

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

September 13, 2011

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Superintendent's Recommendation for Modernization of Wheaton High School and the Thomas Edison High School of Technology

Wheaton High School and the Thomas Edison High School of Technology are located on the same site and currently share one facility. Funding is approved in the Amended Fiscal Year 2011–2016 Capital Improvements Program to modernize these schools, with a completion date of August 2015 for the building and August 2016 for the site. Given the significant cost and long-term implications involved in modernizing these schools, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) staff was directed to gather stakeholder input regarding the relationship between the Wheaton High School and Thomas Edison High School of Technology programs through the Roundtable Advisory Committee process. The Roundtable Advisory Committee met from November 2010 through January 2011 and members analyzed a wide range of approaches that included a one-school model, a two-school model that created two independent programs, and hybrid models. A report was submitted to the superintendent of schools and to the members of the Board of Education on January 27, 2011, for review and consideration.

On March 28, 2011, the Board of Education directed MCPS staff to conduct a feasibility study for the Wheaton High School and Thomas Edison High School of Technology facilities to include options that would maximize the use of space as well as enhance future enrollment growth for both Wheaton High School and the Thomas Edison High School of Technology. The options were to include two concepts: (1) two buildings on the site; and (2) one building with separate entrances, separate identities, and separate driveways. A Facility Advisory Committee (FAC) was formed for the feasibility study that included participation from MCPS staff, parents from Wheaton High School and the Thomas Edison High School of Technology, state and local officials, and community members.

During the first two FAC meetings in regard to the feasibility study, members developed goals for the modernization of these schools. These goals were used to develop a set of guiding principles for the feasibility study. FAC members evaluated a total of 14 options—7 options that

would construct one building on the site and 7 options that would construct two buildings on the site with separate entrances, identities, and driveways. FAC members identified a preferred option for each of the two concepts. A draft report of the feasibility study for the modernization of Wheaton High School and the Thomas Edison High School of Technology was released for public comment from July 18, 2011, through August 19, 2011. The two-building option, identified as Option A in the feasibility study, was the preferred option of FAC members.

I concur and recommend the following resolution for the Board's approval:

WHEREAS, On March 28, 2011, the Board of Education directed staff to conduct a feasibility study for Wheaton High School and the Thomas Edison High School of Technology and facilities that included two concepts: (1) two buildings on one site (Option A); and (2) one building with separate entrances, separate identities, and separate driveways (Option B); and

WHEREAS, The Wheaton High School/Thomas Edison High School of Technology Facility Advisory Committee met from April 2011 through June 2011 and completed the feasibility study; and

WHEREAS, The Wheaton High School/Thomas Edison High School of Technology Facility Advisory Committee selected Option A, the two-building option, as the preferred option; and

WHEREAS, The recommended Option A will be less disruptive to school operations during the construction phase and will cost less than Option B; and

WHEREAS, The draft report of the feasibility study was available for public comment from July 18, 2011, through August 19, 2011; and

WHEREAS, The superintendent of schools reviewed and carefully considered the input from the Wheaton High School/Thomas Edison High School of Technology Facility Advisory Committee and the community at-large and concurs with the recommendation; now therefore be it

Resolved, That Option A, the two-building option, is selected for the modernization of Wheaton High School and the Thomas Edison High School of Technology; and be it further

Resolved, That the completion date of the entire project be August 2018, pending approval of funding by the Montgomery County Council for construction funds in the Fiscal Year 2013–2018 Capital Improvements Program.

JPS:LAB:JS:lmt