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July 18th, 2018

Leadership
Baltimore County Public Schools
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Towson, MD 21204

phone:
410-522-7243

Dear Madame Superintendent and Distinguished Baltimore County School Board:

An Update Regarding the 2018 High School Capacity Study

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The Sage Policy Group/GWWO study team that you hired to conduct the Baltimore County Public Schools' High School Capacity Study is now approaching the second half of its engagement. We have learned much over the last several months, including through our wide-ranging public engagement process.

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Based on information gathered thus far via nine focus groups, a survey that has garnered more than 2,000 responses from stakeholders, and three public information sessions held in July (at Catonsville, Carver, and Dundalk high schools, respectively), three especially salient issues have emerged:

- 1) The public would like to see the study expanded beyond capacity issues to include school condition issues. Several years ago, the architects at GWWO conducted an assessment of each school building. That endeavor resulted in facility condition grades being assigned to each school. Many stakeholders have pointed to those grades in their discussions with us, asking us to consider school conditions in the context of our ongoing analysis and formation of recommendations to handle current and/or prospective overcrowding;
- 2) Many stakeholders have also asserted a desire to construct feeder patterns that allow for greater neighborhood cohesion. The goal is to keep neighborhood kids together as they move from grade to grade;
- 3) There have also been many calls for expanded choice at the high school level, including through the expansion of magnet programs or career and technical education programming at zoned schools. There is, of course, a desire to see improved educational outcomes generally. Many stakeholders believe that augmented choice represents a key element of the continuous improvement process.



Undoubtedly, we will learn more from the public during the weeks ahead. Survey responses continue to pour in and a website has been established that allows stakeholders to supply expansive discussion beyond the survey framework. Sage/GWWO will be reformulating scenarios to handle capacity issues as we approach the next set of public information sessions (aka gallery walks) in September. We also remain mindful of likely capital budgetary constraints, and remain fixated on helping the system deal with high school capacity (and school condition) issues in ways that are both efficient and fair.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anirban Basu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Anirban Basu, CEO, Sage Policy Group, Inc.