

RESOLUTION: PREVENTING CRUMBLING SCHOOL BUILDINGS**DRAFT 1: 26 MAR 2026**

Resolution by the Schools Committee, Todd Truitt, Chair; schools.chair@civfed.org, submitted by Claire Noakes; president@arlingtonccpta.org. To be introduced for consideration by the General Membership at the 14 April 2026 General Membership Meeting.

WHEREAS Arlington Public Schools (APS) conducted a Facilities Condition Assessment Report, updated on November 20, 2025, that evaluated all 41 APS facilities for both their building characteristics (such as the adequacy of their educational and common spaces) and major building systems' condition (such as plumbing, heating, ventilation, air conditioning).¹

WHEREAS consultants identified \$598,053,156 of building maintenance needs as of November 20, 2025 that are required by FY 2037 to maintain existing buildings in appropriate repair.²

WHEREAS in addition to the maintenance needs, APS identified five school buildings (Barrett, Randolph, Swanson, Taylor, Thomas Jefferson) that were top candidates for improvements to educational space adequacy, which would require major reconstruction, and developed "Feasibility Studies" for potential reconstruction.³

WHEREAS in addition to the existing large maintenance needs and educational space improvements, the School Board directed the Superintendent to demolish the current Patrick Henry building that is used by the Montessori Public School of Arlington (MPSA), and remodel the building that previously operated as the Career Center (the legacy Career Center Building) for use by the MPSA school, within a budget of \$35 - \$50 million.⁴

WHEREAS the School Board also directed the Superintendent to evaluate educational space improvements at Barrett, Randolph, and Taylor within a budget of \$35 - \$50 million at each school, and to evaluate educational space improvements at both Swanson and Thomas Jefferson within a budget of \$150 million for both schools, resulting in a total budget of between \$255 - \$300 million to meet the needs of the five schools identified for major reconstruction under the Feasibility Studies.⁵

WHEREAS the most recent School Board Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) direction cannot be paid for under current assumptions about known, projected costs and projected bond capacity (\$633,110,000, consisting of \$500 million in new bond capacity, \$83,110,000 in authorized but not yet issued bond capacity for schools, and \$50 million in MC/MM funds taken from the operating budget).⁶

WHEREAS if the School Board continues on its current course of action, that cost (\$753,629,353) will exceed the available funds by \$120.5 million.

WHEREAS the resulting \$120.5 million of deferred maintenance could significantly impact both the quality of the learning environment and the building lifespan at many APS schools.

¹ [Long Range Plan to Renovate Existing School Facilities](#)

² [Long Range Plan to Renovate Existing School Facilities](#)

³ [School Board Work Session Feasibility Studies, Sept. 30, 2025](#)

⁴ [Building School Board FY 2027-2036 Capital Improvement Plan Direction](#)

⁵ [Building School Board FY 2027-2036 Capital Improvement Plan Direction](#)

⁶ See sources in Exhibit B.

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THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Arlington County Civic Federation asks the Arlington School Board and County Board to adopt the following actions and direct the Superintendent and County Manager to implement them, in partnership with civic associations, advisory groups, and regional/state partners:

1. APS should promptly specify any plans for financing sources other than County bond capacity for its CIP, such as public private partnerships, energy performance contracts, or other funding methods, and how such funding methods will impact the operating budget;
2. APS should promptly identify which maintenance projects in its CIP will not be funded if current projections are correct, before any additional capital expenditures are proposed under its forthcoming CIP;
3. The County Board should consider delaying the provision of debt capacity to APS until APS identifies the list noted in Resolution #2, or shifts to a lower cost scenario under its CIP that can be afforded under current projections;
4. The APS School Board should develop an overarching framework, consistent with APS's [adopted Climate Action Resolution](#), with rationales, on why it has prioritized certain projects to receive funding and other projects to receive deferred maintenance until after 2037. Such a framework should include a discussion on the suitability of non-capital tools to be used in lieu of capital spending (such as boundary changes, program changes, and/or school consolidations), if applicable. Such a plan should also specify what factors were used in the framework to prioritize projects, and how those factors were applied. Broad public engagement on the framework should be conducted, with opportunities to provide feedback as well; and
5. The Arlington Civic Federation will not support any bond referenda for schools until APS has made significant and meaningful progress on addressing the expectations in Resolution #2 and #4.

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Select big ticket items are identified in sub-bullets, along with the year they are needed.

- Abingdon Elementary: \$3,738,880
- Alice West Fleet Elementary: \$2,519,604
- Arlington Career Center: \$36,426,868
- Arlington Science Focus: \$9,584,978
- Arlington Traditional: \$17,315,694
 - 2032: \$4.78M - Terminal & Package Units
- Ashlawn Elementary: \$12,250,676
- Barcroft Elementary: \$2,167,915
- Barrett Elementary: \$10,815,588
- Campbell Elementary: \$11,216,929
- Cardinal Elementary: \$1,690,080
- Carlin Springs Elementary: \$12,409,789
- Claremont Elementary: \$14,618,920
- David M. Brown Planetarium: \$416,548
- Discovery Elementary: \$10,740,159
- Dorothy Hamm Middle: \$26,954,493
 - 2031: ~\$5M for Floor & Ceiling Finishes
- Dr. Charles R. Drew Elementary: \$13,340,321
- Escuela Key Elementary: \$4,284,906
- Facilities & Operations at the Trades Center: \$8,534,581
- Glebe Elementary: \$8,054,926
- Gunston Middle: \$20,088,807
 - 2027: \$3.8M Roof Coverings; \$5.4M Floor & Ceiling Finishes; \$2M Communications/Safety/Fire Alarm
- H-B Woodlawn Secondary: \$2,116,295
- Hoffman-Boston Elementary: \$14,290,941

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- 2027: \$4.4M - Heating & Cooling Distribution Systems & Terminal and Package Units.
- Innovation Elementary: \$11,882,609
- Jamestown Elementary: \$13,609,696
- Kenmore Middle: \$30,078,143
 - 2030: \$3.45M - Roof Coverings; \$5.35M - Floor & Ceiling Finishes
- Langston High & New Directions (former location): \$4,999,928
- Long Branch Elementary: \$9,130,043
- Montessori Public School of Arlington (in lieu of demolition): \$13,631,949
- Nottingham Elementary: \$7,417,202
- Oakridge Elementary: \$13,903,756
 - 2027: \$4.16M - Central Plant Cooling & Heating and Cooling Distribution Systems; \$2.63M - Wall, Ceiling, & Floor Finishes
- Randolph Elementary: \$8,622,065
- Swanson Middle: \$24,167,512
 - 2027: \$3.53M - Terminal & Package Units
 - 2029: \$5.64M - Heating & Cooling Distribution Systems
- Syphax Education Center: \$5,572,962
- Taylor Elementary: \$9,861,522
- Thomas Jefferson Middle: \$45,898,299
 - 2026: \$2.83M - Roof Coverings
 - 2027: \$8.49M - Lighting & Branch Wiring
 - 2029: \$4.52M - Roof Coverings
- Tuckahoe Elementary: \$10,850,267
- Wakefield High: \$31,404,259
 - 2031: \$5.01M - Floor Finishes
 - 2032: \$3.57M - Roof Coverings
 - 2033: \$4.1M - Communication/Security/Fire Alarm
 - 2035: \$5.94M - Ceiling Finishes; \$2.6M - Fixed Furnishings - Permanent Seating

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- Washington-Liberty Annex: \$1,393,813
- Washington-Liberty High: \$44,763,658
 - 2028: \$2.88M - Solar Energy Supply; \$2.67M - Central Plant Heating; \$3.83M - Communications/Security/Fire Alarm
 - 2033: \$4.89M - Roof Coverings; \$4.24M - Floor Finishes; \$5.02M - Ceiling Finishes; \$3.45M - Elementary School Gyms/Multipurpose Rooms/Auxiliary Rooms; \$4.29M - High-School-level Competition Gyms
 - 2035: \$3.12M - Fixed Furnishings - Permanent Seating
- Williamsburg Middle: \$32,920,547
 - 2027: \$2.92M - Roof Coverings; \$4.41M - Floor & Ceiling Finishes; \$3.33M - Heating Distribution Systems; \$3.05M - Cooling Distribution Systems
 - 2031: \$3.39M - Exterior Windows
- Yorktown High: \$34,367,028
 - 2029: \$2.52M - Central Plant Heating
 - 2030: \$3.61M - Communications/Security/Fire Alarm
 - 2033: \$4.02M - Floor Finishes; \$4.76M - Ceiling Finishes; \$4.31M - Fixed Furnishings - Casework; \$3.3M - High-School-level Gyms; \$2.61M - Auditoriums

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- Significant building condition expenses are clustered in years 2027 (\$133,070,133) and 2033 (\$158,533,260), with only \$34,996,004 identified in 2037, indicating these are front-loaded maintenance needs that cannot be deferred past this CIP cycle without likely consequences. [Long Range Plan to Renovate Existing School Facilities](#)
- Consultants undertook “Feasibility Studies” and developed the following range of cost estimates for each school that was a candidate for educational space improvements, based on targeted capacity choices: Barrett (\$52 - \$106.9 million), Randolph (\$43.2 - \$103.3 million), Swanson (\$94.6 - \$155.1 million), Taylor (\$58.5 - \$111.1 million), and Thomas Jefferson (\$125.6 - \$230.6 million). [School Board Work Session Feasibility Studies, Sept. 30, 2025](#)
- Ultimately, the School Board has choices between different levels of investment in existing building maintenance, educational space improvements, and remodeling. The following could be used as a general guide to various tiers of options:
 - Scenario A - “**Basic**”: if the School Board only paid for the projected maintenance needs identified by the consultant at all 41 facilities, *the total is \$598,053,156*;
 - Scenario B - “**Three Better Schools**”: if the School Board pays for modest renovations to both Swanson and Thomas Jefferson within the stated budget of \$150 million; the MPSA remodeling is done at \$50 million; and Scenario A needs are met, subtracting out any duplicative costs of maintenance identified for the legacy Arlington Career Center (\$36,426,868), MPSA (\$13,631,949), Swanson (\$27,167,512) and Thomas Jefferson (\$45,898,299), *the total is \$674,928,528*;
 - Scenario C - “**School Board’s Choice**”: if the School Board pays for modest renovations at the lowest budgeted amount of \$35 million for each of the three elementary schools, and Scenario B needs are met, subtracting out any duplicative costs of maintenance identified for Barrett (\$10,815,588), Randolph (\$8,622,065), and Taylor (\$9,861,522), *the total is \$753,629,353*;
 - Scenario D “**Top 6 Makeovers**”: if the School Board pays for renovations at the lowest Feasibility Study option for each of three elementary and both middle schools; the MPSA remodeling is done at \$50 million; and the remainder of the buildings receive the consultant-identified improvements except for those costs carved out in Scenarios B and C, *the total is \$872,529,353*; and
 - Scenario E “**Shiny New Capacity**”: if maximum renovations of all five schools identified in the Feasibility Studies and the Legacy Career Center are selected, along with consultant-identified maintenance at the remainder of facilities, except for any redundant costs carved out in Scenario D, *the total is \$1,155,629,353*.
- APS pays for some facilities improvements out of its Minor Construction / Major Maintenance (MC/MM) line item in its operating budget rather than through general obligation bonds, but this

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amount is insignificant in comparison to the amounts of capital funding under the CIP: the proposed 2027 operating budget allocates \$6,869,476 for MC/MM projects. If we assume an average budget allocation of \$5 million for the next ten years, then there would be \$50 million of MC/MM funds available to offset the projected needs under the Scenarios above.

[Superintendent's Proposed Budget FY 2027](#)

- General obligation bonds, which are issued by Arlington County and provided for APS's use, are repaid by APS over time out of its operating budget. The operating budget is also used to pay for teacher salaries, transportation, and improvements to facilities that do not last more than twenty years. As funding for bond repayment increases, it crowds out available funds for all other APS needs. Under the Superintendent's proposed FY 2027 APS operating budget, school debt service is expected to use up 7.9% of the total APS expenditures, or approximately \$67.5 million in FY 2027. [Superintendent's Proposed Budget FY 2027](#)
- As of June 30, 2025, the County owes \$1.34 billion in general obligation bonds that must be repaid. [Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025, Table A-1](#)
- The total amount of debt repayment that APS owes, as of June 30, 2025, is \$483,005,000 in principal and \$138,447,006 in interest, and the repayment schedule calls for \$450,296,493 of repayments out of the APS operating budget through 2035. If any additional debt is issued, this number will increase. [Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025, Notes to the Financial Statements, Note 9](#)
- There are an additional \$354,330,000 of bonds that have been authorized but not yet issued, of which \$83,110,000 are for schools. The decision to issue these bonds would increase the current amounts of debt repayments listed above. [Adopted Capital Improvement Plan FY 2025-2034](#)
- Arlington County imposes a limit on how much debt it will issue via general obligation bonds, in order to satisfy bond-rating agencies and maintain its AAA bond rating. This limit caps the total amount of debt available to both Arlington County and APS. These debt ratios include a requirement that the ratio of net tax-supported debt service to general expenditures should not exceed ten percent, within the ten-year projection. [Adopted CIP 2025-2034](#)
- Arlington County is projecting that its future "Ratio of Tax-Supported Debt Service to General Expenditures NOT TO EXCEED 10%" will range from 8.61% to 9.727%, peaking in FY 2032. This indicates that Arlington County is already close to its ceiling for projected capital expenditures. If municipal bond interest rates rise, the conservative estimates used in this projection would need to be tightened further to avoid exceeding the 10% limit. [County Manager's FY2027 Proposed Budget, Debt Service section, Chart B](#)
- The County is estimating that it will be able to offer up to \$100 million in new bond capacity to APS over the next two years of the ten-year CIP; if this estimate continued through the remainder of that CIP, there could be up to \$500 million of total debt capacity available to APS over the next 10 years. [Building School Board FY 2027-2036 Capital Improvement Plan Direction](#)