



KEVIN KAMENETZ
County Executive

August 1, 2014

Dr. Dallas Dance, Superintendent
Baltimore County Public Schools
6901 Charles Street
Towson, MD 21204

Dear Dr. Dance,

I write in follow up to our many discussions during the past several weeks regarding the County's review of the BCPS capital budget that the school system recently submitted.

As you are aware, the County's comprehensive *Schools for our Future* program proposes to invest \$1.1 billion for school construction projects over the next decade, eliminating all projected school overcrowding and providing air conditioning for 96% of our schools, including every Baltimore County elementary and middle school. I am particularly pleased that we have embarked upon this mission with an unprecedented level of collaboration between the County and the school system. Such a significant investment requires that the County, as the fiscal authority, monitor every expenditure to ensure that we are able to build and renovate as many schools as possible. Given the recent budgetary projections by your staff, it has become clear that the current plan for the central corridor is not viable, and we cannot fund the proposal as submitted.

The current plan under discussion would net 789 seats by building 600 seats in a renovated Loch Raven Elementary School which now serves as a community center and building a 189-seat addition to Cromwell Valley Elementary School. That plan would have also required that the County construct a replacement community center on the Loch Raven site. Last week, your staff estimated the cost of those projects to be \$48 million (Loch Raven renovation and addition \$29 million; Cromwell addition \$19 million) plus our estimated cost for a replacement community center at \$3-\$4 million, for a total of up to \$52 million for a gain of 789 seats.

Upon careful review, as the alternative to the Loch Raven and Cromwell projects, we have revisited our discussion from last year regarding the renovation of the former Towson Elementary School located on the site of the Bykota Senior Center, which both the County and BCPS had rejected as not feasible. Given the choice of constructing 789 seats at an effective cost of \$52 million, the County will now fund construction of a brand-new 700-seat elementary school (estimated cost, up to \$30 million) to replace the

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former Towson Elementary School. The County will also construct a modern senior center at a nearby location to replace the Bykota Center. Funds for this project would be utilized from the 2016 bond referendum. During that interim, we respectfully solicit further discussion to add additional seats as may be needed for the central corridor.

These recommendations are not only cost effective, but provide a modern building at an appropriate location with less disruption.

We also urge you to include as part of the 2014 referendum funds \$6 million to air condition Halstead Academy, and we will consider funding any minor renovation that might also be recommended for Halstead to continue in its current capacity.

I also take note of the proposed renovation of Dumbarton Middle and urge you to restrict the project to air conditioning and interior renovations only.

While the County is no longer able to support the current proposal, we are ready to move forward immediately with the revised proposal above. As always, I appreciate your leadership and our partnership, and I look forward to working together as we implement *Schools for our Future*.

Very truly yours,



Kevin Kamenetz
County Executive

KK:dm

cc: David Uhlfelder, President
Michael Bowler
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Members of the Baltimore County Council