



December 11, 2017

*transmitted via email*

Members of the Champaign Unit 4 School Board and administration:

Thank you for the service you perform for our community. Your board's willingness and ability to reshape your plans and build community support for your current approach is commendable and deserves all our appreciation and gratitude. My own service on the Urbana school board through passage of a large referendum supporting gut-renovation of one school, massive renovations to our high school and middle school, construction of an indoor swimming pool, and renovations on a planned schedule for all our elementary schools, gives me some sense of the workload you are carrying.

School board service is about constraints. On funding, by legal requirements, and more. Those constraints require, in turn, creativity in imagining a way forward that is not always obvious at first glance. Please exercise all your creativity and commitment now to revisit the plan to raze the historic Burnham House at 603 West Church Street to make way for surface parking.

Please do not buy into the concept being advanced by some that your mission to keep Central central with a quality high school to serve your students is at odds with the preservation of this extremely important national and community asset. PACA and those like me who are joining with them are willing to seek a buyer for the property, as well as work with you to acquire other property to meet your building program and ultimate goal of a quality educational facility.

I join with others who have petitioned you to ask that you designate a representative with authority to hold substantive conversations with those devoted to saving this piece of our community's heritage. If it would be of any assistance, I am willing to serve as a facilitator for such discussions, or to contribute in any other way that might help find a mutually positive way forward. This is a role in which I have extensive experience across a range of educational and professional settings.

We all support quality education for our community's youth. Please also listen to and commit to working with those who wish to find a way to do that while preserving and building on our community's significant history and its architectural heritage.

Cordially,

c: Carolyn Baxley; Susan Appel