

## **Secondary School Building Committee**

Town of Grafton  
30 Providence Road  
Grafton, MA 01519

March 17, 2008

Dear Mr. Whynot:

Thank you for your comments on the school space needs issue. It is important for there to be as much attention as possible to this critical community need. We encourage everyone to challenge the facts, ask questions, and stay informed.

You're right. \$550,000 is a large amount of money to spend on a Feasibility Study. Massachusetts General Law mandates the use of an Owner's Project Manager (OPM) on municipal projects – typically this equates to 10% of the project. So, between \$25,000-\$50,000 has been earmarked for the OPM - the remainder for the Study. The Department of Revenue requires municipalities to bond the entire amount knowing that the actual costs may be less. It is expected that the Study will cost substantially less, offset by the use of existing data compiled through the System-wide Master Plan Study completed in 2006, and reduced by the State's reimbursement at 50.79%.

The State did object to the use of language, "system-wide solution," calling it overly broad. The Secondary School Building Committee is responsible for advocating for language that reflects OUR need. Negotiating with the State over critical language that will impact this community is our obligation and a responsibility we take seriously. As of late last week, our suggested, revised language has been approved – and it quite accurately anticipates the expected scope of the Feasibility Study. This language is being submitted to the Board of Selectmen for their review on March 18, 2008.

The State is saying that the study should focus on the needs identified by the Statement of Interest submitted under Grafton High School. And, yes this Committee has spent nearly two years RE-EXAMINING the conclusion of the Master Plan Study Committee in order to reach the conclusion that secondary school space is needed in order to provide system-wide relief to our space needs crisis. As citizens, we should expect nothing less - this is the one of the most important and costly issues this community will face in close to 30 years.

We agree - the Feasibility Study is a "bright light." It is the ONLY means of identifying a solution to the problem that will result in a project that receives state funding. Also it appears to be the ONLY means of independently validating our need to arrive at a solution that is financially-prudent, educationally-sound and with positive system-wide impact. The State may conclude that we should renovate existing buildings, add-on, use portable classrooms or re-use the Municipal Center. And, yes, any one – or a combination- of these solutions could cost less than a new building. Or, it could cost more. At the end of the day, it is reasonable and prudent to have this answer.

We all share the goal of a reasonable - cost effective - long term solution to our school space needs issue. We appreciate your perspective and look forward to hearing more as we work through the process. Watch for upcoming public forums sponsored by the GEA and the League of Women Voters. We strongly encourage everyone to stay informed and ask questions. Our meetings are televised and we welcome your attendance – this is a great opportunity to participate in the discussion.

**Town Meeting is May 12, 2008 at Grafton High School.**

Thank you.

Secondary School Building Committee  
Don Chouinard  
Mary Ann Cotton  
Craig Dauphinais  
Mike Goulet  
Richard McCarthy  
Bob Mulvey

Gary Murray  
Bob Rodak  
Noel Sior-Woodard