



TOWN OF
MONTAGUE
MASSACHUSETTS

Selectboard Office
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To the Esteemed Members of the Massachusetts School Building Authority,

On behalf of the Gill-Montague School District, I am writing to formally endorse our continued interest and commitment to moving forward into the MSBA grant program for the renovation and expansion of Sheffield Elementary School and the potential consolidation with Hillcrest Elementary into a single PreK-5 facility.

Our Statement of Interest, submitted on April 11, 2025, meticulously detailed the critical needs within both our elementary schools. The severe overcrowding in both Sheffield and Hillcrest (Priority 2) has forced the conversion of essential spaces into makeshift classrooms, significantly impacting student learning and privacy.

Furthermore, the extensive facility system failures (Priority 5) are a source of constant concern. Hillcrest's leaking roof, failing asbestos floors, rotting windows, and inefficient boiler are mirrored by Sheffield's leaking roofs, cracked flooring, inefficient windows, antiquated electrical systems, and a 100-year-old boiler in Building C. These issues not only drive-up operational costs but also create an uncomfortable, disruptive, and potentially unhealthy learning environment for our students and staff, as confirmed by Greg Walsh of PCA360 in November 2022.

Finally, the obsolete nature of our existing buildings severely hinders our ability to deliver comprehensive and equitable educational programs (Priority 7). Hillcrest lacks a gymnasium, a dedicated library, and accessible bathrooms, while Sheffield's central office area is not handicap accessible and its gym lacks accessible seating. Both schools struggle with a lack of confidential spaces for critical student services.

The proposed consolidation represents a vital opportunity to address these significant deficiencies, optimize resource allocation, and strengthen school-home relationships within our community. Despite stable enrollment, increasing subgroup populations underscore the growing demand for appropriate space.

We are confident that our proposal aligns with the MSBA's mission to create high-quality, sustainable learning environments. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to partner with the MSBA to transform our vision into a reality, providing our students with the modern, safe, and effective educational facilities they deserve.

Given the recent district budget cuts, this project is paramount, as it offers a path to secure the necessary funding for essential infrastructure improvements that the town would otherwise struggle to finance independently. The town is prepared to move forward in supporting costs towards the feasibility study and schematic design in hopes of eventually securing a town vote to initiate the project.

Sincerely,

Matthew Lord, Selectboard Chair
Town of Montague

The Town of Montague is an equal opportunity provider and employer