



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



November 21, 2020

Dr. Lewis Ferebee, Chancellor
District of Columbia Public Schools
1200 First St NE 10th floor, Washington, DC 20002

Re: ANC6A Request for Information Regarding Firing of Principal Trogisch

Dear Chancellor Ferebee:

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed meeting¹ on November 12, 2020, our Commission voted 7-0-0 (with 5 Commissioners required for a quorum) to relay the following concerns regarding the recent firing of School Without Walls High School Principal Richard Trogisch.

- On Monday, October 5th, the Mayor announced plans to re-open schools in the coming weeks, and, at the Chancellor's Meeting, Principal Trogisch asked specifically what air quality standards were being set by DCPS and how such standards would be measured and enforced. After no specific answer to his question was given, he said he later told his staff and parents that he would not open School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens unless he was certain students, teachers, and all other school personnel would be safe, and
- Like many DCPS facilities, School Without Walls at Francis Stevens is a nearly 100 year-old building with no HVAC system, window air conditioners in each classroom, and numerous maintenance issues that come with an old building slated for major renovation in less than two years, and
- The Center for Disease Control revised its guidance to acknowledge that COVID-19 is spread not just by droplets, but in aerosolized form in closed indoor spaces with poor ventilation and that regular exchange of fresh air is imperative for such spaces to be safe, especially where people (such as students and teachers in classrooms) stay in those spaces for more than just a few minutes at a time, and
- Less than 48 hours after Principal Trogisch questioned whether the air quality and ventilation standards at SWW@FS would allow the school to open safely, he was fired by DCPS with the explanation that there had been a student "enrollment anomaly" in a previous year, and
- DCPS officials indicated to the school community that the firing of Principal Trogisch was "not in the best interests" of students and faculty, and DCPS had knowledge of this 'enrollment anomaly' prior to renegotiating the principal's contract for the 2020-2021 school year but appears to have chosen not to address it, and
- An action that did not prevent his contract renewal suddenly became a fireable offense two days after the Principal expressed health and safety concerns about DCPS plans.

¹ ANC 6A meetings are advertised electronically on the anc6a-announce@yahoogroups.com, anc-6a@yahoogroups.com, and newhilleast@groups.io, at www.anc6a.org, on Twitter (@ANC6A) and through print advertisements in the Hill Rag.



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Given the above history as presented to us by caregivers of students enrolled at School Without Walls, ANC 6A requests a response from Chancellor Ferebee to community concerns regarding the firing of Principal Trogisch. The lack of transparent processes and procedures by DCPS leadership further diminishes public trust in our public schools and runs counter to the values and priorities of DC Public Schools.

Thank you for giving consideration to our ANC's feedback on this issue. Should you wish to discuss this letter with the Commission, I can be contacted at amberanc6a@gmail.com.

On behalf of the Commission,

Amber Gove
Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A