



**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**
Save the past. Enrich the future.

September 16, 2023

Jennifer Wright, President
Stephen Tuminello, Vice President
Bolton Alumni Association
P.O. Box 13414
Alexandria, LA 71315

Dear Ms. Wright and Mr. Tuminello:

I am writing on behalf of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the nonprofit leader of the nation's historic preservation movement, regarding the historic Bolton High School, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is the United States' list of culturally and architecturally unique and irreplaceable landmarks -- like historic Bolton High School -- that merit careful stewardship for the benefit of this and future generations.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation respectfully recommends adoption by the Rapides Parish School Board of the Bolton Alumni Association's thoughtful approach for the treatment of the historic Bolton High School building. It is the National Trust's understanding that the Alumni Association is asking the School Board, as an initial and indispensable step, to conduct a complete conditions assessment by a qualified historic preservation architect of each of the historic building's original windows, before the School Board goes to bid on the District 62 Bond Program projects at Bolton High School. With a full understanding of the current physical condition of the building's windows, the appropriate repair method can be prescribed for each window to meet the community's needs and the School's goals. After repair, the installation of interior storm windows also will improve the building's energy efficiency without compromising the aesthetic character of the landmark High School. The National Trust concurs with the Alumni Association's position that window repair and rehabilitation (rather than replacement) of Bolton High School's existing wooden windows, along with the installation of interior storm windows, will contribute to a safe and comfortable school environment that respects the heritage of Bolton High School and of Alexandria, Louisiana.

Drawing upon the National Trust's practical experience across the country, we concur with the Alumni Association's position that the High School's original windows should be repaired but not replaced. Before going to bid, decision-makers are respectfully advised to compare the costs/benefits of a straightforward program of wooden window repair and maintenance versus custom-manufacture and installation of vinyl replacement windows. The High

School's existing wooden windows are made of red cypress and, following a preliminary "walk-through" tour by expert preservation practitioners, the existing red cypress windows are seen to be in good-to-fair condition generally. The recommended window-by-window conditions assessment, which is proposed by the Alumni Association, is a best practice to protect the community's real-property asset and to guide its planned investment in the High School. Retaining the original windows would be in the High School's best interest, in the National Trust's experience, because of the impressive embodied strength, durability, and decay/insect resistant nature of cypress as a building material. By employing straightforward repair and rehabilitation methods such as wood consolidation, reglazing, repainting, and weatherization, the red cypress windows can be retained at a cost savings to the School Board. However, if vinyl replacement windows are under consideration by decision makers, it should be noted that the energy efficiency of vinyl replacement windows has been found to be overstated and -- without the ability to repair vinyl windows, whereas property owners can effectively repair wooden windows -- another round of window replacement at Bolton High School will be necessary again in 20 years or less.

Consequently, the National Trust for Historic Preservation joins the Bolton Alumni Association in respectfully recommending to the Rapides Parish School Board that the Bolton High School's original red cypress windows be repaired and retained. These windows have stood the test of time, almost 100 years, and with straightforward repair and maintenance methods can be useful for many more years to come.

Thank you in advance for considering the views of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Nieweg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rob Nieweg
Senior Vice President, Preservation Services & Outreach