

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

April 14, 2015

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Larry A. Bowers, Interim Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Interim Superintendent's Recommendation on Relocation of Alternative Education Programs

During the 2013–2014 school year, an Alternative Education Programs Project Team was charged to develop a new vision for alternative education in Montgomery County Public Schools. As a result of the project team's work, all middle and high school alternative programs were consolidated into the Blair G. Ewing Center, currently located on Avery Road in Rockville. Although a Fiscal Year 2015 appropriation was approved to begin the planning process for facility improvements to the Blair G. Ewing Center, the new vision for Alternative Education Programs required a review of the current facility to ensure that the middle and high school programs can be accommodated at the Blair G. Ewing Center.

As part of the *Board of Education Requested Fiscal Year 2016 Capital Budget and Amendments to the Fiscal Years 2015–2020 Capital Improvements Program*, the Board of Education approved a supplemental appropriation to reallocate the funds approved for the facility improvements of the Blair G. Ewing Center to be used instead to renovate and expand the former English Manor Elementary School facility to accommodate Alternative Education Programs. The County Council approved the supplemental appropriation request with the caveat that Montgomery County Public Schools update the feasibility study that was conducted for the current Blair G. Ewing Center site and also conduct a feasibility study for another site the Board of Education deemed appropriate. Staff in the Department of Facilities Management reevaluated potential sites and recommended that the former English Manor Elementary School would be the most appropriate site for Alternative Education Programs. After a careful review, I concur with the staff recommendation and request the Board of Education's approval of the following resolution:

WHEREAS, The Blair G. Ewing Center facility, constructed in 1970 with a classroom pod organization, does not have an ideal building configuration to support the new vision for Alternative Education Programs in Montgomery County Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, Due to the pod configuration and multiple floor levels, the building remains less than ideal to provide easy supervision of students, clear interior circulation, and the separation of middle and high school students, which are critical elements of school design; and

WHEREAS, The approved Fiscal Years 2015–2020 Capital Improvements Program includes \$16.6 million for facility improvements to the Blair G. Ewing Center, with the majority of those funds to be spent on building systems replacement in the facility and will not address all of the building configuration concerns; and

WHEREAS, In order to provide Alternative Education Programs with a facility that would support the program and students, the *Board of Education Requested Fiscal Year 2016 Capital Budget and Amendments to the Fiscal Years 2015–2020 Capital Improvements Program* included a request to relocate the Alternative Education Programs, currently housed at the Avery Road site, to the former English Manor Elementary School site and to renovate and expand the former English Manor Elementary School facility to accommodate the Blair G. Ewing Center Alternative Education Programs; and

WHEREAS, The County Council directed the Board of Education to conduct two feasibility studies for the redesigned Alternative Education Programs—one at the current Blair G. Ewing Center and a second study at another site determined to be appropriate by the Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, Staff in the Department of Facilities Management evaluated centrally located potential sites owned by the Board of Education, Montgomery County, and the City of Rockville; and

WHEREAS, The potential sites evaluated by staff were located in the Richard Montgomery and Rockville clusters, and the northern portions of the Walter Johnson and Wheaton clusters; and

WHEREAS, The criteria used to evaluate the potential sites included the following: location in the county; size of the building and site; availability of property; and availability of public transportation; and

WHEREAS, Staff in the Department of Facilities Management recommended the former English Manor Elementary School as the most appropriate site to accommodate the redesigned Alternative Education Programs; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board of Education approves two feasibility studies for the redesigned Alternative Education Programs—one at the current Blair G. Ewing Center and the second study at the former English Manor Elementary School site; and be it further

Resolved, That at the conclusion of the two feasibility studies, the Board of Education will approve a site for the redesigned Alternative Education Programs; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the county executive and the County Council.

LAB:AMZ:JS:ds