



# Massachusetts School Building Authority

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August 16, 2024

Ms. Pamela Beaudoin, Superintendent  
Manchester-Essex Regional School District  
36 Lincoln Street  
Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA 01944

Re: Manchester-Essex Regional School District, Essex Elementary School

Dear Superintendent Beaudoin:

I would like to thank representatives of the Manchester-Essex Regional School District (the “District”) for meeting with Massachusetts School Building Authority (the “MSBA”) staff on June 24, 2024, and July 22, 2024, to review enrollment projections and methodologies for the Essex Elementary School project (the “Proposed Project”). As discussed, the next critical step is for the MSBA and the District to agree on a study enrollment for the Proposed Project.

The MSBA works with local communities to create affordable, sustainable, and energy-efficient schools across Massachusetts. A critical early component in achieving these objectives begins with an appropriate design enrollment that positions the District to efficiently meet space capacity needs throughout potential future enrollment variations.

The MSBA uses a data-driven enrollment projection methodology based on the widely accepted modified grade-to-grade cohort survival methodology (the “enrollment methodology”). The MSBA’s enrollment methodology generates a baseline enrollment projection as discussed during the June 24, 2024, enrollment meeting, and as further described on the MSBA’s website found under the ‘Building With Us’, ‘MSBA Enrollment Methodology’ section.

Based on discussion with and information supplied by the District, data from sources such as the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“DESE”) and Department of Public Health, the MSBA has been able to create enrollment projections for the Proposed Project, as follows.

The Essex Elementary School presently serves the Town of Essex grade K through 5 enrollments. The MSBA understands that in addition to the current grade configuration, the District would like its Feasibility Study to evaluate a district-wide grade Pre-K through 5 configuration with an expansion to the MSBA-funded Manchester Memorial Elementary School. The District would also like to evaluate a grade Pre-K through 3 configuration at the existing Essex Elementary School resulting in district-wide grades 4 through 5 enrollments attending the MSBA-funded Manchester Memorial Elementary School.

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As discussed, Pre-K enrollment is not included in these projections and the determination for required space will be in the early phase of the grant program's feasibility study phase of the MSBA's process at the time of the review of the District's proposed educational space program for the Proposed Project. Accordingly, this analysis will be focused on the enrollment projections for grades K through 5.

The table below illustrates the District's K through 12 enrollments during the most recent ten-year period, including enrollment for the school year 2023-2024 as reported by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ("DESE").

School Year	Essex	District Wide			
	K-5	K-5	6-8	9-12	Total
2014-2015	270	672	376	440	1,488
2015-2016	249	610	384	432	1,426
2016-2017	225	574	386	424	1,384
2017-2018	228	560	372	443	1,375
2018-2019	222	538	368	471	1,377
2019-2020	219	518	357	483	1,358
2020-2021	189	450	343	459	1,252
2021-2022	219	497	283	450	1,230
2022-2023	231	489	283	416	1,188
2023-2024	229	489	274	399	1,162

A version of the above table with more detail regarding the District's historic enrollment can also be found in the District's Enrollment Projection package.

The total grade K through 5 enrollments in the Town of Essex as reported by the District for the 2023-2024 school year was 229 students, which reflects a decrease of 61 students (-15.2%) from the maximum grade K through 5 enrollments reported during the preceding ten years. Additionally, the 2023-2024 grade K through 5 enrollment reflects an increase of 1 student (0.4%) from the average grade K through 5 enrollments reported during the preceding ten-year period. The MSBA understands that the District initially proposed an enrollment to accommodate approximately 240 students in grades Pre-K through 5 at the Essex Elementary School.

The total grade K through 5 enrollments in the Manchester-Essex Regional School District as reported by the District for the 2023-2024 school year was 489 students, which reflects a decrease of 183 students (-27.2%) from the maximum grade K through 5 enrollments reported during the preceding ten years. Additionally, the 2023-2024 district-wide grade K through 5 enrollment reflects a decrease of 51 students (-9.4%) from the average grade K through 5 enrollments reported during the preceding ten-year period.

With respect to future enrollments, the MSBA's base enrollment projection indicates the District's grade K-5 enrollment will stabilize then trend upward, peaking in the 2032-2033

school year before declining. A similar pattern is also projected for the Town of Essex. In accordance with the MSBA's Enrollment Methodology, the baseline enrollment is calculated using the ten-year average of projected enrollments. As such, the average base enrollment projections for the Proposed Project through the 2032-2033 school year are as follows:

- Essex Elementary School Current Configuration: Grade K-5 base enrollment projection: 245 students
- Essex Elementary School Proposed Configuration: Grade K-3 base enrollment projection: 160 students
- District-wide proposed Configuration: Grade K-5 base enrollment projection: 505 students

As a result of a sensitivity analysis performed by the MSBA on this base enrollment projection and further discussion with the District, the following adjustment has been made to the base enrollment projection:

#### Out-of-District Enrollment

- In order to adjust for fluctuations to in the out-of-district enrollment patterns of the District's residents over time, the MSBA has made an additional adjustment to the base enrollment projection.
- In order to make this adjustment, the MSBA adjusted the grade-to-grade survival ratios for grade K through 5 by a total of 3.3% throughout a four-year period in the projection.
- This adjustment added the following numbers of students to the base enrollment, as compared to the projection without this adjustment:
  - Essex Elementary School Current Configuration of grade K-5 enrollment: the adjustment added approximately five students
  - Essex Elementary School Proposed Configuration of grade K-3 enrollment: the adjustment added approximately five students
  - District-wide Proposed Configuration of grade K-5 enrollment: the adjustment added approximately ten students

As a result of the analysis of the base enrollment forecast, the historical enrollment trends of the District and the adjustment described above, the MSBA recommends for planning and study purposes only, study enrollments for the Proposed Project as follows:

- Essex Elementary School Current Configuration of grade K through 5 enrollment: 250 students (plus Pre-K students)
- Essex Elementary School Proposed Configuration of grade K through 3 enrollment: 165 students (plus Pre-K students)
- District-wide Proposed Configuration of grade K through 5 enrollment: 515 students (plus Pre-K students)

Please note that these recommendations for study enrollments do not represent an affirmation by the MSBA for approval and/or funding of any of these options and are intended only to provide a

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framework to inform the feasibility study to be conducted as a means of determining the most cost-effective and educationally sound solution to be agreed upon by the District and the MSBA. The MSBA's study enrollment recommendations assume full utilization of all remaining school facilities.

If the current grade K-5 enrollment configuration in the Town of Essex is not determined to be the Preferred Solution, the District will be required to document in the Preferred Schematic Report that the Preferred Solution has been approved by the School Committee and necessary District officials. Further, the MSBA will require a written plan from the District describing the process for determining local support for preferred grade reconfiguration. Please note any potential grant associated with a Proposed Project that includes a grade Pre-K through 3 configuration at the existing Essex Elementary School, resulting in district-wide grades 4 through 5 enrollments attending the MSBA-funded Manchester Memorial Elementary School, will be limited to the work at the Essex Elementary School. Upon approval of the District's Preferred Solution, the MSBA will forward a design enrollment certification that is specific to the grade configuration associated with the approved Preferred Solution.

The MSBA believes that these study enrollment recommendations will position the District to efficiently meet space capacity needs throughout future enrollment variations. Please sign and return the attached certification within 21 calendar days to confirm agreement on these study enrollment recommendations. If the District feels that these study enrollment recommendations do not meet the needs of the District, please respond to this letter via e-mail to Claire Ackerman and propose three meeting/conference call times for which the District can be available to discuss enrollment.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Claire Ackerman (Claire.Ackerman@massschoolbuildings.org) at 617-720-4466.

Sincerely,



Michael McGurl  
Director of Capital Planning

Cc: Legislative Delegation  
Chris Reed, Chair, Manchester-Essex Regional School Committee  
Kate Koch-Sundquist, Vice Chair, Manchester-Essex Regional School Committee  
John Binieris, Co-Chair, School Building Committee  
Theresa Whitman, Co-Chair, School Building Committee  
Michelle Cresta, Director of Finance and Operations, Manchester-Essex Regional School District  
File: 10.2 Letters (Region 3)

**MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL BUILDING AUTHORITY  
MANCHESTER-ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ESSEX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
STUDY ENROLLMENT CERTIFICATION**

As a result of a collaborative analysis with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (the “MSBA”) of enrollment projections and space capacity needs for the Essex Elementary School (the “Proposed Project”), the Manchester-Essex Regional School District (the “District”) hereby acknowledges and agrees that the design of alternatives, which may be evaluated as a part of the feasibility study for the Essex Elementary School, shall be based in accordance with the following:

<b>Town of Essex Grade K-3 Enrollment (plus Pre-K)</b>	<b>Town of Essex Grade K-5 Enrollment (plus Pre-K)</b>	<b>District-wide Grade K-5 Enrollment (plus Pre-K)</b>
165 students	250 students	515 students

The District further acknowledges and agrees that, pursuant to 963 CMR 2.00 *et seq.*, the MSBA shall determine the square feet per student space allowance and total square footage according to the enrollments noted above. The District acknowledges and agrees that it has no right or entitlement to any particular design enrollment, square feet per student space allowance, or total square footage and that it has no right or entitlement to a design enrollment any greater than any of the enrollments noted above, and further acknowledges and agrees that it shall not bring any claim or action, legal or equitable, against the MSBA, or any of its officers or employees, for the purpose of obtaining an increase in the design enrollment for the Proposed Project that it has acknowledged and agreed to herein. The District further acknowledges and agrees that, among other things, the design enrollment, square feet per student space allowance, and total square footage of the Proposed Project shall be subject to the approval of the MSBA’s Board and that the final approval of a Proposed Project shall be within the sole discretion of the MSBA’s Board.

The undersigned, for themselves and the District, hereby certify that they have read and understand the contents of this study enrollment certification and that each of the above statements is true, complete and accurate. The undersigned hereby certify that they have been duly authorized by the appropriate governmental body to execute this certification on behalf of the District and to bind the District to its terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Executive Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Duly Authorized Representative of School Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent of Schools

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date