

## Building the New Patrick Henry School

Good evening Chairman Graf, members of the School Board, Dr. Crawley, Patrick Henry parents and other Alexandrians. I am Mark Huddle the Patrick Henry PTA President. I am here this evening to talk about the building of the new Patrick Henry School.

While I was in college many years ago my Nuclear Engineering professor was teaching us about "inherently safe" reactor designs which relied on passive safety systems as opposed to the then current power plants designs like at Three Mile Island which required multiple levels of active safety features to provide a "relatively safe design". The passive safety didn't require operator actions to shut down the reactors in the event of an emergency. If any catastrophe happened and many things went wrong the system will turn itself off and keep the reactor from overheating. The other designs which were not inherently safe utilized multiple levels of redundancies and were incredibly complex with many points of failure. And they also required constant active cooling which could also fail.

When I look at these current plans for the new Patrick Henry School from the engineering perspective... I see something similar. I see "inherently safe design" in option A.1 with the sidewalk for foot traffic east to west directly in front of school, the wide separation of different traffic types with Bus traffic behind and car drop off and parking in front keeping our children's safety as primary importance. Also the areas for the Recreation Department are not near our bus entrance and exit and away from the main entrance so they can be easily monitored as well. Also there is a better delineation of the school space from the Department of Recreation multipurpose space which is on the opposite side from the Classroom Wing. Should there be a lockdown and it becomes necessary to restrict the different areas of the school from outside entry it will be easier in Option A.1.

When I look at option C.1 I see a "relatively safe design" where we are placing multiple cross walks which will need to be monitored and having bus traffic, pedestrian and bicycle traffic intermingling with the car drop off and pick up areas in the south east corner of the property. We already know there will be issues down in this spot, and the architect is trying to come up with solutions to address those issues with active safety systems and levels of redundancies. Also, the schools shared spaces are spread all across the north end of the building so locking down spaces becomes more challenging as people will be traveling the "main street" through the main hallway of school back and forth to the classroom wing all the time.

The parents and teachers of Patrick Henry that I have spoken to during meetings, at school functions, and out in public all want their kids to be safe first and foremost. We have option A.1 design that takes into account the surrounding area where our students live and where the school is situated and provides a better solution to what we currently have. Our current school is from the 1950's when it was primarily a walking school with few buses and few cars. We need to take into account that we are using multiple levels of "active safety" with our teachers and principal currently watching every day to make sure the children get to school safely and there still are near misses with our kids on a regular basis.

It is unacceptable that when we have the chance to make things better for the future of our city and are children that we are ~~not~~ eliminating the design that has the most inherent safety features but rather working with one that requires many levels of active safety to only be relatively safe?

For those of you who made it to the meeting last night, thank you for your attendance and attention. I have been saying that our parents and teachers who attend our school are consistently interested in making the safest and best school possible. We do not want to have an option that is "acceptable" with regards to safety. We want the kids to feel that it is a place of learning that will instill them to do their best. The Mothers and Fathers of PHES students that spoke up last night regarding the A.1 option hardly ever speak in our meetings. You need to understand that they are not the only ones that feel that way. I also hear this from other parents and teachers. They would like to walk their children to school and they said they don't feel safe with everything that is happening at the south east corner of the school property. Option C.1 will only amplify the problem because it will locate even more traffic at the choke point increasing the probability of an accident. Please listen to the parents and bring back Option A.1. They felt that they voted for it the last community meeting and now it has been taken away without any input from them.

We should allow Option A.1 to be developed to be the safest place to send our children to learn to be the best students they can be. We should be providing the safest option for our kids or we will be failing at our primary duties which is to keep them safe first and then to educate them. Another item to keep in mind is when you are adding multiple levels of safety it can result in increased expenses. To be good stewards of the people's money we should look at Option A.1 which has more green space, a smaller foot print, less roofing and less pavement which requires less water management all of which can save money.

This new school will showcase the great work our teachers and administrators are doing and most importantly keep safe the kids who "Work Hard to Get Smart".

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mark Huddle

Patrick Henry PTA President and Proud Father of 2 Great PHES Students