

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

DECISION ON AWARD OF CONTRACT

FACILITY UTILIZATION & PROGRAM ADEQUACY ASSESSMENT

March 24, 2025

Background Information:

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) continues to experience increasing challenges related to facility space shortages stemming from enrollment growth, Pre-K expansion under Maryland's Blueprint for Maryland's Future, heightened special education requirements, and expanded programmatic services. Even schools operating below State Rated Capacity (SRC) struggle to provide sufficient instructional and support spaces to meet modern educational needs.

A third-party analysis of our facilities, space utilization, and program adequacy is essential to address these challenges. On May 20, 2024, the Board of Education approved transferring \$500,000 in capital balances into the Facilities Master Plan category to fund a Facility Utilization & Program Adequacy Assessment. This initiative will evaluate current space usage and program requirements across HCPS facilities and provide recommendations to optimize the use of existing infrastructure.

Additionally, the State of Maryland passed legislation in 2024 establishing the Maryland School Mapping Data Program, which requires all local education agencies (LEAs) to provide digital floor plans for use by emergency responders. While HCPS maintains PDF floor plans, many are not to scale, have become inaccurate over time due to building modifications, and are difficult to update and maintain. Given the alignment of this legislative requirement with this project's scope, HCPS has also incorporated the development of updated, accurate, scalable, and easily maintainable digital floor plans into this initiative. The selected firm will deliver digital floor plans that move HCPS toward compliance with the 2024 Maryland School Mapping Data Program requirements.

On November 22, 2024, HCPS publicly issued a Request for Qualifications to solicit professional consulting services to complete this assessment. The scope of services included evaluating 33 elementary schools, the Harford Academy, and Swan Creek School and developing new digital floor plans for all 54 HCPS facilities, including elementary, middle, and high schools.

Submissions were due by January 9, 2025. Two firms responded:

- MGT Impact Solutions, LLC
- GWWO Architects

Both firms were determined to have met the minimum qualifications outlined in the RFQ. In February 2025, a multidisciplinary interview panel comprised of stakeholders from HCPS Planning & Construction, Facilities Management, and Educational Services interviewed the firms. Following this process, GWWO Architects was selected as the most qualified firm based on evaluation criteria including experience, understanding of the project, technical approach, and prior school planning expertise.

Discussion:

HCPS and GWWO Architects outlined a mutually acceptable scope and price proposal of services that includes two primary tasks:

- Task 1: Facilities Assessment—Review existing drawings, hold stakeholder workshops, conduct site visits, analyze space, identify deficiencies, develop optimization strategies, and deliver a comprehensive assessment report.
- Task 2: Digital Floor Plans—Develop new digital/electronic floor plans for all 54 HCPS facilities in a format compatible with both HCPS and emergency response systems.

The total cost of services GWWO Architects provides is \$429,431.63, including all reimbursables.

The final deliverables will include:

- One (1) electronic copy and five (5) printed copies of the Final Report.
- One (1) electronic copy of new digital floor plans for each of the 54 facilities.

The anticipated timeline for the project is five months, with work commencing upon contract approval, final deliverables, and a presentation of the results to the Board of Education, expected in September 2025. The information from this analysis will also inform the redistricting process that will align with the opening of the new Harford Academy School.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the Board of Education approve the contract for the professional consulting services for the Facility Utilization & Program Adequacy Assessment, in the amount of \$429,431.63 to GWWO Architects.