

Memo from the Chair of the Mt. Greylock School Committee
March 11, 2014

After discussions at recent Selectmen meetings in both Williamstown and Lanesborough, I would like to clarify some issues regarding the timing and urgency of our work with the MSBA.

1. We need to certify an enrollment number within the 180 days (not the 270). The deadline is April 14, 2014. We need to pass votes on the Feasibility Study Funding no later than July 14, 2014. The plan is to vote in Williamstown on May 20 and in Lanesborough on June 10.
2. If the communities want to discuss a different configuration (8-12, for example, as indicated by the Laneborough meetings last night) we need to stop the enrollment discussions with the MSBA and present local actions and/or approvals in the communities demonstrating agreement on this matter. The MSBA will need such evidence before considering a different configuration.
3. If the Feasibility Vote fails in May and/or June, we need to report this to the MSBA within 10 days. We can re-vote within the 270 days (by July 14, 2014), but if we do not have the community support, we will need to postpone our work with the MSBA. This means withdrawing our SOI and applying at a later time. We were one of 16 districts accepted this year out of a pool of 200. There is no guarantee whatsoever that we will be invited back into the program in near future.
4. While the discussions taking place right now over issues of union affiliation, regional configuration, enrollment, grade shifting, quality of education, cost savings, etc. are all valid conversations, it is important to remain focused on the schedule set forth by the MSBA. We have had many years of SOI submissions to address these issues – and we have been addressing them.
 - Mt. Greylock undertook a Regionalization Study in 2013 and invited Hancock and New Ashford to consider joining.
 - LES and WES formed union 71 in 2008 to achieve cost savings and educational collaboration.
 - MG formed an agreement with Union 71 to establish a tri-district partnership in 2010 for cost savings and many other benefits, including curricular alignment, shared PD, and improved preparation for entrance to Middle School.
 - MG worked with the ICLE on a needs assessment to get us to where we could properly define the curriculum for the SOI.

The issues currently being discussed are not new and for any one of them to become a deal-breaker at this time would be highly unfortunate. We need a plan for how best to address the needs of this building in the most educationally beneficial and cost-effective way possible. Our children, our teachers, and our communities deserve this. We are presently at risk for losing our NEASC accreditation and will have to answer to the requirements of town Building and Fire Inspection Services should we fail to move forward with this process in a timely manner and on the MSBA schedule.

This is our opportunity to work with the MSBA. This opportunity expires July 14, 2014. When we submitted our latest SOI, we as a School Committee indicated we were ready to participate in the program. We need to continue to demonstrate that we are ready. We have a schedule to meet and it is up to us and the SBC to see that we meet that schedule. If we cannot meet the deadlines and succeed in passing the votes, then we have lost our opportunity to provide the residents of both towns with options on how best to move forward.

Carrie Greene, Mt. Greylock School Committee, Chair