



## HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Court House Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013

Allan H. Kittleman  
Howard County Executive  
akittleman@howardcountymd.gov

www.howardcountymd.gov

FAX 410-313-3051

TDD 410-313-2323

September 7, 2016

Dr. Renee Foose  
Superintendent  
Howard County Public School System  
10910 Clarksville Pike  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21042

Board of Education of Howard County  
Howard County Public School System  
10910 Clarksville Pike  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21042

Subject: Site Acquisition for 13<sup>th</sup> High School

Dear Dr. Foose and Board Members:

I was disappointed to receive your letter dated August 30, 2016 regarding the purchase of the Gould property on Mission Road in Jessup. I am concerned that the Board of Education (the Board) took more than three months after the County Council's adoption of the FY2017 Budget on May 26 to provide feedback for this site, that Board discussions were held privately and that the recommendation to use this site for an elementary and a middle school apparently was made without community input.

The negotiations to purchase this site began several years ago because a high school is needed to meet the growing population demand and to relieve overcrowding at existing high schools. My administration restarted the negotiations to purchase the site shortly after I took office, based on conversations I had with the Superintendent and some members of the Board who encouraged the County to buy the land. This urgency was based on the need for a new high school in the eastern part of the County and because of limited land available along the Route 1 corridor.

On May 5, 2016, when I announced the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to purchase this site specifically for a high school, the Superintendent and the Chair of the Board provided statements of support. The Board's desire expressed in your August 30 letter to build an elementary and a middle school at these sites is a reversal from previous public statements and private discussions. It is also inconsistent with the community's expectation to have a high school in this part of the County.

Prior to and at the Board's meeting on September 8 when you expect to discuss this acquisition, I would encourage the Board to proactively seek public input regarding this change. Unless HCPSS can submit a reasonable plan demonstrating how it will reduce overcrowding at our high schools in the

RECEIVED SEP 12 2016

Dr. Renee Foose / Board of Directors  
September 7, 2016  
Page -2-

near future or changes its recommendation to include a high school on this site, the County may need to reassess this purchase. The site was selected for its potential to hold multiple school sites, including a high school, based on drawings and feedback from your staff. It would be a missed opportunity to not locate a high school there.

In addition, our Office of Law has advised us that the budget condition simply stipulates that the Board vote to request the site, not to acquire the site. Specifically, the condition in the FY2017 budget provides that the County may not spend funds on its acquisition of the property unless the Board "confirms by vote that the Board is requesting the site" and indicates how the Board intends to use the site. The vote required by the budget condition does not concern any future acquisition of the site by the Board, which is the subject of Section 4-116 of the Education Article and Board Policy 6000, but would merely confirm the Board's request to the County for the site. The requisite six-month review period noted in the Board's letter will delay the purchase agreement between the County and the owner needed to satisfy their MOU terms, which contemplate the County Council approving a Purchase and Sale Agreement on or before December 31, 2016.

In order to move this process forward expeditiously, and in the spirit of why this acquisition was pursued, I hope the Board will reconsider its position and provide a formal recommendation which addresses the concerns I have expressed.

Sincerely,



Allan H. Kittleman  
County Executive

cc: Calvin Ball, Council Chair  
Councilperson Greg Fox  
Councilperson Mary Kay Sigaty  
Councilperson Jon Weinstein  
Councilperson Jen Terrasa  
B. Diane Wilson, Chief of Staff  
Lonnie Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer  
Jahantab Siddiqui, Deputy Chief of Staff