

May 30, 2016

Item #8

RSD#19 Board of Education  
RSD #19 Building Committee  
RSD #19 Office of the Superintendent  
1235 Storrs Road  
Storrs Mansfield, CT 06268

Dear Superintendent Silva, BOE Chairman Mark, and Members of the Board of Education and Building Committee:

We are writing to request that the RSD#19 Board of Education and Building Committee expand the focus of their visioning process to include options for renovating or rebuilding EO Smith at the current location. The decision to move forward with one candidate proposal – to design a new school at a new location – was done with limited public discussion. We believe that hiring DRA Architects for a fee of almost \$50,000 to lead conversations about what a new school at a new location could look like (e.g., what type of surface should we have on the athletic fields, should we have a roof top deck?) is premature. It is our belief that the community has not been provided with sufficient opportunity to consider the various renovation/rebuild/build options and weigh the educational, financial, social developmental, and cultural consequences of moving the high school out of the Storrs downtown area.

As we understand it, the community workshop as planned on 6/9/16 will focus exclusively on what a new build at a new location could look like, bypassing any meaningful opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the merits of this proposal as compared to renovation options. This narrow focus ignores the growing concerns of many residents who are not in favor of abandoning the current downtown campus and who would like a more open and balanced discussion about the impact such a move would have on our educational and broader community.

We respectfully request that the RSD#19 Board of Education and Building Committee:

- 1) put all options back on the table, ranging from minor renovations at the current campus to a new build on the current campus
- 2) develop a reasonable timeline for soliciting extensive community feedback before bringing any proposal to referendum

We look forward to hearing from the Board of Education and Building Committee about how these concerns will be addressed. We wish to engage in a productive dialogue about this critical issue and look to you, our educational leaders, to respect our voices in this process.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Alexander Haeger  
Michelle Alexandrin  
Renee Allard  
Alicia Almagro  
Jon Andersen  
Charlie Ausburger  
Morgan Ausburger  
Michele Bacholle-Boscovic

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Avery Baldrige  
Eric Baldrige  
Hannah Baldrige  
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Jessica Campbell  
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Kimberly Christenson  
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Anna Cranmer  
Kevin Cranmer  
John Crepeau  
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\*Note: The signatures for this letter were obtained electronically, primarily through Facebook at Keep EO Smith Downtown: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/873797359416116/>

Cc: Paul Shapiro, Mayor of Mansfield  
Matt Hart, Mansfield Town Manager  
Mansfield Town Council  
Christina Mailhos, First Selectman, Town of Willington  
Michael Zambo, First Selectman, Town of Ashford  
Mae Flexer, State Senator  
Tony Guglielmo, State Senator  
Gregory Haddad, State Representative  
Linda Orange, State Representative  
Sam Belsito, State Representative