

November 13, 2024

James MacDonald, CEO
Mary Pichetti, Deputy Chief CEO / Executive Director
Massachusetts School Building Authority
40 Broad Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02109

To MSBA Executive Leadership,

Thank you again for your recent visit to Northern Essex Community College (NECC) to discuss the new Statement of Interest submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority, seeking assistance with planning toward a shared campus for Whittier Regional Vocational Technical School and NECC.

As expressed in our Statement of Interest and our conversation during your visit, we anticipate shared space located on NECC's Haverhill campus can overcome some of the challenges of Whittier Tech's previous attempt to secure funding for a new facility on its existing site by reducing the cost to our member communities while expanding capacity for vocational education and access to postsecondary credentials needed for our regional workforce.

Accordingly, we have been engaged in a preliminary study guided by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute to examine regional labor workforce needs, and explore models for vocational high school and higher education collaborations from across the country, with the involvement of nationally recognized experts from Jobs for the Future and the Harvard Project on Workforce Development, as well as stakeholder state agencies, legislative leaders and, most importantly, representatives of our member cities and towns.

As a demonstration of their commitment to working together productively to explore shared campus partnership opportunities with the goal of moving forward with a mutually acceptable proposal, we are pleased to present to you, as an accompaniment to our Statement of Interest, the enclosed "Memorandum of Understanding for a Whittier Tech and Northern Essex Community College Shared Campus Working Group," approved by the elected leaders of ten of our member communities.

If there is any additional information that would be helpful to this process, or questions we can answer, we are available at your convenience. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lane A. Glenn, Ph.D.
President
Northern Essex Community College



Maureen Lynch
Superintendent
Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING -
WT AND NECC SHARED CAMPUS WORKING GROUP**

WHEREAS, the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical School (hereafter “WT”), which serves the 11 member communities of Amesbury, Georgetown, Groveland, Haverhill, Ipswich, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley, Salisbury and West Newbury, is in need of a new and modern facility, including expanded access and providing for increased enrollment; and

WHEREAS, the member communities are seeking the best financial pathway to provide such a facility by lowering the overall cost to the member communities, while at the same time leveraging all available financial contributions by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (hereafter “MSBA”), as well as other available state resources; and

WHEREAS, leaders of all 11 member communities have been meeting throughout 2024 to discuss and explore options for funding, including the potential of a shared campus model between WT and Northern Essex Community College (hereafter “NECC”); and

WHEREAS, the member communities are in agreement to continue their collaborative efforts provided the MSBA supports funding for such a new school model.

WHEREAS, the member community leaders are also in agreement that such discussions of the opportunities presented from such a shared campus model and the alignment of goals with NECC, as well as the exploration of financial options to meet these objectives, would benefit from a more formal association.

NOW THEREFORE, the 11 member communities agree in principle to form a working group to be known as the “WT and NECC Shared Campus Working Group.”

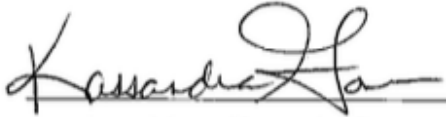
Further, each member community agrees that this collaborative effort aims to meet the evolving educational needs of the region’s students and communities, efficiently and affordably. With the understanding that this process will:

- Continue to explore ways to create a new, modern facility for WT;
- Allow for expanded access to postsecondary education across northeastern Massachusetts;
- Increase enrollment capacity at both WT and NECC and make them more affordable;
- Ensure best overall value through a shared campus to ensure space utilization and efficiencies will be prioritized, while pursuing new avenues of potential additional funding sources beyond the member communities.

Each of the undersigned member communities agree in good faith to join and actively participate in the WT and NECC Shared Campus Working Group. We further agree to continue regular meetings in which the member communities engage and explore shared campus partnership opportunities with the ultimate goal of moving forward with a mutually acceptable proposal. It is also understood that any such proposal shall not be binding on any of the 11 member communities as a result of their participation in the WT and NECC Shared Campus Working Group.

This Memorandum of Understanding may be utilized as an instrument of good faith by any third-party board, financial entity, or agency seeking validation of the WT and NECC Shared Campus Working Group’s pursuit of the goals and objectives outlined above.

Signed this 12 day of November 2024 as follows:


Amesbury, Mayor Cassandra Gove



Newbury, Town Administrator Tracy Blais


Georgetown, Town Administrator Orlando Pacheco


Newburyport, Mayor Sean Rcardon


Groveland, Acting Board Chair Jason Naves


Merrimac, Select Board Chair Chris Manni


Haverhill, Mayor Melinda Barrett


Salisbury, Town Manager Neil Harrington


Ipswich, Town Manager Stephen Crane


West Newbury, Town Manager Angus Jennings