

May 13, 2024

Dear FAC:

The APS Montessori community steadfastly supports the plan of record for the Career Center campus. We ardently support the plan to build the new Arlington Tech building, to move MPSA into the old ACC after a refurbishment, and to finish the Career Center site with planned green space by razing the current Henry building, as well as providing the planned parking garage for the site.

This holistic plan is the result of several years of community engagement – including our own agreement and support. We continue to see the agreed-upon plan as the best way forward for APS Montessori, the Arlington Tech and Career Center communities, and the surrounding neighborhoods.

There are many good reasons why the Career Center plan emerged after several years of public debate. While those reasons remain valid, it is even more important now to follow through on the project. Our support for the plan is based on two fundamentals. First, as a county wide choice school that predominantly serves overflow from South Arlington neighborhood schools, we know that a central location is important both for access to the school, but also to keep costs down. Of the 393 K-5 students enrolled in MPSA in SY22-23, 70% (274) transferred from neighborhood schools located south of Route 50. We would far rather precious money be spent on obtaining the right quantity and quality of educators than extraneous bussing. Being centrally located works toward that goal.

Second, if MPSA does not go to the empty old ACC, then where will it go? We don't want to take someone else's school building from them. Indeed, doing so would trigger wider school district upheaval and associated costs (e.g., the need to redraw boundaries, provide extraneous bussing, and additional costs of moving classrooms). In the near decade since planning started for moving Montessori out of the Drew Model Elementary School, there has never been another site identified with as many MPSA-specific and district-wide benefits as the Career Center campus.

We remain resolute that this plan is the best way forward for all students, stakeholders, taxpayers and county residents alike. APS should stay the course, and we ask that you reiterate your own recommendation to maintain the project. Thank you very much for your service to the community.

*Signed,*

*Jonathan Hui*

*Michael Bruno*

*Arlington Montessori Action Committee officers, MPSA PTA, and member and the Career Center BLPC.*