

Minuteman School Bonding Referendum September 20

Please note Special Rules for this Referendum: All Precincts vote at the Center at the Heights (Senior Center) 300 Hillside Avenue. Polls will be open from Noon to 8 PM. Absentee Ballots available as with other elections.

On September 20, a district-wide referendum will be held on the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School's proposed construction of a new school at the District's campus in Lexington and Lincoln, to be built in conjunction with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA).

Needham is a member town of the district, and all Needham registered voters are eligible to vote. The referendum will be decided by majority of the total vote in all sixteen district towns.

Minuteman's existing facility, built in the early 1970's, has serious building systems and capital maintenance issues, does not meet current code and architectural standards, and cannot optimally support Minuteman's vocational education program.

The estimated cost of the project, which is for a new school with a design enrollment of 628 students, is approximately \$150 million, towards which the MSBA has committed \$44 million. Under revised regulations applicable to MSBA projects, the District will be also be able to assess a capital charge to out-of-district tuition students. The MSBA project timeline requires the District to secure passage of this referendum to be eligible for State funding and for the project to move forward.

With thirty year bonding, Needham's share of that cost will be proportional to its share of the student enrollment and the amount payable each year will be included in the District's budget assessments. Needham currently has 25 students at Minuteman, and that number is expected to increase to some extent with a new facility.

In May of this year, Needham Town Meeting voted unanimously to support bonding for this project. However, a negative vote by one of sixteen regional town meetings (Belmont) has required that a Minuteman district-wide referendum be held for the project to go forward.

Minuteman High School is the primary vocational education resource for Needham residents and is an important option for students who either seek or will be better served by vocational education opportunities.

The vote will be held on Tuesday, September 20, under a specific statute applicable to regional vocational schools. In Needham, all precincts will vote at The Center at the Heights (Senior Center/Council on Aging), 300 Hillside Avenue. The polls will be open from **Noon to 8 PM**. Absentee ballots are available as in other elections for people unable to vote that day.