

# **BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY**

## **INFORMATIONAL REPORT**

### **DECISION ON AWARD OF CONTRACT ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE NEW COMBINATION HARFORD ACADEMY AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROJECT**

**September 16, 2024**

#### Background Information:

Built in 1971, the existing Harford Academy (HA) is the only Public Separate Day School serving students ages three to twenty-one with severe and profound disabilities within Harford County. In 2009, Smolen & Emr Associates completed a scope study to assess the current building condition, safety, and educational program efficiency of the HA facility. It was determined that the existing building had reached a point where components and systems needed to be replaced. The scope study also concluded that the instructional needs, as well as the support service requirements of the students attending the school, have changed since the construction of the original building. Due to the medical fragile nature of the students attending the Public Day School, modernizing the facility through a phased occupied renovation is not an option.

Due to fiscal constraints, the HA project was deferred. Thirteen years have passed since the original scope study, and the HA Project is now the highest major capital priority. On August 10, 2020, the BOE approved a contract with FLO Analytics for the Balancing Enrollment project and an update of the site location study for HA. FLO Analytics partnered with Banta Campbell Architects to conduct a site location study as part of the overall Balancing Enrollment project.

At the BOE business meeting on August 16, 2021, the BOE voted in favor of completely replacing the school and building the replacement school on the Campus Hills site, located at 301 Schucks Road.

At the business meeting on February 14, 2022; the BOE of Harford County approved a Balancing Enrollment plan for HCPS that included adding an elementary school to the HA project to increase elementary capacity within the County's growth envelope and to help meet the needs related to expansion of Pre-Kindergarten and Special Education programs. Building a combined special education and elementary school facility would:

- Assist with addressing current and future capacity issues within elementary schools.
- Keep HCPS in line with the current county administration funding trends of completing one major capital project at a time.
- Prevent the current major capital priorities from being deferred.
- Provide HA students direct access to learning opportunities with their typical developing peers.

On April 25, 2022, the BOE approved a contract with Grimm + Parker Architects, Inc. for feasibility study services for the new Harford Academy at Campus Hills.

The Campus Hills site is located just outside of the Maryland Priority Funding Area (PFA). In the “Regulations for the Administration of the Public-School Construction Program,” COMAR 23.03.02, require school projects to be within a Priority Funding Area (PFA). HCPS submitted a waiver request to the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) on December 07, 2022, for the Campus Hills site based on three factors:

- The existing Harford Academy is not within the PFA and less than a mile away from the Campus Hills site.
- HCPS completed a site study of existing BOE properties, and the Campus Hills site was determined to be the best location.
- The Campus Hills site is just outside of the PFA; less than a mile and will serve students living within the PFA.

MDP reached out to HCPS and requested HCPS to work with the local government to complete one of the following:

- The local government extend the PFA to include the proposed Campus Hills site and commit to updating the master plan to extending public water and sewer to the site within 10-years.

OR

- Work with the local planning department to locate a property within the PFA.

HCPS has been working with our local government to develop a solution. Harford County Government (HCG) will not update the master plan and commit to extending public water and sewer to the area due to the vast area it will open to development. However, HCG has been working with HCPS to identify and obtain new property for the school.

At the business meeting on February 26, 2024, The BOE approved the site located on N. Fountain Green Road., Bel Air 21015 as the new location for the Harford Academy School. The County government purchased and transferred the property to the BOE on May 29, 2024.

The Education Specification for the new school was approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) on July 19, 2024.

Discussion:

At the business meeting on April 15, 2024, The Board of Education (BOE) approved a contract with Grimm + Parker Architects, Inc. to update the Harford Academy concept and conduct preliminary site analysis for the new school site. Grimm + Parker completed the analysis, which included the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, a graphic analysis of existing conditions on the new site conditions and verify that the building program meets the planned needs of the new school.

At the business meeting on August 12, 2024, The BOE was presented with an informational report and presentation of the concepts developed for the Harford Academy School on the new site located on N. Fountain Green Road.

HCG funded the FY 2024 Capital improvement program for planning and design of the Harford Academy School in the amount of \$16,000,000.

Final scope and fee negotiations commenced after the presentation of the concept analysis for the Combination Harford Academy and New Elementary School Project to the BOE on August 12, 2024. The design services reflect completion on the Schematic Design, Design Development, Construction Document, and Bid/Award Phase of the project.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the Board of Education approve a contract for the above described professional architectural/engineering services for the New Combination Harford Academy and Elementary School Project, in the amount of \$9,241,877.84 to Grimm + Parker Architects, Inc.