

To: NRSD School Committee Members

Copy: Finance Committee Members – Bolton, Lancaster and Stow

Selectmen and Town Administrators – Bolton, Lancaster and Stow

From: Don Hawkes, Stow MA

Date: April 5, 2015

Subject: NRHS School Choice

I respectfully request you to vote to reject school choice at Nashoba Regional High School at your upcoming NRSD School Committee meeting. (This request is submitted by me as an individual, and should not be construed as representing the view of any local public board.)

For the past several months I have attended and been part of the HS Space Study Task Force investigating and deliberating the District Administration's earnestly presented case for the imminent need for provision of additional space at the High School. The Task Force's Interim Report(s) have/will document such need; it does require reiteration here. My concerns, rather, as both a taxpaying resident and a member of the Stow Board of Selectmen, are centered on yet-to-be determined costly proposals to remedy lack of space at the HS.

This lack of "adequate" space may be addressed in at least two approaches:

1. Provide additional physical plant
2. Reduce the overall enrollment by eliminating school choice at the HS level

These two need not be necessarily mutually exclusive; assuming choice were to be eliminated now as requested, it will take more than four years to gain the full advantage of the approximately 100 additional spaces, as District obligations to students already "in the pipeline" from earlier commitments work their way through to graduation or leave the system through out-migration. However, that consideration should not dissuade the Committee from taking the fiscally responsible position at this juncture. This action would, however, provide "breathing room" for the taxpayers of our District towns before a major capital program might be sought.

I recognize the anticipated argument that eliminating HS school choice would reduce revenue to the District. However, to the extent that a strong case can be made for additional space availability, that short-term aspect would pale in comparison to the immediate – and future - space relief gained.

I applaud the Committee's and Administration's actions in providing two additional HS classrooms for this fall by the addition of Stow's portable classrooms. Taken together with choice elimination and modest capital improvements, this package of options will be seen as being responsible BOTH to educational opportunities for the students and to our already overburdened local taxpayers.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.