

Superintendent's Vocational Education Options Work Group Report

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**PRESENTATION TO BELMONT SCHOOL
COMMITTEE
JUNE 19, 2018**

Context

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- At a Special Town Meeting on October 19, 2016, the Town voted to withdraw as a member district of Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School (MM). The effective date of Belmont's vote to withdraw from MM as a member district is June 30, 2020.
- In light of this vote, Belmont Superintendent of Schools, John Phelan, commissioned a work group to explore and recommend options for Belmont students in career, vocational and technical education (CVTE).

Group's Charge and Formation

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- Broad-based community participation was solicited; the work group is made up of:
 - School and Town administration
 - BPS educators
 - Town Meeting members
 - Parents & Grandparents
 - Community members
 - Belmont representative to Minuteman School Committee

- Work Group members:

Michael Bruno

Anthony DiCologero

John Herzog

Tommasina Olson

Casey Cammack

Jim Gammill

Karl Ivester

Joseph Quinn

Glen Castro

Mary Gavin

Denise LaPolla

Jim Sullivan

Madeline Cronin

Elizabeth Goss

John Murphy

Gregory Wilder

Framework Developed

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- **Guiding Questions**
 - How should Belmont contract with CVTE providers?
 - Where should Belmont students go for CVTE programs?
- **Selection Criteria (adopted from BPS District Configuration Analysis)**
 - Academic, Social-Emotional, Student Life Factors
 - Space, Availability, Enrollment Factors
 - Long Term Sustainability Factors
 - Financial Factors

How to Contract with CVTE Providers (Agreement Structures)

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- **No agreement**
 - Belmont students enroll in CVTE schools as permitted by enrollment policies
- **Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA)**
 - Written agreement between Belmont and a CVTE school to establish enrollment opportunities and other terms & conditions for Belmont students to attend
- **Membership in a regional CVTE school**

Where to go for CVTE Programs

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- **Initially reviewed several programs in the Greater Boston & Metro West Area**
 - Regional CVTE schools
 - CVTE programs offered within local school districts
- **Narrowed cohort of schools to:**
 - Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School (MM)
 - Shawsheen Valley Technical High School (Shawsheen)
 - Shore Occupational Learning and Vocational Education Division (SOLVED) – A local collaborative of municipalities (Cambridge, Medford, Somerville, Waltham) offering CVTE programs to their students

Selection Criteria

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- Academic, Social-Emotional, Student Life Factors
- Space, Availability, Enrollment Factors
- Long-Term Sustainability Factors
- Financial Factors

Selection Criteria: Academic, Social-Emotional, Student Life Factors

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- **Academic**
 - DESE Profile Data
 - Program Offerings
- **Social-Emotional**
 - Community and Connection
- **Student Life**
 - A consistent place for a Belmont cohort to attend, year after year
 - Access to clubs, activities, and after school supports
 - A welcoming school that engages in outreach to Chenery Middle School and the larger Belmont community

Selection Criteria: Space, Availability, Enrollment Factors

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- **Minuteman**
 - Current enrollment is less than full capacity
 - A building project is underway which will decrease capacity to approximately 628 students
 - ✦ Other non-member districts may be seeking membership
 - ✦ Member districts have priority acceptance over students from non-member districts
- **Shawsheen**
 - Due to its trend of increasing enrollment, Shawsheen is currently unable to offer seats to non-member districts
- **SOLVED Districts**
 - Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS) is geographically the logical access point to the SOLVED districts.
 - ✦ However, CRLS has decided not to allow any out-of-district students to enroll for the 2018-2019 School Year; although CRLS is open to exploring the possibility of other solutions, if any

Selection Criteria: Long Term Sustainability Factors

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A successful CVTE program arrangement for Belmont students will be characterized by:

- Consistent placement location for advising Belmont students of CVTE opportunities
- Available capacity for Belmont students
- Priority acceptance so that Belmont students are not “locked-out” of programs annually
- Reasonable commute distance and time from Belmont
- Administration of Belmont CVTE options
 - Guidance Office: Advisement; Application; Managing student placements; Aid in known, smooth transition process for Belmont Students
 - Transportation: Procurement; Contract administration; Daily logistical concerns to be managed by receiving school – not by Belmont

Selection Criteria: Financial Factors

- **Cost components**
 - Tuition
 - Special Education (where applicable)
 - Transportation
 - Capital
- **Change to MM cost components since 2015**
 - DESE approval of a Capital Fee for non-member districts attending MM
 - Capital Fee is in recognition of the construction costs of the new MM facility and is an attempt to achieve a more equitable cost-sharing among member districts and non-member districts.

Selection Criteria: Financial Factors (cont.):

FY19 PER STUDENT OPERATING COST COMPARISONS

	Total	Core	Trans- portation	SPED charges	Capital (non- building)
Minuteman - actual Belmont member assessment	34,823	28,060	1,352	2,650	2,761
Minuteman - hypothetical non-member charge for Belmont	24,263	17,266	2,878	2,650	1,469
Shawsheen - if non-members were accepted for FY19	23,000	17,266	3,084	2,650	0
Cambridge - if non-local students were accepted for FY19	16,855	11,327	2,878	2,650	0

Notes: items in italic are estimates

"Core" costs for Belmont as a MM member is the actual assessment, less the amounts attributed to transportation, SPED, capital.

"Core" for the non-member scenarios are the DESE set tuitions for FY19; estimates for transportation and SPED are extra charges.

All SPED estimates based on 50% of students with IEPs, times \$5300 FY19 charge per IEP student as set by Minuteman.

Belmont non-member MM scenario includes existing capital obligations from 2016 and earlier.

Minuteman member transportation costs are partially offset by a state grant; non-members are not eligible for that grant.

Summary of Findings

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TOWN NEEDS	NO AGREEMENT	INTER-MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT	MINUTEMAN MEMBERSHIP
Seat/Enrollment Priority	NO	TBD	YES
Consistency for Students	NO	TBD	YES
Transparent & Established Funding Mechanism	NO	NO	YES
Vote in Governance	NO	NO	YES
Vote on Curriculum	NO	NO	YES
Community Support for Students	NO	NO	YES
Overall Cost Savings	YES	TBD	NO
Administrative & Logistical Efficiencies	NO	NO	YES

Conclusions

- From a review of the data, continuing as a member district of Minuteman provides the best path forward for the Town and Belmont students in terms of
 - Academic, Social-Emotional, Student Life Factors
 - Space, Availability, Enrollment Factors
 - Long-Term Sustainability Factors
- While the cost per student to attend MM as a member district is higher than other options
 - It is the only option that provides assurance of acceptable programmatic sustainability for Belmont students.
 - The cost per student can be mitigated by
 - ✦ Capital fee to non-member districts
 - ✦ Increase in enrollment
 - ✦ Generation of rental revenue upon completion of the MM building project

Recommendation

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Therefore, the recommendation of the Vocational Educations Options Work Group is for the Town of Belmont to reinstate its status (i.e. rescind its withdrawal) as a member district of Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School.

Next Steps

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- The report of the Working Group is being provided at the direction of the Superintendent for consideration by the School Committee and the School Department of the next steps
- The Working Group is available for further discussion as may requested for the by the School Committee and other Town leaders
- The full report of the Working Group and supporting documents are available on the BPS website at <http://www.belmont.k12.ma.us/bps/Administration/Vocational-Education>