

### **A Misleading Suggestion**

In late 2004, as projected costs to renovate the two State High buildings continued to climb, a group that included myself asked the school board to consider other building options before moving forward.

Common construction practice dictates that an in-depth comparison of building new versus renovating be undertaken when renovation costs approach 60 percent of building a new facility. Our goal was to promote a fiscally responsible comparison of at least one option to the only plan the district had considered.

The board responded by directing the architects under contract to design the renovation project to conduct a limited feasibility study on a new school. The study did not include floor plans and considered only one site.

A completely new building was estimated to cost \$104 million to \$114 million. The \$40 million cost difference between the two options led to the conclusion that the two-building renovation was the more fiscally responsible alternative.

Within weeks and without consideration of the educational implications or community input, the board reversed course and seized upon the \$97.6 million large-school plan. Board members are now using our request for consideration of options to justify putting 2,800 teenagers in one building designed around an existing structure rather than educational initiatives.

I never have and do not now support a large-school concept on a problematic site that will net only five classrooms and likely will guarantee the anonymity of our children. To suggest otherwise is misleading to the public.

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