

Candace M. Lewis

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Re: Patrick Henry Project

Dear Members of the Board,

My son is a first grader at Patrick Henry Elementary School and I am asking for you to support the New Building Option 2 for the Patrick Henry Project. New Build Option 2 would not require a change to the student and teacher's everyday life at Patrick Henry and I urge you to choose this option.

As a child, my elementary school was overcrowded and utilized trailers to accommodate all the students. I have personally experienced the harshness of the cold rain, the strong gusts of wind, and the snowy slushy days as I moved from trailer to trailer. Please do not put my son through these very same conditions by selecting an option that would require the use of a swing space. I also do not want my son separated from his peers that he has grown to form a bond with by placing him elsewhere as a swing space alternative.

I would not like my son to have to go to school in a construction site; therefore, I do not want him to be in a school that is being renovated in phases. The age of the school has me concerned about Asbestos issues, which was a popular insulation during the time the school was built. The children and teachers of Patrick Henry should not have to be subjected to the poor air quality that will be generated from the construction and possible Asbestos particles floating around in the ventilation system. Also the costs to properly remediate the possible Asbestos situation do not seem to be part of the renovation calculation. With New Build Option 2, this would not be a factor.

I can understand the concerns of the Latham Street residents and agree that the entrance on Latham Street is not necessary. I would ask that the Board, the Architects and the City work together to consider an alternative option. One option I proposed at a recent meeting was to have the playground moved closed to Latham Street and have the parking lot loop cut between

the school and the recreation center. The Architects responded that they didn't want children crossing the street to go from one building to another. Since the Architects have not finalized a plan for the buildings, they can either construct a catwalk overhead or they can build a tunnel underneath connecting the buildings. I believe this plan would satisfy the Latham Street residents' request to remove the entrance and have a playground closer to Latham Street. This plan would also reduce the need to have a traffic study performed on N. Latham St. If this plan is not acceptable, please consider utilizing a gate to block off the entrance from Latham. I am told that the Fire Department would have to have access to this entrance in case of an emergency. If this is a requirement, please consider using a special gate for the fire department that is currently being used at T.C. Williams. This gate would open whenever the siren is heard from the fire truck or ambulance.

There have been responses from the community that the Recreation Center is underused and should be torn down or not part of this project. I would like to point out that the Patrick Henry Recreation Center is used every day as an aftercare program, which is a more affordable option over the Campagna Center afterschool program. If this is taken away, you will displace children and reduce the after-care options for many families.

Members of the Board, please recognize that our Patrick Henry Teachers, our Children and Principal Bynum have worked too long and hard to get to where they are with testing scores and an improved curriculum to start shaking things up now. Please vote for New Building Option 2 with a modification to the Latham Street entrance.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Candace Lewis

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