



T.C. Williams High School

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February 27, 2017

The Honorable Allison Silberberg
The Honorable Justin Wilson
The Honorable Willie Bailey
The Honorable John Chapman
The Honorable Timothy Lovain
The Honorable Del Pepper
The Honorable Paul Smedberg

The Honorable Ramee Gentry
The Honorable Cindy Anderson
The Honorable Bill Campbell
The Honorable Ronnie Campbell
The Honorable Hal Cardwell
The Honorable Karen Graf
The Honorable Christopher Lewis
The Honorable Margaret Lorber
The Honorable Veronica Nolan

Ladies and Gentlemen:

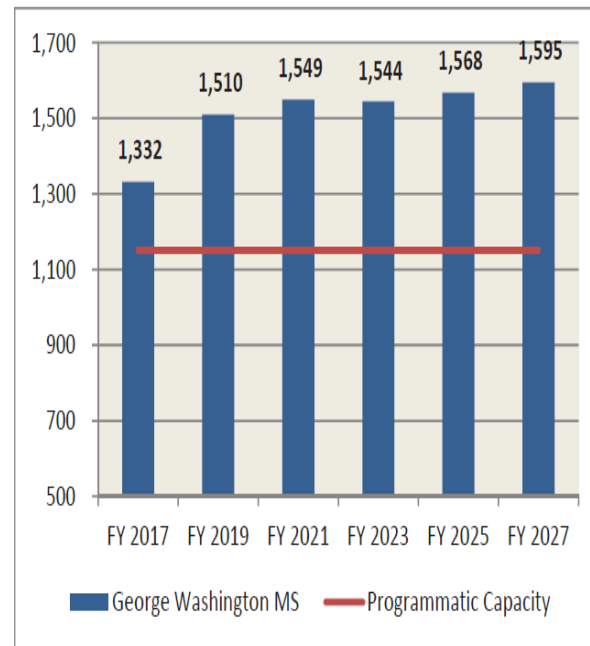
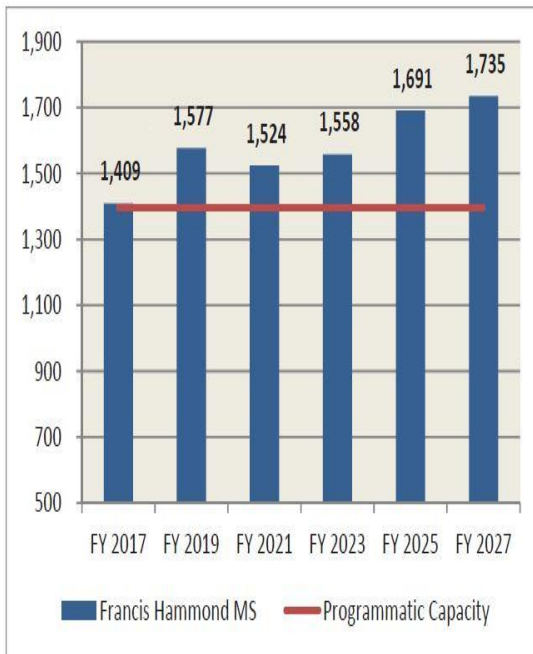
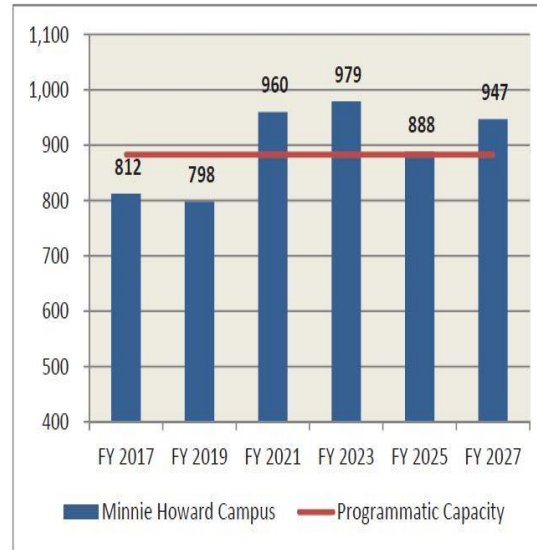
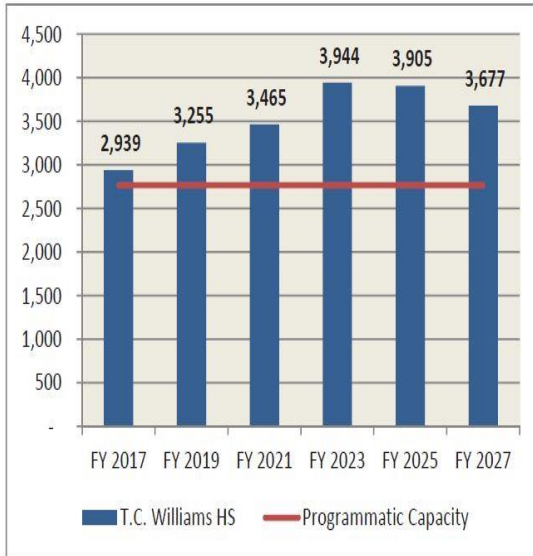
We write on behalf of the Capacity Committee of the T.C. Williams High School Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). The ILT is composed of administrators, department chairs and program leaders at T.C. Williams. The Capacity Committee supports the rebuilding of Minnie Howard as proposed in the School Board's adopted 2018-2027 Capital Improvement Program Budget (CIP).

A senior Alexandria official asked recently, "What, in one paragraph, is the case for a new secondary school?" The case can be expressed in three sentences: the current and projected near-term enrollment numbers at T.C. Williams, Minnie Howard and the middle schools reveal overcrowding now with substantial increases projected for the near future. Second, the overcrowding at T.C. has numerous negative consequences including damaging the education of some of our neediest students. Third, rebuilding Minnie Howard is an opportunity to address the overcrowding and to design specialized spaces to serve all students better.

The CIP proposes rebuilding Minnie Howard as a secondary school with architectural and engineering work starting in 2018 and the new school opening in 2024.

The February 15 enrollments are 2,972 at T.C. Williams-King Street, 792 at Minnie Howard, 1,426 at Francis Hammond and 1,345 at George Washington. The students in grades 6,7 and 8 at Jefferson-Houston are not included.

The following four CIP charts show the compelling need for more space (the horizontal bars represent capacity—the maximum number of students for which each building was designed):



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There are no “alternative facts” about enrollment: the capacity crisis is here. Additionally, safety issues associated with the movement of large groups of students at passing times, assemblies, pep rallies, fire drills and dismissal continue to be a major concern.

The overcrowding at T.C. adversely affects class schedules (e.g., science classes are held in non-science rooms) and other activities (e.g., students exit the crowded cafeteria in search of quieter and less crowded lunch spaces.) However, the greatest negative effects of overcrowding are felt by students who have the most difficult time in school. Our administrators say that at-risk students repeatedly say that there are just too many people at T.C.

We work in the largest, and arguably most diverse, high school in Virginia without an effective alternative program for students who have difficulties in T.C.’s large and crowded environment. A rebuilt Minnie Howard is a chance to address overcrowding, design space that complements, not duplicates, the King Street campus and create specialized space for an alternative program.

Thank you for your leadership on this important topic. We hope we can count on your support

Sincerely,

Co-Chair, Capacity Committee Co-Chair, Capacity Committee

cc: Dr. Alvin Crawley
Mr. Mark Jinks