

City of Richmond



July 22, 2021

Dear Chair Burke, Vice Chair Young, and members of the Board of Richmond Public Schools:

While we have not yet received responses to our correspondence from May, we have followed the actions of your School Board meetings. Given the actions and statements by your Board over the months since our May 13 letter, we must conclude that you are not amenable to our proposed compromise that would have established joint processes for procurement, project management, communications and engagement, trades and training, and back office support.

The proposal offered by Vice Chair Young and passed by a majority of the Board at the July 19 meeting may on the surface appear to be a compromise by RPS, but actually it raises questions for us. Specifically, we are concerned that this action does nothing to accelerate the timeline by which a new George Wythe High School would be constructed. Superintendent Kamras has been clear that his administration is not equipped to embark on procurement or construction management until he has staffed the new positions, with an estimated date of October.

We would like to understand why the School Board's proposed evaluation panel, "to be [composed] of no fewer than seven persons including no fewer than three City employees and four RPS employees and no greater than nine persons including no fewer than four City employees and five RPS employees," cannot be leveraged to evaluate the design service proposals due August 2 in response to the City's Request for Proposal 210013745 issued on June 17 so that we can build a new George Wythe as soon as possible. The same collaborative panel proposed by the School Board could review these submissions and not waste the time that will be lost by the reissuance of an RFP by RPS. The purpose of the City's RFP is to select the best professional design services firm, not to determine how the GWHS will be designed.

Finally, we are concerned about the stated plans to issue design service RFPs for a new technical school and a new Woodville Elementary School later this fall. It is against best practices to issue design services RFPs so far in advance of funding availability. If you have sources for funding the construction of these additional new schools other than the City's Capital Improvement Plan, we would benefit from that knowledge.

City of Richmond



The opportunity to collaborate is still on the table as the current RFP for design services for George Wythe does not close until August 2. We urge you to listen to the hundreds of parents, students and alumni and collaborate with the city on building a new George Wythe High School as soon as possible.

Thank you,

Levar M. Stoney
Mayor

Dr. Cynthia I. Newbille
7th District Councilmember

Stephanie A. Lynch
5th District Councilmember

Dr. Michael J. Jones
9th District Councilmember