



March 25, 2025

To the Honorable Council  
City of Norfolk, Virginia

Re: A Resolution Requesting the Norfolk School Board to Prioritize a Plan to  
Consolidate Schools

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

Attached is a resolution requesting the School Board to prioritize a plan to consolidate schools to ameliorate the loss of funds due to surplus capacity of school buildings.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BAPishko", is written over a horizontal line.

Bernard A. Pishko  
City Attorney

BAP:lm  
Attachment

Form and Correctness Approved:

*BAP*

Contents Approved:

By:



Office of the City Attorney

By:



DEPT. City Attorney's Office

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

## Resolution No.

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE NORFOLK SCHOOL BOARD  
TO PRIORITIZE A PLAN TO CONSOLIDATE SCHOOLS.

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WHEREAS, Norfolk Public Schools ("NPS") is the cornerstone of a proudly diverse community with highly qualified teachers and staff dedicated to providing a variety of teaching and learning opportunities for all students; and

WHEREAS, the Norfolk City Council understands the importance of NPS; and

WHEREAS, public schools in Virginia are dependent upon state and local funding, NPS cannot tax or borrow; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth funds the cost to meet its minimum standards and the City of Norfolk ("City") funds the remainder. In 2025 the City's annual contribution towards operating costs of NPS was 164.2 million dollars. In addition, the City is responsible for 100% of the capital costs; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, the City Council enacted a formula to determine the amount its funding would exceed the prior year's funding; and

WHEREAS, although there has been a major decline in student enrollment, City Council has remained committed to increasing the per pupil spending. In 2010, the student enrollment was 31,176 and in 2025 it is projected to be 24,459, a 21% decrease in enrollment; and

WHEREAS, since 2019, the NPS Facilities Master Plan highlighted the rebuild of Maury High School, Granby Elementary, Norview Elementary, and Jacox Elementary Schools, along with the consolidation of Tidewater Park Elementary School, Madison Alternative School, Easton Pre-School and Lindenwood Elementary School; and

WHEREAS, since 2019 the costs estimated to rebuild Maury High School have increased from 150 million dollars to 250 million dollars; and

WHEREAS, in 2023 Norfolk School Board consultant, Cooperative Strategies, outlined Norfolk's declining enrollment and underutilization of elementary, middle and high school buildings. Cooperative Strategies reported that since 2013, NPS has operated three (3) to seventeen (17) schools more than needed for the population served ("surplus schools") with the number increasing over time. Cooperative Strategies estimated the "annual operational cost of carrying surplus capacity", the amounts that could have been saved and invested where needed. The cost/potential savings are significant; for example: \$8,490,000 in 2018, \$8,440,000 in 2019, \$16,748,000 in 2020,

\$17,168,000 in 2021, and \$20,284,000 in 2022; that is over 71 million dollars in these five (5) years alone; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, City Council stated publicly that they would stand with the Norfolk School Board, on making the difficult decision of closing and consolidating schools; and

WHEREAS, in 2023 City Council expressed a sense of urgency to the Norfolk School Board on the closure and consolidation of schools to reinvest savings into major school capital improvement and maintenance projects including Maury High School, Booker T. Washington High School, and three new elementary schools to replace aging buildings; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Norfolk:

Section 1:- That the Council requests the School Board to prioritize achieving these savings and closing and consolidating schools.

Section 2:- That the Council requests an action plan from the Norfolk School Board before August 1, 2025, indicating the closure and consolidation of ten schools starting before the school year 2026-2027, with closing a minimum of two schools a year thereafter until the number of school buildings no longer exceeds the amount needed.

Section 3: - That if the closure and consolidation plan is not timely provided and implemented, it would appear necessary that the Council take steps to provide consequences for delay. Such steps could include changing the appropriation to NPS from a lump-sum appropriation to a directed appropriation thereby giving Council more control over school appropriations in order to ameliorate the estimated loss of funds due to surplus capacity of school buildings.

Section 4:- That the Council acknowledges the difficult choices the School Board faces; nonetheless,

eliminating unneeded buildings must be a priority addressed immediately.

Section 5:- That this resolution shall be in effect from and after its adoption.