



Office of the School Board 2110 Washington Boulevard • Arlington, Virginia 22204

MEMORANDUM

TO: Arlington Civic Association Presidents

FROM: APS School Board

DATE: April 20, 2026

CC: Civic Federation President
County Council of PTAs President
County Board Members
Arlington Public Schools PTA/PTSA Presidents
Arlington Public Schools Superintendent

We appreciated the opportunity to visit the Civic Federation monthly meeting on March 10 and present information about our Capital Improvement planning process. If you would like to review [the presentation](#), it is available on the CivFed web site.

At the April 14, 2026 Civic Federation meeting, the Education Subcommittee presented a proposed resolution on “Preventing Crumbling School Buildings,” submitted by Claire Noakes, president of the County Council of PTAs.

We couldn’t agree more that it is critical for our system to maintain our buildings, which are both the learning environments for students and the workspaces of our teachers and staff.

As with school systems across the Commonwealth, we face challenges with aging facilities, rising construction costs, increased community expectations, and reduced revenues. We seek to do our capital planning with fidelity to fiscal responsibility and recognition of both near- and long-term prioritization of needs.

The proposed resolution suggests that the County delay the provision of bond funds to APS, which runs directly counter to our facilities planning and needs. The resolution further suggests that the Civic Federation oppose any bond referenda which, again, would only serve to delay our capacity to address critical infrastructure needs.

We acknowledge that the public has found it difficult to fully understand the process by which we have conducted analyses and applied methodologies to prioritize critical maintenance and infrastructure projects.

But we ask civic association leadership and members to please engage with us if you have questions regarding our capital improvement planning, rather than signing off on a resolution that would materially impede our progress on capital improvements.

The Superintendent will present the proposed CIP at the School Board meeting on May 14. We will hold CIP work sessions on May 19 and June 2, and a public hearing on June 2.

Below, you'll find some additional information as you consider the proposed resolution.

Clarifications to inform consideration of the proposed resolution by civic associations

The proposed resolution presented to the Civic Federation on April 14 draws conclusions on a number of planning documents that extend beyond the intended purpose of those documents and beyond decisions made by the School Board to date. We offer the following clarifications for your consideration.

- **Long-Range Plan:**
The Long-Range Plan is a facility condition assessment tool intended to compare building systems and inform planning. It **does not establish project priorities, funding commitments, project scopes, or implementation timelines**. Cost figures reflect high-level system needs (in 2023 dollars, excluding inflation), not capital project budgets or Board-approved obligations.
- **Deferred Maintenance:**
The resolution equates items not fully addressed in the next CIP with long-term deferral. In practice, APS addresses facility needs through a combination of phased capital projects, annual maintenance funding, system replacements, and targeted repairs. The **Long-Range Plan does not assume all identified needs must be resolved within a single CIP cycle**.
- **Cost Aggregation:**
The resolution combines figures from the Long-Range Plan, Feasibility Studies, and CIP guidance into a single funding shortfall. These figures come from different planning efforts with different purposes and assumptions. Feasibility study options are alternatives, not additive projects, and **the Board has not adopted a capital program based on the combined scenarios presented**.
- **Renovations vs. System Repairs:**
Identified system deficiencies do not automatically require full major renovations. Conversely, major renovation options studied through feasibility work incorporate, but do not duplicate, system needs. **School Board direction explicitly calls for lower-cost options focused on infrastructure, safety, and accessibility where full modernization is not affordable**.
- **Board Direction vs. Decisions:**
The FY 2027–2036 CIP direction instructs staff to bring forward options, cost ranges, and financing strategies. **Final project scopes, sequencing, and funding decisions have not yet been made, and additional analysis of alternative financing and cost-containment remains underway**. The School Board also continues to engage in analysis of the educational factors utilized in our proposed projects.