



Watertown Public Schools

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To: The Watertown School Committee
From: Deanne Galdston, Superintendent
Cc: Mary DeLai, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations
Theresa McGuinness, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment
RE: Update on Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School
Date: November 24, 2017

Students in Watertown have long been provided with the opportunity to attend Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School, even though Watertown is not a member district through the Chapter 74 Non-resident Student Tuition Program. This program provides students the opportunity to attend a school outside of their district of residence to study a state-approved vocational technical education program that is not offered by their district of residence.

With Minuteman High School opening its doors to its new facility in September 2019, this is an optimal time for Watertown to explore options to become a member district. If Watertown continues to utilize the Non-resident Student Tuition program, an additional capital fee of \$8400 will be charged for each Watertown student attending Minuteman to defray the cost of the debt service. Towns or cities that choose to become new members will be provided a multi-year incremental phase-in of the debt service which has potential cost saving implications for the Town.

On October 11, Assistant Superintendent Mary DeLai and I met with the leadership team at Minuteman to discuss the process by which Watertown could become a member district. Currently, Minuteman High School has nine member districts: Needham, Dover, Lexington, Arlington, Acton, Concord, Stow, Berlin and Lancaster. Belmont is withdrawing their membership in 2020. The current enrollment at Minuteman is 590 students, with Watertown sending 63 students this year.

In order to become a member district, the Regional Agreement would have to be amended to include Watertown, which would require approval of the amended Regional Agreement by Watertown, the successful approval of the amendment by each of the member districts' communities, and approval by the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. All of this must be completed prior to December 31 for new members to be admitted for the following July 1. As much of this process would have to be completed in the late winter, it is not feasible for Watertown to become a member until July 1, 2020. I recommend that we explore the options more thoroughly, with a potential decision being made in the late fall of 2018.

Some of the potential benefits of becoming a member district include: guaranteed seats for Watertown students, Minuteman School Committee representation, middle school afterschool exploratory programming, post-graduate opportunities for Watertown adults, assistance from students on projects in

the member town, and a 50% discount on rental rates. All sports have no fees and no cuts and all students in member districts are provided transportation.

I have included in this memo a projected member assessment for Watertown compared to non-member costs for FY22-25. Mary DeLai and I are planning to return to Minuteman Regional High School in January to meet with Watertown students to learn more about their choice to attend Minuteman, as well as their experiences as students in the school. We will prepare a summary of what we learn for the subsequent Budget and Finance Subcommittee meeting.

Minuteman High School
Analysis for the Town of Watertown
Projected Member Assessment compared to Non-Member Costs

<u>Projected Member Assessments</u>				
	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>	<u>Year 4</u>
	<u>FY22</u>	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY24</u>	<u>FY25</u>
Minimum Required Contribution	\$ 1,106,548	\$ 1,128,679	\$ 1,151,253	\$ 1,174,278
Transportation	\$ 84,750	\$ 86,445	\$ 88,174	\$ 89,937
Other Operating Assessments	\$ 529,816	\$ 540,412	\$ 551,221	\$ 562,245
Debt Service <i>(Yr. 1 - 25%, Yr. 2 - 50%, Yr. 3 - 75%, Yr. 4 - 100%)</i>	\$ 179,920	\$ 359,840	\$ 539,759	\$ 719,679
Total Annual Assessment *	\$ 1,901,034	\$ 2,115,376	\$ 2,330,406	\$ 2,546,139

<u>Projected Out-of-District Costs</u>				
<u>Assumes 70 students (50% on IEP's)</u>				
	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>	<u>Year 4</u>
	<u>FY22</u>	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY24</u>	<u>FY25</u>
Projected Non-resident Tuition Rate <i>(FY22 Proj. rate: \$17,860/std. @ 2% inc./yr.)</i>	\$ 1,250,200	\$ 1,275,204	\$ 1,300,708	\$ 1,326,722
Special Education Fee <i>(35 students @ \$5,000/student)</i>	\$ 175,000	\$ 175,000	\$ 175,000	\$ 175,000
Capital Fee <i>(Est. rate = \$8,349/OOD student)</i>	\$ 584,430	\$ 584,430	\$ 584,430	\$ 584,430
Daily Bus Route <i>(\$350/day x 2 buses @ 3% inc./yr.)</i>	\$ 126,700	\$ 130,501	\$ 134,416	\$ 138,449
Total Annual Cost	\$ 2,136,330	\$ 2,165,135	\$ 2,194,554	\$ 2,224,601

FOOTNOTES:

- 1) Assumes estimated annual budget of \$24,302,516 in FY22 & full debt service issued.
- 2) Ch. 70 Aid for vocational students will decrease Watertown Ch. 70 funding by approximately 4%.
 - Based on FY17 Ch. 70 Aid and Net School Spending requirements