


Office of the Superintendent of Schools  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

May 6, 2015

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Larry A. Bowers, Interim Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: Cross-agency Work Group on School Design Options

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you that a cross-agency work group is being formed to examine alternative ways to design schools. The work group members will explore school design options that minimize site needs. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find school sites large enough to fit our traditional school facility model; this is especially true in areas of the county experiencing urbanization. The Cross-agency Work Group on School Design Options will complement the study that began on collocating public facilities.

At the March 7, 2015, Infrastructure Forum, sponsored by Councilmember Roger Berliner, examples of innovative school designs were presented. Some designs involved the use of former commercial and industrial buildings, while others required less land than in the past. Subsequent to the forum, there has been a growing interest in exploring these design approaches. Interest also has been generated in repurposing commercial office space for schools as vacancy rates in these facilities are on the rise. The question has been raised about whether some of Montgomery County Public Schools' (MCPS) space needs could be met through locating schools in these vacant buildings. The recent opening of Bailey's Elementary School in a retrofitted office building in Bailey's Crossroads, Virginia, also has raised interest in this alternative approach.

Work group membership will include staff from the Maryland State Department of Education; the Office of the County Executive; the County Council; the Montgomery County Board of Education; the Montgomery County Planning Department; the MCPS Department of Facilities Management (DFM); and a representative from the Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations, Inc. Furthermore, an architect who is familiar with school design and commercial office buildings will be identified to assist the work group. Mr. Bruce Crispell, director, Division of Long-range Planning, and Mr. Peter J. Geiling, team leader, Real Estate Management Team, DFM will cofacilitate the work group. The timeline for completion of the study has not yet been established; however, we will keep you apprised of progress during the next several months.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Andrew M. Zuckerman, acting chief operating officer, at 301-279-3626 or Mr. James Song, director, Department of Facilities Management, at 240-314-1064.

LAB:AMZ:BC:imt

Copy to:

Dr. Statham

Dr. Navarro

Dr. Zuckerman

Mr. Civin

Ms. Turner-Little

Mr. Crispell

Mr. Geiling

Mr. Song

Mr. Ikheloa