space summaries with the District and the Designer to better understand which alternative best meets the educational program and is most-beneficial and efficient for Longmeadow High School.*

*Throughout the feasibility study process, the Owner's Project Manager and the Designer gathered information from the School Building Committee and the Community to understand the goals and values for the project. The District is one of seven members of the Lower Pioneer Valley Collaborative which offers programs such as automotive technology, carpentry and graphic communications. The programs currently offered at Longmeadow High School are separate from those offerings and include business and technology programs, with courses in accounting, economics, law and management. The District has continued this approach in the preparation of its educational program used for the alternatives study.*

*In conjunction with the Designer, the District has presented a total of eight alternative options that have been evaluated through the feasibility study:*

*1A. Systems Renovation and Code Compliance*

*1B Full Renovation*

*2A1 Renovation/ Demolition/ Addition (New Classroom Wing; Elimination of Two Courtyards)*

*2A2 Renovation/ Demolition/ Addition (New Classroom Wing; Elimination of Two Courtyards,  
Media Center Located in Third Courtyard)*

*2B Renovation/ Demolition/ Addition (Retain 1971 Building; New Addition with Classroom  
and Primary Core Spaces)*

*3A New Construction (New Building Located Adjacent to Existing Building)*

3B *New School (Located Across Bliss Road)*

4 *No Build Option*

*Each of the alternative options above was individually evaluated by the District, and of these eight alternative options, the District selected three options as being the options that most favorably address the District’s educational goals, construction cost criteria, and operational costs.*

*The three options, including preliminary project costs, further evaluated by the District are as follows:*

**Preliminary Project Cost Summary**

<i>Option</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Total GSF</i>	<i>Estimated Construction Costs</i>	<i>Estimated Construction Duration</i>	<i>Modular Costs</i>
<i>1B</i>	<i>Full Renovation with limited relocation of program areas and demolition of interior walls to accommodate larger classrooms</i>	<i>248,500</i>	<i>\$59,222,000</i>	<i>54 months</i>	<i>\$3,000,000</i>
<i>2A</i>	<i>Renovation/ Demolition/ Addition (New Classroom Wing; Elimination of Two Courtyards)</i>	<i>234,000</i>	<i>\$59,800,000</i>	<i>42 months</i>	<i>\$1,875,000</i>
<i>2B</i>	<i>Preferred Option - 185,000 Maximum gross square feet of new construction with the renovation of the 1971 portion of the facility.</i>	<i>237,000</i>	<i>\$63,795,000</i>	<i>27 months</i>	<i>0</i>

*Based on the evaluation of the above options, the District has presented Option 2B as the preferred option for Longmeadow High School as the alternative that best addresses its educational needs and creates the most energy efficient building which will result in lower operational and maintenance costs. The District identifies the disruption to the educational program and the students with construction durations of 4.5 to 3.5 years as a significant disadvantage to Options 1B and 2A.1. In addition, the District recognizes that these options will require the additional cost of modulares estimated at \$3 million and \$1.875 million, respectively.*

*The District has expressed a strong community interest in retaining the existing pool and District administration space and has proposed the renovation of the 1971 portion of the facility to house these spaces. The pool is currently located in the 1971 wing but the District administration space would need to be relocated to this wing. The MSBA acknowledges the community's goals but has made it clear to the District that it will not participate in any costs associated with the renovation of this portion of the facility. The District recognizes and accepts this and further understands that this project will not be eligible for any renovation incentive points. The extent of the renovation included in the Options 1B and 2A.1 varies as the existing ineligible spaces are spread throughout the existing building, while Option 2B consolidates the spaces into one area. When the costs associated with renovating these ineligible spaces are removed from the three options, the construction estimates for each of these options is approximately \$55 to 56 million.*

*Based on the narrow margin of cost to renovate versus the cost to build a new facility, the District strongly endorses Option 2B as the alternative that it believes addresses the majority of the District's educational and community goals, results in a shorter construction duration, results in lower operational and maintenance costs and minimizes temporary building costs.*

*MSBA staff has reviewed the feasibility study options presented and the associated enrollment data with the District. Based on this review, MSBA staff recommends that the preferred option to provide a maximum of 185,000 gross square feet of new construction to replace the Longmeadow High School, with the renovation to the 1971 portion of the existing facility to be borne 100% by the District, be approved to proceed into schematic design....”*

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As noted in the letter, the Longmeadow SBC considered many options ranging from “no build” to renovation to new construction to “model school” for Longmeadow High School. The SBC weighed those options in a well reasoned manner resulting in the preferred option of an 185,000 square foot new building and renovation of the 1971 wing. This decision is the best long term solution for the entire Longmeadow community. To review the complete Feasibility Study, please go to [www.longmeadow.org/sbc](http://www.longmeadow.org/sbc) . A hard copy of the study is also available at Storrs Library.