



November 24, 2015



The Honorable Peter Franchot
Comptroller of Maryland
80 Calvert Street
P.O. Box 466
Annapolis, Maryland 21404-0466

Dear Comptroller Franchot:

The Montgomery County Board of Education and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) staff have appreciated your support through the years when it comes to construction needs and our efforts to ensure that our buildings are well-maintained and efficient. We take great pride in our construction program both in terms of quality and the fact that we are exceptional stewards of the public funds entrusted to us. We complete our projects on time and on budget, and our commitment to environmental sustainability is evident in all of our new facilities. We have worked closely with you over the years to ensure that you always have had the information about our construction program that you have needed as one of the county's most important representatives in Annapolis.

That is why it was so disappointing to learn about the statements you recently made that created a false and misleading impression of our construction program.

In a public forum, you erroneously commented that MCPS spends "\$500 per square foot" on our capital projects. In addition, you quoted a conversation with our "head of construction" that I have been unable to determine where, when, or with whom this conversation took place. I am concerned about the inaccuracies about our capital costs and would appreciate if you would correct the misstatements you have made about our district.

Following are the facts that we have shared previously and offer them again so that you will have them for reference:

- No MCPS capital project costs \$500 per square foot; since Fiscal Year (FY) 2008, our construction costs have averaged between a low of \$212 per square foot to a high of \$297 per square foot in FY 2015. When the site development costs are excluded, costs ranged from \$177 to \$240 per square foot.
- This square foot cost trend is consistent with other school districts in Maryland and northern Virginia.
- Our construction program has set many standards and shared best practices and benchmarked with numerous school districts in Maryland and the Washington metropolitan area, including Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax counties.

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

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- We take pride in an excellent quality control process resulting in 100 percent on-time completion and within budget for more than 15 years with an average of 2 percent in change order rates.
- Our construction program was the first in the state to obtain Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Level certification through the United States Green Building Council in 2006 before Maryland adopted the LEED standards in 2008.
- Our construction program continues to lead the state in environmental sustainability efforts, accomplishing 21 LEED certified projects and earning many other environmental stewardship accolades.
- The United States Department of Education has recognized five MCPS schools with the National Green Ribbon School Award since the inaugural year of the award in 2012.
- In 2013, MCPS was recognized with the District Sustainability Award by the United States Department of Education. In recent months, Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. recognized two MCPS capital projects with the 2015 Excellence in Construction Award.

I would welcome the opportunity to have a conversation with you and other Montgomery County local and state elected officials to discuss our school construction program. I have asked my staff to schedule an appointment with you in the near future to ensure that you have accurate information about school construction in Montgomery County. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the costs of our capital improvements program, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Larry A. Bowers
Interim Superintendent of Schools

LAB:AMZ:sln

Copy to:

Members of the Board of Education
Dr. Navarro
Dr. Statham
Dr. Zuckerman
Mr. Edwards