



**CITY OF NEWPORT
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

437 Broadway
Newport, Rhode Island 02840-1767
Phone: (401) 847-2100
Fax: (401) 849-0170

Jo Eva Gaines, *Chairperson*
Rebecca Bolan
Sandra J. Flowers, Ph.D.
Patrick K. Kelley

Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., *Vice Chairperson*
Robert J. Leary
Charles P. Shoemaker, M.D.

Monday, March 9, 2009

Newport School Committee
c/o Chairperson Jo Eva Gaines
437 Broadway
Newport, Rhode Island 02840-1767

Subject: **Preliminary Analysis of Maintain the Status Quo Option**

Reference: (1) **NEWPORT SCHOOLS Stage 1 Application for Housing Aid Review
Newport, Rhode Island February, 2009**

Dear Mrs. Gaines:

During the Newport Public Education Foundation forum hosted on 5 March 2009 several of the community members that spoke indicated that they felt that repairing the existing four elementary schools would be more cost effective than building a new PK-4 school. This "Maintain the Status Quo" scenario was investigated during the 2005 Long Range Facilities Planning process and found to be significantly more costly than new school construction, however at that time there were six elementary schools in operation.

Based on this input from the community, we feel it necessary to perform an initial analysis of the costs and educational value of the "Maintain the Status Quo" option. Under this scenario the Carey, Cranston-Calvert, Coggeshall and Sullivan facilities would be renovated and remain in operations.

Reference (1) provides detailed assessment of each of these school facilities. Carey, Cranston-Calvert and Coggeshall received a ranking of 4 and Sullivan received a ranking of 3. In order to compare this option a detailed cost estimate would be needed to determine the investment required to bring these buildings up to a ranking of 1 and provide a useful life of at least 50 years. The renovations required include replacements of electrical, plumbing, and heating systems, roofing and chimney repairs, ADA accessibility compliance and fire code compliance improvements. Using the 2002 NESDEC report these costs were estimated to be \$17.5M and when indexed for an annual inflation rate of 3.5% would cost \$23M in 2010. If the School Committee wishes to obtain more recent cost estimates HMFH Architects Inc. should be asked

for the cost of conducting an analysis.

More importantly, from an educational perspective maintaining the status quo provides none of the educational advantages and opportunities for the students previously cited by the Ad Hoc School Building Committee as:

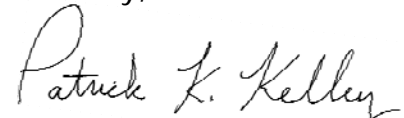
- Providing better opportunities for accelerated learners in flexible groupings
- Providing remedial help for all students who have the need
- Providing teacher collaboration opportunities to further improve instruction
- Minimizing mobility of teachers and students to provide a consistent education community that improves parental involvement and increases academic performance
- Providing better opportunities for after school programs with community partnerships
- Localizing special services of school psychologists, social workers, nurses, speech therapists, behavioral specialists, reading, music and art teachers, etc. thereby eliminating their travel time between schools
- Allowing for special attention to early childhood (Pre-K - 2) and elementary (Grades 3 & 4) developmental needs on a uniform basis
- Providing optimal space for outdoor activities

These improvements are necessary if the Newport Public School system is expected to provide the programs and support needed at the PK-4 elementary education level that will lead to improved student academic performance.

Additionally, this option will require retaining 9 staffing positions that a single PK-4 does not require which will cost the school department an additional \$20.1M over a 20 year period and \$36.6M over a 30 year period. This option also allows the return of only the Underwood property to the city to offset construction costs. The net result of these factors is that the Maintain Status Quo option will cost 36.5% more over 20 years and 82.6% more over a 30 year period of operation.

Finally, the renovation of the four existing elementary school buildings will not provide the opportunity to achieve the level of sustainable building construction and renewable energy utilization available through the recommended PK-4 construction project.

Sincerely,



Patrick K. Kelley, Chairman
Ad Hoc School Building Committee

PK:mgr