

FAQS REGARDING POSSIBLE PHASING PLANS FOR THE NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL AT THE STRATFORD SITE

Q: Has the School Board already approved the alternative phasing option?

A: No alternative phasing option has been approved.

Q: When will the School Board decide about any possible phasing options?

A: The School Board's decision on how to transition students to the new middle school will be determined before the FY 2017-26 Capital Improvement Plan is adopted in June.

Q: What was the original phasing option for the Stratford project?

A: Under the original CIP plan, construction at the Stratford site is slated to begin in 2017 or 2018, and continue through completion in time for the new middle school to admit sixth, seventh and eighth grade students in September 2019.

Q: What is the alternative phasing option for the Stratford building?

A: Under the alternative phasing option construction at the Stratford building would begin in July 2019 and proceed in stages through final completion in August 2020.

After internal renovations during summer 2019, the building could open as a new middle school in September 2019, with sixth and seventh graders while construction of the addition continued through summer 2020.

In September 2020 a new sixth grade would enter the school, sixth grade students from the previous year would enter seventh grade, and seventh grade students would enter eighth grade.

Q: Do the alternative phasing options affect quality of instruction and program continuity?

A: Quality of instruction and program continuity remain the top priorities for the School Board and staff. All decisions will be made to provide the best possible instructional setting for students. Both options that have been suggested will ensure that a full program of instruction and extra-curricular activities will be provided at the new middle school.

The original phasing plan will have students in grades six, seven and eight moving to the new middle school in September 2019. The alternative plan moves sixth and seventh graders only to the new school in September 2019. Eighth grade students would be grandfathered to complete middle school at the same school they attended in sixth and seventh grades, and then move on to high school at the end of eighth grade.

Q: How do these options affect the Stratford Program?

A: Quality of instruction and program continuity for students attending the Stratford Program are also top priorities of the School Board and staff as they transition to the new school on the Wilson site and move to greater inclusion with students in the HB-Woodlawn Program. Under the original plan, Stratford students would move to a temporary location in 2017 or 2018, disrupting inclusion with HB-Woodlawn students. Under the alternative plan, Stratford students move to the new school on the Wilson site at the end of June 2019, three months before the H-B Woodlawn students arrive in September 2019.

Q: Are there financial considerations to making decisions about phasing?

A: Under the original plan to complete the Stratford project in time for the new middle school to open to all three grades in September 2019 Arlington citizens would vote to approve bond sales for construction of the project in November 2016. Under the alternative phasing plan citizens need not vote to approve bond sales for construction of the project until November 2018, thereby reducing the impact of debt service obligations on the operating budget and/or making more funds available for other projects for two years. Under the original plan funds would be required to relocate the Stratford Program temporarily during the 2018-19 school year, while under the alternative phasing plan additional funding would have to be made available for the project to account for increased costs incurred by bidding and constructing the project one year later.

Q: Are there any other issues that will be considered when making any decisions related to the phasing of projects?

A: The School Board will consider the continued crowding at our middle schools, especially at Swanson and Williamsburg. In addition, financial issues and the overall timeline for the proposed construction projects will affect the final decision.