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MEMORANDUM

To: Rita Jeffers, MVEA
Natalie Krauthamer, MVEA

Cc: Nedine Cunningham, MVEA
Kim Hoffman, MTA

From: Sarah Gibson

Re: Tisbury Elementary School

Date: March 11, 2019

I first visited the Tisbury School on January 4, 2019, when I met with representatives of the MVEA and school administrators to gather background information about recent efforts to address health and safety concerns in the building. I visited the Tisbury School again on February 18, 2019. At that time, I toured the school with both of you and Sean Mulvey. I have reviewed the *Preliminary Design Program Submission* for the Mass. School Building Authority, dated March 23, 2017. Based on all of this information, I am writing to provide some suggestions with the hope that the MVEA can encourage the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee to develop a comprehensive short-term and long-term strategy for addressing the significant building issues at the Tisbury School. Please note that my focus was solely on the physical state of the building – I am not making any suggestions as to programmatic needs or the best educational use of space in the building.

Observations about the Tisbury School

The Tisbury School's building envelope is not weather tight. The *Preliminary Design Program Submission*, which is the most comprehensive assessment of the condition of the school, includes a detailed description of the building exterior and its deterioration (Section 1.4). To that, I would add the following observations from my visit to the school on February 18th:

Water intrusion is evident throughout the building. Water damage to ceilings and walls is indicated by peeling paint. See photos 1 – 3. In one location (Math vocabulary room) water damage is evident on a wall near an uncovered electrical box. See photo 4. In some locations, water intrusion has caused significant damage to wall board behind radiators in classrooms. See photos 5 – 6. Water has damaged window sills in several classrooms. See photo 7. Leaks have discolored ceiling tiles. See photos 8 – 9. Door frames show significant rust in several hallways in the building. See photo 10.

As noted in the *Preliminary Design Program Submission*, many windows in the building are no longer sealed or weather tight. Condensation is visible in windows in various locations. See photos 11 - 12. In the teachers' room, the seal around the window has deteriorated to the point that daylight is visible through the

seal. See photo 13. Not surprisingly, fixtures in classrooms show signs of water-related deterioration, or mold/mildew growth. See photos 14 – 15.

I also observed buckling in classroom floors that presented obvious fall hazards. Flooring was buckled on the stage. Outside the nurse's office, the doorjamb has pulled away from the wall. There were signs of routine flooding from heavy rains in areas of the building that are below grade. On the exterior of the building, there are obvious signs of deterioration of the building envelope (all noted in the *Preliminary Design Program Submission*).

In addition to the many problems with the building envelope, the ventilation system in the building suffers from age and lack of adequate capacity. Intakes for classroom univents are blocked off, restricting fresh air from entering the building. The kitchen hood is not code compliant and does not adequately remove grease.

In summary, despite obvious extraordinary dedication to students and programs in the building by administrators, educators, and staff, the state of the Tisbury School building is extremely concerning and the building needs immediate and long-term attention.

Suggestions for developing a repair/renovation strategy

My understanding is that the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee are committed to developing a plan for short-term repairs and for a longer-term renovation/addition project at the Tisbury School. My understanding is that the Board and Committee are meeting to formulate a warrant to be put before voters in April, 2019. Assuming that is the case, I suggest the following:

1. The content of the warrant articles should be guided by the 2017 *Preliminary Design Program Submission*. As mentioned before, this is the most thorough existing assessment of the building needs. A warrant article should include funding to conduct an assessment of the building that would determine what short-term measures can sensibly be taken to address the obvious and serious issues with the building envelope and structural deterioration noted in the 2017 *Preliminary Design Program Submission*. This assessment might amount to an update of the 2017 assessment, done by the same firm or firms, or a firm with similar expertise. One purpose of this assessment should be to identify short-term measures that might result in the most benefit for the money spent. Another purpose would be to confirm that the findings of the 2017 assessment are still applicable.
2. The short-term priorities for the school should be building envelope issues and ventilation issues. The building envelope priorities should be to make the building as weather tight as possible. The ventilation priorities should be unblocking intakes so the ventilation system can function as well as possible, and fixing the kitchen hood so that it is code compliant.
3. Although testing for mold spores might identify specific locations in the building affected by mold, I would suggest that initially, in lieu of testing for the presence of mold, any building assessments be targeted towards resolving water intrusion issues generally. Mold grows in conditions where there is excess moisture. To the extent that sources of water intrusion can be identified, fixed, and building materials dried out and kept dry, mold growth will be inhibited. Although at some point testing for mold may be appropriate, I encourage the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee, in the initial stages of planning a warrant article to address the complicated and widespread issues at the

Tisbury School, to focus on the building envelope and how its failures affect the interior.

4. Insofar as a warrant article may include funding for developing a plan for the Tisbury School, I suggest that such planning focus on both short-term and long-term measures. Bifurcating planning into short- and long-term timeframes may require spending resources to implement short-term measures that will then be undone/redone or superseded by long-term measures. However, the alternative -- to wait until the renovation/addition project is fully formed -- is unacceptable and only serves to punish dedicated administrators, educators, and students who have contended with substandard building conditions for too long already.
5. To the extent that a warrant article can include funding intended to incorporate findings by the Mass. Department of Public Health (MDPH), it should do so. When I visited the school on February 18th, we discussed the possibility of requesting MDPH to conduct an air quality assessment at Tisbury School. The MDPH provides free air quality assessments of schools, and may be able to provide another set of eyes on the issues in the building, as well as recommendations for measures that could be implemented immediately that might help to mitigate some of the problems in the school building.
6. The process for developing short- and long-term plans for Tisbury School and implementing them will be a multi-year process. Ideally, the 2019 warrant article will provide maximum funding for both developing short-term plans for the building and executing them, and for developing longer-term planning. Ideally, the 2019 warrant article will be the first of several funding articles to ensure a comprehensive solution to the school's problems.

It is clear that the Tisbury School will require substantial funding to address the issues at the school. The building is not in good shape. The current state of the building is disheartening, to say the least. The MVEA will need to organize to support any appropriate, effective plans that the School Committee and Board of Selectmen develop – Kim Hoffman and I have talked, briefly, about that organizing effort.

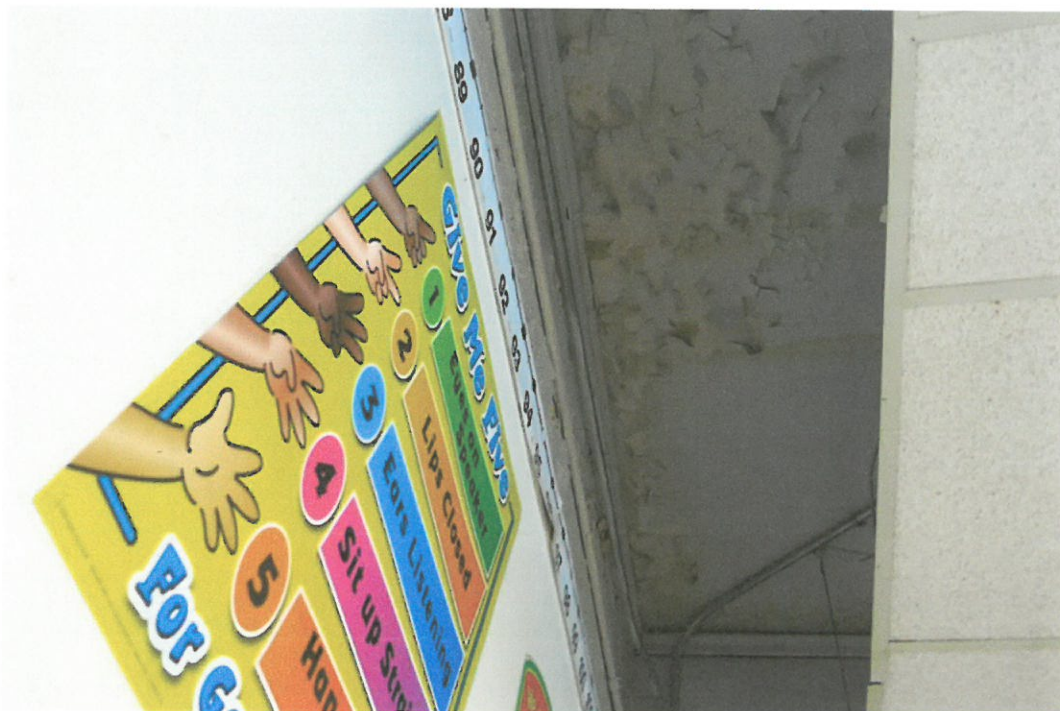
Please let me know if you have questions, or if you want to discuss any of this further. I'm happy to talk with you before the Board of Selectmen/School Committee meeting on March 12, 2019, or anytime thereafter as plans move forward.



1: Evidence of water damage to paint near classroom windows (room 312)



2: Water damage to kitchen wall near electrical box



3: Evidence of water damage to paint above suspended ceiling (rm 216)



4: Evidence of water damage near open electrical box (Math Vocabulary)



5: Damage to wall behind radiator (rm 216)



6: Damage to wall behind radiator (rm 313)



7: Delamination of window sill (rm 318)



8: Stained ceiling tile (Spanish)



9: Stained ceiling tiles (rm 319)



10: Rust on post near window (entrance with barrel arch)



11: Condensation in window (Art room)



12: Condensation in window (rm 201)



13: Break in window seal at 4:00 position (teachers' room)



14: Rusted radiator with damage to wallboard behind the radiator (rm 201)



15: Mold/mildew growth (Art room)