



## MAYNARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

www.maynardschools.org

12 Bancroft Street

Maynard, Massachusetts 01754

# Progress Made & Challenges Ahead Historical overview of the High School facility issue

### What is Accreditation?

Hospitals, museums, many colleges, many private schools, and almost all public high schools voluntarily join a regional accrediting association and submit themselves to periodic peer-reviews against predetermined standards. Massachusetts public schools are re-evaluated for Accreditation every 10 years by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges, known colloquially by its acronym, 'NEASC'.

### Where is MHS in the process?

In the spring of 2002 MHS hosted a site visit by a team of educators from accredited school members of the New England Association of Schools & Colleges. The Visiting Team identified a series of 'commendations'; and placed MHS on 'Warning' status with 'recommendations' in several standards, not in itself unusual. Following the site-visit report, the MHS Principal and faculty must study the recommendations and develop corrective actions to address *each* recommendation. Schools then must report progress back to NEASC on a yearly, a two year and a five year schedule. In the 10<sup>th</sup> year, the process begins all over with another site-visit to maintain Accreditation.

In his Five Year Report, the Maynard High School Principal demonstrated that MHS has met **ALL** the NEASC standards based on curriculum alone,  
[http://www.maynardschools.org/NEASC/NEASC\\_Ltr.pdf](http://www.maynardschools.org/NEASC/NEASC_Ltr.pdf)

### Why is MHS now on 'Probation'?

In the initial '02 report a series of facilities issues were identified, e.g. inadequacies in science labs and the library. Some corrective action was taken to address these facilities recommendations. There were some renovations in science rooms and some resources, (i.e. a full-time librarian and computers), were added to the library. Four years after the 2002 site visit, NEASC notified the District in a January '06 letter that facilities progress was inadequate; MHS was placed on 'probation' for facilities inadequate to support curriculum delivery.

### Winter 2006

Within a month of the NEASC notification, the Superintendent proposed a Facilities Study plan to the School Committee because several of the identified facilities problems required architectural and engineering analysis to correct. The SC approved that plan; added Green Meadow to the study, and immediately advanced a warrant to the May '06 Town Meeting which funded an engineering/architectural study to provide facilities guidance.

### **Summer/Winter 2006**

The School Committee formed a Facilities Advisory Council of citizens to work with Tappe Associates, an Architect firm. This group spent months, guided by architects and informed by engineers' reviews, studying both facilities. In March 1, 2007, that report, the Tappe study, was presented to the School Committee: <http://www.maynardschools.org/reports.html> the report identified substantial, systemic problems in the HS building, e.g. heating, electrical, insulation, roofing, etc., leading to the question of whether the facility could be refurbished or should be replaced.

In order to maintain its Accreditation, NEASC made clear its expectations: [http://www.maynardschools.org/NEASC/NEASC\\_Ltr2.pdf](http://www.maynardschools.org/NEASC/NEASC_Ltr2.pdf) Maynard must make HS facilities improvements for its current generation of students, i.e. make much needed short-term improvements, as well as develop a long-term facilities plan. Since then, with the assistance of a dedicated Facilities Committee, the School Committee has been advancing HS facilities issues on these two fronts, simultaneously, short-term, inexpensive improvements, and long-term planning.

### **May 2007**

Town warrant funded a new HS boiler and new library resources, e.g. computers, on-line references, research materials, etc. These improvements were chosen because they were current, essential needs, and, like the boiler, were portable capital investments. High School students returning in the fall enjoyed a new, expanded HS library, and everyone could be confident of heat! Last year we added to the HS 12 smart boards and overhead projectors, improved the science labs, including the addition of computers, chemistry lab ventilation, microscopes, probes, sensors, software, and training for teachers.

### **So what about Accreditation?**

These short term 'portable' investments and similar small, yearly improvements satisfy immediate NEASC expectations for progress towards fulfilling standards for Accreditation. Confer the District's last two yearly reports, [http://www.maynardschools.org/NEASC/Letter\\_to\\_NEASC\\_05\\_14\\_2008.pdf](http://www.maynardschools.org/NEASC/Letter_to_NEASC_05_14_2008.pdf) [http://www.maynardschools.org/NEASC/MHS\\_Letter\\_to\\_NEASC\\_03-31-2009.pdf](http://www.maynardschools.org/NEASC/MHS_Letter_to_NEASC_03-31-2009.pdf) These yearly reports have clearly demonstrated to NEASC our continuing short term efforts to address the HS facilities problems. Only if the District were to ignore critical facility issues would the High School lose Accreditation.

### **And long-term, what about the major facilities issues?**

Given the facilities problems identified in the Tappe study, the larger question is, how should the District address the more substantial, systemic HS facilities needs for the long term? Should the District do short-term, but costly repairs to an aging facility? Or would it be more economical and educationally preferable to renovate or rebuild? Or is regionalization with another district a possibility? As the long-term facilities solution, the School Committee applied to Mass School Building Authority to begin a collaborative process seeking State assistance to determine the best resolution of the HS facility challenges. <http://www.maynardschools.org/Facilities/HS10MSBADoc.pdf>

### **Spring 2008**

On April 9, the MSBA moved MHS to Feasibility Planning status, [http://www.maynardschools.org/MSBA/MSBA\\_04\\_09\\_2008.pdf](http://www.maynardschools.org/MSBA/MSBA_04_09_2008.pdf), meaning in part: *MSBA would pay a little over half of our planning costs.* The School Committee, with the support of the Selectmen and Fin Com, promptly moved forward a warrant article

for a Feasibility Planning process, funded at about 55% by the MSBA. The Town overwhelmingly supported the article and the feasibility planning began. The Selectmen then expanded the School Committee's original facilities committee to include a broader range of community members.

**Members**

Jerry Culbert, Chair	Ed Mullin	Chris Johnson, Finance Committee
Matt Briggs	Bonnie Winoker	Bob Nadeau, Selectman
Anthony Midey	John Barilone, Sr.	Mark Howrey, School Committee
Ken Neuhauser	Peter O'Callaghan	

**Advisory Members**

John Curran, Town Manager	Peter DiCicco, School Business Administrator
Mark Masterson, Superintendent	Laura Chesson, High School Principal

**Winter 2009**

The 'Town of Maynard School Building Committee', closely following the MSBA's guidelines, developed and published a 'Request for Services'(RFS) to hire an Owner's Project Manager (OPM). Throughout the feasibility planning, the OPM serves as the MSBA/Town's overseer of the entire process, making sure that all viable alternatives are professionally reviewed. (The MSBA will not pay for the ultimate 'preferred solution' without the OPM's blessing.) The OPM's first task (now underway) is to assist the Building Committee in hiring an architect who will cost out alternatives, e.g. refurbish, build-new, add-on, etc.

**Summer/Fall 2009**

The Town of Maynard School Building Committee, guided by the OPM and assisted by the architect, will begin consideration of alternative solutions to the HS facility problem. At some point, probably fall, the committee will recommend a preferred solution first to the MSBA. After the MSBA reviews the recommendation and approves it (agreeing to fund a percentage of the total cost) the alternative will go before the voters for their approval.

**Summary**

The Town of Maynard School Building Committee has benefited by the work of earlier committees and is now guided and supported by the MSBA, through both their required processes and their funding. In the coming months a series of alternatives will be reviewed, costed-out, considered, and eventually a preferred alternative will be accepted by the MSBA and voted at a Town Meeting.