

March 19, 2018

Arlington County School Board
Arlington Education Center
1426 N. Quincy Street
Arlington, Virginia 22207

Dear School Board Members:

The Stratford Middle School Building Level Planning Committee (BLPC) met on February 27 to review the proposed final design. The members in attendance unanimously support the staff-recommended \$39.15M project cost and \$30.42M GMP contract.

Specifically, of the 160 value engineering items explored since November, we unanimously:

- *support* the ~\$2M savings from items identified by and recommended by staff; and
- *oppose* any exterior modifications that could require Certificate of Appropriateness revisions or significantly impact accessibility or teaching and learning (elevator, classroom renovations, etc.).

In addition, we support the pursuit of Virginia historic tax credits to support the renovation elements. As part of this application, we suggest including an alternate to fund additional lighting upgrades and restoration of the original glass block daylighting. Successful certification will generate ~\$1.5 – 2M to replenish reserves or fund these additional upgrades in the future.

This is not an easy site and never has been. The 1950 School Board discussed “the challenges presented by the site [including highly varied topography, steep slopes, heavily wooded, a creek that ran across the property, surrounded by residential development on three sides]”.¹ Nonetheless, your colleagues asked staff to pursue the lower end of the \$29M - \$56M budget estimated at site selection in 2014. Ultimately, we drastically reduced the renovation scope to compensate for unusually high site costs and rapid cost escalation in the construction market.

Proceeding with the proposed GMP is the best combination of managing costs, meeting modern safety and accessibility codes, and honoring our commitment to build once at this site. We look forward to your prompt review and approval, followed by construction start in early April and welcoming students to the long-awaited new neighborhood middle school by September 2019.

Sincerely,



Susan R. Cunningham
Chair, Building Level Planning Committee, Stratford Middle School Project

¹ <http://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/06/HALRB.Stratford-Local-Historic-District-Designation-Report.6.11.2015.pdf>, accessed 10/24/15.