

# Wilbur & McMahan Schools

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Dr. Harold G. Devine  
Superintendent

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## MEMORANDUM

To: School Facilities Study Committee  
From: Superintendent of Schools  
Date: July 8, 2009  
Re: School Construction Process and Timeline

I have been in contact with Joseph da Silva from the Department of Education (DOE) and he has reviewed the process and timeline for obtaining DOE participation and financial support for a school building and/or renovation project. He said that bringing a plan before the public and even our outreach program is, at this time, very premature. He said that local approval does not occur until the following steps have been taken and approvals given:

He said that at this time we should be submitting a “STAGE I APPLICATION” to him.

### STEP 1 – LETTER OF INTENT

*The intent of this step is to inform RIDE of the commencement of the planning process leading to a potential Stage I application and provide contact information. Each application, regardless of whether the project involves major construction or capital improvements, must file a letter of intent. This notification will start the collaborative comprehensive planning between the district and RIDE.*

Required Information:

1. Name of Local School District/Charter School
2. Date that Stage I application is planned to submitted
3. Contact Person
4. Contact Telephone Number
5. Contact Email Address
6. Brief description of the comprehensive planning steps to be undertaken and the project type and financing mechanism anticipated.
7. Planning Timeline
8. Signed by the Superintendent of Schools, School Committee Chair and Municipal Representative

Following a meeting with RIDE and approval of the Letter of Intent, we must complete the Stage I Application. The purpose of the Stage I Application is to identify and verify the problem. The

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fact that Joe da Silva performed the original facilities audit while with Mount Vernon Group gives us an advantage in this regard. The Stage I Application consists of fourteen (14) very involved steps which include:

1. \_\_\_ Statement of Interest & Project Justification  
\_\_\_ Letter of Intent from Superintendent signed/certified by School Committee Chair and Municipal Representative

2. \_\_\_ District map with highlighted educational facilities
3. \_\_\_ School Building Committee Members list and backgrounds
4. \_\_\_ District Asset Protection Plan
5. \_\_\_ Capital Facilities Improvement Plan
6. \_\_\_ Facilities Analysis (Comprehensive Facilities Plan)
7. \_\_\_ District & Community Demographics
8. \_\_\_ Cross Districting Due Diligence
9. \_\_\_ Educational Program Due Diligence  
\_\_\_ Existing School Capacities and Grade Configurations  
\_\_\_ Approved Educational Program certified by School Committee  
\_\_\_ Educational Program Needs Assessment

10. \_\_\_ Planning Activities

The intent of this section is to summarize project planning activities.

This section will discuss which consultants assisted with the project planning and whether there is municipal support for the project. In addition, this section will describe the alternatives explored, historical implications of existing facilities, and the energy efficient/gross smart concepts considered.

11. \_\_\_ Operating Budget Analysis
12. \_\_\_ Local Jurisdictional considerations such as local comprehensive plan conformance
13. \_\_\_ Document how preliminary planning consultants contract procurement satisfies applicable laws
14. \_\_\_ Feasibility Study proposed scope of work.

According to da Silva, the School Building Committee (see # 3 above) must be in place at this stage of the process. The DOE construction regulations defines the membership of this committee:

### **School Building Committee members**

The district must submit names and backgrounds of the members of the school building committee that shall be formed in accordance with the provisions of the district's local charter and/or by-laws.

The school building committee must, at a minimum consist of eight people, including the superintendent of schools, at least one member of the school committee, the local official responsible for building maintenance, a representative of the office or body authorized by law to construct school buildings in the municipality, the school principal from the subject school, a member who has knowledge of the educational mission and function of the facility, a local budget official or member of the local finance committee, and at least one member of the community with architectural, engineering and/or construction experience to provide input relative to the effect of the project on the community and to examine building design and construction plans for reasonableness.

This takes us to the end of Stage I. Following DOE approval of the Stage I Application, the process moves on to Stage II. During this phase The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) will approve a project at a particular cost for a certain number of students. [In this document the terms DOE and RIDE are used interchangeably]. They will also identify how much \$\$ will be reimbursed by the state for this particular project.

Following Stage II approval by RIDE, the application will be submitted to the Board of Regents by RIDE and will be approved as a formality. I am offering this rather lengthy communication to advise that all of the above must be completed BEFORE a request to the Legislature can be made to approve funding of this project and the approval of the legislature must occur **BEFORE** any local approval can be sought.

What follows is a portion of the text of the contract between JCJ Architects and the Little Compton School Committee. Emphasis has been added:

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF CONSULTANT

Consultant shall perform the following services:

A. Compile and analyze all existing school facilities studies and available information. Identify and analyze all existing town and school owned properties for their ability to accommodate a new school.

Attend Facilities Committee meetings and, as requested, School Committee meetings for the purpose of updating the committee on their progress to date on the project.

Research and provide to the Facilities Committee new trends in developing school facilities to deliver a better educational product.

Plan for the preservation of the historic portion of the school building.

**Advise the Facilities Committee in every aspect of RIDE school Housing process.**

**Coordinate all studies and/or reports required to secure state funding.**

Develop **timeline of required tasks** leading to a school construction bond authorization by the Town.

Assist the Facilities Committee in identification of a suitable construction site.

Prepare drawings to extent necessary to graphically represent the final plan.

Advise Facilities Committee regarding a community information campaign preceding a funding vote by the Town.

**Advise the Facilities Committee with regard to such other tasks as may be necessary for the successful prosecution of these efforts.**

B. The services listed above are meant to represent the **minimum required end products.**

In conclusion, Joe da Silva said that a request for local approval would be appropriate for possibly November, 2010, certainly not this year. There is simply too much to be done in advance of any request for local approval. It is my opinion that the efforts of the committee must be redirected toward addressing the sequence of activities required by RIDE and that our consultant must provide us with a plan to meet these requirements.

Harold G. Devine, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools