MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors, Massachusetts School Building Authority
FROM: James A. MacDonald, First Deputy Treasurer, Chief Executive Officer
Mary L. Pichetti, Executive Director, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
DATE: October 21, 2026
RE: Model School Program Recommendations

The purpose of this memorandum is to seek the Board of Directors' approval of two project designs, as indicated on page 3, for the Massachusetts School Building Authority's ("MSBA") Model School Program. The MSBA issued a Request for Qualifications ("RFQ") dated January 21, 2026, requesting project designs for consideration to be included in the Model School Program. In accordance with established practices, staff has completed its review of the Model School Program applications submitted by Designers in response to the RFQ. The information and recommendations below were presented at the Facilities Assessment Subcommittee meeting on September 16, 2026.

Background

The MSBA's Model School Program seeks to adapt and re-use the design of successful, recently constructed schools to meet the requirements of a school district that has been invited by the MSBA's Board of Directors to construct a new (versus renovated) school. Under the Model School Program, the MSBA intends to select from existing school designs meeting the appropriate criteria and to pre-qualify the Designer of each selected Model School. The District, in collaboration with the MSBA, may then select one of the pre-qualified Model Schools and its Designer. The District will then enter into a contract with the selected Designer for design services. It is anticipated that the list of pre-qualified Model Schools will be updated periodically.

The recommended Model Schools listed below meet the following minimum requirements:

1. The proposed Model Schools are entirely new construction of a PK-12 grade configuration, located within a 125-mile radius of Worcester, MA;
2. The proposed Model Schools were permitted using 780 CMR Massachusetts State Building Code 9th edition or, if not permitted in Massachusetts, any building code or design criteria using the International Energy Efficiency Code ("IECC"), no earlier than 2018 edition, and ASHRAE 90.1, no earlier than the 2016 version;
3. The proposed Model Schools were registered with either U.S. Green Building Council "LEED-S" or Collaborative for High Performance Schools ("CHPS"), and;
4. The proposed Model Schools have been open for full occupancy for a minimum of 12 months as of September 18, 2026 (using the substantial completion date as the starting date of occupancy; for phased occupancies, using the final substantial completion date).

In addition, the recommended Model Schools were evaluated favorably using the following criteria:

1. Completeness of the requested submission materials;
2. The adaptability of the school design to other sites without substantial re-design or expense;
3. The extent to which the school classroom wing/areas may be adapted to a 20% addition and reduction in design enrollment by adding or reducing the number of classrooms. The Core Academic portion of the design must be adaptable to expansion or contraction to meet a specific design enrollment, with minimal re-design effort;
4. The adaptability of the design to various educational programs. In particular, the design must be adaptable to various teaching methodologies, grade configurations, class offerings, and reconfiguration of core classroom space with minimal re-design effort;
5. The extent to which the spaces in the school allow for maximum flexibility for multiple and/or future uses;
6. The extent to which the design includes differentiated learning spaces and student and teacher collaboration areas;
7. The efficiency of the design; how closely the school conforms to current MSBA space summary guideline standards, including net square footage by category, total net square footage, total gross square footage, overall grossing factor (GSF/NSF), and space utilization of capacity generating spaces;
8. The incorporation of energy efficiency and sustainable design elements based on the current MSBA Sustainable Building Design Guidelines;
9. The school's environmental qualities and natural lighting;
10. The extent to which the school complies with the MSBA Guidelines for Science Labs in High School Facilities (if applicable), the Review and Recommendations of Best Practices for K-12 STEM Learning Spaces and/or MSBA's Staff Recommendation for 2018 Science/Technology/Engineering Area Guidelines;
11. The construction cost per gross square foot exclusive of site development, Furnishings, Fixtures & Equipment ("FF&E"), and soft costs;
12. The extent of change orders as a percentage of the original bid price (exclusive of Owner directed change orders or change orders related to differing or unforeseen site conditions);
13. The ability of the proposed design team to comply with the goals of the Model School Program (design "best practices," accelerated production schedule, reduced fees, reduced change orders, etc.) based on previous project experience; and,
14. Any other criteria that the MSBA may deem relevant to the evaluation of proposed model schools.

The MSBA received three responses to the RFQ on May 6, 2026. Staff reviewed the responses in accordance with the criteria stated above. Having previously visited one school within the last 12 months, staff conducted visits to two of the three schools in August 2026. During the visits that were conducted, the team sought to receive input from the districts regarding the benefits of the building and to gain an understanding of any challenges associated with the building. In addition, an update regarding the Model School reviews and visits was provided at the Facilities

Assessment Subcommittee meeting on July 15, 2026. A full update and staff recommendations were presented at the Facilities Assessment Subcommittee meeting on September 16, 2026.

Recommendation

Based on the review and findings described above, staff recommends that the following two project designs be included in the Model School Program:

- Florence Roche Elementary School, by Studio G Architects, Inc.
- Dr. William R. Peck Middle School, by Mount Vernon Group Architects, Inc.

The following project design, which was submitted for consideration, is not recommended to be included in the Model School Program:

- Francis M. Leahy School, by Mount Vernon Group Architects, Inc.

The MSBA will continue to monitor the effectiveness of MSBA policy to support the Model School Program.