

Open letter to Kathleen Lenihan, SBC Chair, and Superintendent Hackett

Dear Kathleen and Julie,

Thank you for all the energy and work you have invested in the new LHS design. At today's SBC meeting I asked two questions. I would like to get more clarification to the answer to my first question and an answer to my second one.

First, I asked how would the project be affected if SBC submitted their proposal to MSBA 2-4 months later. (Dec 2024 or Feb 2025). I was pointed to answers already given in previous meetings. I have looked up these answers and I understand that the if the current design is to be built on the fields the delay of 4+ months would cost the students a season of sports for which they use the fields. Mr. Baker especially emphasized this issue.

As you know our group is advocating for **STAGING the project by following the recommendations of the 2015 Master Plan** produced by the same architects. They suggested that a new building could be erected on campus – perhaps in place of/near the Foreign Language Building. Should the SBC choose to follow the 2015 recommendations, how would a 2-4 months delay of MSBA submission affect that project design?

Second, from reading of the MSBA regulations and some communications from them, I believe that the signed commitment letter suggests that they would fund Stage 1 of the project if executed as per 2015 Mater Plan recommendation. Since we expect that Stage 1 should cost at most \$200M, at 31% reimbursement rate we could get as much as \$62M from MSBA. So the most we'd be risking is the loss of funding for Stage 2. However, one of our members is working with MSBA on updating their rules to adapt to the new issues that the State MBTA mandate has created for early-adopting communities. Since the State wants this mandate to succeed, it is our belief that they will find a way to keep our LHS project "open" so that funding is also available for Stage 2.

As you know the most strictly enforced rule for MSBA funding is to use accurate prediction of future enrollment for the school size. SBC has done an excellent job presenting to MSBA why their original 2,200 student enrollment was not sufficient. What no one (not MSBA, not SBC, not our group until 3 weeks ago) realized is that currently there is no way to build a valid enrollment-predicting model. We only discovered this problem when one of our analysts tried to model future enrollments and discovered that because of the new MBTA zoning there is no data for it to use. MSBA is now aware that the 2,395 number for future enrollment is not based on a valid enrollment-prediction and that there is no way to accurately predict how big enrollment to plan for until the 1st wave of the MBTA developments are built and occupied (2-4 yrs.). Therefore we cannot know how big our new LHS needs to be.

In summary, please provide us with answers to the following questions:

1. If SBC selected to STAGE the project, how would 2-4 months delay in submission affect the project?
2. If the project is STAGED, would the current acceptance into the MSBA funding program reimburse at least Stage 1 at 31% as per our signed letter of agreement? Please confirm the answer with MSBA.

Thank you.

- a. Is it correct that MSBA is extremely strict about funding a right-sized school based on reliable enrollment projections?
- b. If we cannot obtain a reliable enrollment projection does that not invalidate the 2,395 enrollment number that is based on a flawed enrolment-projection model?

I look forward to your answers which should clarify many of the speculations that are circulated by both supporters and opponents of the current design.

With much appreciation,
Olga Guttag