



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



December 30, 2013

Abigail Smith
Deputy Mayor for Education and
Co-Chair of the DC Advisory Committee on Student Assignment
1350 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 303
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Deputy Mayor Smith,

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A (ANC) is pleased that you are leading Mayor Gray's comprehensive review of Student Assignment and School Boundaries and requests that you and the other members of the Advisory Committee reinstate proximity preference at the School Within A School (SWS). The ANC adopted a resolution making that request at its regularly scheduled and publicly announced¹ meeting of June 13, 2013. The vote was 6-0-1, with five required for a quorum.

SWS's move to the Goding building at 920 F Street, NE, was a welcome development for the Capitol Hill community and ANC 6A. SWS has always had strong ties in our community and its attendees are predominantly drawn from our neighborhood -- it has the highest percentage of neighborhood children of any school on Capitol Hill.

The ANC would like to see those ties to SWS's immediate community continue.

Unfortunately, the children who live closest to the school who sought admission to it in this year's lottery were not afforded the opportunity to attend. As our neighborhood continues to add elementary-aged children at the fastest rate in the city, the community's need for early education slots in schools like SWS also grows. Until this year, SWS operated as a traditional neighborhood elementary school and enrolled students through boundaries and proximity preference. While we do not quibble with DCPS's decision to drop boundaries from admission to SWS and to make it a citywide school, we strongly urge that neighborhood proximity preference be reinstated.

Such a preference will allow neighborhood families to play an important role in the school that is closest to their home and will aid the school by having strong support from its neighboring community. It will also support the emphasis that SWS's Reggio Emilia curriculum places on local community and parental involvement by connecting the school to its immediate neighbors. It will also help alleviate challenges that arise between a school and its neighbors related to traffic, parking and other issues that are less likely to pose significant challenges at traditional schools where the neighboring families are afforded the chance to participate.

¹ ANC 6A meetings are advertised electronically on the anc6a-announce@yahoo.com email list and the ANC-6A@yahoogroups.com (not controlled by the ANC) and NewHillEast@yahoogroups.com email lists, and through print advertisements in the *Hill Rag*.

Thank you for your consideration of our request to reinstate a proximity preference at SWS. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me or Commissioner Gloria Nauden (202-528-9005 or gnauden@gmail.com) regarding this matter.

For the Commission,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Holmes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "D".

David Holmes
Chair

cc: Vincent C. Gray, Mayor
Tommy Wells, D.C. Councilmember, Ward Six
Monica Warren-Jones, State Board of Education
Principal John Burst, School Within School