D.C. PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

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PUBLIC HEARING AND PUBLIC MEETING

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MONDAY
OCTOBER 28, 2019

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The D.C. Public Charter School Board met at Rocketship DC Public Charter School - Rise Academy, located at 2335 Raynolds Place SE, Washington, D.C., at 6:30 p.m., Rick Cruz, Chair, presiding.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

RICK CRUZ, Chair
SABA BIREDAA, Vice Chair

LEA CRUSEY

RICARDA GANJAM

JIM SANDMAN

NAOMI SHELTON

STAFF PRESENT

SCOTT PEARSON, Executive Director, DC PCSB
KATHERINE DAMMANN, School Performance Department
RASHIDA YOUNG, Chief School Performance Officer
ALSO PRESENT

MICHAEL BARNET, The Family Place PCS  
SHAWN CHAKRABARTI, The Family Place PCS  
MARCO CLARK, Richard Wright PCS for Journalism and Media Arts  
DWIGHT CRAWFORD, AppleTree Early Learning PCS  
NICOLE DAVY, DC Preparatory Academy PCS  
ALISHA FUNDERBURK, Richard Wright PCS for Journalism and Media Arts  
EMILY LAWSON, DC Preparatory Academy PCS  
MEKIA LOVE, KIPP DC PCS  
LAURA MAESTAS, DC Preparatory Academy PCS  
JACK McCarthy, AppleTree Early Learning PCS  
JAMIE MILES, AppleTree Early Learning PCS  
JOSHUA PACOS, Rocketship DC PCS  
JACQUE PATTERSON, KIPP DC PCS, DC Preparatory Academy PCS  
SAUMIL SHAH, KIPP DC PCS  
JOYANNA SMITH, Rocketship DC PCS  
HALEY WIGGINS, The Family Place PCS  
NEIL ZUBARIO-AMAFILLO, DC Preparatory Academy PCS
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CHAIR CRUZ: Good evening. We're going to get started with our first part of our agenda this evening which is our public hearing.

So good evening. I'm Rick Cruz; I'm the chair of the D.C. Public Charter School Board. I'm joined this evening by almost all of our board members. Ricarda Ganjam will be joining us in about five minutes. Lea Crusey over to the right there, Naomi Shelton right beside me. Saba Bireda, our Vice Chair who also will be walking in, in just a few moments. Jim Sandman and Scott Pearson our Executive Director.

Start off by saying thank you to Rocketship Rise for hosting us and Ward 8 this evening, and thank you for the leadership team.

I'd also like to begin the meeting with just a few short announcements; PCSB today released our school quality reports for pre-K through 8th grade. This year we have 45 Tier 1 pre-K3 through 8 schools which is up seven from
last year. There are zero Tier 3 pre-K8 schools and 12 of our pre-K8 schools have improved in tier this year, so we're really proud of that. We have more Tier 1 pre-K8 schools than Tier 2 schools in both Wards 7 and 8. And all of that information, all of those scores is on our website; if you go to our "Compare Schools" tool at the top right-hand corner of the home page or by visiting the Transparency Hub. And for those of you interested in our high school, adult and alternative quality school reports, those will be released next week. So you'll see more of that and our various communications over the next couple of days and weeks.

So we've got a pretty busy agenda this evening. I want to create an opportunity for public comment at the top of the meeting. I've got a list of individuals to start with, then we'll have a public hearing on four charter amendments, and then we'll turn our attention to a set of votes later this evening. But we'll use our first hour or so for our public hearing
items.

So starting with that I'd like to invite a list of public hearing witnesses to the table here on the right. I'm going to start with three people at a time, there'll be opportunities later on in the public meeting as well. Every individual will have two minutes. We'll hold pretty tightly to that to ensure that we get everybody on record, but of course anyone who'd like to submit written testimony or to email, and if you can't complete all of your testimony, or if you have additional thoughts, the email to use is publiccomment@dcpcsb.org. That's publiccomment@dcpcsb.org.

So I'll get right to it with our first three public hearing witnesses; Sara Woodruff, Candice Scruggs, and Alexis Bumpers.

Are those three individuals here?

So Sara Woodruff, Candice Scruggs, Alexis Bumpers. We also have Duane Arbogast.

Thank you.

All right, we'll start with -- ma'am,
if you want to start first.

Start by stating your name and you
have two minutes.

MS. WOODRUFF: Hello, my name is Sara
Woodruff. I'm a resident in Ward 8. I live
close to the intersection of 16th Street and
Frankford. I'm here today to discuss my concerns
about the not formally yet proposed property that
DC Prep is in the process of purchasing,
expecting to close at the end of December on
Frankford Street. And I want to express my deep
concerns and opposition as I'm not in support of
this and neither are my neighbors. Currently,
the distance to my house to Moten Elementary in
the front yard is literally that wall; the
distance to this proposed location is the
equivalent of that back wall. So we have deep
concerns about schools being that close to one
another and the adverse impact it has on our
neighborhood. I imagine that a lot of you have
dealt with the traffic and chaos outside to get
into this building, so what essentially DC Prep
is proposing, if that should be at my doorstep, despite the fact there's already a school right there. And furthermore, Laura Maestas and her colleagues at DC Prep have expressed grave lack of transparency with us, they will not give us clear answers, and quite frankly I believe her intention was to purchase this property and close on it before we as neighbors in the community could get feedback on that. And so I think unfortunately her plans have been a little thwarted because we found out her intentions. But we continue to ask questions about the traffic plans and things of that nature, and she had been very slow and lethargic in giving us the information. And furthermore, my expectation is that a public school is going to represent the interest of its students to its best extent, and I think that will not be served by having a school in a neighborhood where the neighbors are in gross opposition to that school. I think it puts children at risk in terms of their emotional and physical safety when you have a neighborhood
that's not engaged in support of the school, but is rather in opposition to it. And quite frankly, the behavior we've seen today from DC Prep dictates to me that this relationship is beyond repair, that they will never be a partner to this neighborhood and this community. So while I understand the desire to have what they perceive to be a quality education, not at our doorstep.

Thank you.

(Appause.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MS. BUMPERS: Good evening, everyone.

My name is Alexis Bumpers and my husband and I live in the Fort Stanton community on Frankford Street as well. At this current moment I want to express my opposition against the DC Prep Charter School Middle School being built at 1619 Frankford Street. The school being situated in this lot would negatively impact our quality of life as my home is only a few feet away from the proposed location. Four of our bedrooms, two of
which are actual bedrooms -- I'm sorry; four of our windows, two of our actual bedrooms will be facing the building which would cause disruptions and interruptions and issues with privacy, security and safety as children and walking traffic will be able to look into our home. The drawing of the proposed building demonstrates just how close the school is from our home and the school will cause issues with loitering as well as traffic, and students walking -- I mentioned that as well -- but these are all issues that are completely out of DC Prep's control. Even with just Moten Elementary School we now have kids walking through our yard and also playing pranks on our property. This will only increase with the proposed middle school and statistics show that DC Prep has a higher rate of school suspensions which perpetuates a school-to-prison pipeline. Fort Stanton is a residential neighborhood that already has a school and a building, and another school would cause great disruptions to our home and everyone else's home
located around it. We understand that DC Prep, new students currently attending DC Prep need a site for the upcoming school years, but it's not fair or considerate to us or our neighbor's homes in the community to not consider how this proposed location for the DC Prep Charter School Middle School in Fort Stanton would impact our quality of life in our home. The school being situated in the proposed location would adversely affect our property value and overall desirability of our home and neighborhood due to all the disturbances that come with middle school. This is why we disagree and oppose the DC Prep Charter School to be built at the 1619 Frankford Street SE address as well as any other commercial property.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay, thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. ARBOGAST: Good evening, board, Chair Cruz, and fellow board members. My name is Duane Arbogast; I'm Chief of Strategy and Innovation for the Children's Guild. Tonight I'm
speaking for the alternative accountability schools as we're working with Public Charter Board to revise the alternative accountability framework. We want to ensure that the AAF supports rigorous and achievable accountability expectations for the significantly at-risk students that we serve. We expect these updates to the AAF will assist our schools in refining our respective charter goals.

First, we would really like to thank the Public Charter Board for their willingness to tackle the issues of accountability for schools who serve students with multiple at-risk factors. We sincerely appreciate the staff's commitment and willingness to examine the issues from multiple lenses. It is quite clear that everyone is committed to getting this right. We are especially grateful for the thoughtful engagement of our schools by Erin Kupferberg who is leading the AAF Working Group on behalf of the Public Charter Board. We also appreciate the opportunity to participate as partners in this
work. We recognize that this work has national implications as our colleagues across the country are wrestling with these issues. It is your work in the arena of accountability that gives us this national exposure, and we hope to make the most of it. This includes expanding the concept of alternative accountability beyond high schools. Right now most of the work is focused to high schools and we'd like to expand that. And while there's consensus on the broad goals of the AAF, we would like to make some recommendations about next steps. One is to establish a set of research questions about reliability, validity and analysis, identify critical data points, model the data sets, and then make recommendations for the goals. Possible research questions can include the role of absenteeism around incarcerated youth and the variability of growth scores for students scoring in the lowest stanines.

We plan to keep you informed of this collaborative work. We also invite you to visit
our schools and see first-hand the challenges,
the opportunities and the successes we experience
every day.

Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. All right,
four public witnesses; Lashawn David, Princeton
Tymus, Alexis Hansford, and Sharease Clayton.

Okay, whoever would like to begin.

MR. TYMUS: How you doing? My name is
Princeton Tymus. I'm a fellow parent of DC Prep
and a teacher at DC Prep. I'm speaking on behalf
of DC Prep expanding to 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th
grade. I believe that DC Prep is a great
community school, not only working there, but
also as a parent for my child also. My child has
been at DC Prep since kindergarten and don't want
him to go anywhere else. I'd like him to stay at
DC Prep until he graduates from 8th grade. I
believe that he has grown tremendously
academically and socially. And also, not just
him, but the other students that also been there
since pre-school, that I have been with since
They need a place that they can call home and consistency is key with our children, especially in Ward 8. They have a lot of changes and this is something that I do not want -- change their school. I believe that's very important that they stay at the same school until they leave 8th grade and still be with us even past high school and continue. I've been speaking with a lot of parents throughout the years, we knew this time would come, and we are -- we're very hopeful and we definitely want the education that our children have been receiving since pre-school to continue all the way up to 8th grade. So I just want to state that I'm definitely in for DC Prep expanding to the Burnie Building and furthering -- possibly having a new building for our 5th, 5th, 7th, 8th graders when that time comes.

Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Ma'am?

MS. DAVIS: Hello, my name is Lashawn Davis. I'm the parent of a DC Prep student. My
daughter has been at DC Prep going -- this is her fifth year now. I'm very hopeful that we can get at least a middle school, I want my child to continue on to be a DC Prep student. She's the highest, actually, in the school for DC Prep Anacostia. She's been there since they opened. It would be an honor if we can have a school that's located in the same area. Some of us have two and three children, so by us having children at DC Prep Anacostia and then we have to go all the way across town to actually take our children to the other schools, it will be a great inconvenience. So hopefully we can get this DC Prep Middle School.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MS. HANSFORD: How you doing? My name is Alexis; I'm a parent at DC Prep. I have two babies that's attending DC Prep. I've actually been with DC Prep since the trailers and the transition has been wonderful, it's always been a great experience. Today is my first time being here, so it's just more than a business; this is
kid's futures. And I know being able to serve a
child as a whole, that's what DC Prep, it does.
Test scores -- when you guys say kids will do
things in the neighborhood, it starts at an
elementary school and we are going to transition
to do that at the middle school, all the way
through adulthood, hopefully.

Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, thank you.

(Applause.)

So thank you to those who came out in
support of DC Prep, their expansion to middle
school and the proposal that we're taking up this
evening around the Burnie Building. Also, thank
you to community members who've come out with
real concerns about a proposed additional site,
or substitute site. So DC Prep will be up in
just a bit and we'll ask them to speak to both
issues this evening.

We'll have public comment
opportunities at other times across the evening,
but I would take a few moments if there are
others who would like to offer up public testimony. We have a few moments that we can offer that up. So let me just get maybe the first five individuals who'd like to come up, that'd be great.

We'll get to all of you.

We'll give you as many seats, and then I'll call up the next five.

And again, name and organization that you're with, if that's appropriate. And you'll each have two minutes.

MR. BUMPERS: Hello, my name is Rashod Bumpers and I'm speaking on behalf of the Fort Stanton Civic Association, as well as a resident. My house is 1605 Frankford Street. And to give you kind of a visual -- if I'm my house, DC Prep will be right here where she's sitting right here. So as my wife spoke earlier, currently there are kids actually walking through the alleyway and across our front yard and playing pranks on our door. Also, we had a community meeting with the CEO, Laura Maestas, with our ANC
Darrell Gaston, as well as other residents and here's a list of the issues that we have; DC Prep entered into the contract with the current property owner before even any community outreach was done. The proposed property is currently -- well, the neighborhood is mostly residential, with the exception of Moten. And DC Prep presenter could not provide a list of the other properties that were proposed in addition to the Fort Stanton location. She vehemently concerned, that she was only concerned with the needs for students and not the community at large. The building of the school has contributed to traffic, as we all saw today trying to get in here. The immediate ANC's that are directly affected, Darrell Gaston and Charles Wilson, have both opposed the school. There are currently two public middle schools and five charter schools within half a mile of this location. Also, too, we have written a letter to the city council, other city officials as well, and they are in support of the neighborhood in opposing this
proposed location. I just think that I'm not
very happy with how DC Prep conducted themselves
and buy a property, close on a property and say,
"Hey, community. We're here. How can we be a
good neighbor." I think that's just not
operating in good faith.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Thank you, sir.

(Applause.)

MR. BELL: My name is David Bell; I'm
a resident of Ward 8. I'm speaking in opposition
of the DC proposed charter school on Frankford
Street. Mine is about 25 feet from the school.
I appreciate you all taking our comments and
listening to what we have to say here. Tensions
are high and so are our emotions, so thank you.

I'm actually the current Director of
Government Relations for the American Traffic
Safety Services Association. In 2018 according
to NHSTA, 36,650 men, women and children died on
our nation's roads. Of these deaths, pedestrian,
cyclist deaths rose by more than 10 percent in
2017 to 2018. These are the highest levels that have been experienced in 30 years and these are preventable deaths. And indeed, addition of another school to accommodate over 400 children, staff and parents in less than a mile radius, as Rashod mentioned, would increase these numbers, traffic congestion, fatalities, injuries significantly. The issue's real, and we all saw it outside today getting in.

Taxation is another issue I'd like to speak of; the entire project will cost the taxpayer approximately $24 million, all the proposed land is $1.2 million. For 2019 fiscal year the cost per student and the faculty allowance is $3,335. If you extrapolate that, that's $1.5 million in facility allowances alone each year just to accommodate 450 students. Pretty stifling numbers.

DC Prep has also repeatedly declined to provide teacher's salary data to the board itself. We looked at their 990 forms, you will notice -- somebody mentioned that this isn't a
business -- quite frankly it is. The pockets are
being lined by the teachers within a range of
$135,000 to $215,000 in taxpayer money. DC Prep
has expressed three principles as it relates to
their goals; one, identify a property at low
cost; find a sizeable land; and three, proximity
of the previous locations. As you can see, none
of the goals listed include any of the safety of
the students, a financially intelligent use of
taxpayer money, or in showing that their efforts
benefit the community as a whole.

I urge you to not build 25 feet from
my house. I thank you for your time.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, sir.

(Applause.)

MS. ALBOLOCK: Hi, my name is Eolani
Albolock. I'm a resident of Ward 8. I live on
Gainesville and 18th Street. And as a mother to
a young son who would potentially attend the new
DC Prep location, I have grave concerns about
this school. It does not seem that it is meant
for the community, but it is meant for the
current students that would be transferred in. And so based on what the CEO has told us in a few different meetings, you would literally be transferring the classes of students there; therefore, the residents that actually live there would not be able to send their kids or enroll them in the school -- which is a huge issue, especially if our tax dollars are paying for this. Additionally, I'm really concerned with the alarmingly high suspension rate of DC Prep which has garnered attention of the PCSB previously. Suspension has a direct correlation to the school-to-prison pipeline according to a comprehensive study conducted by Texas A&M universities, Public Policy Research Institute, and the Council of State Government Justice Center. As a mother to a black boy, this definitely alarms me if this is not being addressed in their current operations and current operating statuses.

Again, I am not seeing a benefit to the children in the community in which the
Finally, I'd also like to say that the CEO mentioned that there were 30 locations, potential locations for this building and this property, and we have not heard of any of them, other than the one in our neighborhood. And we'd like more transparency. The lack of transparency is alarming, especially if there are issues with students in our neighborhood. If the CEO doesn't even know what's going on and can't give us information, how can we trust that if there's an issue that arises, we'll be able to work with her hand-in-hand in order to address it.

Thank you for your time.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

(Appause.)

MS. BELL: Hi, my name is Stephanie Bell and I speak to you tonight in opposition of the DC Prep proposed school location at 1619 Frankford Street. You may be confused as the proposal in front of you is for the Burnie location; that's because DC Prep has not yet
submitted an application for this school despite
the fact that they will complete their purchase
as of December 2nd. Whenever DC Prep does plan
to submit an application to amend their charter,
you will ask them in Question 7 to tell you about
the outrage to the community. If DC Prep answers
that question in any way to indicate they have
provided any community outreach, they are lying.
As a neighbor living 25 feet away from this
proposed building, there is zero outrage from the
school. The only reason that I know about it is
because surveyors trespassed on my property while
doing a survey for DC Prep. At a community
meeting requested by the Fort Stanton community
and hosted by our ANC chair, that was not
initiated in any way by DC Prep. CEO Laura
Maestas stated that she did not know if the
school would be purchasing the land and would not
answer questions about whether there was a
contract; a blatant falsehood as DC Prep's
contract was ratified two weeks prior. To date
the only information that has been given to me by
a neighbor has been two letters; one telling me
of a survey being done on the same day as the
letter, and one that was sent after I refused to
let a surveyor onto our property. I walked the
3-mile radius around the proposed school and not
a single resident that I encountered had any clue
that DC Prep had purchased the land.

At every opportunity the community has
voiced our opposition to this project. Myself
and my neighbors are here tonight to voice our
opposition again. DC Prep has hoped to complete
their $1.2 million purchase of the land before
the community had an opportunity to object and
without applying for an amendment to their
charter, hoping that they would be so far along
in the process, you would simply rubberstamp
their application. They have tried to rob the
community of our agency and this board of their
duty to serve their mission. As such, I would
urge that you vote not to approve their
application for the Frankford Street location.

Thank you.
CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. BUSSIE: Hello?

Oh, cool. It works.

All right. How you all doing?

My name is Clifford Bussie and I work at DC Prep. I am not a politician, I am not a real estate agent, I am not a CEO. I am none of that. I am a teacher. And the reason why I decided to teach at DC Prep is because their mission is to bridge the educational divide in our city. I've worked at well-to-do schools, I call them white schools -- sorry. I've worked with those schools, right, where the kids have every access afforded to them in those schools, and then I've worked at DC Prep, right, where we want to work in underserved communities to give our kids a chance. When I started working there not only did we have a principal and we had a dean, but we also had an early childhood principal. We also had an early childhood dean of students. We also have a Special Ed
Coordinator, we also have dedicated aides. In my classroom today is me, my co-teacher and two dedicated aides for our children because we have an inclusion classroom. So the kids in our school in the Special Ed Department have a higher chance of success upon graduation by being in our community. Also, at DC Prep we have Prep Next, right. That's a community of people that are dedicated to being attached to the kids that start off at pre-school and graduate at 8th grade, and follow them through not only high school, but college to make sure they are successful. I know because I came from an underserved community where I did not have that support, and I had to learn how to make it in this society. I currently live in a house with two white males that own a house that I live in, and I don't know how to do that because I did not have that education. At DC Prep that's what I'm working to do, that's what DC Prep is working to do. I truly, truly appreciate you all hearing us out, I appreciate your size because that means
you believe in something, I respect your space. I know for a fact that when I have children they're going to DC Prep and I plan on teaching at DC Prep for as long as I can.

    Thank you.

    (Applause.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

All right. Do we have another five individuals who would like to testify?

Please, yes.

Thank you.

All right, if you'd like to begin, ma'am.

Yes.

Just make sure the mic is on.

MS. BETHEA: My name is Glenda Bethea.

MS. BETHEA: My name is Glenda Bethea and I live in Ward 7, Ward 8. I've lived there all my life and I'm speaking on behalf of DC Prep. My daughter has been at DC Prep in the Edgewood community in 2006 is when she started. She is now a senior at Bowie State University.
(Applause.)

DC Prep has been in her life since 2006 and they are still following her today. As he spoke, she's a part of the DC Prep Next. And I wanted to say that they have been tremendous; without them I don't even know how I would have gotten through a whole bunch of different things, how she would have got through her college, how I would have got through figuring out college, or how I would have got figuring out high school. I pay for her high school education, I pay the college education for her high school. She went to Elizabeth Seton, but DC Prep helped me do that. They've been following her throughout all of this. I have two other children who were DC students from public school, but they didn't get this experience, they didn't get any of that. I took them through public school first, then I had to pay for private school with those kids first. I have a 36-year-old and a 29-year-old that I wish had DC Prep experience. I wish they had that first. This school being in this
neighborhood, in Ward 8, you're going to miss you
not letting them be a part of this. Your
children will miss out on an opportunity. You
have no idea what you'll be missing out on. Very
unique -- you have no idea what you'll be missing
out on.

That's all I have to say.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. SMITH: My name is Nina Smith and
I have two kids that attended DC Prep Edgewood,
both of them have
graduated, one is in high school, one is in
college. My son has ADHD and from the day we
diagnosed him through DC Prep at 2nd grade, they
have given him everything he needed to be
successful through elementary school and middle
school, and now he's going through it through
high school. I love DC Prep. I'm here to
represent DC Prep, although both my kids have
graduated from DC Prep. DC Prep is a good
charter school. Not just DC Prep, a lot of the
charter schools are actually good charter schools. I used to commute all the way from southeast to northeast every day for the past nine years to make sure that my kids got the education I felt that DC Prep was giving them and all the things that they teach them. I understand you all's concern as homeowners, but I'm telling you DC Prep is a good charter school for our kids over here in Ward 7 and Ward 8.

Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. GASTON: Good evening to the board. My name is Darrell Gaston; I'm the Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for 8B04 which covered the planned permanent site for DC Prep Middle School. I want you to ponder on the percentages of 30 percent and 70 percent; while you're thinking of those numbers this means that 30 percent of all students in charter schools are on grade level or have met expectation on the 2019 PARCC test in English and/or math. This
means that 70 percent of all charter school students are not on grade level. The hard reality is that their educators are failing 32,934 students in Washington D.C. And who are those educators -- the DC Public Charter Schools LEA's such as DC Prep who is chartered and authorized by this board to educate our students.

While we are all not teaching our students the same, this board has the responsibility to honestly look at the entire picture before issuing any new charter permits, especially for charters who are already authorized by this board. But why authorize a middle school in Ward 8 by a charter who currently suspends maybe 15 percent of their students? At both DC Prep middle schools almost half of their students are at grade level or below. At DC Prep Benning Middle School only 39 percent of their students are career and college ready in math, and 46 percent are college and career ready in English.

That means that more than half of their kids at their middle school are not on grade level, so
why reward them with a new school?

Let's look at DC Prep Edgewood Elementary campus; 40 percent of their school population is college and career ready in English and 52 percent are college and career ready in math, but when it comes to predicting future educational success, 41 percent of their students are college and career ready and will graduate on time. This means that 59 percent, more than half of their students are predicted not to be college or career ready or on grade level anytime soon. So again, I ask why would you reward them with a new school?

Suspension rates at DC Prep are still high and because of their last application rates, severe concern about their high suspension rates, I wonder if these numbers are real numbers or have been altered to improve data in order to get a new school. At DC Prep BMC campus nearly 15 percent of all their kids were suspended on the 2017 and 2018 school year and roughly 15 percent of all students at their DC Prep Edgewood Middle
School campus have been suspended as well for the same school year. The DC Public Charter School Board took issue with high suspension rates and I trust and I say nearly 15 percent is still high and deserve more considerable attention.

When we look at the Anacostia Education campus nearly 3 percent of their parents made mid-year withdrawals. The question is was it voluntarily or was it forced removal to keep their expulsion rate at zero percent? We cannot keep issuing new charter authorizers without addressing the failed policies of the current local education agencies who are not educating our youth. But more troublesome is 40 percent of teachers left Anacostia Education campus last school year; this is beyond disturbing. Forty percent of their teachers left their school, and according to their audit only 40 percent of their school population for DC Prep as a whole meet level for or on grade level. So we look at the entire picture of DC Prep, 60 percent of their kids are not being educated
adequately and are not on grade level. And so when we talk about this particular school, let's not give them another charter whether it's on Frankford or Burnie until they educate what they currently have readily available. And it's not hard to be a Tier 1 school when you kick 3rd and 4th graders out of an elementary school and put them in a middle school so that you screw numbers. And 98 percent of the pre-K and kindergarten kids who took the NOP assessment failed by the time they reached 2nd grade, so meaning half of the 98 percent of kids who took a test in 2nd grade, only 46 percent of them was actually on grade level. And before we give them a middle school, let's wait until their current 3rd graders who take the PARCC this spring, decide how they do, because what we know is that their Brookline Education campus only 45 percent of their 3rd graders are on grade level. When we look at Edgewood only 43 percent of their 3rd graders are on grade level. And when you look at the important numbers like 8th grade and their
middle schools, only 38 percent are on grade
level in math and 45 percent is on grade level in
English. So while we're looking at real numbers,
while my neighbors have concern about loitering,
littering, traffic, I'm looking at their academic
performance and their past performance is not
good enough for Ward 8. And we can't keep
putting schools at every vacant lot that we have
because it's a matter of right and let's hold DC Prep accountable for not educating the kids that they have now before we award them with another 450.

(Applause.)

MS. JACKSON: Good evening. My name is Tracey Jackson; I'm here to read a letter from the Council Member Trayon White. "Dear Chairman Cruz, as Ward 8 Council Member my duty is to ensure that all residents have access to quality education. As you know, DC Prep has submitted an application to open a middle school at Burnie Elementary School, 1619 Frankford Street SE. I recently met with residents who have shared
concerns about the oversaturation of schools in our community; I agree. This is not about putting charter schools versus DC public schools, but ensuring that we are not draining public resources. We currently have two public middle schools, Hart Middle School and Kramer Middle School. We have five charter middle schools, Achievement Prep PCS, Wheeler Place Middle School, Center City PCS, Congress Heights, Friendship PCS, Technology Preparation Academy Middle, KIPP DC, AIM Academy PCS, KIPP DC Honor Academy PCS. Kipp DC/AIM Academy PCS is 6 miles away from the proposed new site. I understand that DC Prep is the highest performing network of charter schools in DC and would potentially bring a Tier 1 middle school to Ward 8 based on DC Prep's additional measures regarding early child students' outcomes on street selected assessments, 95 percent of PK students passed the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test of their early mathematics ability. Still the sad truth is that nearly half of those students do not retain the
knowledge by the 2nd grade; more than 50 percent are on the grade level at Anacostia Education campus. When we look at DC Prep's highest Tier 1 schools which are both DC Prep, Edgewood Elementary School and Benning Elementary School which rate 89 percent and 85 percent respectively, only 40 percent of the 3rd graders are predicted to have educational success. This story is the same regarding their PK math and PK pre-literacy PPVT and the team of scores at 95 percent. But those scores drop more than half by the time they finish 3rd grade. Accordingly, DC Prep's annual report, less than 50 percent of DC Prep students are not on grade level in math and 54 percent are not on grade level in English, language arts. Additionally, approximately 40 percent of teachers left the Anacostia campus during last school year. While Ward 8 would love to welcome a high-performing middle school bringing one of DC Prep's -- where less than 50 percent of the students are grade level in ELA or math, it is not what the residents want. Both of
their middle schools are borderline Tier 1, measure 68 percent and 67 minimum eligibility. Please do not approve DC Prep's application to open a middle school at 1619 Frankford Street SE. Sincerely, Council Member Trayon White, Ward 8."

(Applause.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MS. MATTHEWS: Good afternoon, good evening. My name is Jaleesa Matthews; I am the Dean of Students at Anacostia Elementary School. Our students deserve a quality education; that's what we've promised, that's what we're providing and that's what we have to continue past this school year. We are backing our families, they want AMC. Our students deserve AMC. And our scores received today let us know that we are capable and up for the task. Our families and students believe in what we have provided them thus far. Extending to AMC means that we can follow our children past 3rd grade, we can follow them past 8th grade, we can follow them past 12th grade into college. I am not dismissing what the
community members have to say, but I cannot and will not dismiss what my family and my students want, what they deserve and what they need. Transparency, this is my transparency; we've had zero suspensions at AEC last year; thus far this year we have had zero suspensions at AEC and today we received our PMF score of 90.2 percent. (Applause.) I stand with opening AMC. Our community needs it, our children deserve it. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. (Applause.) Sir?

MR. DUCKWORTH: Good evening. My name is Stephen Duckworth. I would like to start by thanking you all for holding this hearing this evening. I am a Special Education teacher and I'm very concerned about the duplicity here; I'm hearing two very opposed perspectives about this new school, and I want to start with the people who have the signs because I do understand that
it's somewhat disingenuous not to take into consideration how the building would affect their lives. And I know that that's a real issue in a lot of schools and it's so very concerning to me when people don't want a school in their neighborhood because it's a problem. But as an educator I understand the proponents of the school because I've been in DC for ten years and I know DC is a very hard city and any school that has opportunities for the students to really get an advantage after high school and middle school, and high school and after, it's very serious and it's an opportunity that I shouldn't disregard as an educator and I don't think we should disregard as residents in the District of Columbia. Again, I don't think it's fair to disregard or to be disingenuous to the people who are living in close proximity to where the school would be, but as an educator I understand that statistics and data with the PARCC exam, it may look a certain way but when you actually go into the classroom every day, you realize it takes time and the
environment, the actual school environment makes
a huge difference for the children. And so even
if their scores are low, this new facility may
actually increase their scores just because the
environment does have bearing on their
performance. So I just want to encourage
everybody to take into consideration these things
and really look inside yourself as we make a
judgement about this new school.

Thank you for the opportunity to

speak.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

(Applause.)

You press the button.

MS. JOYNER: My name is Andrea. I'm
about DC Prep, I'm on Rocketship. I'm talking
about them. I do love the school, my kids have
been here for four years since they've been open.
But I have a major concern on something that
happened about three weeks that I feel like have
not been put to recommendation of doing what's
supposed to be done. My kid was in aftercare,
the school was closed that Friday and basically
I'm hearing six different stories that a guy came
up here that did not have a kid, to come to the
school and was about to walk out with both of my
kids. Like I said, I heard six different stories
from six different people. I don't know what to
believe and I was thinking that this was a reason
to get better in schools and things to be better
with the kids taking care of more. And right now
I feel like I've been in a way thrown under the
bus because I don't feel like my situation has
been taken care of. I was supposed to be getting
a meeting for two weeks now and this is going on
the third week and I have not got that meeting
yet. And I feel like safety is a big concern on
behalf when it comes to my kids. The guy that
came up to the school was a child molester, he
did this act at a number of Maryland schools and
it really concerns me because my kids has already
been molested this year by another guy. So I'm
up here to talk on my kids' behalf and I feel
like things need to be more better with safety
when it comes to the school building.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MS. JOYNER: Thank you.

(Applause.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Ma'am, before you -- sorry, I just want to make sure if there's someone at Rocketship who can address -- or Rashida, someone -- Rashida, you can meet with her just to make sure that we're addressing whatever the situation is.

MR. PACOS: I can speak to the situation with that happened. The situation did happen with an aftercare provider that we had. The situation was fortunately stopped by our office manager, the students were not allowed to leave the building, the individual was arrested and he's currently being prosecuted. There was actually a hearing today, so the child did not leave the premise. But mom is 100 percent right, we have to do a strong job of making sure children are safe; that's our first response. This situation our aftercare provider did not
follow appropriate procedures and we were lucky that a staff member did stop the situation, contact our resource officer and the gentleman was arrested on site. So that's how we handled it. I clearly need to do some initial follow-up with mom, Ms. Joyner, to address the situation.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. And if we could just make sure that we close this out with our staff as well so we can understand what the final resolution is here and anything that you'll be doing differently moving forward.

MR. PACOS: Absolutely.

CHAIR CRUZ: Good. Thank you, ma'am. So one last round of public comment for anyone. I believe there's at least one individual that would like to join us at the desk, and then we'll move onto inviting some of our staff up to share some of the public hearing items.

Ma'am?

PARTICIPANT: Good afternoon. I thank you for the opportunity to speak before you. I
am a resident of Ward 8 and my home let's say is center court, and when I come out to my back porch the school will be the wall there. And just listening to all of the various comments that have been stated, and I think the last gentleman that just spoke with regards to a new facility, I know we did have the meeting in our community and one of the things I had recommended was -- and I don't know if it's even considered -- that there is a school that sits behind Moten Elementary School which used to be Wilkerson, and that facility is vacant. And we were wondering if that is the location that you would consider placing it because it is a school zone, it's set up where as if you place it on Frankford Street, and just coming up here today and looking at all of the chaos that was going on where there was a young lady, because I recorded it, who got out of her car, left her hazards on in the middle of the street, all the other cars were in the center of the street and no one could move. So just thinking about our community, it's already tight
space because you have apartment buildings where
you have residents on both sides, homeowners
parked on the other side, so it just would not be
conducive. I am a very strong proponent of
education, I am a product of the DC public school
system. And living there -- I did go to Moten --
and believe it or not, I understand as a parent I
wouldn't want to have to travel all across town
to take my children to different locations, but
sometimes when you're trying to get your child
where you want them to be, sometimes you have to
do that and sometimes it's not going to always be
easy, but what's in the best interest of that
child, I think that's what you have to do. I
mean, as a product of the DC public schools, I
went to Moten, but I traveled across town to go
to Shaw Junior High School, and then I went onto
Dunbar. And after that, I went on -- of course I
am a college graduate, getting ready to work on
my doctorate at Harvard. So I just think that
with the parents I understand because I am a
proponent.
(Applause.)

And I do want the best for all children, and because it's what they need. But I just think that with the school I do not think that it would be conducive for our neighborhood and it's just -- and I just think that you really should consider that and also consider the suggestion of taking over Wilkerson or considering it as another location versus the Frankford Street location, because I think that it will work to your benefit.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, ma'am.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

MR. PEARSON: Ma'am, I just want to thank you for suggesting that. It wasn't something that had been on our radar, and I'm actually reaching out to the Deputy Mayor right now.

CHAIR CRUZ: Push the button.

MR. DAVY: Hello, good morning. My name is Nelson; I'm a resident of Ward 8. Just wanted to share with you my experience. I moved
to D.C. area around 15 years ago and during that time it wasn't popular, it wasn't even considered an idea to raise a family in D.C. and one of the main concerns was finding education. It was something everyone told me you don't want to move to D.C., the schools are not the best schools. And I decided to stay, I didn't feel like it was necessary to have my family move out of the ward just for schools, and DC Prep provided an alternate and I've been happy ever since. And I also think just to respond to the comments that in other wards the parents and the families they have options, they have several options. In Ward 8 I'm not sure why it's not -- we should be given the same opportunity; it's not fair to have our families have to take our kids across town to a different ward to what we find is quality education. Why can't we live in our community and go to schools -- I understand the concerns, I'm a homeowner in Ward 8 too, I understand the value of property value, but families are not going to want to move to this to an area where
they feel like they can't have options for their
kids to have an education, so.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, sir.

(Applause.)

All right, so I'm going to ask our
staff to go up to present some of the charter
amendments, including the DC Prep.

MS. QUINN: May I have representatives
from AppleTree, please?

Push the button.

MS. MILES: Good evening. I'm Jamie
Miles, the Executive Director and Chief of
Schools for AppleTree.

MR. MCCARTHY: Good morning -- good
afternoon -- good evening. I'm sorry, I'm
confused. I'm Jack McCarthy and I'm Board Chair.

MR. CRAWFORD: Hi, everyone. I'm
Dwight Crawford, Chief Operating Officer for
AppleTree.

MS. QUINN: And I'm Teri Quinn, Senior
Manager of the School Quality and Accountability
Team for the DC Public Charter School Board.
This is a public hearing to discuss AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter Schools amendment request; first, to relocate its AppleTree Southwest campus to a new location effective for school year 2020, 2021 at 475 School Street SW; and secondly, to open a new campus location by school year 2023, '24 at 1000 4th Street SW. Both proposed sites are in Ward 6 and an enrollment ceiling increase is not necessary for this amendment. And obviously we have representatives here to answer any questions you may have.

CHAIR CRUZ: Do you guys have anything you'd like to start off by sharing in addition to what's already in the record?

MS. MILES: Again, I'm Jamie. Thank you so much for having us here today. Just wanted to take a moment to tell you a little more about AppleTree and why we're requesting this move. As you know, AppleTree has a long history in the Southwest community. Our first early childhood education campus was founded in 2001,
about 20 years ago at the Riverside Baptist Church at 680 I Street SW. Since that time we've educated over 1,300 students, primarily from the Southwest community. We have been doing this job for a very long time, again, almost 20 years and we do it very well. Due to redevelopment in the area the school at the Riverside Baptist Church eventually had to be relocated to the Jefferson Middle School campus and we have modulars there. And as I'm sure you are aware, we were unable to come to an agreement with the city this past school year, so we had to put our school on pause, so we're no longer open in the Southwest community. And that left us very disappointed, that left our families very disappointed. We have 108 families who do not have a school to attend this particular school year. But the good news is it's not over; we are here seeking your approval that we'll be able to open a new site at 475 School Street SW. And also as we think ahead and we plan, as I said we work really hard, we educate students very well, we are going to
continue to grow, we're going to continue to thrive. And we're hoping that within the next three to four years we'll be able to open an additional site at 1000 4th Street SW. But first starting with the School Street location, we'll be co-tenants with another charter school. AppleTree will be on the lower level and the other school will be on the remaining floors in that building. It's going to be a complete renovation of the building, so a bright, welcoming, warm environment to welcome our earliest learners into a building. Speaking of the location at 1000 4th Street, again this is years to come, but we're planning ahead and we're thinking ahead; this is our Waterfront Station and we're in agreement with P.N. Hoffman. Most of the building will be residential and AppleTree schools will be on the ground floor along with some other retail uses. And School Street, again, will be a wonderful development, a wonderful school, will be bright, open and welcoming for the students.
We're excited by the opportunity to open and run both schools. As I mentioned earlier, we have a history of operating schools, not only just operating them, we are Tier 1 schools and we operate them, and we want to continue to do that for years to come. And we know with this new increase and being able to open two additional schools, we'll be able to continue to grow and meet the needs of the students and the families in the Southwest community. We know parents and students will take great delight and pride in being able to walk into two brand new school buildings, one next year and one in future years.

Again, thank you very much for your time.

I'll take any questions that you may have.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. We'll open it up to our board.

MEMBER SHELTON: Good evening. I'm a proud resident of Ward 6 right there at the
Waterfront Metro, so I appreciate hearing that you all are thinking ahead in terms of location. Can you for the good of the group just walk through the community engagement that you've done so far, and what has been the community response in Ward 6 to the engagement that you had?

MS. MILES: So first we reached out to our ANC commissioners, we're just making them aware of going into the community and opening and re-establishing ourselves in the community. In addition, we have an amazing recruitment team and they spend Saturdays walking up and down the streets talking with families, knocking on doors, sharing with them. We're giving out flyers, we're giving out postcards to share with our families that we're coming back into the community -- wherever they are in this little thing here -- so it just says, "AppleTree area around the public charter schools Southwest community, and we ask that the families show their support, sign off on those, as well as we have signature cards that we received. So we
have about a little over 350 of residents who are interested in returning to the Southwest community or being a part of our expansion in the Southwest community. We've also been in churches in the southwest community sharing with them what's happening, inviting them to be a part of the community and engaging with us, as well as recently hosted a reception for the community, just a thank you for those families who stuck by us because even though we were on pause we had about 100 families who stayed on the wait list and really refused to go anywhere, so we wanted to thank them for sticking through this with us, but also letting them know that we're coming back and being able to share a little bit about the opening of our new schools.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: In terms of the density of that neighborhood, in the school have you done outreach to families that are there who have children that would be aging into the school?

MS. MILES: Yes. So again, we engage
with all families in the community.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Good. And then in terms of the construction for the 1000 4th Street location what is the proposed timeline of that?

MS. MILES: So right now we're saying '22, '23, but it's so far out, honestly, whether anything could happen, and it could be a little beyond the '22, '23 school year. But right now we're looking at the '22, '23 school year.

MEMBER GANJAM: Can you tell us a little bit more about the co-location plan? I understand you'll be co-locating with a high school and the needs of high school students are quite different than the needs of pre-school students, so what are you thinking around that?

MS. MILES: Yes, so safety is number one priority. So there'll be separate entrances and exits for the building, as well as access. So basically one side of the building you will enter in as AppleTree, and then the other side of the building will be the other charter school in which they can go up into the other parts of the
building. But there will be no interaction with
the high school students and the early childhood
students in the building based on the way they
exit and enter.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: In terms of the
growing need you receive for early childhood
seats in Ward 4, can you just talk about the
analysis you've done there that gives you
evidence that that's correct?

MS. MILES: Yes. So one, just
starting with the families that we've talked to
and looking at our waiting list and the number of
families we constantly enroll in our community.
But also the Deputy Mayor of education, his
facilities plan he's released, the mayor's plan
that they released over the city, and as you just
look around the Southwest community, the amount
of properties that are being built in the area
shows that there's a need. But most importantly,
the facilities plan that looks at the number of
residents in the community as well as the babies
that they'll be having in the future, and the
area is what we sort of built that around.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Just for the record, can you tell us what your wait list is, the closest schools, the closest AppleTree to these new locations?

MS. MILES: So at last check, at one point it was right around 100 families that stayed around on the waiting list at that time. And again, those families did go other places, but we announced that they were closing, they stayed with us until we absolutely could not receive them.

MEMBER SHELTON: And is there any discussion about Jefferson and any space being available once they reopen?

MS. MILES: No, the lease was expired, it's not renewed and that discussion was closed at the table.

MEMBER SHELTON: That discussion was with who?

MS. MILES: Deputy Mayor of Education, Jefferson Middle School, some other individuals
from DC Public Schools. And yes, that discussion came to a quick halt.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Given the conversation about facilities this evening, I would love for you to share a little bit about your partnership with the developer. Is that another avenue that clearly we need to be pursuing or the church schools need to be pursuing?

MR. MCCARTHY: At 475 School Street?

CHAIR CRUZ: Mm-hmm.

MR. MCCARTHY: This is a property that's being developed with Building Hope and Richard Wright, so we are a sub-tenant of Richard Wright. It is an opportunity to take a building that is in the Federal Center neighborhood, so it's just over the highway from Southwest. And to completely renovate a building that's not in service right now to make it available to students in a place that's close to Metro and that is safe close to -- there's a police station nearby. And the Departments of Education, NASA,
HHS are all nearby, and there are many district residents who work in those agencies. So we see this as an opportunity to develop a brand new, beautiful space in a location with a developer that has a track record of success and making space available for charter schools in a timely manner where it can have a great respect.

MEMBER SHELTON: Just to go back to the facilities conversation that you had with the city; was there an alternate location proposed for you to co-locate?

MR. MCCARTHY: No.

CHAIR CRUZ: Any other questions from the board?

We'll have another session for public comment in a while.

All right, great. Thank you. This will be up for vote next -- in November.

(Applause.)

MS. QUINN: May I have representatives from DC Prep, please?

MS. MAESTAS: Good evening. I'm Laura
Maestas and I'm the CEO of DC Prep.

MS. DAVY: I'm Nicole Davy; I'm a board member at DC Prep, as well as a parent and a resident of Ward 8.

MR. ZUBARIO-AMAFILLO: Neil Zubario-Amafillo, I'm the Chief of Staff at DC Prep.

MS. LAWSON: Emily Lawson, founder and former CEO, and member of the board of DC Prep.

MS. QUINN: This is a public hearing to discuss DC Preparatory Public Charter Schools amendment request to open its previously authorized sixth campus, DC Prep Anacostia Middle School at 2501 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE in Ward 8, effective for school year 2020, '21.

This is a former Burnie Elementary School building, effective July 1st, 2020 to June 30th, 2022 DC Prep will lease the proposed facility directly from Building Pathways. In school year 2020/2021 DC Prep Anacostia Middle School will educate approximately 81 students in 4th grade and in school year 2021/'22 the school will educate about 150 students in 4th and 5th grade.
After that the school will continue to add a grade each year until it reaches maturation. It is unclear at this time whether the school will be able to stay at the Burnie site after school year 2021/'22, but representatives from the school are obviously here to answer any questions you may have.

CHAIR CRUZ: Great, thank you. We obviously have a number of things to talk about. I'd love for us to start with any opening remarks specific to the amendment that's before us and that we'll vote on in November. And then would love to pivot to some of the public testimony from this evening as well.

MS. MAESTAS: Great, sounds good.

Good evening, Chairman Cruz, members of the board, Mr. Pearson, and members of the PCSB team. I'm Laura Maestas; I'm the CEO of DC Prep, a public charter school that serves more than 2,000 students from pre-school through 8th grade. Our five schools are located in Wards 5, 7 and 8 and all of our schools are Tier 1. We
are proud to have the highest percentage of
students who scored proficient or better on PARCC
of all the school networks of Washington D.C.
What we wanted to share with you tonight is that
we open schools slowly, we open schools
deliberately. We're now on our 17th year and we
have five campuses. Because we know that the
reason to open a school is because you have
something of value to offer. And that happens
when your schools are strong, when your students
are thriving academically and cognitively and you
build trust and connection with the families that
you serve. And that's what's happening at
Anacostia Elementary campus, because while our
Anacostia Elementary campus is in our fifth year,
we've been serving the families of Ward 8 since
our earliest days at our Edgewood and Benning
campuses. We now serve more than 560 Ward 8
students across our five DC Prep schools with
about half of those students attending our AEC
campus. Our program model is to serve students
from pre-school through 8th grade, followed by
ten years of high school and college counseling. With nearly 600 graduates we have evidence that this approach works, 97 percent of our alumni go on to graduate from high school; even more impressively our students are graduating from college at three times the rate of their peers nationally. This is the program model that we promised our Anacostia Elementary families in which they expect us to deliver. We are well on our way. Anacostia Elementary has been a Tier 1 school each year since it opened. On the school quality report that was released this morning AEC earned 90.2 out of 100 points, making it one of the highest performing public charter schools in the city. We are particularly proud of AEC's results as it demonstrates how incredibly capable at-risk students are when given access to a strong school community. As you know, 68 percent of AEC students are considered to be at risk and with your approval we can say yes to our families who want their children to attend a DC Prep middle school here in Ward 8. We've secured a
two-year lease on 2501 MLK and a letter of support from the 8C ANC. We're committed to addressing the need identified in the recent DC Policy Center's research paper on the lack of access that Ward 7 and 8 families have to strong middle school options.

And I want Ms. Davy, one of our parent board members, to speak next.

MS. DAVY: As a DC Prep board member, a resident of Ward 8 and a parent of a 2nd grader at Anacostia Elementary School, I'm here tonight to ask for your support for our application to open Anacostia Middle campus at 2501 MLK. My son Nixon has been a student at DC Prep Anacostia Middle campus since its inaugural year in 2015 and has been one of the decisions we've made. I was impressed with DC Prep's record of academic excellence and was excited about options for quality education in our neighborhood. And AEC has exceeded my expectations. I'm confident when I drop my son off at school, I know he's safe, that he's surrounded by caring, dedicated staff,
challenged with a rigorous curriculum, and where
developing socially and emotionally is just as
important as academic growth. It is evident in
the skills my son possesses and the progress made
over the years, how he speaks and listens to
others, how he perseveres, how he advocates for
himself, how he contributes to group activities,
and his ability to manage his emotions. I
believe the Public Charter School Board should
approve our application to open ANC to help
fulfill the promise made to us parents by DC Prep. Help us keep our children in a familiar
environment where the expectations are known,
where a strong community has been built, where
our kids thrive. Please allow our children to
attend a school with proven results in our
neighborhood of Anacostia.

MS. MAESTAS: As a public charter
school network we don't have access to city-owned
school buildings. Finding a building or the
space to build one is incredibly time-consuming
and challenging and has the potential to
introduce challenging community dynamics. Even people who are supportive of strong schools may not always want a strong school to be located in a particular place. Given that and the fact that schools should and must be part of a larger community, I want to speak directly to the importance of community engagement and community support. The application that we're asking you to consider tonight focuses on 2501 MLK Jr. Avenue SE; if approved we would open Anacostia Middle campus in the basement of that school in space that is not being used by Excel for two years. As I shared in my opening statement, we have served Ward 8 families from our earliest days as a single site school. Since 2015 when we opened AEC, we have worked to engage a broader range of Ward 8 community leaders, including the ANC's in 8A, the previous and current Ward 8 council member, the Ward 8 State Board of Ed representative, our immediate neighbors on V Street, including both the parishioners of Saint Theresa and those who live in the single-family
homes on our block, and Commander Wright and the
MPD officers of 7D. We have been involved in
efforts to raise awareness of, push for solutions
to gun violence in Ward 8, including attending
the Ward 8 Education Council, supporting the Ward
8 Safe Passage Initiatives, hosting a community
safety walk with city and local leaders, hosting
a community event with Secretary Duncan, and
organizing a spring cleanup with Anacostia's
Business Improvement District.

Specific to our application tonight,
we have worked to engage the Ward 8C community by
presenting to the Ward 8 ANC's Executive
Committee, presenting at a Ward 8C7 single member
community meeting and presenting to the Ward 8C
ANC meeting. We've obtained a letter of support
from the 8C ANC to open ANC -- that's a lot of
acronyms -- at 2501 MLK Street SE. We have not
heard concerns from the 8C community with respect
to this application, 2501 MLK beyond concerns
that supporting a charter school could draw
resources away from district middle schools.
However, the ANC who raised that concern ultimately voted in favor of providing a letter of support for our application tonight. We are committing to strengthening our connection to the 8C community, we will continue to attend 8C ANC meetings to keep on top of the needs, interests and concerns of the 8C community and we will continue to reach out to Commissioner Edwards-Hines. We know that engaging the community in the immediate vicinity of the school is complicated by the state of the transition the Barry Farms community is experiencing, but we hope that outreach to some of the nearby congregations, like Matthews Memorial will help us to form strong and lasting partnerships with the community. I also want to be up front about where we are in efforts to secure a permanent location. Do you want me to speak about that now or should I hold on that?

CHAIR CRUZ: Let's get any board questions on the specific amendment and with respect to Burnie, and then I very much want you
both to make a statement there. And I'm sure we also have questions.

    MS. MAESTAS: Great.
    MEMBER SHELTON: Good evening.
    MS. MAESTAS: Good evening.
    MEMBER SHELTON: So I was going into the series of questions that I generally ask about community engagement, but clearly based on the outreach that we've heard here tonight and the emails that we've received and conversations that we've had and other ways and forms that people have engaged with us, we know that community engagement in terms of the issue that is not up for discussion tonight in terms of what we are going to vote on next month. But what will be discussed is an issue, we know that. So my question to you tonight would be, in relation to -- and I'm going to actually pivot once you give the response, but pivot to the larger issue that we're seeing play out here -- my question to you is you've had the contact with the AMC in relation to Burnie -- in terms of the engagement
that you've had so far with the residents who are
at the new construction at Frankford -- is that
the right street?

CHAIR CRUZ: Frankford.

MEMBER SHELTON: Can you very briefly
-- if anyone else on the team can very briefly
speak to some of the issues that were brought up
tonight, and we can talk about the outcome, et
ce tera. I would love to have some feedback on
that as well. But in terms of what has
transpired in the last two months, if you can
just give a brief overview of what that
engagement has looked like, the concerns that
were brought up here tonight, but also to any
other concerns or questions that have been
brought up in other exchanges.

MS. MAESTAS: Sure. The issues that
I made a note of to address tonight -- let me
just look at my notes -- they're issues regarding
traffic, regarding parking, regarding litter,
regarding loitering, communication with us and
whether or not people are feeling hurt and that
their concerns are being addressed, the fact that we would be locating the school close in physical proximity to the neighbors. Then there were other concerns about whether we've been up front about whether we have closed on the property, there are concerns about whether we would be able to be located somewhere else. So should I just start going through them?

MEMBER SHELTON: No, so I think we're good on knowing what the issues are.

MS. MAESTAS: Mm-hmm.

MEMBER SHELTON: Can you walk us through what you've done to mitigate some of those concerns, be it anything in terms of constant communication with the ANC and/or other representatives in the community, if you could give feedback on where you currently stand in terms of the purchase of that property? Can you give us feedback on -- I'm going to go ahead and skip ahead to this -- if you were able to stay at Burnie beyond the two-year lease and you purchase this property, what would then happen to the
property that you purchase?

MS. MAESTAS: So I met with Mr. Gaston around August 30th. We found out about the property on -- I'm going to get to your question very quickly, I promise -- but just to give you some context -- so our original goal when we moved to AEC was to have a single site where we would be able to have our elementary school and our middle school in one location, and we were not able to do that. And so we wound up in the situation where we had to be in trailers beyond the big chair for a few years. Then eventually we were able to open our elementary campus over on V Street which is a beautiful building, but we're not able to put a middle school there, right. And so we've been looking for many years to find a site that is big enough, that we can actually afford, and that is large enough for a school with like 45,000 square feet of interior space. We've been looking for properties that are within a mile of our AEC campus in order to address the concern that families are going to
have multiple drop-offs and pick-ups. We found
out about the Frankford Street property in the
middle of July and we reached out to the seller
and put down a deposit that would allow us to be
able to conduct diligence on the site. We have
not purchased the site; if we do purchase the
site that would happen in December.

MEMBER SHELTON: When you say if you
were to purchase the site, have you already
entered an agreement and you would be closing in
December or you would be moving forward with
purchasing the property in December? Would you
close in December or would you be moving forward
in the process of purchasing the property?

MS. MAESTAS: We would be closing in
December.

MEMBER SHELTON: So you --

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MEMBER SHELTON: Excuse me -- ladies
and gentlemen, because one, I appreciate everyone
being respectful tonight, I appreciate all the
comments that were made this evening. The reason
I'm going through this line of questioning is so that you can get answers to your questions. The other piece of this is I would like to also bring some other things to the table for us to have discussions, but at the end of the day let's not be disrespectful, let's conduct ourselves in a way that we will be able to have a thoughtful conversation around this, okay?

So my next question -- which thank you very much for your honesty -- I think at the end of the day people just want folks to be honest, to be respectful, to know that their concerns have been heard and they are being respected. As of right now, clearly by the demonstration here, that is not how people have felt. What I will say is to the folks that are here, protesting this location, that is not what we will be voting on next month, right. We're all on agreement on that. Understood.

So the question that I asked to the previous school that was up here about the conversation that they had with the Deputy Mayor,
whether or not there was any opportunity for them
to go back into the location they were in before,
and other questions that I will ask of this group
in terms of whether or not other opportunities to
go into existing school buildings have been
presented to them. Because what I would love to
do is to have everyone that is here right now be
very thoughtful about how they can engage with
the city to be thoughtful about how they provide
facilities for schools. So question to you all,
have you had conversations with the city to think
about what other options and opportunities there
are to go into existing buildings, so if the
purchase is not necessary you don't have to move
forward in that?

MS. MAESTAS: Yes, so I've had this
conversation with the Deputy Mayor on multiple
occasions. I've also had this conversation with
Commissioner Gaston, like repeatedly. Mr. Gaston
knows very well that I have said on many
occasions, I have said in front of everyone
basically here -- I see lots of familiar faces --
that I would be very, very happy to have another location. And if there were the opportunity to remain at Burnie, we would be thrilled, we would happily stay there. And I have shared that with Commissioner Austin who is the ANC commissioner for 8C. We have explored Wilkinson; I'm told that Wilkinson is not a possibility because the Deputy Mayor has tagged that site for the Infrastructure Academy.

(Off-microphone comments.)

It's a job-training program as far as I know. But I would be thrilled. And so what I've communicated after the Martha's Table meeting, Commissioner Gaston and I sat down and I said, "Look, I definitely hear the feedback from the community that many members of the immediate community would prefer not to have a school there and I would love to figure out a way so that I can go somewhere else." So I pitched we can go back to our board, we can talk about how long we can delay our process, and if we're able to identify another site, we would resell the
property, but we're not going to be able to
identify -- my understanding is if there is any
possibility of being able to turn up another
location, it will not be known until after the
end of the calendar year. And so the challenge
that we face is if we do not have access to a
district facility, then we have no option.

MEMBER SHELTON: When you say you have
no options, is there the opportunity or
possibility of co-locating with another school?

MS. MAESTAS: We have asked about that,
as well. I flagged that for the deputy mayor. I
said I would be very glad to consider it. The
schools that we were brainstorming that would
kind of be within an appropriate vicinity did not
sound like they would be feasible prospects, for
a host of reasons. But if that were possible,
then I would be very glad to explore that.

MEMBER SHELTON: Have you had an
opportunity to go with your ANC Austin, the ANC
from Burnie, and the council member from the
ward, have you been able to go in to talk with
the deputy mayor about a collective idea of how they could help to rectify this issue?

    MS. MAESTAS: I would be very glad to do that. We have not had that conversation as a group.

    MEMBER SHELTON: So my suggestion tonight is that tomorrow the collective representatives of the community, along with the ANCs, along with you and you and your board, find ways and times and options and opportunities to go to the elected officials who are part of the process of identifying facilities. This board, and I'm going to be very transparent, I'm going to be exceptionally blunt, and I'm going to just say this as matter-of-factly as possible.

    The city is well aware of the concerns that operators such as yourself, such as KIPP, such as Achievement Prep, all of the operators have concerns about facilities. At the end of the day, the children that we are collectively, DCPS and the Charter School Board, are trying to educate via our LEAs, are really and truly being
hindered by an uncoordinated effort to figure out where children can go.

So while it makes all the sense that you all would be here to advocate, to have your voices heard, and we need to see that -- I think everyone on this dais up here is in agreement with the idea of if this is an issue for your community, we should be willing to hear that out and find ways to rectify that.

But in terms of the issue of facilities, knowing that there are DCPS schools that are under-enrolled, they are now trying to find funding to close budgetary gaps, and knowing that there is space and opportunity, especially with buildings that are sitting vacant, that are dilapidated and have tons of resources in terms of where students can go, we need to eliminate whether or not that has anything to do with traditional or charter public schools, but where are we serving our children best.

(Applause.)

MEMBER SHELTON: There is no reason
that we should have members of this community,
albeit it was very respectful -- there should not
be people standing up here with signs and
fighting each other about where a school will or
will not go. I've been on this board for nearly
two years, and the idea of having people have
animosity towards each other in their own board,
and then against schools who are doing the work
that we know that DCPS has not been doing over
the last 20 years, I'm beyond frustrated.

(Applause.)

MS. MAESTAS: We hear you.

MEMBER SHELTON: The line of
questioning that I asked to the representatives
from AppleTree was deliberate and to drive home
the point that at the end of the day, telling a
school or telling an operator that they will no
longer be able to sit into a facility that is
being what? It's being renovated, is not full,
and could house not only that school, but
additional space for other schools? How are we
not only thinking co-location, but also
collaboration between our charters and our public schools?

So what I would encourage all of you to do, specifically for you and your school and this community, is to figure out how you can get this board, these school leaders, and the leaders of your community in front of your elected officials to put pressure on them to find ways to resolve this issue.

(Applause.)

MEMBER SHELTON: Now I know that I have used up a lot of time and we're going to be here fairly late, but at the end of the day, the fact that we spend our time thinking about adult issues and whether or not someone believes in children or doesn't, or believes in a school or doesn't, at the end of the day we know that there are schools that are not serving them, there are schools who want to. There are communities who are caught in the middle because they cannot have a thorough and deliberate picture of where schools are going to be located. That is unfair
to y'all, that's unfair to y'all, and it's damn sure unfair to us.

I don't like sitting here seeing our communities fight over simple things that we could have the people we elected figure out. I don't know if we're going to take a bio break anytime soon, but I would encourage you all to find ways, because I know that you all have been having conversations. And I know, and I respect how frustrated you all are. You had brand new property built, and what you don't want to have is a school in your backyard.

Rocketship just had that issue how many years ago? How many? Exactly. So why are we fighting these same battles when schools exist? I'm done.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

(Applause.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Ms. Shelton.

Questions from other board members? Otherwise, I know I have a few. Go ahead.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: One question that's
come up already with the community is this
feeling that this is not a school for them,
because it appears that the spaces that will be
at the new campus will essentially be reserved
for kids who are coming from AEC. I'll also add
I am your neighbor to AEC across the street. I
do think the process that happened at AEC was
much better than this process, and so I would
encourage you to go back to that process because
we were brought in much earlier than I think the
community here has been brought in.

But back to my original question, I
mean, it does appear that we need to have a
conversation about what the school looks like
with regards to the people whose potential
children could go there and feel like they won't
be able to go there, which I can imagine is
frustrating.

MS. MAESTAS: Yeah, so to be clear, we
accept any student who participates in the
lottery, right. So anybody in the city who wants
to attend a D.C. prep school can apply for the
lottery, you know, and hopefully they will get in. We current --

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: You have a transfer preference, though, for the kids who will be from AEC.

MS. MAESTAS: Yes, yes. We serve 560 kids who currently live in Ward 8, and I think 137 of them who live in 8B. So we are serving, like, this community, and --

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: But I think the question is, like, numerically if I did not go to AEC, how many spaces are actually available for kids who did not go to AEC?

MS. MAESTAS: Yeah, we also do take number of students in fourth and fifth grade and sixth grade, as well. But I would say it is much, much easier to be able to attend Anacostia Middle School if we're able to open it than if you have attended Anacostia Elementary Campus. The way that our model works is, like every strong school, the quality of education builds year after year. So if you look at our results
for our seventh and eighth graders, they are by far the strongest, because the longer our students are with us, the better they do.

So that's the way that we believe that we can best deliver on our mission, is to have students with us for a long time.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: So I think you're probably familiar with my feeling that that's a wonderful idea. Public schools should be taking kids to the maximum capacity that they can. So I would just highly encourage you, as I've encouraged all of our CMOs that have similar feeding patterns, to open up as many seats as possible. Because while that is great and it appears to work very well for your model, the ideal is to get as many seats as possible available in your school to kids who haven't necessarily been with you the entire time.

MS. MAESTAS: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Other questions from the board? So can we just spend a moment on Burnie as the option that you have for the next two
years, or at least that's what you're asking us.

What is preventing that from being a long-term option?

MS. MAESTAS: So Excel has a lease on the space now. They are the primary occupant. Their lease is ending. They are supposed to be moving out of that building. Until such time as, like, the Excel community has a home, there is no real certainty about what will happen with that school. So from our perspective, like, we understand that there are things that need to play out within DCPS, within the mayor's office with building pathways, who has the lease from DGS. We are waiting to see what ultimately happens as to where Excel will be located.

MS. LAWSON: Can I just add -- I spent a lot of time on this when I was still working at D.C. Prep. We at D.C. Prep would be very interested in staying at Burnie, and so we would be ready to sign a long-term lease immediately, at any time someone brings us a reasonable lease. So in my opinion, just speaking as a board
member, it's just politics. No one is willing to stand up and say that Excel should move and we should be able to be there. So we've just been waiting. We've been waiting for, I don't know, a year and a half on this.

CHAIR CRUZ: Excel is a school of far more grades and students than you all. If their lease has ended or is ending, they've got to be engaged in the same set of conversations about where they're going to go.

MS. MAESTAS: So I'm supposed to be meeting with DCPS within the next few weeks. I'm just waiting on them. I've, like, opened up my schedule entirely to talk about what their plans are for that school, because as soon as there is any clarity around what will happen with the school, that will allow us to be able to plan, and probably us and others, right? Because we wouldn't even need the full space. So I think we're all just waiting to see what's going to unfold in DCPS's planning.

MEMBER SHELTON: Who is going with you
to that meeting with DCPS?

    MS. MAESTAS: From --

    MEMBER SHELTON: I can't go. I highly encourage you to demonstrate that there is political cover because there is a desire to collaboratively think about this. So it can't just be you. It needs to be you and members of the community. You and other people going and putting pressure on people to say we do not need to have people fighting about where folks are going to be located.

    We would like to see how we can think through this and use that as a model for other ways to think through it. We are having individual and siloed conversations, and folks are nervous about making moves and doing things that unfortunately disrupt what happens with children. So while I'm glad that you're going to have that conversation, that isolated conversation doesn't -- There is no public forum other than council for us to have this dialogue, right?
MS. MAESTAS: I hear you, and I respect the --

MEMBER SHELTON: Yes. There is no dialogue, there is no open meeting, there is no transparency discussion with the Deputy Mayor for Education. There is none. So I highly encourage you to take the members of the community that would like to see this resolved with you when you go have that meeting. That show of public support and pressure will shift that conversation.

Again, we're having siloed and individual conversations that are held in people's offices and in conference rooms where we are now having a conversation that has absolutely nothing to do with what we're going to vote on next month, nothing. And I'm saying this Because you and I were going to have a conversation and I said I don't want to talk to you one on one. I want to have this publicly. You have to have this conversation with other members of the community, asking the members of the elected,
asking them to think through this with you all.

We can't keep having siloed conversations. And this isn't me berating you, please know that. Know that this is not about how you did or didn't do. We, people are showing up and saying what has and hasn't happened. We can't go back and change that, but what we can do is think about how to do this differently. At the end of the day, everybody that is in this room has the ability to go to their council member, go with their ANC, go to the Deputy Mayor for Education and essentially go to the mayor and say you want to see a dedicated plan and idea of how we're going to address this issue, because this can't keep coming up year after year. It's not fair to kids. And I'm going to be quiet. I'm tired.

MS. MAESTAS: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim?

MEMBER SANDMAN: It sounds as if the closing date on the Frankford property is going to be well before you know whether the Burnie
property will be available to you. Is that right?

MS. MAESTAS: That is true.

MEMBER SANDMAN: What is your incentive to continue to pursue the Burnie property once you own the Frankford property?

MS. MAESTAS: So it would be phenomenally easy -- Well, one, it's closer to AEC than -- Well, number one, I wouldn't have a whole bunch of people who are really angry with me. I'm really invested in not having a whole bunch of people who are really angry with me. So that's, like, number one consideration. Number two, it would be less expensive. Number three, it would be closer for our families. Number four, it would, like, prevent us from having the disruption of moving from one location to another. I would be thrilled to stay at Burnie, thrilled.

MEMBER SANDMAN: What are you going to do with the Frankford property once you own it?

MS. MAESTAS: I've offered to Mr.
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Gaston that we could put together a committee of members from the community. We could identify a set of criteria, and we could use that criteria in order to identify a purchaser who would be more embraced by the community. I think we would have to figure out the terms of, like, exactly what that would look like, but that was a conversation that Commissioner Gaston and I had in late August.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: To that point, just so we can keep full transparency, if you do not renew at Burnie, you will be constructing something. So can you talk through what that would look like for the benefit of folks in the room? And in terms of what that would entail for a school to open in '20-'21? Not in '20-'21, at the end of the two years, after the Burnie lease is up.

MS. MAESTAS: So if we are in the position where we end up needing to move forward with the Frankford Street site. You're asking what it would involve in terms of, like, when we
would start?

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: What would your construction plans be?

MS. MAESTAS: I believe that we will have more information about what may or may not be a possibility in terms of co-location, in terms of, like, district space, sometime early in the spring. That would allow us to be able to, like, have as much information as possible. We would delay all of our processes on moving forward with, like, the components of construction that would prevent us from being able to, like, stop, until after that point in time.

We would obviously need permission from the PCSB before that, and we would try -- I've offered to Commissioner Gaston to put together a committee of members from the community to come together and figure out what are all of the concerns that we have. What are the things that we would be able to solve together, and to basically have a working group.
If that was something that the members of the community would be interested in, then that's what we would want to do to figure out how we could make this as accountable as possible for the concerns of the community.

Did that answer your question, or were you asking something else?

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: I think so. I mean, I'm just trying to get as much information as possible for people who will have construction happening very, very close to their homes, so exactly when the construction would be happening I think would be helpful.

MS. MAESTAS: Yeah. So we anticipate that, like, the permits and the building, you know, we would need to allocate at least 18 months for that process. If we need to be able to open the school, like, you know, in June, we would want it to be ready in June of '22. So we would try and, like, kind of get really started in earnest 18 months before that.

CHAIR CRUZ: Did you have another
question?

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: January 2021?

CHAIR CRUZ: I know you're trying to get a meeting with DCPS. You've spoken to the DME. Has there been a timeline confirmed for you for when a decision around Burnie, beyond the two years, will be delivered? So when we talk about if there are other options in the spring, do you have any confidence that there will be a decision one way or the other by the spring? Not just working on your timeline, Because I know you were thinking about where would students be in two years and backwards planning from that. Any real signal as to when a decision could potentially be made with respect to Burnie?

MS. MAESTAS: Every timeline that we've had about Burnie has not happened on that timeline. The challenge is, if I had confidence that we would go there, then I would not be going through this, right. I would not be pursuing Frankford Street if I thought that, like, for sure we can go and remain in Burnie. So until
such time as we have confidence, it feels irresponsible to our families who are depending on us to not continue to explore the best possible option, which was Frankford Street.

I believe that I will know, like, significantly more about whether or not Burnie is a long-term possibility in March/April time frame.

MR. PEARSON: Rick, if I could add, that is the time when the city releases their budget, which includes their capital budget. If the city has concrete plans to relocate Excel, I would expect that we would see it in their capital budget in March.

MEMBER SHELTON: How much was the deficit that DCPS had?

MR. PEARSON: $7 million.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, everyone, for your input. Thank you for everyone who's come out to speak both in favor and against some aspects of the plans. There are a number of things we've talked about that we'll be following
up with, as well.

MS. LAWSON: Can I say one thing before we're done? Just to Saba's point about the difference in this process and the AEC process, I mean, I think we have as an organization learned a lot about community engagement over the years. This process I was less closely involved with because I'm on the board, not on staff right now. But everything I understand, everything we tried to do, and our intentions were exactly the same, and that's what's hard about it.

I think in this case, when we saw this listing, we went and looked at the property, and it seemed viable, and there had been no property that seemed viable basically for, like, two and a half years. We would go and look at different properties and they would not be viable for various reasons. So we looked at it and it was viable, but it seemed like there were multiple buyers potentially interested, and they wanted an offer right away. So it was put in an offer, like, immediately.
You put in the offer, and all that really means is you're putting in a piece of paper and maybe you're putting up $50,000.00 as a deposit, but it's non-refundable, so you couldn't get it back. So all you're doing is you're putting in a piece of paper. So we went ahead and put in the piece of paper, and then at that point we said okay, what are all the things we have to do to see if this is viable? What about community engagement? Would the building fit on this site, et cetera?

We were literally just starting that process, I think, when people saw people around and said, what are you doing? Understandably, I'm just trying to explain. Understandably, and so then it was, like, wow, you're doing all this stuff and you hadn't told us about it. Unfortunately, we did not go forward. We didn't have ever a chance to be the first people there to say here's what we're thinking about, here's what we're doing, because it was, like, we had just started to think about it.
So I just wanted to make that point, which is we had tried to start with the same --
We tried to go through the same process, and this time we've kind of been behind the 8-ball, and as a result we have, I think, given off a very different impression of who we are and what we're trying to do than how we think of ourselves.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: And I just would say, as someone who participated in that process, it wasn't just deciding. It was ongoing process. I was there when we talked about the traffic patterns. There was a constant ongoing interaction. We knew when the construction people would be there. We were told in hours. We asked to push it back. Like, there was a really ongoing dialogue, and this is not the start of a good ongoing dialogue. So the extent that this ends up happening, that's the part -- I mean, we've obviously missed the part about deciding, but the part about the ongoing collaboration and discussion can still happen the way it did in my neighborhood.
So if this does happen, which, frankly it doesn't appear that, you know, I think someone said being in a neighborhood where you're not wanted is not really an ideal situation for the kids or the community. So hoping there's some different discussions that happen, but if it does happen, the process that you did with the AEC community I think was a good one to follow.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right, thank you.

Dave?

MEMBER SHELTON: Just one thing. Just for the record, not for you all, not simply and solely for you, but less this and other situations like this be an example of hearing out communities. I recognize that a lot of the conversation that has been had in public forums have been very tense. But being able to lay out what you just laid out, and being honest, up-front and transparent goes a long way. Along with being able to not only rectify, but apologize when people have been aggrieved. So I would encourage whatever discussions that happen
between you and the community going forward,
start with an apology for what has happened thus
far, and thinking about how to move forward.

That's, again, not simply for you all
in your case, which it is applicable, but
thinking about that for all of the operators who
are all trying to do this in the most effective,
efficient, but it's not always at the front of
their thought to do this in a way where people
are truly engaged and respected, and feel that
they have been respected. So putting that at the
forefront of how we all do this work, and being
thoughtful and respectful of the communities that
we are trying to serve. Thank you.

(Applause.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you very much.

Teri, do we want to call KIPP up? Thank you.

MR. PATTERSON: Good evening, everyone.

I'm Jacque Patterson, Chief Community Engagement
and Growth Officer.

MR. SHAH: I'm Saumil Shah. I'm the
Vice President of Planning and Design.
MS. LOVE: Hi, everyone. My name is Mekia Love. I am the Deputy CAO for our elementary schools at KIPP D.C.

MS. QUINN: This is a public hearing to discuss KIPP D.C. public charter schools' amendment request for a grade band expansion and a reconfiguration at its existing Somerset facility in Ward 8, which currently comprises KIPP D.C. Honor Academy, serving grades four through eight, and KIPP D.C. Somerset College Preparatory, which serves grades nine through 12. If approved, beginning in school year 2021, the LEA plans to open an elementary school campus, KIPP D.C. Wheeler Elementary Academy, that will serve students in grades one through four. In that same year, the LEA will reconfigure KIPP D.C. Honor Academy to serve only grades five through eight. Additionally, beginning in school year 2021-22, the school will open an early childhood campus to serve grades Pre-K3 through Kindergarten. This grade expansion and reconfiguration does not require an
enrollment fee increase, and representatives are here to answer your questions.

MR. PATTERSON: Thank you. Good evening, my name is Jacque Patterson, as I said, and I'm the Chief Community Engagement and Growth Officer. As they introduced themselves, I'm joined by Mekia Love, our Deputy CAO for elementary schools, and by Saumil Shah, Vice President for Design and Planning. At KIPP D.C., we believe all students have the right to a rigorous, relevant and joyful learning experience that will empower them to be successful in college, careers and life.

KIPP D.C. operates the most Tier 1 schools of any charter network in the district. Nine of KIPP D.C.'s 10 elementary and early childhood schools are currently Tier 1. KIPP D.C. also has a successful track record of restarts. We are proud of our work restarting Arts and Technology Academy, which was on the verge of closing due to poor performance, but is now also a Tier 1 school.
In December 2018 and February 2019, the PCSB Board approved amendments to D.C. KIPP's Charter to enable KIPP D.C. to restart Somerset Prep. The PCSB approved KIPP D.C. to operate any grades at the Wheeler Road campus. In order to ensure as smooth a transition as possible, we decided to educate students in grades four through 12 at two schools, Honor Academy and KIPP D.C. Somerset College Preparatory.

Over the next seven years, we intend to renovate the campus, add additional grades and classrooms, and transition the high school students to a permanent location in Ward 8. Ultimately, we intend to operate the Wheeler campus as we do our other campuses, serving grades Pre-K3 through eighth grade at one site. We believe that this campus model is in the best interests of students for these three reasons.

First, we want to enable Honor Academy students and their young siblings to attend school at the same location. Second, we are eager to begin working with our students as early
as possible. And third, we want to help offer more seats to students seeking a quality public education near my home ward of Ward 8. In order to expand and serve these grades, we are seeking an amendment to our charter so that it accurately reflects the campus name and grade spans operating at the Wheeler campus. These are conforming amendments since DCPS already approved KIPPs to serve all grades at the campus.

Thank you, and we'll be happy to answer any questions that the board may have.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Any questions from the board?

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Hi. I'd actually just like to hear about your enrollment numbers right now at Somerset, which I understand are lower than projected, and how you think adding these grade spans will affect that. Pretty much every time you're in front of me, I ask about the other high school that you're planning on, so I would like to understand what's going on with the other campus, as well.
MR. SHAH: So I can talk a little bit about the enrollment at Somerset today. So when we were approved to operate Somerset in December, you know, we had sort of limited information about the level of need, the number of students who were actually there. We had last year's enrollment information, but we weren't sort of inside the building. By the time we better understood what the students and families wanted, needed, we decided to actually focus on serving existing students as well as we could.

So at the high school level, grades nine through 12, we set a 80 percent re-enrollment target. We ended up getting about 70 percent. We didn't want to enroll new students at the high school, because high school turnaround is extremely challenging. So we are slightly under target at the high school, but it's because we didn't do too much back-filling there in this particular circumstance.

For Honor Academy, we decided to maintain sort of a homeroom size of two homerooms
across all of the grades. So at the fourth and fifth grade, which were new additions last year, Somerset had previously started at sixth grade. We added two homerooms at our model size, which is about 50, so about 25 per homeroom. We set a target for re-enrollment of 80 percent there, as well, and we did hit our targets at Honor Academy.

So that's the reason. It was sort of intentional that we are a little bit smaller, but we actually saw really strong demand, and we actually have 350 or so students on the wait list right now for both schools at the Wheeler Road campus.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: You have 350 across middle and high school?

MR. SHAH: That's accurate, yes.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: And when do you plan to restart backfilling in the high school?

MR. SHAH: I would say next year I would imagine that we'd be opening to doing that.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Then the other
question was an update on the other high school.

MR. PATTERSON: I really appreciate that question. So currently we have done an exhaustive community engagement process, and we are gearing toward the time that the proposals are due. They'll be due on November 5th. We are putting in a bid for Ferebee Hope, and again, we have been to, and I believe some of the ANCs can testify here -- Almost every single ANC within Ward 8, particular 8E, where it resides, and speaking with the single member district commissioner, Ms. Armstead, we have engaged the community in any way you can specifically talk about.

We've knocked on over 200 doors. We've talked to the council member and the State Board of Education person. So we're very hopeful that after going through the 14th meeting that they'll have November 14th, that we're approved for that.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: For Ferebee Hope?

MR. PATTERSON: For Ferebee Hope, yes,
ma'am.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: I don't have it in front of me, but when you were approved for the new high school there was a discussion in the testimony, which I can get for you, about opening up a number of spaces in the ninth grade so that the new school would not just serve kids who had come from a KIPP K-8. I don't know if anybody's prepared to talk about that commitment tonight, but I just want to make sure that continues to be accurate and funded.

MR. SHAH: Yeah, we do backfill across the board, maybe not at the highest levels of high school because of credit requirements and the complexity of that. But at ninth grade, 10th grade, we do currently backfill. Yeah, so I'll leave it there.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: So it's not backfilling. There was actually a commitment for when the school opened, that spaces would be reserved for kids who had not gone to a KIPP K-8.

MR. SHAH: We can get back to you on
that. I actually don't have the answer to that question.

CHAIR CRUZ: Other questions from the board?

MEMBER CRUSEY: So thank you for this. Given your existing Somerset campuses that were acquired as part of the school turnaround plan, how do you ensure that the proposed grades will maintain highest standard of quality?

MS. LOVE: Hi. Thanks for the question. I'm excited to talk to you about it. We've had a strong start at Honor Academy and at Somerset, so the proposed grades would be elementary, which is my wheelhouse. Some of the things that we've done so far very intentionally -- I just got a chance to visit the school last week -- is that we have a really small school feel, even in the middle school. Students aren't transitioning a lot. They've been very intentional about making relationships with families so that every kid feels known and feels loved, and they have a strong bond and sense of
community and connection.

We've also just made sure that teachers are teaching research-based curriculum. We had a lot of good teachers and staff there, and now they'll benefit from just being a part of our KIPP LEA. We've doubled down on instructional coaches for all of the subject areas, but also we have special education instructional coaches and just robust PD. I'm very proud of the success of our early childhood schools and our elementary schools. We've got two of them that are blue-ribbon schools, and I'm excited for us to explore that possibility with Somerset and with Honor, and with any other grades that we expand to down there at Wheeler.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Thank you. Just related to that, in order to serve at the same high level of quality, will you need to bring on additional staff, or are you going to work with what you already have?

MS. LOVE: Sure. I mean, we always assess what the needs are. So for instance, this
year, we just doubled down on the number of mental health providers, like, across all of our KIPP D.C. schools, but specifically at Somerset. Last year if you were to go to Somerset, we had one principal, but this year we have robust leadership teams because we know restart can be challenging. It's something that we always are continually assessing. Like, what staff and what resources do we need to make our schools excel and to help our teachers thrive?

It's something that, of course, we always look at. Just like we brought in new supports this year, if we need those, like, we will just do whatever is in the students' best needs.

MEMBER GANJAM: We've talked a lot about community engagement this evening. What have you all done in terms of community engagement to explain the plan and the growth?

MR. PATTERSON: Yes, ma'am. In that particular area, we started as soon as we were kind of interested in Somerset. We started
attending ANC 8C meetings, and we were very happy when we came before you that we had their full support and a letter of support from them. At that particular time, they were almost near the end of their term. That was November/December time frame of that year, last year. We went back and we have gone back every single month to talk to them.

We have engaged their single member district ANC, Mr. Salim Adofo, on a regular basis. He is updated and we meet with him on a regular basis. But above and beyond that, we've also, because we knew that the community had a lot of just hard times in the community, so to speak, we're working with Cure the Streets to make sure that not only the building is safe and everything, but also that the community as a whole is safe.

We know there is, and I live in this ward, there are different activities that go on between neighborhoods. So we're trying to make sure that kids are safe back and forth, including
safe passage. KIPP has led that kind of charge throughout the whole city, and getting funding put into Safe Passage. So we continue to do both inside internal community engagement, and then we also do external community engagement throughout the whole ward and the single member district.

CHAIR CRUZ: I think this question is for Saumil, because you mentioned earlier the consideration you make in taking on a turnaround at the high school level and some of the entry years that you might not allow for in order to do that. How does that fit philosophically, then, with taking on more and bringing on additional? I understand the rationale, but in a world where you can only juggle so many things, how do we secure the turnaround which this board voted enthusiastically for, in order to ensure that the students at Somerset in the middle and high school grades were going to be served well?

MR. SHAH: It's a great question. I think when we started looking at Somerset's -- Naturally the grades will get larger because some
of the Somerset high school grades are, like, 24 and 25 students. So in some ways, just because we've got two full homerooms or larger grades in eighth grade and seventh grade, the high school will get larger. At the same time, we do have some attrition from year to year, so we would, from a financial perspective, want to be backfilling some of that so that we can afford all the resources that Mekia spoke about.

So I don't imagine, just sort of given the footprint of the existing facility, that we would expand anything dramatically, but I do think that we could see a larger enrollment size overall at the high school than exists today.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. If there aren't any other questions, we have one more item for the hearing, and we'll be voting on this matter, as with the others, at the November 18th meeting, to be precise. Thank you.

MR. PATTERSON: Thank you.

MS. WIGGINS: Good evening. I'm Haley Wiggins, the Executive Director of The Family
MR. BARNET: Good evening. I'm Michael Barnet, Board Chair of The Family Place.

MS. QUINN: Say that one more time.

MR. CHAKRABARTI: Shawn Chakrabarti, Board of Family Place.

MS. QUINN: This is a public hearing to discuss The Family Place public charter school's amendment request for a de minimis enrollment ceiling increase of five percent of its maximum enrollment ceiling for each school year, which is an increase of seven students beginning in school year 2020-21. The school is currently approved to educate up to 140 students in school year 2020-21 and school year 2021-22, and it's maximum enrollment ceiling is 175 students for school year 2022-23 and beyond.

If approved, this increase would allow the school to serve up to 147 students in school years 2021-22. And in school year 2022-23 the school's maximum enrollment will increase by eight students to a new maximum of 183 students.
at capacity. Representatives are here to answer any questions you may have.

MS. WIGGINS: Good evening.

CHAIR CRUZ: Would you like to open up with any remarks?

MS. WIGGINS: Sure. Yeah, we're just starting our second year of operation, and we have exceeded our enrollment targets both years. Our enrollment ceiling for the first two years was 120. In year one, we reached 131, and then this year we're at 136. Five are duplicates, so we're still in that phase. We've successfully over-enrolled each year, and you know, it would be helpful to be able to get some additional funding for those additionally-enrolled students.

I know that are a new school and we just have the preliminary result of our first year, but we have done very well. If we were tiered, we would achieve Tier 1 in our first year, even though we're not officially tiered this year. So we feel very strongly, you know, that the community needs us. We have high
interest in our programs, and have been very
successful this first year going into second year
of operation.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MEMBER SHELTON: Have you had any
opposition from the community in terms of --

MS. WIGGINS: No, we haven't. I mean,
I reach out regularly to our A1C, Christine
Miller, and she is very supportive. We haven't
gotten any opposition.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Is it just this year
that you have been over-enrolled, did you say?

MS. WIGGINS: I'm sorry?

MEMBER CRUSEY: Is it just this year
that you have been over-enrolled?

MS. WIGGINS: Last year and this year.
We opened last year. We hit 131, and we're
funded for 120, because that was our ceiling.
This year, we're at 136.

MEMBER CRUSEY: How have you been able
to close that budget gap?

MS. WIGGINS: We've been in the
community for many years, and are very resourceful. We work with lots of volunteers. We were used to providing many of the same services with a lower budget, so we have that experience and have been able to do it.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Can you put a dollar figure on what that gap has been? If you had been fully funded for the number of students you're serving, do you have an idea?

MS. WIGGINS: In my mind, I feel like I should, but I think it was around $250,000.00 that we could have received.

VICE CHAIR BIREDIA: It's been a long time since I've seen you guys, but congratulations on two years.

MS. WIGGINS: Thank you.

VICE CHAIR BIREDIA: Two questions. I haven't seen the building since I know there was some remodeling, so if you could talk about that and how that's allowed you to serve this number of students. Then it sounds like you have plans to do more remodeling, so I just would like to
hear about that and whether funding is available for that. You mentioned that you're doing well, which of course, we don't have assessment and ranking data yet, but if you could kind of describe what your assessments or whatever indicators are telling you, you know, that your students are achieving, if you're at the goals you've set for yourself.

MS. WIGGINS: Sure. As far as the building, we were able to do some renovations in the first year, so we were able to do some renovations in the basement, as well as just bringing lots of areas of the building up to code and up to ADA. We also offer four different schedules for our families, so not everyone is ever at the building at the same time, so we rotate those schedules.

Last year was our first year in the community offering evening programs, and it's been a huge success. We started with two classes in the evening and immediately expanded to three, and would do more if we had more space, but we
are limited by our space. So we are looking into a few options for year three. We are looking into the possibility of being able to expand the current building that we have by going up or down. So I've engaged with some contractors and an architect to get some estimates on what is feasible.

We're considering that for year three. If that does not work, we will need to lease some additional space in year three. By year five, we will need an additional location, so we've already engaged with some real estate expertise and an architect, and are looking into some options for year five. But space is definitely an issue for us.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: And then the question on data, on how your students are doing and how you've been measuring that so far.

MS. WIGGINS: I wish I would have brought it with me. I know that for our PMF scoring, we reached 72.4 in our first year. So I should have it with me, but we surpassed all of
our goals as far as ESL advancement. I just
don't remember the percentage right now, but I
could get it to you. We needed 63 percent, and I
believe we were around 70 percent, 73 percent,
72.1.

Then for college and career readiness,
we also were very successful with that. Most of
our students have retained their employment that
were enrolled, or some have gained some
additional employment, as well as I think our in-
seat attendance rate -- Thank you, that's
helpful. So our in-seat attendance rate was
71.4, and then our persistence rate was 84.2,
sorry 73.4, excuse me. I should have brought it
with me.

MEMBER SHELTON: How are you looking to
close that attendance rate or increase the in-
seat attendance rate?

MS. WIGGINS: Well, we've used various
incentive programs, some different competitions
to get the, you know, they can be entered into a
raffle if they have 100 percent attendance. You
I know, we're working with an adult population, so it is a little bit different, but we're trying to think of different ways to motivate them and encourage them. We offer a two-generation program, so the parents are able to bring their children with them to the center. We're doing reading challenges where the parents and kids are reading together, different things like that to try to motivate the students. As well as we were able to hire an additional case manager and employment specialist this year to really help them address any needs that they might be having that are keeping them coming to class.

MEMBER GANJAM: Just curious, what's the duration that students typically spend at the school? Is it they're going through a program in a year, 18 months, two years? What do you see?

MS. WIGGINS: We have a variety, so probably on average I would say two years. We do have some students who start with little to no literacy in their native language, and so it does take them longer to go through the program.
Again, this is historical data because this is only our second year of charter school, but some of them have been there for longer, so three, four years. Then more of our advanced students, like our CDA students, will just be there for, you know, one year while they're getting their Child Development Associate. So it depends on which track the students are in.

MEMBER GANJAM: Have you had a graduating class already?

MS. WIGGINS: Yeah, we had our first graduating class in June of 2019.

MEMBER GANJAM: How many students graduated?

MS. WIGGINS: I think around 80, 83, but again, they're on all different tracks, so graduation is defined differently for each program.

MEMBER GANJAM: Thanks.

CHAIR CRUZ: Any other? If we don't have any other questions, we'll see you back next month for the vote.
MS. WIGGINS: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. So now we're going to transition to the public meeting, and I'm going to start with needing a motion to approve the agenda. So board members, can I get a motion?

MEMBER SHELTON: I move to approve the October 28, 2019 board meeting agenda.

CHAIR CRUZ: Can I get a second?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: I have a second. All in favor?

(Chorus of aye.)

CHAIR CRUZ: I have an aye from Steve Bumbaugh, as well, who is unable to attend today. All right, we have a few moments for additional public comment. Any public officials in attendance who wish to speak will be recognized. Anyone additionally who would like to add any public comment to the record? Thank you.

MS. THOMPSON: Good evening to everyone. My name is Tamika Thompson and I live
on Frankford Street. The proposed site of where D.C. Prep would be, would be right at my door. With that being said, I understand all the concerns of all of the residents, including where I live and the D.C. Prep family. Education is important to everybody because I have children, too. They're grown now, but one of them did go to Achievement Prep, and he graduated, though, from Eastern, which is still a good public school. I have one that graduated from Ballou, which is still a good D.C. public school.

But with that being said, as Ms. Shelton said, I do believe both charter schools and DCPS, they need to come together. There's a plethora of buildings in D.C. I don't believe that there's a need to build a brand-new school where it's really zoned for residential. It is not zoned for commercial unless you try to circumvent the system and go through the federal and say that's in an emergency, which it is not. When this school right here, Rocketship was built, they did not engage the
community, nor did the board. You guys, whenever there's a charter school that's built, do they not have to go through you guys? Are you guys -- do they have to go through you?

CHAIR CRUZ: They request a charter amendment to approve the location, but each of the schools -- and one of the reasons why Ms. Shelton and Ms. Bireda asked the questions that they did, is that it's the school's responsibility --

MS. THOMPSON: For this school to be built, you guys had to know about it, right?

CHAIR CRUZ: Ultimately, we had to approve the location.

MS. THOMPSON: Right, that is correct. You had to approve this location. No one ever came to our community. I'm only right around the corner, but I would never have built this school across the street from a halfway house, never. You didn't engage the community. And when this school is open in the daytime, am I right, Rocketship family, it has to become a one-way?
During the beginning and the end of the school day, it becomes a one-way because it's so congested and they don't want anything to happen to the kids because of the traffic.

That is not what we want on Frankford, not at all. We want the kids to have a safe environment, but we do not want that congestion and all the other things that fall along with that.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, ma'am.

MS. THOMPSON: And we want more transparency, because D.C. Prep, not you guys, the parents, the people that represent D.C. Prep, were not transparent with us. They did not engage the community. Only after the fact that you bought the property, then you engaged with the community. And only did you engage is because we saw surveyors. When we asked the surveyors what they were doing, oh, we can't tell. I don't know, we're just surveying. You know what you're doing. You're surveying for a school that's going to be right in front of my
bedroom. No, we don't want that.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, ma'am.

(Applause.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Sir, didn't you already testify?

MR. DUCKWORTH: That was from before.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay, yes.

MR. DUCKWORTH: Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. This is what I actually initially contacted the board about via email in the public comments section just previously. I just wanted to throw some ideas out there because I see there's the vision and I see there are two very different accounts regarding the school's progress and how much they're helping students. But what I wrote about previously involves the procurement process at one of your charter schools. The school that's Two Rivers public charter school.

I submitted a proposal. Les Riddle is held responsible for reviewing the proposals. I made several efforts to reach out to them.
They held a meeting themselves, and when I attended, they weren't very transparent about how they were making the judgment to select the contractor. I know they have many proposals. I'm just a bit concerned, which I've heard other people speak about the lack of transparency. In order for it to be fair and competitive, you know, they don't really identify who makes the judgment.

They don't identify factors that were deemed favorable or unfavorable, and I put that in writing when I sent the email to you. I would just be most appreciative if maybe the board here would consider giving bidders an opportunity to find out exactly who reviewed their proposals. If you could make it mandatory, possibly, and to also provide feedback about what items were deemed favorable or unfavorable in order for bidders to be more competitive and to meet the standard that's set before them. Thank you very much.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Teri?
DR. CLARK: Good evening. I'm Dr. Marco Clark, CEO of Richard Wright Public Charter School.

MS. FUNDERBURK: Good evening, Alisha Funderburk, COO of Richard Wright Public Charter School.

MS. QUINN: PCSB staff recommend that the board approve Richard Wright Public Charter High School for Journalism and Media Arts' charter amendment request to relocate its campus to a new facility in school year 2019-20, and approve PCSB Board Chair Rick Cruz to sign the amendment on behalf of the board. The school plans to relocate to a new facility located at 475 School Street Southwest in Ward 6, effective on January 1, 2020, for the remainder of the present school year.

We held a public hearing on September 16th about this proposal, and we did not receive any public comment. But in case you have any lingering questions, representatives are here from the school.
CHAIR CRUZ: Do you want to open up
with any remarks?

DR. CLARK: All right, well, good
evening. It's been a long day. I just want to
say thanks again to the board for bringing us
back. We've been working with Ozo throughout
this past month to submit the documents that were
requested. We've gone over many of the things to
get a clear understanding. We've also brought
our CPAs involved with the conversation with Ozo
to outline any questions to ensure that there was
clarity taking place from the last board meeting.

CHAIR CRUZ: I'll open it up if any
board members have any further questions.

MEMBER GANJAM: Could you just refresh
on how have you communicated this potential
change to your current community?

DR. CLARK: We have held several
meetings with our parents. We've engaged the Ward
6 community. We've also had support from the
council member in Ward 6 whose been supporting
the process. We've also engaged the school
directly pretty much adjacent to us to continue
to build a collaboration as we move forward.

MEMBER GANJAM: Have the families
expressed any concerns about moving?

DR. CLARK: They're very excited.

MEMBER GANJAM: Good, great.

CHAIR CRUZ: So I think the issues that
we raised, or the questions we raised, I should
say, not issues. The questions we raised last
time were with respect to student enrollment, re-
enrollment, and ultimately your ability to
sustain financially the school. So I know you've
been in conversations. Could you summarize for
us where you and hopefully your board have come
to sort of peace with the investment that you're
making?

DR. CLARK: Absolutely. I think one of
the things that we were able to get some more
clarity with Ozo from the beginning. The initial
budget that we submitted had a full renovation
rather than a growth in enrollment, and that
would renovate according to the enrollment
growth. So with that, we were able to demonstrate sustainability moving forward, as well as, you know, the room to grow and to make sure there's affordability for everyone as we move forward.

CHAIR CRUZ: And working with Building Pathways will allow you that -- it is Building Pathways, right?

DR. CLARK: Building Hope.

CHAIR CRUZ: Building Hope, sorry.

DR. CLARK: It's been a long day, I understand.

CHAIR CRUZ: Building Hope will allow you that flexibility, so you'll be able to grow and take on costs as needed, variably.

DR. CLARK: Absolutely. And also what was missing from the first initial budgets that we gave a very conservative view, it did not show the person that's going to sub-lease from us and actually how we're going to share that portion. That was not part of the initial budget that we laid out.

CHAIR CRUZ: And that would be
DR. CLARK: That would be AppleTree, correct.

CHAIR CRUZ: Just continuing on the conversation we briefly we had with them in terms of how you prepare to have the little ones right alongside your eighth through 12th grade.

DR. CLARK: We see it as an exciting opportunity. We've been having conversation with AppleTree in every aspect, from the design of the building to the way that we're going to collaborate as co-tenants together. Some things that we see as a benefit for high school students to do as far as community service, that we believe a lot in, in working with the young folks there.

So we have come together as teams. We've been for, I don't know, several months now, eight or nine months, with the two different schools, to collaborate on how we would make this happen. So the design of the building is going to be great to work and share, and work with the
safety. As you know, we are really big on safe pieces with our students, and so we're going to continue to do that with them, as well.

CHAIR CRUZ: Board members, any other questions? I want to say thank you for responding to all of our questions and --

DR. CLARK: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: -- at that point, concerns about the financial feasibility of it and working with a team to get that all squared away.

DR. CLARK: Absolutely.

CHAIR CRUZ: If there are no additional questions, I'd be ready to entertain a motion.

MEMBER SHELTON: I move that we approve the charter amendment request of Richard Wright Public Charter School and approve Board Chair Rick Cruz to sign the amendment on the board's behalf.

MR. PEARSON: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right, I've got a motion and second. All in favor?

(Chorus of aye.)
CHAIR CRUZ: Aye, and I have an aye from Steve Bumbaugh, as well, as unanimous approval.

DR. CLARK: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Congratulations.

DR. CLARK: Thank you.

(Applause.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Dr. Clark, when are you set to move into the building, or at least what's the timing currently?

DR. CLARK: When are we going to move in?

CHAIR CRUZ: Yeah.

DR. CLARK: We're not going to move until June.

CHAIR CRUZ: So now we're in June.

DR. CLARK: Yeah, June next year. So we're going to finish this year --

CHAIR CRUZ: You are, okay?

DR. CLARK: -- in the blue castle.

CHAIR CRUZ: You just can't get away from the blue castle.
DR. CLARK: We can't get away.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

DR. CLARK: Thanks.

CHAIR CRUZ: Teri?

MS. QUINN: May I have representatives from Rocketship?

MR. PATTERSON: Good evening again. Jacque Patterson in this capacity as a board member of Rocketship.

MR. PACOS: Josh Pacos, Director of Schools for Washington D.C. for Rocketship Public Schools.

MS. SMITH: Joyanna Smith, D.C. Regional Director.

MS. QUINN: DC PCSB staff recommends that the board approve Rocketship Education D.C. Public Charter School's charter amendment request to operate its third campus at a new location in Ward 5, and approve PCSD Board Chair Rick Cruz to sign the amendment on behalf of the board. The school plans to operate its third campus, Rocketship Ward 5, I believe that name will be
changed, at 5450 3rd Street Northeast beginning
in school year 2020-21.

The school currently operates two
other campuses, Rocketship Legacy Prep in Ward 7
and Rocketship Rise Academy in Ward 8. If this
request is approved, beginning in school year
2020-21, Rocketship will operate all three
campuses in Wards 5, 7 and 8. We held a public
hearing about this proposal on September 16th.
We received 18 public comments in total, of which
14 were in support of the school's request and
three were opposed. The representatives are here
to answer any lasting questions.

CHAIR CRUZ: Any opening remarks before
I ask our board if they have any questions?

MS. SMITH: We don't, actually.

CHAIR CRUZ: It's all out there? Board
members?

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: So I want to make
a comment, and then a question. For the good of
the public and for the record, the vote in front
of us is to approve a board charter amendment
that would add a location. Rocketship signed an agreement with DC PCSB back in 2014 that allows it to open a new school every school year provided that it meets certain requirements, including having all your campuses be Tier 1, which you have met.

That means that the decision to open up a new Rocketship has already been determined, and so I want the public to clear what we're voting on tonight is not whether or not Rocketship can open a new location, but it's really a very almost pro forma vote as to whether or not this amendment can be made to your charter.

With that said, I do appreciate that you did the market analysis of Ward 5. I do think it would be helpful to see your wait list numbers included in a market analysis. I believe you looked at sort of wait list numbers across Ward 5. I think that would be helpful for people to see that there's a demand that would be served by opening up another Rocketship. You have five
more that you are provided to open up in your charter agreement, and so going forward, I think for clarity and transparency for everyone to understand that your decisions about where to site new locations aren't driven just by that agreement, but also to make sure that you're actually serving a demand in the community.

I did look at your wait list numbers. I understand that it's about 236, with the bulk of that being around the Pre-K ages where you will be serving in Ward 5 initially. But I do just encourage you that the market analysis go a little bit deeper and so that we're able to answer questions to the public about whether or not we're just continuing to open Rocketships or if there really is a demand to keep doing that.

MS. SMITH: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: So one question I'll bring up is with respect to subletting. So there's a provision, and perhaps even an LOI about the opportunity to sublet, at least for a short period of time until you need the space to
another school. I just want to be very clear
that the specifics of that subletter and the
school is not what we are voting on tonight. We
are voting your location, the location you
proposed. I don't know if you wanted to say
anything more about that just because that is a
topic that has come up.

MS. SMITH: Sure. So as you mentioned,
we did sign a Letter of Intent with Social
Justice, but we have not signed a lease
agreement. So we are in the process of
negotiating those terms. We're expecting that
that will be finalized sometime in November.

CHAIR CRUZ: And Social Justice will be
running its own process, Teri, at that time, to
engage community members and to then come before
this board as a newly chartered school.

MS. SMITH: That's right. And then the
term that we are anticipating will be three
years. So while there will likely be an option
to renew, we also anticipate the possibility that
we will be able to fill the building and that
there is the demand for our seats, and that we
won't need a sub-tenant. But we're excited to
partner, because it is an exciting continuum
possibility since we serve Pre-K through Grade 5
to have kids potentially to matriculate into a
high-quality middle school.

    CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Any other?

    MEMBER SHELTON: Just for my
clarification, because I wasn't on the board at
that time, and it's great to be able to talk to
you, Jacque.

    MR. PATTERSON: Yes, ma'am.

    MEMBER SHELTON: What year did you all
start the process of building the facility that
came before us because another school was going
to co-locate with them last year? When did you
all start that process?

    MR. PATTERSON: So you're asking when
did we start this particular process for this
third school?

    MEMBER SHELTON: Uh-uh. I'm asking
about the --
MR. PATTERSON: Legacy?

MEMBER SHELTON: -- Legacy location.

MR. PATTERSON: Oh, Legacy?

MEMBER SHELTON: Yes.

MR. PATTERSON: We started that process I believe in 2016. Josh is correct.

MEMBER SHELTON: 2016?

MR. PATTERSON: Yes, ma'am.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: If there are no other questions, I will take a motion on this vote, as well.

MEMBER SHELTON: I move to approve the charter amendment request of Rocketship Education DC PCS and approve Board Chair

(Applause.)

MEMBER SHELTON: Rick Cruz to sign --

CHAIR CRUZ: We haven't even voted yet.

MEMBER SHELTON: Right. This is just a motion. So I'll start over. Hold on. I move to approve the charter amendment request of Rocketship Education DC PCS and approve Board
Chair Rick Cruz to sign the amendment on the board's behalf.

CHAIR CRUZ: I have a motion and a second. All in favor?

(Chorus of aye.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Aye.

(Applause.)

CHAIR CRUZ: And for the record, an aye from Steve Bumbaugh, so unanimous support.

MR. PATTERSON: And we just want to thank you guys. As you see, we have a lot of parents that are in their home school, and it's been a pleasure working with them, so thank you.

MS. SMITH: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, all. Katie Dammann?

MS. DAMMANN: Good evening.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right.

MS. DAMMANN: My name is Katie Dammann, Senior Manager within the School Performance Department, here with Rashida Young, Chief School Performance Officer. Tonight we are asking the
board to vote on revisions to the admission
preference policy and the student admissions
guidelines. Most of these revisions are updating
outdated language and aligning policy with
practice. The most substantive change outlines
how LEAs may opt into a transfer preference,
which will allow students of preference to move
between campuses within an LEA or a network of
member schools, such as DCI.

This change is being made to align
policy to practice. Following our discussion at
September's board meeting, we have gotten clarity
about how transfer preferences are facilitated,
and now know that all transfers between campuses
must move through the My School D.C. lottery
system. I am happy to answer any questions you
have about these changes.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Hi, Katie.

MS. DAMMANN: Hi, Saba.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Thank you for your
work on this. I do think it's important that we
go through the changes that have been made since
the last meeting, because there have been some
significant changes. In particular, I just would
like you to stress, maybe walk through what this
process would look like at a school that has
decided to employ a intra-LA transfer process.

MS. DAMMANN: I'm so sorry. I had a
hard time hearing your question.

MEMBER SHELTON: Excuse me, in the back
of the room? Can you all keep your voices down,
please? And ask the folks in the hallway, to
yeah, thanks so much.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: I actually just
want you, for everyone to understand the changes
since the last we looked at this, to walk through
the process that a school would take if they want
to employ an intra-LA transfer.

MS. DAMMANN: Yeah. So they would
actually have to work with their family to move
through the My School D.C. transfer process. So
the same way if a family wanted to move from one
LEA to another, they would have to complete,
like, a request through My School D.C. to enter
into a new campus and move through, if there was a wait list at that existing campus, to move through that wait list, if needed.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: And how will families know how to do that? Like, how would they be alerted to that ability to do an intra-LA transfer? I'm trying to get you to say that it's going to have to be in their handbook.

MS. DAMMANN: Oh, yes, of course. So it would have to be available to families either in their student handbook or in another document that's accessible to families so all families are aware of the possibility that they could move between campuses if they want to, yes.

CHAIR CRUZ: I just want to acknowledge the many sort of inputs of my Vice Chair and my many other board members had across this process, so thanks for addressing this, both so that we can ensure the fairest process, but also the most transparent process. So thank you for that.

Board members, any other questions? One of the most debated policies? If no other questions,
I'll take a motion on this, as well.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: I move to, sorry,
I feel like it should be me. I move to approve
the revisions to the student admission guidelines
and admission preference policy.

MEMBER SHELTON: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: I've got a motion and a
second. All in favor?

(Chorus of aye.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Aye, and an abstention
from Steve Bumbaugh. Six votes in favor, motion
passes. Policy is in place. Thank you. Just a
few last things for this evening. As usual, we
have a consent calendar of items to be read into
record. Those are all available in the public
record. Before we vote on the consent calendar,
would any board member see a reason to remove an
item for discussion or if there is a recusal? If
not, I will take a motion on this, as well.

MR. PEARSON: I move to approve all
items on the consent calendar.

CHAIR CRUZ: I've got a motion, can I
get a second?

MEMBER SHELTON: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: I've got a motion and a second. All in favor?

(Chorus of aye.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Aye, and an aye from Steve Bumbaugh, as well. Any new business on the part of our board? If no new business, I will open the floor for one, hopefully brief, moment of public comment. Does anyone have anything else to add to the public record this evening? Going once, going twice. I will take a motion to adjourn.

MEMBER SHELTON: I move to adjourn the October 28, 2019 board meeting.

MEMBER GANJAM: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: Motion and a second. All in favor?

(Chorus of aye.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Aye, and we are adjourned.

See you on November 18th.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 9:30 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Public Hearing and Public Meeting

Before: DC PCSB

Date: 10-28-19

Place: Washington, DC

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

[Signature]
Court Reporter