



District of Columbia Government
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
Box 75115
Washington, DC 20013



December 18, 2019

Chancellor Lewis Ferebee
D.C. Public Schools
1200 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Deputy Mayor Paul Kihn,
Deputy Mayor for Education
1350 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chancellor Ferebee and Deputy Mayor Kihn,

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed meeting¹ on December 12, 2019, our Commission voted 6-0 (with 5 Commissioners required for a quorum) to convey our concerns regarding DCPS's handling of the modernization planning process for School Within School (SWS) at Goding (920 F Street).

SWS is located within ANC6A and serves a large number of ANC6A residents. SWS is slated for modernization to commence this summer. Last year, DCPS representatives informed the SWS community that DCPS planned to locate a new swing space within NE DC, which would be used as the swing space for local elementary schools SWS, J.O. Wilson, and Browne as each is modernized over the course of the next six years. DCPS conveyed that message to the school community at a public meeting in May 2019 and continued to discuss potential sites for the swing space into the summer. At that meeting, DCPS committed to return to the community to discuss potential swing space locations and how to appropriately retrofit or build the potential locations to the needs of the school at a meeting early in the 2019-2020 school year. No such meeting occurred. Instead, on November 25, 2019, DCPS officials informed the SWS community that DCPS was abandoning its earlier commitment to locate the swing space in close proximity. DCPS did not offer any explanation for abandoning its earlier commitments and did not share its newly-desired swing space location. DCPS officials also stated that DCPS did not anticipate engaging the community regarding where the swing space would be located and did not have a plan to accommodate the school's significant student population who require physical accommodation. Likewise, DCPS stated that it was not prepared to provide space for SWS's award-winning FoodPrints program, despite the fact that the program is planned to be a featured component of the modernization of SWS at Goding.

The Commission received public comment from several members of the SWS community at our December 12 meeting. Although the Commission invited you and members of your staff to join us at that meeting, no member of DCPS was able to attend the meeting. The Commission joins the SWS community in its concern that these decisions were ill-informed and have been inade-

¹ ANC 6A meetings are advertised electronically on the listservs anc6a-announce@yahoogroups.com, anc-6a@yahoogroups.com and newhilleast@yahoogroups.com, at www.anc6a.org, and in the Hill Rag.

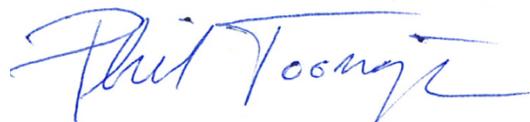
quately communicated to the community. Accordingly, the Commission requests your attention to remedy these issues in a manner that reflects the importance of a community engagement and transparent decision-making process.

Specifically, the Commission voted unanimously to request that: 1) DCPS return to the community within 30 days to engage with community members regarding DCPS's proposal for swing space to house the SWS students; 2) DCPS honor its prior commitment to locate a swing space in NE DC that would serve the SWS, J.O. Wilson, and Browne school communities during their modernizations over the next six years; 3) DCPS facilities staff prepare to accommodate SWS's children's needs and other unique attributes of the school, to include its award winning Regio Emilia curriculum and FoodPrints program during the two years that the school will be located in a swing space, and 4) DCPS communicate with the Commission regarding any plans to bus children from the SWS at Goding site to a swing space location, so that any required bus planning can be well-informed to minimize disruption to the school community and to the neighboring residents.

Should DCPS, after hearing community input, determine that it is necessary to bus students from the Goding location, the Commission requests a proposed plan for the busing to be provided for discussion with the ANC, the school community, and DDOT, and further requests that DCPS share what lessons it is learned from the problems experienced with inadequate planning for the busing of Capitol Hill Montessori children from their school location earlier this year. The Commission specifically shares the community's concerns regarding whether the 920 F Street location has sufficient room to accommodate school buses, family drop-off, construction staging, and commuter traffic and requests that any plans to bus children be communicated for public comment well in advance of the new school year.

SWS at Goding is a thriving school that serves many neighborhood children who live in ANC6A and in other adjacent communities. Our Commission looks forward to working with you and with the school community to ensure its continued success and a productive engagement process for the school's modernization and swing space planning. We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to meeting with you and members of your team at your first availability.

On Behalf of the Commission,



Neighborhood Commission 6A

cc: Mayor Muriel Bowser
Council Chair Phil Mendelson
Council Education Chair David Grosso
DC Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6
At-large Councilmembers Robert C. White, Jr., Anita Bonds and Elissa Silverman