SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Town of Medfield, Massachusetts 02052

September 13, 2022

Dear Medfield Board of Selectmen;

In accordance with the newly amended Code of the Town of Medfield, Chapter 10, Article IV, Subsection L, the Medfield School Committee submits this application for the construction of a new elementary school, or the renovation/addition of the Dale Street School or other current elementary buildings, as identified by the School Building Committee (SBC). We strongly believe that it is in the best interest of the community and its students for the School Committee and the School Building Committee to examine the grade structure of our elementary schools.

The previous SBC spent several years collaborating with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) on a comprehensive feasibility study, as well as a schematic design for a new elementary school. While the project as proposed failed at the November 7, 2021 Special Town Meeting by a 4% margin, there are aspects of the vision that continue to be valid and important in consideration of our community's future needs.

- The new project must provide the District with future flexibility for grade-level configurations. This flexibility has become increasingly critical both in our present circumstances and as mandates for early childhood education become a reality in future years. Medfield Public Schools must have the space and resources to accommodate the cyclical one or two grade surges it experiences regularly, an example of which may be seen in our current Pre-K and early elementary programs. The District has had to historically make sacrifices in both community desired and revenue generating program offerings, as well as in class size. Any new project must take into account how these factors at the earliest stages of education will impact the elementary system as a whole. With this application the School Committee takes into consideration potential enrollment fluctuations.

- In a reevaluation of the initial plan, as well as factors raised since that plan was proposed, the Committee and Administration identify a unified setting of at least two elementary schools as a high priority of a new elementary school or renovation/addition project. A unified setting minimizes transitions for our students and increases opportunities for staff and service collaboration. It is possible that during the predicted lifespan of the building there may be such a significant contraction of school age population that the district may choose to consolidate its resources into a two elementary school program.

- A significant inadequacy of the current elementary program, across all schools, is the need for non-grade specific learning spaces and infrastructure for Special Education instruction and support, individualized instruction, hands-on learning, library-media resources, language learning labs, and designated music and performing arts rehearsal and performance areas. These spaces are necessary and standard within contemporary educational building projects.

- Our schools serve as a community resource for many town-wide organizations. A new elementary school or a renovation/addition reconfiguration must continue to serve the community outside of the typical school day and calendar. Upgraded facilities will continue to provide more opportunities to Medfield residents as well as needed revenue streams for the School District.

- The next school project should be a model for the Town of Medfield's long-term energy and sustainability goals. A sustainable building will increase our ability to manage long-term climate change and the financial challenges that will accompany this reality, while also teaching our students each day about the importance of renewable energy and sustainable resource practices.

In April of 2022, the Medfield Public Schools, with the Board of Selectmen's support, submitted a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the MSBA for acceptance into its building program. The MSBA process would allow the Town of Medfield to receive substantial reimbursement for the project, although the previous project's reimbursement of $19,000,000 is no longer guaranteed. As of this writing, the MSBA has not contacted the District to inform us of our acceptance into the program in December 2022.

The Medfield School Committee submits this application to the Board of Selectmen to expedite the formation of a SBC and with it begin in earnest the work to provide our students, staff, and community with a modern learning facility that meets the specific needs of our town's citizens, as well as their expectation of the highest quality of education.

The School Committee looks forward to working in partnership with the School Building Committee and the Community to bring a project to the town for a successful vote and completion of this much needed modernization of our elementary system.

Please see the attached Education Plan, as well as the most recent SOI submission, for more in depth detail in support of the District's application.

Thank you for your consideration,

The Medfield School Committee:
Anna Mae O'Shea Brooke, Chair
Timothy Knight, Vice Chair
Jessica Reilly, Recording Secretary
Michelle Kirkby, Financial Secretary
Leo Brehm, Member at Large