

24 June, 2011

TO: Alison Denton
APS Facilities Planner

FROM: Cliff Logan
Jamestown Elementary PTA President

SUBJECT: Capacity Planning Feedback

In response to the 5/20/11 memo from Superintendent Murphy regarding the Capacity Planning Process, we submit the following responses to his five questions. Our responses have been coordinated with Principal Annan Glascoe, the Jamestown staff, and the Jamestown community. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input, and we look forward to continuing to work with you throughout the process.

- 1. APS is considering building permanent additions (approx. 8-10 classrooms) at a limited number of elementary or middle schools around the County. If we were to consider your school as a potential site for an addition, please tell us what you see to be the pros and cons of additional permanent space. How might it affect your school's operation and/or infrastructure?*

Given that the County added on to Jamestown in 2004, there is limited space on our campus for further expanding the footprint of the school and maintaining the limited playground space that we do have. (The "back field" is not school property and Jamestown has next to the fewest number of parking spaces of all elementary schools in the county.) The only feasible addition would be a vertical one that does not increase the school's footprint.

- 2. Do you feel your school's class sizes could manageably increase by 1-2 students? (APS' current class sizes are below state requirements and are lower than our neighboring jurisdictions. For example, state maximums for K-5 range from 29 to 35 students per class. APS' current class size recommended maximums for K-5 are between 24 and 27 students, depending on grade level.)*

The Jamestown community does not support any increases in class size for any grade in K-5. APS already raised the class sizes by 2 for the 2010-11 school year. We believe any further increases to class size is the worst possible solution; all other potential solutions should be fully tapped before resorting to further class size increases. Any additional increases will negatively affect the learning experiences of our children, which will in turn negatively affect the current positive reputation of APS.

- 3. Are there ways your school could more efficiently make use of space to accommodate growth?*

One way to create space at Jamestown and throughout the County would be to move all Montessori and pre-K programs housed in APS team schools to local community centers. For example, the Jamestown and Taylor classes could be moved to the under-utilized Madison Center. These programs are enriching to our schools and are of obvious benefit to the community, but when faced with severe overcrowding issues, the County should decouple these classes from the elementary facilities. By placing them in local community centers and grouping them by team, the Montessori and Pre-K programs retain a link to the elementary schools.

While Jamestown already surrendered the teacher's lounge for a classroom (in 2009), we could support converting the current Spanish classroom into a standard classroom. Given Jamestown's status as a SMART Showcase School, we would not support the conversion of our current MAC lab to a standard classroom unless the only alternative was to increase class size. All other spaces (such as the special ed classrooms) are too small for use as standard classrooms.

4. Do you have other suggestions for increasing the capacity of your school?

We believe the relocatables should be considered for Jamestown only as a last resort before increasing class size. Although we would prefer relocatables to increasing class size, the requirements for them would necessitate placing them in front of our school, and we are concerned about the impact this may have on our neighbors.

5. APS will analyze the option of building a new elementary school(s) if funding and space can be found. Do you have other suggestions for increasing the capacity of the APS system?

The use of relocatables is a temporary solution and not likely to address the sort of population growth predicted by APS. Relocatables cannot be scaled and do not provide sufficient infrastructure required by the predicted population expansion. As such, a long-term solution needs to be found to ensure that APS maintains its high education standards. Indeed, this may require some difficult and possibly politically unpopular decision-making.

Long-term options could include (in order of most preferred solution to least):

- Expanding overcapacity schools without increasing class sizes. This solution is likely to be faster and cheaper than adding a new school, and would not require redistricting, which is viewed as the least palatable option.
- Building another elementary school for N. Arlington. We would recommend creating a magnet school. In order for this to alleviate overcrowding, such a school would have to be appealing to the families in the most crowded areas of the county. We view creating a new neighborhood school as a less attractive solution, since a new neighborhood school would require

redistricting of much of the county in order for it to significantly alleviate overcrowding. It is unsettling to families to change school districts or have younger children attending a different school due to redistricting.

- Redistricting. We view redistricting as the least palatable option, since so many school districts would need to be redrawn in order for this solution to have an impact. If redistricting is adopted, we recommend that it be limited to new families only. We also question whether this is still a viable option given recent projections which show almost all school districts to be at or near capacity in the near future.