



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
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EXHIBIT X.X

TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Fern Desjardins, Chair, School Construction Committee

DATE: July 17, 2026

SUBJECT: Major Capital School Construction Program; Extension on Waiver Consideration;
RSU 17/MSAD 17 – Agnes Gray School Construction Project

STATEMENT OF FACT

By a unanimous vote of those present at the September 14, 2022 meeting of the State Board of Education, Project #6, the Agnes Gray School in RSU 17/MSAD 17, was moved to the Approved Projects List of the 2017-2018 Rating Cycle, Major Capital School Construction Program. The motion “further recommended that Section 6.2.F., Time Limitations, ¶1, be waived by the State Board of Education until a workable plan for Concept Approval has been developed by the Department and the designated school systems. Further, that the Department will provide the State Board of Education with periodic updates on the status of progress toward Concept Approvals of the designated projects.”

Due to the waiver mentioned above on the Time Limitations for the project, the Department of Education and the School Construction Committee of the State Board of Education followed up on their waiver at the October 9, 2024 meeting of the State Board. Commissioner Pender Makin and the School Construction Committee recommended to the State Board, and the Board adopted the motion, “that in accordance with State Board of Education Rule, Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects, Section 6.2.F(1), the State Board of Education approve 2025 as the assigned calendar year for the three projects identified in this exhibit to obtain Concept Approval. Failure to obtain Concept Approval in 2025 shall result in removal from the Approved Projects List unless a waiver is obtained from the State Board at least 30 days prior to December 31, 2025.” The Agnes Gray School was one of the three projects identified in the exhibit.

Heather Manchester, Superintendent of Schools in RSU 17/MSAD 17, formally requested “a waiver to allow the district to continue moving forward with the Agnes Gray School project without removal from the Approved Projects List” in a correspondence to the State Board on November 26, 2025. Superintendent Manchester included a *Proposed Timetable for Concept Approval* identifying actions to be taken from December 2025 to November 2026 when a referendum would take place in all eight towns of Oxford Hills. The process was further outlined in a *Pre-Referendum Schedule* by LaVallee/Brensinger Architects that Superintendent Manchester included in her correspondence. She further explained why the Site Selection phase was delayed, plans on moving forward with the Concept Design, and being ready for a Local Referendum vote in November 2026. In response to the request, the State Board unanimously voted to grant a Time Limitation waiver to RSU 17/MSAD 17 and approve 2026 as their new assigned calendar year for their proposed timetable and plan for obtaining Concept Approval by December 31, 2026.

In a May 26, 2026, email to Chair Desjardins and members of the School Construction Committee and Scott Brown, MDOE, Superintendent Manchester made a request for an extension to the Time Limitation waiver RSU 17/MSAD 17 was granted on December 1, 2025 when 2026 was designated as their new assigned calendar year for their proposed timetable and plan for obtaining Concept Approval by December 31, 2026. She followed up by attending the May 27, 2026 School Construction Committee meeting with Joe Britton and Lance Whitehead, architects at Lavallee Brensinger Architects. Superintendent Manchester explained that the land the district had been investigating for viability of the site and negotiating to purchase for the new school was unexpectedly sold to another party. She spoke of the district’s need for a consolidated elementary school to open new preschool programs and “enable better access to special education services to all students within the district.” The redistribution of students would allow space in the Paris Elementary School for the West Paris students who were displaced due to the abrupt closure of the Agnes Gray School. The architects presented the revised *Pre-Referendum Schedule*, which included the two sites property owners withdrew from consideration (January 2026 and May 2026), plans for State Board Site Approval in January 2027, and Concept Approval in February/March 2027. The district would go to referendum in June 2027.

The Committee voted unanimously to move forward with the extension request.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

On June 12, 2026, the School Construction Committee recommended that this exhibit be placed on the July 17, 2026 State Board of Education’s meeting agenda and that pursuant to State Board of Education Rule, Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects, Section 6.2.F(1), the State Board of Education grant an extension on the Time Limitation waiver to RSU 17/MSAD 17 and approve 2027 as their new assigned calendar year for their proposed timetable and plan for obtaining Concept Approval by April 30, 2027. RSU 17/MSAD 17 will provide periodic updates on the project with the first report due at the August 28, 2026 School Construction Committee meeting of the State Board.