



Date: March 24, 2014

To: The Albemarle County School Board &
Dr. Pam Moran, Superintendent

From: Long Range Planning Advisory Committee

Re: Direction for Annual Recommendation – FOLLOW UP

As a follow-up to our February 27th meeting, we have summarized what we heard as the general consensus from the board.

High Schools

Enrollment data currently does not support a new high school. We have the capacity at our current high schools for the next five years. We do not see the need to incur the cost of a brand new school. It makes more sense to us to explore renovation, improvement & expansion (as needed) opportunities at the schools we currently have. The immediate issue is at Albemarle High School. It is over capacity and only projected to grow more. Our recommendation will likely include the convening of a redistricting committee unless we receive different feedback. It is our recommendation that it would be a comprehensive study to include middle schools as well.

Board's Response:

The Board is prepared & agrees it is appropriate to consider redistricting. It is important that all high schools should be evaluated to ensure equitable consideration.

The notion of a 'school of the future' should be seen as separate topic. "What is the education of the future?" That is a question the Board must tackle and determine what a high school should be. Those answers will influence what the facility needs are not just enrollment & capacity figures.

As included in the previous recommendation, it is important to keep a placeholder in place for additional seats.

Parity/Modernization

As our schools continue to age and the needs of our students evolve, modernization projects will be increasingly important. To date, though, a stand-alone modernization project has not been funded. Any major modernization of a school has only been coupled with a major addition. We anticipate modernization projects to take an increasing presence in our future recommendations. How do we improve the viability of such projects?

Board's Response

The Board has ranked parity project high in the previous recommendation including a commitment to the southern schools. Staff is conducting an evaluation of all learning spaces. The data derived from the evaluation will be a driver to support such modernization projects. When spaces become inadequate it has to be more important than creating additional seats.

Stony Point

The School Board approved a wait-and-see approach two years ago regarding the possibility of redistricting at Stony Point. The school continues to utilize four trailers, but redistricting no longer seems like a viable option. Our previous recommendation included an addition onto the school, but it was ranked lower in priority than other projects. It is our inclination to prioritize it in a similar way below modernization projects such as Red Hill, Yancey & Western Albemarle. We understand the Board's desire to phase out the use of trailers, but is this a more pressing issue than other needs of the division?

Board's Response

The Board is ok with the prioritization of the addition on Stony Point as proposed.

Pre-K

Pre-K programs are making an increasing presence at our schools. Notwithstanding their inherent benefits to students, the programs are often occupying rooms in buildings that are nearing or over capacity. How should we view these programs when making long term facility decisions? What is the long-term plan for dedicated spaces for Pre-K classes?

Board's Response

It is important to keep Pre-K students at their base school. This is one of the inherent benefits of the programs. Dedicated spaces for current & future pre-k programs will require additional seats, however. The Board of Supervisors have made pre-k education one of their priorities. It is important for this Board to make the Board of Supervisors aware of the impact of these programs on the long-term facility needs of the division. The Board supports the pre-k programs, but they must meet the needs of K-12 students first.

Other Topics Discussed:

- ***Shortage of elementary seats & possibility of a new elementary school***
- ***Accuracy of enrollment projections***
- ***Need to include a project for the WAHS Environmental Science Academy***