

# Feedback from the Online Feedback Form

As of **Wednesday, April 3, 2019**, 281 total responses had been received through the online survey. Feedback was categorized as:

**PH parents**

**DM parents**

**Not currently PH/DM parents**

Parking 6; 2; 37

Traffic, congestion, pedestrian safety 12; 6; 48

Safety/suitability/maintenance of old building 6; 17; 8

Delay of fields/PH build 11; 3; 19

Community not listened to, not gaining from this 0; 0; 6

Outdoor play space 14; 10; 23

Concern about housing 800 more students/staff on the site 2; 2; 8

Constant/continued construction debris, traffic, noise, disruption 7; 1; 20

Inequity/sacrifice for PH students and community 5; 2; 15

Quality of life, inconvenience, disruption to neighborhood 0; 0; 12

Extended commute for students 0; 6; 1

Reduced quality of education 1; 1; 3

Start/dismissal times 20; 3; 1

Classroom size 0; 2; 0

Skeptical that use of old PH as swing space will end be limited to MacArthur: 0; 0; 12

Broken promises/growing lack of trust and confidence in ACPS: 3; 1; 11

Before and after school care and programs: 0; 12; 0

**All survey responses:**

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Ywq6drKewHGYSTvy9gvpl6SbRwnK3qHR>

## Feedback via Email

Comments
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My name is David Brennan. I live on North Naylor Street, two blocks from Patrick Henry. My daughters attended Polk, and are now at TC-Minnie Howard and Jefferson Houston. I was not able to attend the public forums over the last two days, but I wanted to share some thoughts and concerns.

Everyone recognizes traffic and safety lie at the center of this issue: parents at PH, Polk, MacArthur; neighbors; ACPS. The challenges with the neighborhood roads and traffic patterns around the site have been stated countless times. What concerns me is that we've seen little to no evidence there has been any real focus on understanding what the impacts will be. And without that, how can we have faith that ACPS and T&ES have any plan to address those impacts proactively?

I spent three summers in college as an intern at a traffic engineering firm. I did manual traffic counts and [sat](#) at intersections for hours on end counting cars. I installed traffic monitoring strips in roads. All to collect data used in construction planning and congestion mitigation. I have seen NONE of these methods deployed in our neighborhood. What exactly does the city know about the traffic? It's not clear to me.

Most disturbingly, [tonight](#) at Polk the superintendent stated he has not yet actually BEEN to PH during a morning drop off. To have no first-hand perspective on the current situation (which everyone agrees is very bad) while suggesting a path forward (which everyone agrees will make it MUCH worse) is unacceptable. Every decision maker in this process needs to experience the neighborhood at morning and afternoon key times. And that must involve more than just standing at the school, but driving the neighborhood roads - Latham, Polk, Peacock, Jordan, Taney. I would go one step further and suggest (or demand) that ACPS actually run buses - the same number that would be coming from MacArthur - as part of this experience. Simulations and estimates can only go so far. If those making the final determination on this project don't experience the poor sight lines, limited visibility, illegal parking, and residential-width streets how can we trust them to be making informed decisions?

Dear Members of the Alexandria School Board and Superintendent Hutchings,

[Tonight](#) I attended the MacArthur conversation regarding swing space. As a former school board member, former board representative to Douglas MacArthur, and current MacArthur parent, I wanted to share some questions and thoughts about the proposed use of the old Patrick Henry Elementary School as swing space for the MacArthur community. First, let me begin by saying that in terms of swing space options, using Patrick Henry makes sense. I commend the Superintendent, City Manager, and School Board for exploring this option. It's creative, fiscally responsible, and the right type of forward thinking conversation that can help the community solve our school capacity issues to move the needle. Let me be clear up front — if MacArthur needs swing space, I support this option. But first, I believe there are critical questions that need to be answered before you say yes to this option.

To spare your time in reading this long email (lord knows you get plenty of them), I'm giving you my cliff notes with my questions that I believe need answers and I've provided more thoughts about each question below (if you want the longer version). No need to respond directly to me on this email.

**On whether or not MacArthur needs swing space:**

1. Have you looked at all options that would allow students to remain at MacArthur during a rebuild, such as using the land behind the school and building a taller building, or doing a land swap with the city land behind MacArthur?
2. Where is the MacArthur building assessment or feasibility study that validates that MacArthur must use swing space and kids cannot remain on property during the build? There is an assumption that swing space is needed, but where is the study / evidence?
3. If keeping the MacArthur community on site during the build is an option, what is the cost associated with making this decision? Is it more expensive to stay on site, or less expensive to move to a swing space? [Tonight](#) we heard that it would be possible to stay on site, but at a great expense. What's the expense?
4. If keeping the MacArthur community on site during the build is an option, what are the pros and cons of this decision for staying or going? Is one of the pros that it allows us to complete this project earlier?
5. If you don't have the assessment and you are working off an assumption that MacArthur must use swing space, do you feel comfortable moving forward with a decision on Patrick Henry based on an assumption that you need swing space?

**On moving forward with Patrick Henry as a swing space:**

1. Does your cost savings take into account the additional buses needed to transport the entire MacArthur 700+ students?
2. How do you account for the additional increased traffic for kids and the community? The additional buses on Latham street was a big area of concern when deciding the new Patrick Henry building location and its entrances/exits. How do you alleviate even more traffic impacting the Patrick Henry community? How do you ensure safety?
3. If you have to do staggered start times (as pitched [tonight](#)), how will you account for families that may now face either a later start (hard for working families) or an earlier start time?
4. Why is the build timeline quoted as 2-3 years (students move fall of 2020 and move back in 2023)? How did we successfully construct Jefferson Houston (with kids on site) in one year and Patrick Henry in under 3 years? Why would it take longer at MacArthur especially if kids are moved off site?

**On whether or not MacArthur needs swing space:**

The idea of using swing space was first pitched during the years I served on the board. There was an acknowledgement that some of our schools that desperately needed renovation or a rebuild could not support the school community remaining on site during construction. Schools

such as MacArthur, Mason, and Maury were all shared as locations that may need swing space. I remember sharing these thoughts at PTA meetings during various CIP budget cycles. However, in all of these conversations with the Board, Superintendent, and community we also said that there would be a building assessment study that evaluated the properties before swing space was verified as needed.

**Tonight**, the conversation at MacArthur operated from the assumption that swing space was the only option for Douglas MacArthur, jumping from assumption to definitive without sharing any validation. When I asked if all options had been explored, we were told, yes, and that it would be too expensive to build behind MacArthur. If that's the case, please share these eliminated options.

Even in earlier iterations of Patrick Henry, we evaluated several building locations and options, each with a different price tag. One option (that was eliminated) included the possibility of moving the Patrick Henry community to a swing space to preserve the previous open land along Latham Street. That option was eliminated due to cost and the fact that the land space existed, allowing the Patrick Henry community to stay on site. We all agreed at the time, if we could keep communities on site during a build, that was an ideal decision for the community and students. This agreement also took into account cost and safety. I'm including earlier iterations of the PH conversations here. Original conversation (2013):

[https://esbpublic.acps.k12.va.us/public\\_itemview.aspx?ItemId=4624&mtgId=503&mtgType=No](https://esbpublic.acps.k12.va.us/public_itemview.aspx?ItemId=4624&mtgId=503&mtgType=No). A&E Study (2015)

[https://esbpublic.acps.k12.va.us/public\\_itemview.aspx?ItemId=6172&mtgId=611&mtgType=No](https://esbpublic.acps.k12.va.us/public_itemview.aspx?ItemId=6172&mtgId=611&mtgType=No) Feasibility study (2015):

[https://esbpublic.acps.k12.va.us/public\\_itemview.aspx?ItemId=6362&mtgId=614&mtgType=No](https://esbpublic.acps.k12.va.us/public_itemview.aspx?ItemId=6362&mtgId=614&mtgType=No)

On the final MacArthur point, if you are saying that Patrick Henry is a 60 million dollar savings, where can you point to that savings? I am sure the savings is with the swing space, but if kids were able to remain at Douglas MacArthur, would you still see that savings, would there be additional savings?

**On moving forward with Patrick Henry as a swing space:**

Have you accounted for the additional cost for buses needed and for security? Moving the MacArthur student population to the Patrick Henry property increases the student population from 700+ to 1,400-1,500 students in one area (granted, in two buildings). This population increase comes with an added need for security at drop off and pick up, recess, and any school lock down, lock in, or emergency evacuations.

Based on several coffees I recall having in the Patrick Henry community in 2015, there was a real concern on increased traffic and safety with the new K-8 school. What is the impact on the Patrick Henry community by adding another school in the neighborhood?

While on the surface, I think Patrick Henry is an excellent solution to swing space, I fear that this accelerated 11-day decision timeline is forcing you to skip some crucial steps that allow you to make the best decision for the students, community, and tax payers. There was always an assumption that MacArthur would have to move, but there were also assumptions that there would be a feasibility study to verify if we needed swing space when MacArthur was up for a rebuild. While I definitely do not want to delay MacArthur's rebuild anymore than it has been delayed, and completing the rebuild in 2023, versus 2025 is very attractive, I also want to have confidence that the study / feasibility analysis was done and you are not rushing a decision based on the accelerated timeline.

I would have a hard time voting yes if these questions were not addressed. I also understand that you

occasionally have to make decisions with the best information available, which can sometimes be a grey area. I'm hoping this decision is not a grey area. If this is a grey area decision, please be up front about it. Frankly, one of the pros for moving to Patrick Henry in 2020, even if we could stay at MacArthur, might be that it allows us to get started sooner in solving our school capacity issues in Alexandria.

I really appreciate all that you do. The work is not easy, and it's not always rewarding, but it is so necessary.

With my utmost respect,  
Kelly Booz

Kelly

	<p>Having attended the Patrick Henry swing space meeting on Tuesday (<a href="#">March 19</a>) it appears I am one of a few who agrees the proposal for using PH to temporarily house the MacArthur students is a good solution. All of the nay-Sayers comments about traffic, playground space, safety, etc. are all fixable items that can be addressed and solved. The City will need to step in and make the "fixes" happen, but again, it is doable. To the School Board I say "press on" with the proposal.</p>
	<p>n regards to the Patrick Henry repurpose I would like to express my frustration with this proposal. If this plan is passed and MacArthur kids are bused in, my kids will never experience the benefit of a recreation area. As it stands most of the kids on this end of Alexandria have to drive to the east end to participate in rec activities. We need a facility on the west end for the community to gather and our kids to flourish. Our kids need a baseball facility, basketball court and a soccer field that isn't rented out most of the time. If this is decided to move ahead, my children will never have the benefit of this facility. The traffic will be horrendous and our streets will be full of more traffic than they can handle. We have already been dealing with the unmanaged construction traffic for months and months. The number of school activities will double as well as all evening events. Where will my neighbors who park on the street do so, on concert or PTA nights? Without the development of the fields, where are ALL of these kids have recess? Field Days? Learn Baseball or soccer?? PH kids are already having recess in the bus round about! I firmly believe that if the scanario were reversed, and it was being proposed to send the "west end" kids to the "east"side of Alexandria, the conversation would have been stopped before it ever started.</p> <p>Respectfully submitted, Robyn and Vaughn Ambrose</p>
	<p>If you live in the area of Patrick Henry it has been a nightmare. We were seeing a light at the end of the tunnel and now it is a freight train. The traffic is more than difficult and the parking is nonexistent at the present time. Add more buses and 50 more teachers wanting to park will make our neighborhood a giant parking lot that is impossible to navigate. The construction noise and mess ,semis blocking access and egress out of neighborhood ; this has not been a pleasant experience. The end was near and now they want to do more construction on the old school, not put in the athletic fields, add to the traffic and then after 4 years start up the athletic construction again. This will become their permanent solution for the other schools that will need swing space. The workers were to be bused to the construction area to lesson the traffic but this was never followed through and we were left with workers parked every where. The people on Lathem had you park on Taney because they couldn't get down their street to their homes. If you lived in our area you would know this is not a great idea. It is time they follow through on the original plan and let us reclaim our neighborhood. We have been very patient and accommodating. The danger this causes to our children and neighbors has not been addressed. We are a walk to Polk school neighborhood and now you want to increase the nightmare we have been enduring with more cars and buses. You say this will be taken care of...then why I ask have you not address current problems with safety. This can not go forward. These are our homes, our children our neighbors. Our quality of life has deminished during this construction and our vocal and written concerns have been ignored. We support two schools within eye shot of each other and this neighborhood can not support another.</p>

Dear All:

I am writing in reference to the current proposal to utilize the old Patrick Henry Elementary School as swing space for MacArthur Elementary. Please note the following: I strongly oppose the idea of using PH as swing space. There are many reasons, and I will attempt to outline the ones that I feel most strongly about below. I hope that my concerns, as well as the many other concerns that I know my neighbors have shared with you already are heard. There is the general feeling that this is a very last minute proposal, and that very little thought has been given to the impact on the school as well as the surrounding community. Please take the time to read everyone's comments, listen to our concerns, and remove this idea from consideration.

- It is unfair to the students of ALL schools - Patrick Henry as well as MacArthur, as well as the communities surrounding both schools. The PH project needs to be finished so that the kids have a completed school with outdoor grounds, and so that the traffic, congestion, and most of all safety issues can start being addressed.

- The children at Patrick Henry NEED to have their outdoor fields and playgrounds finished. Elementary school is K-5th grade – 6 years. It's already been over a year that the kids have been dealing with a complete reduction of outdoor play space at the school as the current construction has been ongoing. If this swing space was allowed, it would be at least 4 more years until the fields and play areas are completed (since all construction projects take longer and since then there would also be the reliance on MacArthur finishing on-time, I imagine it would be longer than 4 years realistically). That would mean that any kids who have started kindergarten this past year would make it ALL THE WAY to middle school by the time they had the opportunity to get outside and properly engage in outdoor activities at school. This is completely and utterly unacceptable. Younger kids are in need of as much physical activity as they can get during the school day, maintaining a bare minimum of outdoor play (currently the children play in the street area of the bus loop at the new PH school – horrible!) is just not right.

- The construction period has strained our family as well as PH's neighbors' patience to breaking points. Further time spent with the addition of another entire school's worth of kids/activity/vehicles/etc. is completely unsustainable.

- The new PH School is designed to provide 90 parking spaces for staff and visitors. If that is not built out, and then the entire MacArthur staff is also brought on site, off street and on street parking will be a MAJOR issue through the surrounding neighborhood that will need to be addressed.

- In addition to parking issues, there is the issue of traffic congestion. I'm going to be frank but hopefully not offensive when I say that I find the idea of solving drop-off and pickup congestion by staggering start/end times for both schools to be an insult to the capacity of our neighborhood to sustain a doubled duration of morning and afternoon congested periods. I live on Strathblane Place, and there is no way to avoid the congestion on Latham, Taney, and the adjacent roads (Jordan in particular) during school transition hours.

- If PH was to be used as a temporary home for students from the MacArthur school zone, there will not be ANY opportunity for MacArthur kids to walk and bike to school, as the distance from that zone is significant. This condition would increase the dependency on vehicles and buses, again, increasing the traffic and worsening pedestrian safety around the school and surrounding intersections. I feel strongly that safety of school students and staff should not be compromised under any circumstances, and in this

case, the safety of Polk students as well as the safety of any community member walking along the street will be negatively impacted.

- I have heard that the use of the old PH facility as swing space is estimated to “avoid the cost of approximately \$60M.” Frankly, I’m not sure how that was calculated, since I have heard that there is not yet even designs for MacArthur. With that in mind, it is hard for me to understand exactly how the \$60M figure was calculated. Regardless of calculations, I am also a conscientious taxpayer and voter in Alexandria. Of course, I always love saving money. I have to say here though, that the expense of this idea will be the expense of the wellbeing of our children and of the community. I would imagine that if it were possible to monetize our citizens’ wellbeing, it would far exceed \$60M over 4+ years. As a taxpayer, I am happy paying money to ensure that our kids are appropriately resourced and cared for, and that our communities are safe and enjoyable for all.

I am aware that my fellow citizens and I elected the School Board to promote positive and healthy learning environments, and that includes paying attention to safety issues on-site, and capacity issues that affect learning environments. Please take the time to listen now to your citizens and realize that this is not a viable option and should be removed from consideration.

Regards,  
Anne Koster, 4665 Strathblane Pl, 22304  
(I will have a daughter in kindergarten starting this Fall.)

Hello,

Please first allow me to thank you and the prior school board for completing the construction of Patrick Henry Elementary and also for completing the Rec Center. Both buildings are lovely inside, and they are so well-deserved. I am so happy for the students, parents and teachers - they were well overdue for a new space. Unfortunately, now I feel compelled to write to you regarding the proposal to repurpose Patrick Henry as a "swing space" for MacArthur Elementary students while that school undergoes renovation.

I have been in the MacArthur cafeteria too, I truly believe it is long overdue for new space or reno as well. Like many of my neighbors, I consider the Patrick Henry site to be a bit of an eyesore (understatement), but we can live through it. The traffic on Taney is pretty brutal in the morning, but I think we can live through that for another year or two. What I think is pretty outrageous about this transition plan is that there will be no outdoor play space for the existing P-H kids, then add to that the 500 - 800 additional kids on the property. Studies have been done that show the correlation to outdoor time (recess) and achievement. This does not feel like a well-thought out solution.

I'd like to know what the alternate solutions are -- I believe we can do better. It sounds like well thought out community discussion is in order before any decisions are made. It's the way we've always done things here. I hope this will continue.

Thanks so much for your review of my comments.

Best,

Suzanne Johnson  
492 Naylor Place

Please do not move forward with using the old PH swing space until you have had time to do a feasibility study as well as a traffic study, due to the CURRENT safety issues surrounding traffic and pedestrian safety around the Patrick Henry neighborhood. Doubling and tripling the bus and car traffic with another school, prior to having any plan in place, will lead to pedestrian injury and possibly death. Please consider evaluating the current problems, and conduct research to have a plan devised to address specific issues prior to implementing a rushed plan. Please also consider the lack of play space for current PH students, as they are having recess in the bus loop rather than a playground.

Dear Superintendent Hutchings and School Board Members,

I am unable to attend the meeting this evening, but wanted to provide you with my thoughts as a school neighbor, volunteer, and retired educator. Thank you for taking the time to read and digest all the communication on this issue which is coming your way.

We live on the corner opposite the PH site. Latham Street in particular has borne the brunt of the months of construction, the piles of dirt, the sound of heavy machines, the stormwater runoff onto Latham, and the construction workers taking up all available street parking, but we were rewarded this winter with the opening of the new school and recreation center. And then this.

I think it's hard to appreciate when one's timeline is one project long, the impact that "one more sacrifice" is having on our West End community which has already had to accept BRAC, and daily endures the increased traffic that cuts through our neighborhood due to the rapid rate of nearby infill development. Peak oil? We have peak traffic! A four year ask is just beyond the pale for us.

I understand you are between a rock and a hard place. I urge you to redouble your efforts to locate a different swing space rather than putting two communities through four years of turmoil, and making an already dangerous traffic situation exponentially worse.

It's totally unclear to me what priority you place on community input. It's also unclear to me that you are prioritizing the needs of students and faculty at either school. Please nix this proposal now.

Respectfully,  
Sissy Walker

ACPS is proposing to use the old Patrick Henry School as a swing space during the modernization process for Douglas MacArthur Elementary School. To follow through on this proposal would be negligent to the safety and welfare of the ACPS children and community members. The current situation with vehicles, buses, and pedestrians is already extremely unsafe for Patrick Henry and Polk families while the original plans for new Patrick Henry space continue to be incomplete, and these safety issues will only become more extreme if this proposal is enacted.

Our community understands the appeal of this seemingly easy solution for ACPS swing space, and we absolutely have empathy for the Douglas MacArthur issues. DM has a large number of students in a building that is hanging on by a thread. We are all experiencing some version of that in ACPS. We can relate. However, this particular solution would create many more problems, create deep distrust within the community and perhaps even cause people to look outside of ACPS and the city for housing and education, and I cannot stress enough that no solution to any problem within ACPS should in any way shape or form jeopardize the safety and welfare of human beings. We know that not moving forward on this proposal is the harder financial choice to make as well. The easy and cheapest choice is not always the right choice, however, and I think this situation is a testament to that truth. There is no price that can be put on safety, and decisions made by the school board should never disregard the safety of the very people the board is meant to serve.

And so, while we understand that this opportunity potentially provides some cost benefits and checks off a box in terms of locating a swing space, the negative impacts it would have on these three ACPS communities are far worse than what those two favorable factors can negate. Please review the videos and notes from the meetings that have taken place between the superintendent and the parents/communities. The old PH school has many issues, including mold, vermin infestations, and water damage, to name only a few. The long transition into the new Patrick Henry space has been extremely trying on the students, and on everyone in the community. There is major construction fatigue. People are ready for playgrounds and sports fields and parking lots. At our Polk meeting last night, not one soul spoke in favor of this proposal. Apparently parents were openly weeping at the PH meeting the night before that, because of how negatively this proposal would impact their children.

My oldest two children are currently at Polk, the eldest of which will start school at Hammond Middle School next year as a 6th grader. While I am excited for the learning opportunities that will be afforded to her there, I am terrified of her making it on her own to/from school safely from the bottom of Richmarr/Latham all the way up to N. Pegram/Seminary Rd (this is a 1.3 mile walk) if bus services are not provided to her. If transportation is not allotted for her, (i.e., if transportation services do not account for actual walking distances, but instead determine eligibility using as-the-crow-flies measurements), then she will definitely be walking along Latham, crossing Taney by Patrick Henry, and turning left onto Polk by the bus entrance for Patrick Henry, crossing several side streets including Pickett, until she finally crosses again at Pegram. These are all extremely busy intersections.

The community has asked for help with safety problems over the years, and while we have gotten some positive changes made directly on Polk Ave in front of the school, there are still many safety issues that continue to affect our community, and that have been made far worse by the current PH situation. We have asked for more police presence in the past, but they say they cannot provide anything regularly, and that it is difficult for them to provide presence at the requested times because this is when their shifts change. We have requested stop signs and more crossing guards as well. We have not gotten the stop signs, and we were told at the swing space meeting this week at Polk that the city is currently short on crossing guards and that they are currently hiring, so we should go forth and spread the word. None of this has been very encouraging for our community.

Given the issues we have had addressing these concerns prior to the new PH traffic issues, many in the

community are understandably having difficulty believing that these resources that we are unable to procure now would somehow come to exist without further issue should more vehicles, pedestrians, and buses be put into play in our community. As it stands now, many students in our neighborhood are not eligible bus riders for Minnie Howard -- which is well over a two mile walk through another set of dangerous intersections for my children and many others who make that walk now or will do so in the future. We are currently fighting to get just one bus that the neighborhood kids could share for this purpose, and so we find it difficult to stomach that the city is somehow, at the last second, instantly willing to shuttle all of the Douglas MacArthur students across the city without issue.

Currently, crossing guards are present at Pegram and Polk, at Richenbacher and Polk, and at Taney and Pegram. However, their time there is limited. Additionally, vehicles make U-turns everywhere along these routes, and since the changes at Patrick Henry, buses have been racing through side streets like Naylor, Mansfield, Pickett, and Owen. Cars frequently run through stop signs and through crosswalks with pedestrians present at all times of the day, including when children are walking to and from school. More crossing guards are needed throughout the neighborhood at intersecting roads, especially at Latham and Taney. There is a lack of stop signs at many dangerous intersections. There are blind corners on the hills, made worse due to excessive volume of both moving and parked vehicles on Latham and Polk (all day long, not just at drop-off and pick-up times). Many residents are having issues leaving their driveways safely on these and on other side streets as a result of the increased traffic and the dangerous speeds at which some vehicles and buses are operating throughout the neighborhood, etc.

I will continue to have children at Polk next year, a 3rd grader and Kindergartner, and my youngest child will follow in their footsteps a few years after that as well. I am sincerely concerned about what the pedestrian safety for my children could be like throughout their elementary, middle, and high school school days, most especially if this proposal goes through. As unsettling as that prospect is for me personally to have what could be a decade or so of close calls and near misses as a best case scenario for getting my children to and from school, consider then that my children are merely four people. Nearly 800 students currently attend Polk. Add to that the entire student population of Patrick Henry, K-8; I see many PH children walking without adults to/from the Fox Chase Apartments, crossing the busy and traffic heavy from Jordan St. Then add 750 MacArthur students, 80 faculty and staff and their vehicles, 15 buses, and REC Center visitors and staff, and the beginnings of rush hour traffic. Nothing is worth putting the lives of all of these people in jeopardy.

There is no question as to what is happening presently: we are experiencing major safety issues as a result of the Patrick Henry parking and bus passage being incomplete. These concerns have been voiced very clearly in the meetings, and I have done my best to make them clear to you all here as well. With this knowledge in hand, supporting the use of the old Patrick Henry school as a swing space would be extremely short sighted and would require an absolute disregard to the safety of our ACPS children and the Alexandria City community. There is simply not enough room, no matter how it is done, to viably provide adequate parking or passage for all the needs of PH and DM students, staff, families, and REC Center visitors, while also providing essential outdoor play structures and fields. Therefore, adding another entire school body into the mix would be both illogical and reckless.

If the city moves forward on this proposal, not having done any transportation studies or having heeded the many warnings of community members about safety and other issues, knowing that they were likely creating an unsafe situation for the students, the community will be outraged. Should something tragic happen to a student, the repercussions are not something that can be undone. And so, I sincerely urge you all: do not to move forward with this safety-negligent proposal. Do not support using the old Patrick Henry as a swing space.

Thank you.

Alternatives ideas:

George Mason and Cora Kelly will be able to accommodate building on-site during their transitions, so I highly recommend that studies start being executed now to see if either or both of those spaces could be used as swing spaces for Douglas MacArthur upon their completion, especially given that George Mason was supposed to be the next school updated, but has once again been pushed to the side when this last-minute PH swing space idea was put forth. The DM students could even be split between them. If those prospects turn out not to be options, then ACPS needs to look for other possible spaces in the city. There is a huge unused building with a massive parking lot surrounding it on Eisenhower Avenue, for example. Another option to consider is whether or not nearby schools to Douglas MacArthur, or under-capacity schools like Jeff Houston, could accommodate Douglas MacArthur families while their school is being updated.

I spoke at the school board meeting last **tonight** and was told I could forward the videos referenced.

Video one:

<https://youtu.be/gTRLiOfgaw>

Comments: U-turns were a common occurrence at the Taney and Howard intersection. The drop off lane in front of Patrick Henry created a long line and people who weren't dropping off kids would get do U-turns to get out of the line.

Video two:

<https://youtu.be/ckxjZQOQuSY>

Comments:

Shows a jeep driving on the wrong side of the road in order to bypass the drop off lane in front of patrick henry.

Video three:

<https://youtu.be/kh-VP9vp8Ps>

Comments: This video shows a city bus and cab driving on the wrong side of the road to bypass the drop off lane in front of Patrick Henry.

I had trouble sharing the videos with google drive so I had to upload to youtube. Here's the youtube link to the main channel:

Thanks in advance!

Carey Jackson

**VIA CALL, CLICK, CONNECT**

Dear Call.Click.Connect:

The Mayor's Office moments ago received a call from Ms. Saletta Coleman-Pierce (scolemanpierce@gmail.com; 202-271-1149) expressing her (and several other parents') concerns over ACPS' recent swing space proposal, in which McArthur students will be assigned to temporary space at Patrick Henry. Her email (below) contains supporting media information.

Ms. Coleman-Pierce is copied here so that she may have lines of communication open with CCC and the respective departments.

Thank you,

Mark McHugh

Aide for Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson

703-746-3982

**From:** Coleman-Pierce <scolemanpierce@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, March 21, 2019 10:21 AM

**To:** Mark McHugh <mark.mchugh@alexandriava.gov>

**Subject:** Fwd: Swing Space Study Meetings on Facebook Live

Both meetings this week can be viewed on the ACPS Facebook page, there are parents sobbing while speaking they felt so betrayed.

**VIA CALL, CLICK, CONNECT**

Dear Ms. Sanders,

Thank you for writing us today. Please know that I am contacting Mayor Wilson, in addition to our city-wide departmental Call Center, to attend to your concerns related below regarding the swing space proposal.

Thank you,

Mark McHugh

Aide for Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson

o: 703-746-3982

**From:** Mary Sanders <sanders05@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, March 21, 2019 10:57 AM

**To:** Mark McHugh <mark.mchugh@alexandriava.gov>

**Subject:** Swing Space for MacArthur

Hello Mr. McHugh,

I am Mary Sanders, parent to 2 children at Patrick Henry Elementary School or new name Patrick Henry School. I was just made aware that the mayor's office was not aware of the possible swing space for MCarthur elementary school which will greatly affect our school. ACPS is trying to make a decision in the next week about possibly using the old Patrick Henry School building for a swing space for Douglas MCarthur which we are strongly opposed to and so are the neighbors. School is claiming they will save \$60 millions dollars which I would think needs to be approved by the mayor right?

My concern is that this is not right nor will this be feasible for our children. This will make 2 schools in one plot of land. This will mean more traffic and more kids in one space. This means disrupting schedules for busses, possible delays for parents getting to work. Disruption of proper learning for our kids and not to mention the headache for teachers and administrator. This also mean that our old building could technically have been repaired and made better instead of building a better school. I don't understand how these decision are made but they are not right. I don't think they are making the right decision by attempting to do this.

Our children are so upset my youngest said they promise us a soccer field does that mean we won't have it. This is not to mention how angry I am about this thought or idea. No disrespect to MacArthur but no our old school couldn't have been in worse shape. We wouldn't have gotten a new school prior to a school that's falling apart and they claim is worse than the old Patrick Henry because maintenance wasn't done. How is that our problem? I feel they are penalizing our kids and teachers. This is not a good idea at all and I am highly against it. We have dealt with this construction for years and fought for this new building now we have to fight for our enrichment for our kids and the community of alexandria. Please do not agree to this very bad idea.

Please let me know what more we can do. I spoke at the meeting at Patrick henry which was televised by channel 7 and facebook live. We are getting a petition as well. If you need further info from feel free to contact me anytime. Thank you,

**VIA CALL, CLICK, CONNECT**

Dear Mr. McHugh,

Thank you so much for relaying my call and concerns. I would like to add that I have grave doubts about this plan. While I laud the attempt to be fiscally responsible and to move up the timeline for a new school for MacArthur elementary students, I believe that ultimately the negative impact on the Patrick Henry School community and the neighborhood outweighs the progress that would be achieved. It is not just about a lack of outdoor space either, it's the feeling of stability and normalcy that these kids need. I'm sure that I don't need to remind you that this is a Title 1 school that was previously failing. How long can we continue to ask kids to make achievement gains without access to age-appropriate recreation and open space and while spending their days in an active construction zone? What are the health impacts of that construction zone?

Additionally, the traffic impacts on both parents bringing their children to school and the neighborhood at large have not been adequately addressed. This year has been chaotic, unsafe and extremely stressful. We cannot continue to do this for another 4 years and with almost double the school population. The burden is extreme and the plans to address the issues are inadequate.

I also question the \$5 million dollar price tag that ACPS has put on this project. The old school building suffers from years of neglect and has problems with mold, vermin, leaking ceiling, bathroom plumbing issues, flooding in the cafeteria, a leaking room, and more. Parents have reported that they have noticed positive health impacts since their children have moved to the new school. We are concerned for the welfare of students at Douglas MacArthur and really question how it is possible as ACPS claims that their school is in worse shape than the old Patrick Henry. If that is the case, than waiting another year to get them out of that school is unacceptable and an alternative such as the office building conversion at Ferdinand T. Day should be considered ASAP. If my kids had to spend another year in the old building, I would have pulled them and gone to a private school frankly.

Thank you,  
Leslie Hinton

**From:** Mark McHugh <mark.mchugh@alexandriava.gov>

**Sent:** Thursday, March 21, 2019 11:08 AM

**To:** Call Click Connect

**Cc:** leslie.hinton@outlook.com

**Subject:** ACPS Swing Space proposal

Dear Call.Click.Connect:

The Mayor's Office moments ago received a call from Ms. Leslie Hinton ([leslie.hinton@outlook.com](mailto:leslie.hinton@outlook.com); 703-470-7984) expressing her (and several other parents') concerns over ACPS' recent swing space proposal, in which McArthur students would be assigned to temporary space at Patrick Henry.

Ms. Hinton is copied here so that she may have lines of communication opened with CCC and any other respective departments.

Thank you, Mark McHugh

**VIA CALL, CLICK, CONNECT**

- Name: Sandy Yamamoto
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 7039150229
- Email: alan.yamamoto@verizon.net
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor and City Council, Last night, I attended the ACPS led community meeting regarding consideration of refurbishing the "old Patrick Henry school" to be used as "swing space" and was sad that the only City Government representative present was a single Deputy City Manager - because I feel it is important that you as a group be fully aware of the disrespect felt by our neighbors in the rush to pursue this option. In fact, it was clear to all that did attend that this option is being forced upon us without the consideration we are due, simply because the existing construction contract is tolling and without action, the City is losing money. However, that should not preclude the due diligence and consideration of all issues voiced last night. Primarily, traffic safety is a very real concern within our neighborhood and those concerns have only increased with the new bus pick-up/drop-off configuration on Latham Street near Polk Avenue. Traffic safety concerns will only be further exacerbated in our neighborhood by the addition of numerous new buses transporting children from MacArthur elementary should the swing space move forward.

This neighborhood has proudly and happily coexisted with two elementary schools within 5 blocks for many years; and now Patrick Henry has become K-8. Buses already flood the neighborhood at least twice each day. So many buses, in fact, that our residential streets (many with parking on both sides) have become primary bus routes to avoid delays at both Polk and Taney Avenues; and buses line up awaiting their turn at access to the school sites. Frankly, this is not acceptable, and should not be allowed to get worse by adding additional time to the length of congestion and potential dangers by adding enough additional buses to accommodate MacArthur students being bused in for the swing space, even with staggered pick-up and drop-off times.

Promises ring very hollow to our neighbors - for example, instead of honoring the decades-old promise regarding no stadium lights, those neighbors had the City renege on that promise last October. Now after years of living in the Patrick Henry construction zone, it seems we are expected to simply acquiesce to the dictate that the old Patrick Henry will become swing space, with a result that we're subject to 4 more years of upheaval and construction traffic, parking, and dangerous intersections, in addition to adding much more traffic congestion generally.

It is unfortunate that you were not present last night to more fully listen to the concerns articulated - for which the ACPS representatives had no specific satisfactory answer (although I give them credit for showing up and attempting to be responsive). I implore you to take the time to listen to the actual community comments from those speaking so that you may give us the attention that we are due.

A lack of confidence in our City government and ACPS is the prevailing attitude - this is your opportunity to prove us wrong.

Most sincerely,  
Sandy Yamamoto

**VIA CALL, CLICK, CONNECT**

Dear Ms. Lafarga,

It is good to hear from you, and it is helpful about the swing space proposal. I will forward to Mayor Wilson (copied here) your email. I will also send your inquiry to our all-City, all-Department Call Center, to make sure that your message is distributed as widely as possible.

In the meantime, please continue to call or email us at any time for this, and other, concerns.

Thank you,

Mark McHugh

Aide for Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson

o: 703-746-3982

**From:** MJ L <mjlafarga2002@yahoo.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, March 21, 2019 1:04 PM

**To:** Mark McHugh <mark.mchugh@alexandriava.gov>

**Subject:** Swing Space Proposal

Dear Mr. McHugh,

I'm Maria Lafarga, one of the concerned Patrick Henry school parents, I know you've been in touch with some of us already but I also wanted to expressed my concerns, in addition to what you already have from them.

Why our children at Patrick Henry have to go, probably their entire Elementary School years and Middle School, without no decent place to play other than a tiny playground and a bus loop? So Sad!! This isn't fair to them, these kids need to run, exercise, play sports, burn their energy. They already put up with it part of last year, this year and now you are talking about another 4 years??

To us, parents, have been a long journey fighting for the new school and REC, attending meetings and more meetings. At the end is all worth it because our children got what they deserved: a healthy, safe and clean environment to learn, while they have fun and make lifetime memories; this also goes for the teacher and school staff.

We only got this news last week, for God sake! We just had the opening ceremony and now is like "Wait, STOP"!! I feel you already made the decision to go with it and these last minute meetings is just to let us know what is coming to us and our community in the near future, and this is only to a hand full of parents as not all have access to social media or don't know how to use it.

I want all the ACPS kids to have a great place to learn and I was shocked to learned that the old P.H. is not the WORST school in the city?? This is to me totally unacceptable and I'm deeply sadden you are letting the children go to school in these conditions.

I want to know WHY are you letting the schools get to this point? Where is the money we, the tax payers, pay go in this regard? Isn't a budget for remodeling and updates? That is going to happened in 4 years, would another school come again? Because by them I'm sure another school will need to be demolished/remodeled.

I'm praying you'd make the right decision for our children and community.....

Thank you for your time.

Maria-Jose Lafarga

**VIA CALL, CLICK, CONNECT**

Thank you, Ms. Coleman, and I will send this additional information to our all-department correspondence via our Call Center (copied above). I will also forward this to Mayor Wilson.

Kind thanks.

Mark McHugh

Aide for Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson

o: 703-746-3982

**From:** Coleman-Pierce <scolemapierce@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, March 21, 2019 10:19 AM

**To:** Mark McHugh <mark.mchugh@alexandriava.gov>

**Subject:** Fwd: Urgent Request: Swing Space Study for Patrick Henry and MacArthur Modernization

Hi Mark,

I just wanted to send you this chain quickly. I will write to you separately in the next email. Thanks for taking the time to speak with me.

Warmly,

Saletta Coleman

202-271-1149

**From:** Keith Kruse <keith.kruse1@comcast.net>

Thank you all of you who showed up tonight to speak at the community meeting with Dr. Hutchings and ACPS. I think the community sentiment was clearly stated, whether they heard is another story.

All that said, the next forum is the School Board and we have very limited opportunity to speak our mind for those elected leaders to hear. Our best hope is to convince them that their support of this proposal is a bad idea and will lose them support.

Unfortunately, I just looked at the School Board schedule and they only have a regularly scheduled meeting tomorrow night starting at 7:00 PM. They have a one hour Joint Planning Session on Monday the 25th specifically to discuss the Patrick Henry proposal, but it is not clear to me that it is open to the public. We need to get maximum participation tomorrow night to speak about the neighborhood's dissent with this proposal and we need to request that they keep the meeting on the 25th open for public comment—it is currently only scheduled for an hour, so I don't think they plan for comments.

**Please share the following with your neighborhood network as soon as possible** and get them to sign up to speak and if unable to do so, then to submit a comment at the below links. I would urge everyone to actually do both.

School Board location:

**Alexandria City School Board**

1340 Braddock Place

Alexandria, VA 22314

To submit a comment to the School Board, please go to: <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/domain/853>

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Neighbors: It has been some time since you have heard from me on the Patrick Henry Project, and something new has emerged that I want you all to be aware of...please see the below note from ACPS.

ACPS is exploring the concept of using the old Pat Henry school facility as "swing space" that will enable the complete demolition and reconstruction of the MacArthur Elem School on an accelerated timeline. ACPS has asked the PHP Advisory Group to participate in this process, and I will be attending a meeting this coming Monday, in advance of the community meeting Wednesday at J K Polk.

I am asking you to reply to me with your concerns and issues, I plan to convey your feedback at the Advisory Group meeting. My initial assessment follows:

- The use of the old PH facility as swing space is estimated to avoid the cost of approx \$60M for temporary swing space for MacArthur ES.
- if MacArthur ES construction starts in 2021, that means the outdoor spaces, parking, etc. PHP will not be fully complete until approx 2023 (my estimate).
- the parent drop off for PH may need to stay on Latham St for the next 3-4 years.
- The impact of additional MacArthur Bus and parent drop off traffic is not known, but is likely to be

significant, if even feasible. Many of you are frustrated by traffic at the Intersection of N. Jordan St and Taney Ave today with only the PH traffic.

- Many on the Advisory Group and the School Board emphasized that safety of students and staff should not be compromised under any circumstances, and this concept is likely to degrade pedestrian and vehicular safety

- If PH was to be used as a temporary home for students from the MacArthur school zone, there will not be ANY opportunity for walking and biking, as the distance from that zone is significant. This condition would increase the dependency on vehicles and buses. One potential solution might be to provide busing for ALL MMacArthur r students from a location in their home district, and not allow any parent drop off at the Temp school.

- The new PH School is designed to provide 90 parking spaces for staff and visitors. If that is not built out, and then the entire MacArthur staff is also brought on site, off street and on street parking will be a MAJOR issue that will need to be addressed.

All for now, please feel free to reply with your concerns and issues. More to follow as this situation develops.

Michael Doney

315 N Latham St

Patrick Henry Advisory Group

	<p>Good Morning,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding the idea of using Patrick Henry as swing space for McArthur while renovating McArthur. As citizens who lives on Latham St., we have suffered through construction noise, lack of parking, increased traffic and a general major disruption in our neighborhood for the past 2 years. Currently, there is not enough parking on the site for the Rec Center and School employees. Adding 700 more students (and parents who drive to and from school) as well as 90 teachers. The front of Patrick Henry is already an impossible bottleneck now as pick up and drop off is on Latham St. we specifically asked that buses and cars be run off of Taney when the school was in the design phase. We were told that it would cost another million to go that route and Karen Graf said and I quote, "the Neighbors will be really happy to have a shiny new school in their neighborhood." This is absolutely an untenable situation to add another school full of children on that site and to push back the finishing of the property for another 4 plus years. Also, there is no good outdoor play space so Patrick Henry children will go to school for 5 years with no place space? What kind of quality is that?</p> <p>We have already lost 2 families with school age children from the street due to the fact that parents felt dismissed by the school board during the first go round of designs and building. And if the school board thinks that teachers will park somewhere else and be shuttled to school, after watching what happened with construction workers, I can tell you for certain that will not happen.</p> <p>I would encourage all of you to come and observe a morning drop off at the new Patrick Henry and tell me that adding more students and teachers at that site will work just fine! Even with a staggered opening, it will create havoc on Latham St for an even longer time in the morning.</p> <p>As a family who has strongly supported ACPS for over 30 years, I know these decisions are hard but this is an idea that would have too much of a negative impact on students as well as the neighborhood. Once again, the West End feels like we are not listened to and get the worst ideas thrust upon us.</p> <p>Carol and Daron Keller</p>
	<p>As a resident of this neighborhood for 62 years the idea you are proposing is ridiculous. This will be a traffic jam from hell two times a day 6 days a week.</p> <p>No parking for teachers, ingress and egress from the Taney avenue/seminary valley area will be horrendous( it already is.), this could and would effect the emergency vehicle access to an aging population, etc.</p> <p>There is a building on Eisenhower Avenue that has been empty for twenty years but was totally rehabed a few years ago. Try and rent that space or purchase that space. Put you new high school and school admin in there on the upper floors and use the bottom floors for your swing school space.</p> <p>If any of the school staff lived in this area they would be against this idea as well</p>
	<p>Thank you for hosting the information session at Polk. I did not get up to ask a question as my neighbors seemed to be hitting all the high points. I was amazed at yours and Dr. Hutchings poise and ability to address all those diverse needs.</p> <p>I think the idea of using the old Patrick Henry space to house the MacArthur students is an inspired idea and shows that someone is thinking outside of the box.</p> <p>I do hope that you and the school board move forward with this despite the fears of the surrounding neighbors. That said, the points about traffic in the mornings around the current school needs to be addresses asap. I fear my neighbors on Latham are being a bit stepped upon. A police presence and even the presence of Dr. Hutchings a few mornings would go a long way to easing some worries.</p> <p>I just wanted to reach out and say that I am in support of this as all our school children deserve updated facilities in a speedy manner and saving the budget \$60 million dollars that might be used towards the potential High School project sounds like solid fiscal responsibility.</p>

Four years is a really long time to tell a community that already feels like it is treated like the ugly stepchild of the city that they will have hold off on finally having the school done. A carrot of some sort would have gone a long way to assuaging the resentment that is building in this West End neighborhood that is now sandwiched by the long-delayed Landmark (now a shelter to save city money) and the 4-year traffic nightmare and eye sore to be. The fact that no one even considered the need to offer something to the community as a nice gesture for losing years of what would be a core community amenity just reaffirms in the minds of many just how disposable we appear to be to many in the rest of the city and among its current management.

To the extent it matters, if this moves forward, I would suggest the city manager, the superintendent, and other stakeholders:

- \* strongly think about how some of that \$60 million could be specifically designated to signature improvements in the immediate neighborhood of Patrick Henry;
- \* think creatively about how to reduce time between all points on the timeline... refab PH, refab douglas, and build outdoor rec area; and
- \* mandate bus pickup and dropoffs for all douglas students (or at their school grounds for bus transport to old PH building).

## Additional Online Feedback

**Justin Wilson is at Patrick Henry School.**

[April 1 at 9:00 PM · Alexandria ·](#)

**Full house at Patrick Henry School for the community meeting to discuss the possibility of using the old school building as swing space to accelerate the rebuild of Douglas MacArthur Elementary School**

Paul Vogel I was there for complete census committee last Thursday!

Jewelyn Cosgrove I wasn't able to make the meeting, but please know I support the use of PH as swing space given the alternative of continuing to delay MacArthur's rebuild. I know we're past the point of ideal solutions and this is one that helps those students. I'm not sure others in my community fully agree with me, but for the good of the city, I'm supportive of this (even if the traffic in my neighborhood down Taney becomes even worse).

Karen Dixon We do not want to delay MacArthur either, but that plan called for researching swing space, and finding an alternative with safe routes to schools, and maintaining a play space for all students. There have been no assessments of the traffic and pedestrian safety impact, and we have no outdoor space other than the bus parking lot for PH kids to play during school. All we need is additional time to make assessments and plan; not a rush to something not well thought out.

Joel Finkelstein Jewelyn Cosgrove Jewelyn, do you indeed live in the West End, near Taney? It is difficult to overstate how out of touch you are with your neighbors' near-universal opposition.

Jewelyn Cosgrove Joel Finkelstein I do. And yeah, I don't agree with most of my neighbors, but it's the right thing to do for our MacArthur students - which also is where my husband went to elementary school. My kids will be walkers to Polk.

Look, the reality is that the problem facing ACPS is stark. Swing space is a critical need and we don't have the space anywhere BUT on the West End. And I get that we always get the short end of the stick over here from trash pickup to potholes to traffic but our kids all across the city need us to think bigger. That's why I support it.

Jewelyn Cosgrove Heck, I was the only candidate for school board in district B who was from the West End.

Sarah Fanning Jewelyn Cosgrove we don't deny the need for swing space. We also don't want this forced through in a rush because of a construction contract that's expiring. That's irresponsible. We need to take the time to do the proper due diligence and studies. Patrick Henry may or may not end up being the best option. But we won't know if we don't do the proper work first.

Jewelyn Cosgrove We do have studies on swing space that show alternatives are very hard to come by and we've missed opportunities before. This is one that is here and that I support because of the absolutely unacceptable conditions of some of our schools. That's why I came to my opinion. It's not that I don't deny the logistical challenges - the bussing in of the teachers alone would be a headache, but without this option, we're left back in the holding pattern that has kept MacArthur moving farther and farther down on our CIP.

Joel Finkelstein This is a deeply irresponsible take. I resent you positioning the vast majority of West End parents and families not looking out for the whole of Alexandria's kids. So you're happy about MacArthur kids going four years without fields, too? And you're happy about them being taught the lesson that they can come from a relatively socioeconomically advantaged school into a more socioeconomically disadvantaged school and denying them the facilities they were promised, despite the community of that school and their neighbors unanimously (except for you) opposing it?

That's not the Alexandria I know - especially when it is bum rushed through in a matter of weeks without safety or traffic planning, without any named alternative site or any meaningful data on costs to upgrade a tear-down-ready school.

Next time don't do the West End any favors by running for school board in any district - you damn sure don't speak for us.

Jewelyn Cosgrove As I said multiple times, the optimal solution is no longer available to us and all of our students suffer. I would rather they share fields for a few years than remain in a building that leaks, grows mold and mushrooms, and has holes to the outside they stuff their jackets into. I am not questioning your motives for disagreeing with me and I would appreciate the same courtesy.

Jewelyn Cosgrove The old PH building is in better condition than the current MacArthur. That's where I stand and why I stand there. It is NOT where I would love to be, but every year we fail to act, put off more time for swing space that doesn't exist, or ask for additional studies, is another year our students are in a building in desperate need of fixing.

Joel Finkelstein I don't question your motives. I question your judgment. This is bad governance, this is bad process, and this is bad for all of Alexandria's children.

Also - you talk about sharing fields. What fields?

Joel Finkelstein They presented this plan TWO WEEKS AGO. It is incredibly irresponsible to demand the school board vote on it now. That's beyond rash - it's reckless and dangerous and absolutely shameful.

Jewelyn Cosgrove Joel, all due respect, the lack of swing space and bad process planning from ACPS isn't a new thing. With the superintendent turnover and other challenges at central office, the cabal that is our maintenance and infrastructure has prompted even consideration of the city to take over this function for ACPS. I respect your frustration and don't disagree that this process is far beyond a day late and a dollar short. It's years late and millions short.

I am extremely concerned we're no where NEAR where we need to be to find any other swing space that could accommodate the size of school we have with MacArthur. And I am very worried it's going to continue to impact our students there, push back other CIP projects for other schools, and we could be left with even worse options down the road. And that concern is every bit as legitimate as those about proper governance and process with ACPS.

When I reference fields, I'm considering that there are already board members raising that concern (rightly so) and that I'm going to try to push the school board to work cooperatively with the city to figure out how they'll provide adequate play space and additional parking.

Again, NONE of this is optimal. I just fall on the side that it's urgent. Years of mismanagement and delays have left us in this position.

Sarah Fanning Jewelyn Cosgrove and the safety and well being - including mental health affected by lack of green space- on our neighborhood's children isn't urgent?

Just because poor planning and bad processes are the standard MO for ACPS does not in any way mean we have to put up with it. In fact I think we should have a full audit of all the research or lack thereof of everything they've done to secure a swing space. I guarantee it's extremely lacking.

And we bloody well know that this was motivated by a contract expiring. We know ACPS is putting this above neighborhood safety and that's repugnant.

Last night the superintendent mentioned the weeks of studies and work that needs done to put a single stop sign at Polk and Latham. The fact that it takes more research and time to put in one stop sign than ACPS is willing to give on swing space is disturbing.

And yes years of mismanagement have put us in this position. Which is exactly why we are standing up against this current misguided and mismanaged nonsense that is definitely a slippery slope to us being the purgatory where all other schools are sent while waiting for their new buildings. There is zero trust left.

Marc Solomon I am with Jewelyn Cosgrove on this one. If the option is to have two schools of kids in non-ideal conditions for three years vs having one school of kids in even worse conditions for six to seven years, we should go with the first option. I personally would have wanted to break ground on a brand new high school this year, and use Minnie Howard as a swing space for the next decade as we modernize the rest of our schools, but we have delayed, delayed, delayed. Again.

Allen Irwin Marc Solomon And at a significant cost savings to boot.

I hope plans are advancing for the other schools that will need rehab so there isn't a similar rush to a solution in the future.

Jewelyn Cosgrove Allen Irwin I'm certainly making my thoughts known to our elected officials about those projects, too. Hammond and GW are in absolutely terrible shape.

Sarah Fanning And where are you proposing to put those students while their schools are fixed? This underscores the need for a real and more long term swing space solution. Not Patrick Henry. And don't even suggest that become the long term option.

Jewelyn Cosgrove Sarah Fanning PH is definitely far from a long term solution, it simply allows us to accelerate the CIP and get the kids a decent school.

Some of the remaining fixes can be done on site. George Mason could use the adjacent city land, for example. Minnie Howard should be built out to accommodate more than just the 9th grade to potentially give us some space there to work with.

If I'm thinking really creatively, another new school on the west end could allow John Adams to be converted back into a middle school.

The reality is that we do not have the access to the swing space we need. We haven't and it's not getting any easier. We do still need permanent swing space - that's not off the table and shouldn't be. But Patrick Henry is a temporary solution to give us that flexibility and an acceleration in the CIP to finally get MacArthur redone.

But these are simply my thoughts. The School Board reps will be who to ask these questions to and I hope we can get the answers we need to know they're focused on longer term solutions as well and holding Dr. Hutchings accountable to that.

Sarah Fanning Jewelyn Cosgrove the problem is that instead of doing the necessary work to secure a permanent swing space, they've stopped and moved to a bandaid that hurts several school communities to boost another. And you are advocating to enable this shortcut that is more of the same misguided and mismanaged behavior that leads to decay of our school system.

The city and ACPS need to be working together in this as a top priority. They need to stop giving permits for office and residential construction and allocate land for the schools. With all the new condos going up, it will exacerbate the already over capacity problem in out of repair schools.

All of this is absolutely inexcusable.

Sarah Fanning Jewelyn Cosgrove I want to be clear - I'm not necessarily saying under no circumstances should we use Patrick Henry. And neither are the other West End opponents. We all absolutely are saying that the due diligence and proper studies and reports must be done and the findings presented to the community first. None of this has been done. And frankly, that's negligent and borderline fraud.

Jewelyn Cosgrove I'll be clear too - on that we absolutely agree. I am constantly in awe of how long it has taken for these problems to be dealt with - or even be considered critical enough to act - that has resulted in poor conditions for our students. It all comes down to process. ACPS has had a lot of change in leadership that has been a major component in that disarray. I see Hutchings trying something bold and taking the concerns seriously, which is what I wanted to have happen, but I do understand that process matters and there's a difference between bold and recklessly charging ahead. And I sincerely respect those who are critical of the process and expect their questions and concerns met with earnest solutions.

Mindy Lyle Great solution

Jeannie Salo I know there are a lot of concerned and disappointed families at Patrick Henry who were counting on finally getting some fields to enable Rec/activities. I am also concerned that millions would go into renovating a space that is decrepit and infested - and will then need to be demolished. Mary Brazier is head of PTA at Patrick Henry and I get the sense that their community has not been given as much of a voice in this debate as the MacArthur community.

Karen Dixon Why have no other plans been presented? Why is the WEST END feeling railroaded? I have a voice, but feel it is not being heard.

Katy Hildreth Sokolove This issue has become so divisive due to the rush to make a decision. I am extremely disappointed that the schools and the city have very little demonstrated capacity to address space for schools effectively. The city continues to allow residential space to be built, and yet, only one elementary school has been added. Patrick Henry is supposed to relieve capacity issues at the middle level, but what parent would want their kid to attend a middle school with limited outdoor space, and no intramurals. I will be watching votes closely to see who approves and what role city officials play. I supported your candidacy mayor, but I am watching your response carefully.

Lauren Haas Finkelstein I appreciate seeing you, other City Council members and School Board members come out to the meeting. Please think about what kind of a decision it is when there is no Plan A. There are no identified spaces for Plan A and so it's disingenuous (at best) for the Superintendent to say otherwise. If there are no viable Plan A spaces then say so. The Superintendent has made his position clear with his recommendation at the meeting's end. We need the School Board to be careful decision makers and stewards of the future of one of ACPS's most at risk school populations. Equity means action, not empty words.

Lauren Haas Finkelstein And look at the recommendations from the Joint City-Schools Facility Investment Task Force (Task Force Final Report, 1/26/18, page 35). PLS. SCROLL DOWN FOR EASIER TO READ VERSIONS IN MY REPLIES.

Lauren Haas Finkelstein More from the Key Observations from the Task Force (page 5):

Lauren Haas Finkelstein And page 6:

Lauren Haas Finkelstein Easier to read versions!

Sam Votsis Thanks for posting these.

Sarah Fanning This whole very short process is extremely problematic. This kind of rush is exactly how fraud, waste, and abuse happen. Lauren has shown what the proper requirements and steps should be in the process and they have not been done at all.

It is very clear that this decision was made and the meetings in the West End are all lip service. We know this is because the construction contract is expiring and penalties will be levied because of the delay. That is absolutely putting money before our community and our children. ACPS has a need for multiple construction projects. This gives us leverage to renegotiate construction contracts. There is really no need to rush this and not follow proper governmental processes. And that means impact studies.

The West End is watching closely and we remember all the other broken promises to our neighborhoods. This is severely eroding trust.

Bethy Dear A lot of these children who attend Patrick Henry live in the apartment complexes in Fox Chase, where they have no access to any outdoor play space. The fields of Patrick Henry have been stripped away from them for over two years, and we are now facing possibly even more time where these kids will have NO access to any outdoor areas to play, whether they are in school, or out of school.

The Superintendent preaches equity, but he is stripping these children of what free resources they had,. There will be nowhere for them to play within walking distance on breaks or weekends. They will be stuck on a small little playground because the city is trying to cram TWO schools onto one plot of land for an infinite amount of time. And what happens when Cora Kelly or George Mason are in desperate need of a swing space? Will Patrick Henry be used for that as well? I have fond memories of playing on the playground during recess in my elementary school days. I was able to walk around and play, and have choices. The city is robbing these kids of that opportunity.

Tina Grimstead Rider I also feel like not enough focus has been paid on the following, all items that any building in the city has to go through that are being ignored in the 2week rush job to approve : 1. Fire safety. Where will the kids go if there is an actual fire are the buildings separate enough. Can emergency vehicles get through during drop off and pick up 2. Storm water: with the increased amount of impervious surfaces and the delayed permanent storm water system how will the run off be managed? If there is increased flooding downstream will the City be responsible? 3. What about traffic studies? In addition to the nuisance factor what about safety? Are they creating an accident waiting to happen with out addressing? They sure didn't do anything proactive during construction..... and do they plan to move the bus stops for TC and hopefully MH again from in front of this now 2 school zone where it is currently located and 4. Are they coordinating with the City who wants to narrow seminary trapping us in our neighborhood?

I also think the numbers bandied about are bogus and inflated: I don't know how anyone could vote yes responsibly without more diligence.

Lauren Haas Finkelstein Agreed! ACPS shared the Patrick Henry Building condition assessment. Please read: <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/phesassessmentreport>. DM families, we want you to have a new school, too! But from page 6: "Having a such a large number of students raises concerns of life safety, especially with an outdated fire alarm system and no sprinkler system."

Marianne Hetzer Hawn Patrick Henry has always been a swing space option, but it wasn't publicly announced or considered until a decision had to made in less than one month. All of a sudden the new administration and school

board members and city leaders DISCOVERED old Patrick Henry sitting there, begging to be refurbished and populated by Douglas MacArthur students over a 3+year timeframe? Puhleeze. "Plan A" has been a placeholder for Plan B since forever, apparently. I'm insulted.

Jeremy Hogg Justin Wilson So this is what I heard last night, with my additional thoughts and commentary.

1) we have not done a traffic study to figure out how this plan (or lack of) would work with 2 schools, yet the School Board is voting up or down later this week. We are owed this plan as this will have a significant impact on traffic on Taney / Jordan.

2) I'm not convinced we have exhausted all other alternatives before this option is voted on. Although this was stated last night by Dr. Hutchings, and I believe the Superintendent is trying to do what he thinks is right, I'm not convinced this is the "only solution." If this is the case, then where are the executive summaries of the analysis showing that no other alternatives are feasible (e.g. cost to take Eisenhower Victory Center, using landmark, or developing other sites). The analysis of alternatives should be visible for all to review on why this plan makes sense over all others. Stating that its on constituents to review the "feasibility reports" is ridiculous. City leadership should be able to explain the plan in simple terms - period.

3) This \$60M "savings" keeps being thrown around. I chatted with Dr. Hutchings about this. First, we have to exit the current contract to demolish the building (an estimated \$4m in materials already bought), we have the cost to renovate the old Patrick Henry building (\$6-10M), and lost fees by the contractor that are likely owed (figure \$1m). So to NOT spend the \$60M, we have to WASTE \$11-\$15M now. That's a horrible ROI. I'm not convinced that the other projects can happen with no swing space required either. If that is the case, then this means paying a premium to build on occupied sites that aren't as spacious as Patrick Henry. Point is – the \$60M savings is not real – and will come down due to a number of factors likely becoming half or a quarter what's projected, at the cost of 4 additional years of traffic, construction, etc in Seminary Valley. Again, if this is such a good deal, then show us the financial plan and high level logistics that makes sense for the West End to get behind this.

4) If this is the only feasible option, and I'm not convinced it is, then the West End should be compensated for the "sacrifice of the greater good" as Dr. Hutchings stated last night. With this kind of savings, why are we not getting additional facilities in the area. One thought is the city invests a few \$Million in a sports complex at polk with an excellent playground that could be shared with Patrick Henry. While not ideal, it would be some compensation for the sacrifice the West End is making to help the City.

Mairym Ramos-Salinas Justin Wilson I truly hope you are reading all the comments in this post. The West End has historically has been short changed but we as a community will put the safety and well being of the most vulnerable members of this community -our kids - first. This is the one issue that we will remember in the next Election

Justin Wilson Mairym Ramos-Salinas, Of course. The School Board has a difficult set of decisions to navigate on this issue with constraints in every direction.

We'll continue to partner with them to figure out the best direction for the City and our kids.

Katy Hildreth Sokolove Justin Wilson Responses as general as this one create a tremendous amount of anxiety. The city and schools should be working on a plan to address this complicated and expensive issue - not continue to tells us how hard it is while the city continues to approve new construction in our space limited city. If you already have a new task force working out a new plan - because the old one is clearly being ignored entirely -please accept my apologies and tell me how to find out about the work they are doing and when a report will be published. Again, read the old one where the purchase of a swing space is recommended, but this idea is clearly being discarded in less than 6 weeks. I'm glad to know all the resources that went into the development of that plan were also a waste.

Justin Wilson Katy Hildreth Sokolove, We approved a funding plan two years ago to address school capacity. It essentially doubled the resources available to address these challenges.

The reason we are having this discussion is because we have those resources. Prior to the 2017 effort, MacArthur was not funded. Swing space was not funded. Cora Kelly was not funded.

Now that those projects are funded, we (by "we," I mean the Council and the Board) need to figure out how to make them happen. The decision about whether to allow the destruction of the old Patrick Henry is a Board decision. They own the contract and it is money that is in the Board's purview.

There is money in the budget for swing space, but while I have not been privy to the details of their search, I understand the challenge they have had in finding properties. The City had similar challenges when we went hunting for a consolidated DCHS location. There are not many properties easily obtainable around the City that can be purchased for a reasonable price and utilized for municipal needs.

The redevelopment process gives us the best opportunity to obtain new properties (Potomac Yard, Landmark, Eisenhower West, etc), but those only materialize when the private development goes forward. That requires us to be patient and subject to the vagaries of the market.

So ideally this would have been a discussion that occurred 4 years ago. But it didn't. Ultimately the Board is going to have to determine the best way to move forward given where we are.

As always, we will partner with them to determine the best way to do so.

Jeannie Salo Justin Wilson it sounds like a huge concern is with the speed with which these critical (and costly and irreversible) decisions are being made (about Patrick Henry swing space specifically). The community did not feel they had a voice or time to raise their concerns with the Board (assuming the Board made the call per your response). And there are a lot of fair points about the process and studies that should have been done to inform that decision. These are impactful to the city and equity for the kids living there. Very complicated issues of course. But I'm concerned that we ensure the goal to stick with a decision is not railroading a more sensible process — given there are very real safety issues at stake as well as a lot of money.

Justin Wilson Jeannie Salo, Agreed. The timeline of this decision-making is not optimal.

Jeannie Salo Justin Wilson you are always very sensible and helpful. I hope there's a way to engage the community and parents in both impacted communities - to ensure the Patrick Henry kids and families don't feel entirely dismissed by the City. They need leaders advocating for them too. They are seeing and feeling a difference in how they are being treated as stakeholders in this process. Alexandria can do better!

Mairym Ramos-Salinas Jeannie Salo , I completely agree with you. Is a sentiment throughout the community. In the 14 years I have lived here in the West End this is the one issue that has brought us together. Elected officials need to look close ly.