



Massachusetts School Building Authority

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October 29, 2025

Mr. James Errickson, Town Administrator
Town of Natick
Natick Town Hall
Town Administrator's Office, Second Floor
13 East Central Street
Natick, MA 01760

Re: Town of Natick, Memorial Elementary School

Dear Mr. Errickson:

I would like to thank representatives of the Town of Natick (the "District") for meeting with Massachusetts School Building Authority (the "MSBA") staff on July 30, 2025, to review enrollment projections and methodologies for the Memorial Elementary School project (the "Proposed Project") and for the additional information provided on August 15, 2025 and August 28, 2025. As discussed, the next critical step is for the MSBA and the District to agree on a design 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 July 30, 2025, enrollment meeting and further described on the MSBA's website, located under the 'Building With Us' section, specifically the 'MSBA Enrollment Methodology' subsection. For specifics on how the MSBA's methodology impacts the Proposed Project, please refer to the District's Enrollment Projection package.

Based on discussions with and information provided by the District, including the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ("DESE") and the Department of Public Health, the MSBA has created an enrollment projection for the Proposed Project, as follows. Memorial Elementary School is one of four elementary schools currently serving the District's K-4 grade

enrollment. The MSBA understands that the District would also like Memorial Elementary School to serve neighborhood PreK students, currently located at Natick High School. As discussed, PreK enrollment is not included in these projections, as the determination of required space occurs early in the feasibility study phase of the MSBA's process, at the time of reviewing the District's proposed educational space program for the Proposed Project.

Accordingly, this analysis will focus on enrollment projections for grades K-4. The table below illustrates the District's grade K-12 enrollment during the most recent ten-year period, including enrollment for the most recent school year (2024-2025) as reported by DESE.

School Year	K-4	5-8	9-12	Total
2015-16	2,211	1,599	1,513	5,323
2016-17	2,212	1,596	1,539	5,347
2017-18	2,191	1,586	1,600	5,377
2018-19	2,167	1,641	1,600	5,408
2019-20	2,105	1,662	1,626	5,393
2020-21	1,961	1,664	1,550	5,175
2021-22	1,962	1,668	1,546	5,176
2022-23	1,957	1,662	1,589	5,208
2023-24	1,901	1,659	1,619	5,179
2024-25	1,898	1,638	1,637	5,173

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

The total grade K-4 enrollment in the Town of Natick as reported by the DESE for the 2024-2025 school year was 1,898 students, reflecting a decrease of 314 students (-14.20%) from the grade K-4 enrollment reported in the 2016-2017 school year, which was the maximum grade K-4 enrollment reported in the preceding ten years. Additionally, the current year's grade K-4 enrollment reflects a decrease of approximately 159 students (-7.71%) from the average grade K-4 enrollment reported during the preceding ten-year period. The MSBA understands that the District is proposing a design enrollment of approximately 699 students in grades PreK-4 at Memorial Elementary School. The grade K-4 enrollment reported to DESE for this school in the 2024-2025 school year is 455 students.

With respect to future enrollments, the MSBA's base enrollment projection indicates that the District's grade K-4 enrollment will experience a decreasing trend before stabilizing in the 2029-30 school year. In accordance with the MSBA's Enrollment Methodology, baseline enrollment is calculated using the ten-year average of projected enrollments. As such, the average base enrollment projection for grades K-4 in the Natick Public Schools through the 2034-2035 school year is 1,755 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 adjustments have been made to the base enrollment projection:

- Student Migration Adjustment
 - The MSBA’s default methodology projects enrollment utilizing the most recent five-year average grade-to-grade cohort survival ratios.
 - In order to account for the recently observed changes in the pattern of grade-to-grade cohort survival ratios, the MSBA enrollment model was adjusted to use the three-year average grade-to-grade cohort ratio rather than the five-year survival ratio.
 - This adjustment added approximately 40 students to the average grade K-4 enrollment as compared to the projection without this adjustment.
- Out-of-District Enrollment
 - In order to adjust for fluctuations 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-4 enrollment by a total of 3.3% throughout a four-year period in the projection.
 - This adjustment added 20 students to the base grade K-4 enrollment as compared to the projection without this adjustment.
- Development
 - Based on the discussions between the District and the MSBA regarding new housing developments and housing development information provided by the District, the MSBA enrollment model was adjusted to use the five-year 75th percentile cohort survival rate for the 2026 and 2027 years rather than the five-year average cohort survival rate, which is utilized throughout the base enrollment forecast to account for the potential impact of developments that are beyond what is typically experienced in the District.
 - This adjustment added 25 students to the base grade K-4 enrollment as compared to the base enrollment projection.

In order to recommend an enrollment for an appropriately sized grade K-4 Proposed Project, the MSBA performed a review of the “school use” for non-project schools serving grade K-4 enrollment: the Bennett-Hemenway Elementary School, the Brown Elementary School, and the Lilja Elementary School, (the “non-project schools”), using “school use” capacity information on file with the MSBA. This review identified a total of 65 general classrooms (exclusive of Special Education, Art, Music, and “other”), and when multiplied by 23 students per classroom, results in space for 1,495 students in the non-project schools identified above. The MSBA understands that year-to-year fluctuations in enrollment occur. Therefore, a 15% buffer has been applied,

resulting in the capacity for 1,270 students (rounded to the nearest five students) in grade K-4 in the non-project schools.

As a result of the analysis of the base enrollment forecast, the historical enrollment trends of the District, and the adjustments described above, the MSBA recommends a design enrollment of 570 students in grades K-4 (plus neighborhood PreK) for the Memorial Elementary School.

As mentioned, the MSBA understands that the District would like the Proposed Project to include space for neighborhood PreK students. If the District's Preferred Schematic includes programming space for neighborhood PreK students, it will be required to document in the Preferred Schematic Report the proposed use of existing spaces vacated or otherwise reprogrammed as a result of the Proposed Project, and that the School Committee and other necessary District officials have approved the inclusion of PreK students.

The MSBA believes that this design enrollment recommendation will position the District to efficiently meet space capacity needs throughout future enrollment variations. Please sign and return the attached certification within 14 calendar days to confirm agreement on this design enrollment. If the District feels that this design enrollment does not meet the needs of the District, please respond to this letter via e-mail to Maria Caprigno 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 Maria Caprigno (Maria.Caprigno@MassSchoolBuildings.org) at 617-720-4466.

Sincerely,



Michael McGurl
Director of Capital Planning

Cc: Legislative Delegation
Bruce T. Evans, Chair, Natick Select Board
Elise Gorseth, Chair, Natick School Committee
Dr. Melissa Spash, Superintendent, Natick Public Schools
Matthew Gillis, Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Natick Public Schools
Stephen Meyler, Chair, Natick School Building Committee
Linda McGrath, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Natick Public Schools
File: 10.2 Letters (Region 4)