

## **Potential cell phone tower on the Dover Sherborn Regional Campus**

### **Background for families**

At its past three meetings, the Regional School Committee (RSC) discussed the construction of a cell tower on campus.

### **Why a cell tower now?**

If you have been on the Regional campus, you know that current cell coverage is spotty at best and non-existent in most places. Both Dover and Sherborn Police have repeatedly articulated their concern that unreliable cell service limits their Emergency Response planning and could affect their abilities to assist on campus. Further, if power went down on the campus, land lines and computer networks would not be in use and communication would be virtually non-existent. DS coaches have expressed concern about their inability to call for emergency services when located at the back athletic fields or at the many spots on campus without land line or cell coverage. Overall, improved cell coverage would allow for enhanced emergency procedures. We could gain more reliable communication with parents/guardians after school hours, potentially support our Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) technology program, and provide revenue for the Region.

### **Why a cell tower on the Regional Campus?**

This subject came to the forefront when AT&T (through Bay Communications) submitted an application to the Town of Dover to construct a cell tower on private Dover land off of Evergreen Way in Medfield, less than 150 feet from the Regional campus border and 500 feet from the HS building.

At that point, RSC members and Superintendent Bliss attend a Dover Planning Board meeting, which was also attended by Medfield selectmen and both Dover and Medfield residents. At this meeting, it became evident that there was support for the RSC to consider placing a tower on land owned by the regional district. RSC voted at an open meeting to investigate siting a tower on the Regional campus, allowing it to control the location of the tower while also realizing the benefits of added coverage and annual revenue. At its meeting on May 21, the Regional School Committee voted to have an expert attorney draft a Request for Proposal (RFP) to explore this opportunity further.

### **What decisions have been made to date?**

The Administration and the RSC seek to be transparent and collaborative throughout this process, beginning with its May 6 meeting, which was attended by several Medfield abutters, and most recently at its June 10 meeting. Abutters were notified by mail; parents were notified via email blast.

At the June 10 RSC meeting, a presentation by one member of the RSC offered a compilation of some of the science evaluating potential health concerns from cell towers. A few audience members offered their concerns. On balance, their message was that if a tower is sited on the Regional campus, then the RSC should consider precautions such as tower location and transmission configuration. One potential site discussed was off of the access road to the back athletic fields – sufficiently set back from any wetlands and twice as far from the school as

AT&T's current application. The full discussion can be found on DSCTV ([www.dsctv.com](http://www.dsctv.com)) at <http://75.150.77.214/Cablecast/Public/Show.aspx?ChannelID=3&ShowID=1186> (click on "Watch now"). The presentation and discussion begin at just before the 22-minute mark. The presentation also will be posted on the district web site ([www.doversherborn.org](http://www.doversherborn.org)).

The RSC has engaged counsel whose specialty is telecommunications to aid in the development of the RFP. It is also in the process of hiring an external Radiofrequency Engineer to provide assistance on more technical and siting aspects of the RFP. The Dover Planning Board, which is considering the existing AT&T application, has requested a response from the RSC by June 23. To meet this requirement, the RSC has posted a meeting for Monday, June 23, 2014 at 8:00 AM in the library at Dover-Sherborn Middle School.

### **How can parents, students and residents participate in the conversation?**

Community members (parents, students, staff, neighbors and others) are welcome and encouraged to attend RSC meetings. Again, the next meeting is scheduled at 8:00 AM on Monday June 23. Constituents can also express their views via email to their Regional School Committee representatives: Chair Dana White ([danabwhite@gmail.com](mailto:danabwhite@gmail.com)), Vice-Chair Michael Lee ([michael.lee.rsc@gmail.com](mailto:michael.lee.rsc@gmail.com)), Secretary Carolyn Ringel ([bakeringel@yahoo.com](mailto:bakeringel@yahoo.com)), Clare Graham ([claregraham\\_RSC@comcast.net](mailto:claregraham_RSC@comcast.net)), Richard Robinson ([rrobinson@nasw.org](mailto:rrobinson@nasw.org)) or to Superintendent Steve Bliss ([bliss@doversherborn.org](mailto:bliss@doversherborn.org)).

### **What next?**

The RSC is scheduled to meet Monday June 23 to further discuss the work being done in preparation of issuing an RFP. Should an RFP be approved, it would be posted on [www.doversherborn.org](http://www.doversherborn.org). The discussion on any bids resulting from that RFP would be scheduled at a September RSC meeting when families have returned for the academic year.