



**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Dupont Circle Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2B**

December 16, 2012

The Honorable Vincent Gray, Mayor  
District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Suite 316  
Washington, DC 20004

Chancellor Kaya Henderson  
1200 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

Re: ANC 2B Resolution on Proposed School Consolidations

Dear Mayor Gray and Chancellor Henderson,

Thank you very much for speaking at the quarterly meeting in early December with ANC Chairs about the school consolidation proposal and the rationales behind the proposal. It was an informative session. In addition to that meeting, the Dupont Circle Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC 2B) and its Commissioners have co-hosted a public forum in late November and attended several other meetings and listening sessions with school officials, PTAs, community members, and other stakeholders.

At its regular meeting on December 12, 2012, the ANC 2B considered the proposed school consolidation. With all of the Commissioners present, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission approved the following resolution by a vote of (9-0):

Whereas, on November 13, 2012, Mayor Vincent Gray and DC Public Schools (DCPS) Chancellor Kaya Henderson announced a consolidation plan for DCPS, which included proposals to close two schools that serve residents of ANC 2B: Francis-Stevens Education Campus (FSEC) and Garrison Elementary School;

Whereas, ANC 2B understands that consolidation in neighborhoods which are served by multiple schools may be necessary and prudent to provide all DCPS students a rich and full array of educational opportunities not feasible or cost-effective in under-enrolled schools;

Whereas, Ross Elementary School, serving the heart of ANC 2B, is at capacity with an annual waiting list of several hundred students and is unable to receive additional students under any consolidation plan, necessitating that any consolidation plan which contemplates the closure of FSEC and/or Garrison would force students and parents far away from their Dupont Circle area homes;

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## Garrison Elementary School

Whereas, the November 13 consolidation plan would consolidate Garrison into Seaton Elementary School;

Whereas, the consolidation plan for Garrison, as envisioned, would undermine DCPS's stated goals, which include meeting "the diverse needs" of students and creating "flexible" schools by "allowing for population growth and shifts and always ensuring that students have high-quality schools in their neighborhood as well as out-of-boundary options";

Whereas, with 228 students currently enrolled, Garrison is at 64% capacity, the highest utilization rate of any school scheduled for closure, and a majority of those students — 60% — are neighborhood students from wards 2 and 1;

Whereas, if all 228 students from Garrison were to enroll at Seaton, the combined school would be severely over capacity, necessitating a significant number of students be housed in modular learning units;

Whereas, DCPS anticipates the neighborhoods served by Garrison will see an increase of 125 elementary school students by 2015 and that DCPS anticipates reopening the building in the foreseeable future;

Whereas, Garrison houses an autism program, and moving those students to a new learning facility would have significant negative impacts on their continued educational growth and advancement;

Whereas, Garrison has stronger community involvement than Seaton and has higher math and reading scores than Seaton on the DC CAS;

## Francis-Stevens Education Campus

Whereas, the November 13 consolidation plan would consolidate FSEC early childhood and elementary students at Marie Reed Learning Center and middle school students at Hardy Middle School, both of which are over a mile from FSEC;

Whereas, the Dupont, West End and Foggy Bottom neighborhoods have worked to plan livable, walkable communities where education, shopping, dining, entertainment and other activities can all be performed without the use of a car, and transferring students to schools over a mile from homes without any direct public transportation alternatives will set back our walkable city planning initiatives while creating a de facto "child free" zone;

Whereas, DCPS has proposed continued utilization of the building by expanding the School Without Walls campus to FSEC; School Without Walls is currently over-enrolled by approximately 100 students for the space available in its current building;

Whereas, the School Without Walls Home & School Association passed a unanimous resolution opposing the envisioned expansion to FSEC;

Whereas, the DCPS consolidation plan was created to more fully utilize campuses by increasing overall enrollment in each building; however, the 100 or so students from School Without Walls is significantly fewer than the 225 students which currently attend

FSEC, which would result in an even less desirable utilization rate for the FSEC campus if current students are transferred to other schools;

Whereas, FSEC has a low vision program which serves low vision and blind students. It is extremely difficult for these students to make friends and learn to navigate new campuses/buildings. The current proposal contemplates tearing these students away from their current teachers and friends and segregating the low vision students at different campus from their peers;

Whereas, DCPS made commitments to the Dupont, West End, and Foggy Bottom communities to keep Francis-Stevens Education Campus open as a neighborhood school following closure of Stevens Elementary School during the last round of school closings;

Whereas, ANC 2A supported the use of the former Stevens campus for Ivymount only with the understanding that FSEC would remain open to serve the neighborhood; and

Whereas, FSEC's early childhood program was oversubscribed for the 2012-2013 school year and DCPS declined to provide staff for two additional preschool and pre-k classes, which would have significantly increased enrollment.

#### Resolution

Therefore, be it resolved, that ANC 2B opposes the closure of Garrison Elementary School based on the school's current and anticipated increased enrollment, higher DC CAS scores, and significant community involvement;

Be it further resolved, that ANC 2B urges DCPS to fully consider all alternatives to closing Garrison, including all options presented by the Garrison PTA and other individuals or groups that would increase enrollment, decrease per-pupil costs, and increase student achievement;

Be it further resolved, that ANC 2B opposes the closure of Francis-Stevens Education Campus, which would leave the Dupont West End and Foggy Bottom neighborhoods without a local elementary and middle school, and which disregards our neighborhoods' walkable living initiatives; and

Be it further resolved, that ANC 2B urges DCPS to fully consider all alternatives to closing FSEC, including all options presented by the FSEC PTA and other individuals or groups that would increase enrollment, decrease per-pupil costs, and increase student achievement.

Commissioners Mike Silverstein (mike.silverstein@dupontcircleanc.net), Jack Jacobson (jack.jacobson@dupontcircleanc.net), Will Stephens (will.stephens@dupontcircleanc.net), and Mike Feldstein (mike.feldstein@dupontcircleanc.net) are the representatives in this matter. We look forward to continued dialogue on our schools.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William F. Stephens". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Will Stephens, Chair

Cc:

dcatania@dccouncil.us; mbrown@dccouncil.us; jgraham@dccouncil.us;  
mcheh@dccouncil.us; yalexander@dccouncil.us; pmendelson@dccouncil.us;  
jackevans@dccouncil.us; mbowser@dccouncil.us; twells@dccouncil.us;  
mbarry@dccouncil.us; kmceduffie@dccouncil.us; vorange@dccouncil.us; eom@dc.gov;  
francisco.fimbres@dc.gov; james.bulger@dc.gov