The D.C. Public Charter School Board met in Suite 210, 111 O St, N.W., Washington, D.C., at 6:37 p.m., Rick Cruz, Chair, presiding.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT
RICK CRUZ, Chair
SABA BIREDHA, Vice Chair
STEVE BUMBAUGH
RICARDA GANJAM
NAOMI SHELTON
JIM SANDMAN
LEA CRUSEY

STAFF PRESENT
SCOTT PEARSON, Executive Director, DC PCSB

RASHIDA YOUNG
NIKHIL VASHEE

HANNAH COUSINO
ALSO PRESENT
CANDACE DAVIS
LATORRIA HENSON
BUSRA AYDIN
PATRICIA BRANTLEY
STEVE MOORE
NEAL STIMLER
JOSHUA JOHNSON
MONICA VALENTINE
BECCA ABURAKIA-EINHORN
VICTOR HORTON
DESHAUN SINGLETON
STEPHANIE GRAVES
CARLA HOUSE
LEGGREG HARRISON
WARESS MAJEED
STEVEN FOSTER
MARCHIE GRAHAM
ANGEL ABREGO MONTO
ABDELWAHAB GUBARTALLA
MARTIN AYABA
SAMANTHA TRIPLETT
RUQUAN BROWN
RAVEN FREEMAN
VANESSA BERTELLI
HUI LI
ROBERT CROSBY
JAY TWINE
EVELYN IRAHETA
LEAH VAUGHAN
JUSTIN LESSEK
DENISE EDWARDS
RYAN ABEL
SHARON GREEN
DONALD HENSE
SHANTELL WRIGHT
RUFUS DAVIS
KATIE DAMMANN
VALAYA WISE
HANI ABO AWAD
DANIEL CALLIS
LEE DAVIS
ALSO PRESENT

JAMIE GUBARTALLA
NATALIE SMITH
JENNIFER MOORE
TAURA SMALLS
SAYMAH NAH
JIMMIE JENKINS
JEMAR MILLS
LANETTE DAILEY-REESE
ALISON GILMEISTER
NIK APOSTOLIDES
KAREN DRESSEN
LATONYA HENDERSON
CELENEASE EDISON
MONICA RAY
TERESA CURRISTINE
ELIZABETH TORRES
JOE SMITH
MATTHEW ENELSWE
KAREN AUSTIN
AARON MENDER
MATTHEW MCCRAY
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(6:37 p.m.)

CHAIR CRUZ: We've got a big -- We've got a long agenda this evening, so I'm going to get us started. This is our February 24th PCSB Board Meeting. Thank you to Friendship Public Charter School for hosting.

I'm joined today by our full complement of board members. Starting on the right -- or at least on my right -- your left, Naomi Shelton, Jim Sandman, Ricarda Ganjam. I'm Rick Cruz, Chair of the Board. Also joined by Saba Bireda, Vice Chair, Steve Bumbaugh, Lea Crusey, and our Executive Director, Scott Pearson.

We're going to kick off as we do with all of our meetings with our public comment section of the meeting. And we have a hefty number of items on our public comment agenda.

I'm going to start by inviting three public witnesses up at this time. I've got a list I'm going to work my way through. I'm going
to hold people to two minutes per public comment,
so that we can give everyone an opportunity to
share what they've come here to share with us.
As always, public comment at DCPCSB.org is where
you can send any comment that you have, whether
it's a copy of the comments that you're
delivering this evening. Or if you don't get to
your full statement or have additional
information to share with us.

So I'm just going to jump right into
it, so we can begin tonight's meeting. And if I
can bring up Candace Davis, Latorria Henson, and
Busra Aydin. Apologies if I mispronounced that.
These are our first three public witnesses. And
as always, introduce yourself, the organization
you're from or speaking to. And you'll each have
two minutes. You can start.

MS. DAVIS: Good evening. I'm Candace
Davis. And we are former Vice Principals from
Ingenuity Prep to request a response to an
unanswered email that was sent Friday, February
14th. Our email was sent to you, Mr. Cruz, along
with Scott Pearson, Avni Patel Murray, Rashida Young, and the following DC council members, David Grosso, Phil Mendelson, and Trayon White.

During our private meeting on January 24th with you, Mr. Cruz and Scott Pearson, it was confirmed that IP in fact, violated the law and disregarded its own school's policies when not providing related services to several students. We were encouraged by you to continue our advocacy by sending any further evidence of unethical or illegal acts. The following is a brief list.

Due to several teachers leaving, the school has been using substitute teachers to supplement the absence of qualified teachers despite Scott Pearson's claim of not seeing evidence of safety concerns when he conducted a surprise visit. A parent texted on February 7th, "The class was completely out of control. There was physical fighting between four or five students. They were cussing, calling each other "B words" so loud you could hear from outside the
door. The sub had zero control to the point
where she had to physically pull students off
each other. She made a couple of students leave
for their own safety. Kids were sitting on top
of furniture and basically not listening. They
did all of this while watching."

This same parent emailed the Board an
extensive letter just today in which she stated,
"It is becoming a daily occurrence and the
violence is progressively getting worse." After
the audit, IP constructed a space that only
mocked a self-contained classroom. The teacher
assigned to that room quickly resigned due to
concerns about the program. On February 12th,
she stated, "I was hired as an inclusion teacher
and forced to start a K2 self-contained classroom
mid-year. No support. No materials. No co-
teacher. The students I was serving in the
inclusion class had no services since I was
forced to shift mid-year. I even expressed
concern about my students in the inclusion
classes regressing due to not being serviced. It
didn't seem to be a concern."

On February 14th, a parent of a student with an IEP shared her child had not received services despite several complaints to Special Education Coordinator, Joseph Carter and current Principal, Jennifer Hampton."

I'm going to quickly close. Can I continue --

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes.

MS. DAVIS: -- is it okay to continue? Her message stated, "Recently my child's special education has been delayed due to Ingenuity Prep discontinuing the self-contained classes without being informed. There is no active Special Education teacher. They keep claiming that they were hiring, but no one has been there. Now my daughter is in the general education class and not receiving her appropriate services due to Ingenuity Prep's negligence.

Although it may appear to Mr. Pearson that Ingenuity Prep is turning around, as experienced educators with the evidence we are
provided almost daily, it is without a doubt, the CEO, Will Stoetzer and Board Chair, Peter Winik do not have our students best interests at heart. Their goal is to cover up illegal practices in order to save their business. As a result, teachers keep leaving, which makes it nearly impossible for even the best turnaround plan to become effective. To this day, students are not getting their needs met. And they cannot afford to wait for any more recommendations from this Board.

In closing, we are here again to report that the children and staff at Ingenuity Prep, under the leadership of Will Stoetzer, are still not being provided with free and appropriate public education. And we are prepared to do whatever it takes to stop these immoral, unethical, and blatantly illegal acts. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Would you like to add anything?

MS. HENSON: No, we work together.
CHAIR CRUZ: Okay, thank you. So let me just give you -- And I invite Scott as well to chime in here. As you stated, we did meet with you and two sets of recommendations came forward across the last several weeks. One was an audit that was -- that was completed by our staff of which we reviewed some of the findings with you. And that has been shared with the Ingenuity Prep staff and board.

As well, there has been an OSSE audit that has been done of which there were sort of compliance violations found there of which they are also implementing. And as you stated, we did get another complaint today. And our staff continues to do visits to the school. And these visits are also sort of surprise visits so that we can understand what is going on in the school.

So we'll be tracking the implementation of the turnaround plan or the remedies that have been laid out. OSSE as well now has a significant role in evaluating their progress against the recommendations that have
been made there. Scott, I don't know if you
would add anything additionally there given that
you're closer to the table.

    MR. PEARSON: I don't have anything to
add now.

    CHAIR CRUZ: Okay.

    MS. DAVIS: So if I may, I'd like to
respond to the visits. My concern is it's no
longer a surprise when they know you're coming.
And based off of what we understand, they are
prepared for visits. And we're just wondering
how many more reports do you need in order for
something else to happen?

    CHAIR CRUZ: That they're prepared for
us walking in at any time --

    MS. DAVIS: Correct.

    CHAIR CRUZ: -- across the day? Well,
that's good. That means that they're on their
top behavior every minute of every day.

    MS. DAVIS: I have no further comment.

    Thank you.

    CHAIR CRUZ: Okay, thank you. Next on
the public comment list, Busra Aydin, Patricia Brantley, Valerie Jablow, Steve Moore. Make sure the mic is on.

MS. AYDIN: Hello?

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes.

MS. AYDIN: Okay, perfect. Good evening. Dear esteemed charter school board members. I'm here today to provide my strong support for the application of the Washington Arabic Public Charter School in Washington DC.

Washington Arabic proposes to offer an Arabic emersion program that would bring important diversity to DC -- District of Columbia's charter school options and would open doors of opportunity to students and educators in the nation's capital.

As an educator and resident of the Washington DC and Tier 1 Charter School parent, I would be glad to have the opportunity to send my child to an Arabic emersion school that promotes diversity, is attentive to student-teacher ratio, committed to creating a positive classroom
environment, and prepares children for a global world.

As you may now, Arabic is the fifth most spoken language in the world and has an incredible rich history. It has influenced many languages including Spanish and English. There are 25 countries in the world that list Arabic as the official language or co-official language. Learning Arabic will provide our students with access to an incredible number of cultures around the world.

I also believe that learning and being fluent in Arabic can open doors for DC children and prepare them for high demand jobs that require mastering the Arabic language. And as shown by the DC regions specific report, DC Language Emersion Project worked with New American Economy in 2017. Arabic is the third most in demand language by employers in the DC region.

As the vision of the DC Charter School Board is to lead transformation of public
education and serve as a national role model for public charter schools, authorizing an accountability, I encourage you to consider the term "equity" and what this means to students in Washington DC. Are we allowing our students to encounter the third most in demand language by employers?

I recommend that DC Public Charter School Board approve Washington Arabic Public Charter so that they can open their doors to DC families and serve the DC community in 2021.

Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Could you state your name for the record?


CHAIR CRUZ: Sorry, I mispronounced it earlier.

MS. AYDIN: No worries.

MS. BRANTLEY: Good evening. As many of you know, I am Pat Brantley. I am a 25 year resident of Washington DC. I've lived in Wards 1, 5, 6, and 7 and have seen first-hand the
transformation of public education in the city.

I'm also the CEO of Friendship Public Charter School with locations in Wards 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. I'm proud of the work that we have done in DC and equally proud of the work of the charter sector in general.

I'm a board member of the Capital Experience Lab Public Charter School. That is the reason I'm sitting before you at this moment. As a longtime resident and operator of public charter schools here, I know that one size does not fit all. A child who will thrive in one environment will not necessarily thrive in another. I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of new charter applications. And I'm here to tell you that if CapX is approved, it will be one of the finest charters in the city. You simply have to give it a chance.

We're in a city filled with immense cultural resources. CapX will harness those resources in a way that is unprecedented. Built into the DNA of CapX are daily expiration, museum
and community-based learning. And a focus on pride of craftsmanship that I believe is unique in Washington and also in the country.

As members of the Public Charter School Board, you have the awesome and I would guess, the sometimes terrible responsibility for deciding on the opening and closing of schools. Perhaps you wonder whether you’ll be sitting at some point down the road contemplating the closure of the very schools that you authorized that were presented as great ideas. Well CapX is more than a great idea.

It is a concept that has been piloted for more than two years with DC families. It is a concept supported by educators homegrown in DC. From a founding team that includes award winning teachers to a strong and diverse board to an executive director who’s been the tested head of a charter school, CapX is set up for success.

Running a charter school is hard. No one knows that better than someone who has done it. And as the head of Friendship at the end of
each day, I hope that I have done more good than not. But like any leader, I have made mistakes and I've learned lessons. And so what I'd like to tell you is that likewise, Lanette Dailey-Reese, the sector director of CapX has learned the hard lessons of leading a school that fell short of its goal. Her experience and her lessons learned will make CapX better and stronger. And I hope you'll give the school a chance. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Ms. Brantley.

Can you top that?

MR. MOORE: I don't think so, no, no. I'm not even going to try I don't think. Good evening, everyone. My name is Steve Moore. I'm the Executive Director of the Southwest Business Improvement District. The Southwest bid was launched six years ago and includes the 500 acres south of the National Mall, roughly between 12th Street and South Capitol Street.

I've had a chance to spend time with the team seeking to establish a Capital
Experience Lab. And we are working with them to help them find a location in Southwest that would fit their needs. This school and its curriculum is an idea that's long overdue.

The Smithsonian Museums are cultural assets of international stature. We should take every opportunity to take advantage of these special places. When we formed the Southwest bid, we were very aware of the proximity of the Freer & Sackler, African Art Museum, the Hirshhom, Air & Space, and the American Indian Museums. We've had the opportunity to plan programs and events with the leadership of these galleries. Initially we wanted to understand their businesses, their concerns, and look for ways for us to support them. More recently, we're looking to create opportunities to network with them and other cultural attractions in Southwest of which the Smithsonian would be a centerpiece.

We have found that management of these galleries to be among the most highly skilled
curators, art educators, historians, cultural administrators in the world. They have few, if any, peers in what they do. And their work are enormous assets that we are not taking fully advantage of.

Part of the experience of growing up in DC ought to be a kind of fluency in these galleries. A familiarity with their work and appreciation for the depth of their thinking and their world class standards. This is true for all of us, not just our children. We have an opportunity here to foster in our children a kind of affection for these spaces and an appetite for what they do and the contribution that it can make to their interior life. The promise of this school is that it will spark in children that most valuable quality, curiosity.

Further, I know from our work with our ambassadors who clean the streets in Southwest that there is a great value in ensuring that students who might face challenges at home have an experience not only of a supportive community,
but also experience ways to connect with others in positive spaces and with people in their lives.

I'll jump to the end. I realize time is short. We will always support Amidon, Bowen, Jefferson, Washington Global Charter -- the schools in our neighborhood. But the CapX idea is distinct and genuinely exciting. And a valuable addition to the educational landscape in Southwest. We very much appreciate your time this evening and want to urge you to support this new school. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. And please leave your full comments with us.

MR. MOORE: I will, yeah.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, all. If we can be joined next by Neal Stimler, Ashley Walton, Joshua Johnson, and Monica Valentine.

MR. STIMLER: Hello, my name is Neal Stimler. I'm a member of the Capital Experience Lab Board of Directors. I'm here today to share my enthusiasm for the opportunity that CapX Lab
presents for learners in the District of Columbia and also as a model for others in the United States and abroad.

As a Senior Advisor and Business Development Specialist at the Balboa Park Online Collaborative in San Diego and as a museum educator, I guide cultural institutions in their learning endeavors in partnership with companies, teachers, and students. CapX Lab's experienced-based learning methods in the context of DCs museums and cultural institutions will prepare students to succeed through applied lessons performed in real world settings.

CapX Lab will give students practical tools to build capacity and creativity, collaboration, and innovation while exploring a broad range of cultural content. Cultural content is a vital tool for students to make with as they complete work with excellent purpose and quality.

CapX Lab will cultivate young people's abilities to accomplish their goals, think
critically, and be productive members of society.
The school will enable students with future-ready
skills to be dynamic leaders through
contributions in business, community, and service
to others.

CapX Labs leadership team inspires me.
They seek to bring forward an empathetic and
empowering new school with a vision to pursue
learning that has a positive impact in
partnerships with stakeholders. I encourage you
to support the application of CapX Lab for the
benefit of the students and the future of
education. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Good evening, members of
the Charter School Board. And thank you for your
time to express my strong support for the Capital
Experience Lab. My name's Joshua Johnson and
over the past decade, I've had the opportunity to
teach Science in the District, write STEM
curriculum for a DC Ed Tech startup company, and
provide instructional coaching for teachers in
Computer Science in multiple different schools and states.

I have worked with the CapX team over the past two years to support their summer pilot programs, popup learning experiences, and act as an academic advisor for Science. Initially I had the opportunity to co-teach a course about solar and alternative energy during the summer pilot program with Ms. Alison Gillmeister. This course solidified my belief that CapX is a unique, innovative, and necessary space for learning within the District.

This class provided students multiple opportunities to learn, process, and apply rigorous academic content. In the course, students used power tools to build a solar panel with help from GRID Alternatives. We took a learning walk to scour the neighborhood and identify solar panels from rooftops to parking meters. We visited the Department of Energy and saw some of the first hydrogen cars to hit the market.
These experiences stick. They are memorable and they enable students to apply the concepts and learn from experts in their field. And it's not just for students. These are things that I as their teacher am often times experiencing first-hand alongside my students, modeling for them that learning is a lifelong process of discovery.

CapX is particularly suited for teaching Science because in my opinion, it's about doing, applying, and acting. The model established by CapX provides significant opportunity for students to master the three dimensional nature of the next generation science standards, both through rigorous instruction of content, as well as the opportunity to hone Science and Engineering practices and consistently apply the cross cutting concepts.

I could go on all night with additional anecdotes to support CapX. I fondly remember collecting stamps with students at the Postal Museum, saw the value of student voice and
choice when Damian chose to participate in a
demonstration sit-in experience at the American
History Museum. And I remember students
confidently sharing their powerful words during a
poetry popup.

I'm here tonight to vehemently share
my support for Capital Experience Lab and
encourage the Public Charter School Board to
approve their proposal. Doing so would provide
students the opportunity to harness the resources
of this city and achieve their dreams.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MS. VALENTINE: Good evening. My name
is Monica Valentine. I'm honored to serve on the
Capital Experience Lab Board of Directors. More
importantly, I'm the parent of a student who has
benefitted greatly from the CapX Lab Program.

My son, Brandon Marshall, participated
in Capital Experience Lab pilots in 2017 and
2018. Brandon has articulated three factors that
made his experience with CapX Lab so valuable.
Number one, the curriculum encourages group
discussion, exchange of ideas, and students give and receive feedback. There is what we know as traditional teaching, but he also find value in independent learning and learning from his peers.

Number two, the CapX Lab curriculum puts a strong emphasis on research, analyzing information, and demonstrating knowledge gained. All critical skills students will use in college and beyond.

Number three, a Capital Experience Lab, learning is not confined to the classroom. It also happens in DCs abundance of museums, cultural institutions, and historical sites. CapX Lab students go in armed with prompts and questions. Then they're given the freedom to explore, study, and observe, return to classroom, and dialogue and use their critical thinking skills. Brandon says that he found himself excited to learn and that learning in a museum was far more engaging than looking for answers in a textbook.

The Capital Experience Lab Team
including the educators, management team, and Board is diverse, passionate, and knowledgeable. They're committed to equity and education. A stated goal is to de-construct barriers to access and increase the number of Arts and Sciences leaders of color in DC and in the U.S.

There are many things in the charter application which speak well of CapX Lab. Here's a quick story that speaks volumes. My son, Brandon, is now a Sophomore in the Duke Ellington School of the Arts Museum Studies Program. He's on the Honor Roll and participating in three to five exhibits each year. The CapX Lab team shows up for some of these exhibits and cheers him on.

I urge you -- Can I continue? I urge you to ensure that this kind of educational experience is available for the students in the District of Columbia by approving the charter for the Capital Experience Lab School. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Ms. Valentine.

All right, I'll call up our next four. Becca AbuRakia-Einhorn and Waseem AbuRakia-Einhorn,
Ms. ABURAKIA-EINHORN: There we go. My name is Becca AbuRakia-Einhorn. I'm Jewish-American. And when I graduated college, I decided I would go study Hebrew in Israel. But instead serendipity landed me in an Arabic Program, a language I'd never studied before. I say serendipity because learning Arabic changed my life for the better in so many ways. It was through Arabic that I met my husband, a Palestinian Muslim. And just six months ago, my son, Omri was born. And with great pride -- he's very excited for civic engagement. And so with great pride that we are raising our son in a bilingual English and Arabic household.

My husband grew up with Arabic as his native language, but started learning Hebrew at age five and English at age seven. Because of
his exposure to multiple languages, he was able to move forward in his career in ways that many of his fellow countrymen were not. And I currently work at Gallaudet University where I use American Sign Language daily. And the ways that learning more languages can open opportunities for students is incredible.

The young people in Washington DC could only benefit from an Arabic Charter School. Arabic is the official language of over 20 countries. Students of the Washington Arabic Public Charter School would be able to connect with these individuals from all of these countries. They would be in high demand for the kind of lucrative and exciting jobs that are available in the Greater DC area. But Arabic is bigger than that. Arabic is a language that has influenced so many other languages, including Spanish, Farsi, Turkish, Amharic, Hebrew, Urdu, and many more.

The Arabic language will be a gateway for our students to connect with even more
languages and more communities worldwide. Arabic is a language that's the foundation of my family and bilingual families like ours who would love more opportunities and places to engage with the Arabic language and allow our students to flourish as Arabic speakers. But even for families where Arabic is not spoken at home, learning Arabic will be a life changing experience, the way it was for me. I have like one more sentence.

CHAIR CRUZ:  Yep.

MS. ABURAKIA-EINHORN: Arabic is a language that brought us English words like Algebra and admiral and algorithm. And I'm only at the letter "A." And Arabic is a rich language that our young people deserve to be exposed to. And I hope that you will approve the application of Washington Arabic Public Charter School.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MR. HORTON: Good evening, Board Members. And thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide public comment on behalf
of the Garden School of Business and Entrepreneurship. My name is Victor Horton. I am a Ward 7 ANC Commissioner, a Ward 8 educator. And tonight, I would like my comment to reflect my role as a community member and education advocate.

I want to start off with the needs of communities and the demands of our residents, many of whom are charter school parents. And sure, our neighborhoods east of the river are advocating for economic development and economic anchors. With that said, we have to be more strategic and intentional of what kind of schools come to our neighborhoods and how these schools impact and support the broader vision of the community.

I urge the Board to approve the Garden because it is a direct response to what our community has collectively advocated for. By delivering a high quality education, offering career paths to business, entrepreneurship, and marketing and committing to being a community
school, the Garden has the potential to become an economic anchor east of the river.

In 2019, I had the pleasure of attending and contributing to the Garden Schools community design session. I was surprised at the vulnerability and transparency of its school leaders. We openly debated things, parents and community members typically discuss like creating the hiring and teacher evaluation process, the Charter School PMF, and choosing a rigorous curriculum that can cater to all students including Special Education and English Language Learners.

Lastly, the leaders of the Garden school have gone above and beyond to ensure the voices that are typically left out were heard at the most critical areas of the school's development. Again, I urge you to approve not only a great school, but a great school with strong and committed leaders. Thank you for your time.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.
MR. SINGLETON: Good evening. My name is Deshawn Singleton from Archbishop Carroll High School in support of the Garden School of Business and Entrepreneurship. I have an extensive experience in high school Social Work. And I've worked across all sectors, whether it's private, public, and public charter. I have experience as well as a Child Protective Service Case Investigator. My DC experience includes working for EverFi, SCL and Financial Leadership Platform, and Maya Angelou through GOOD Projects, a high school in Ward 7, Archbishop Carroll, a high school in Ward 5.

As a Social Worker, I'm an advocate for mental health programs in our school that includes social-emotional learning and post-traumatic stress disorder, better known as PTSD. Unfortunately murder, drug dealing, gun violence, and teenage prostitution has became normalized with our black and brown communities. Our kids as early as 9 years old are exposed to activities on a consistent basis.
Twenty-four years ago, I became a ward of the State due to my grandmother dying of HIV at the age of 42 and my mother becoming fully addicted to crack-cocaine at the age of 23. At a young age, I had to navigate adult issues and problems with a child's mind and I still had to report to school at 8:15 every day as if everything was just okay.

Like other students in DC, my home situation negatively impacted my attendance, my behavior, my grades. How can we expect a child in today's day and age to come home and do homework when they don't know if they're going to eat or if they come home that the lights are going to be on to do that work that they need?

Also to meet our student's needs, the Garden is equipped with a Wellness Center that is designated to provide its students with access to mental health and emotional support, as well as wraparound services. The Garden has also created a tiered approach to meeting our students non-academic needs to ensure that they are
emotionally prepared to navigate throughout today's day.

We can no longer praise resilience as a motive for our schools. We need to provide our students with the needs they need to become successful. Resilience is -- I'm sorry. Can I keep going?

CHAIR CRUZ: You can keep going.

MR. SINGLETON: There we go. I apologize. -- as a child being called resilient because they defined the odds to succeed with little to no support is not a badge of honor. I want to say thank you to the Garden and just giving this opportunity, which is really, really important. And I think our kids really need this. And I want to talk more about being resilient is not the way to make it in life. Give our kids the tools they need to succeed. And I think the Garden can do that. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MR. SINGLETON: Appreciate it.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right, our next four
up for public testimony: Waress Majeed, Dawayne
Cunningham, Carla House, and Stephanie Graves.
It's on. You can start.

MS. GRAVES: Good evening. My name is
Stephanie Graves. I'm a parent of three
students, one of which I had to have travel
outside of the ward to attend Richard Wright
Public Charter School for Journalism and Media
Arts.

While I loved our experience at
Richard Wright, I would have loved even more if
there was a school in our community. I am here
to advocate for more schools like Richard Wright
and Thurgood Marshall. More unique schools with
unique offerings. Our kids deserve real choice.
I am here to support the Garden School of
Business and Entrepreneurship, which my daughter
who graduated from Richard Wright is in school
for Business and Entrepreneurship.

When I look and think about the words
that are typically associated with Ward 7 and 8,
it doesn't make me feel good. Words like "at
risk, underperforming, and low income" are what we hear from CEOs. Ms. Nah doesn't think of us that way. When I read some of her applications and she described our kids as "go-getters, brilliant, and students who can make a way out of no way", I am convinced Ms. Nah is the right CEO for our community.

Some CEOs who open schools in Ward 8 don't know our communities past, at-risk numbers, or the special education percentage. They don't live here. They don't eat here. Some don't even like coming here. Ms. Nah lives here. She works here. She shops and she hangs out with the community, walks the streets and contributes at community meetings, and advocate for our needs past education. That's a CEO we want and I would want.

It's so much more than having a black principal who lives in Ward 8 and 7. We want representation of our executive leaders. If the Garden is approved, -- can I keep -- our children would have a place that fosters concerns,
thinking, and expose them to the work field that
would prepare them for their future. I want my
children to be well rounded. I want my children
to be challenged academically and graduate with
the skills and experience needed to succeed in
the world.

I love the Gardens attendance,
academics, and the CTE. I love the work-based
learning where students gain real world
experience and exposure. I love that the school
will develop by the community and is supported by
our community leaders, Trayon White. I feel that
these are the things that will make our school
and our students successful.

Thank you for your time. And I hope
you approve the Garden School of Business and
Entrepreneurship.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MS. HOUSE: Good evening. My name is
Carla House. I'm a Ward 8 resident, a parent,
and a Ward 8 business owner. I, like my
community, want the most rewarding education for
all of our students, especially our black and
brown students east of the river. I am here
today to strongly encourage you to approve the
application of the Garden School of Business and
Entrepreneurship.

First, I want to acknowledge the
commitment the Garden has shown to the needs, the
wants, and the demands of our community east of
the river. Typically new school operators come
up with a great idea for a school. In recent
cases, these ideas have been a Montesorri or a
dual-language program.

Next, the school operators then
pitched their ideas to the community and if we
like their idea, the community gets behind them
and supports their idea. No harm, no foul. The
word that I want to stress to you today is "their
idea". What makes the Garden different -- and
even more reason why they should be approved is
simple. To create a school that focuses on
economic development and breaking generations of
poverty through business and entrepreneurship was
not originally their idea. It was the
community's.

The Garden is our solution to the
problems that we are facing in our ward.
Specifically generational poverty. This is our
school's choice. With the Garden, the roles have
switched. The students had a great idea for a
school. The community affirmed this idea. And
the operators got behind them and supported it
100 percent. This is how it should be done and
not the other way around.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I
want to acknowledge the trust. The trust that
these operators have built within our community.
This is the link that is missing from a lot of
our schools in both sectors. Not only do we
trust this group with our idea, but we trust them
without children and their futures, academically
and economically.

Thank you again for your time and your
commitment to approving great schools that our
communities demand and out students want and
need. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MR. HARRISON: How you guys doing?

I'm LeGreg Harrison. I'm actually replacing Wayne. He wasn't able to make it. Like I said before, my name is LeGreg Harrison. I'm the owner and CEO of the Museum DC, The Legacy Marketing Group, and Organic Goods Consulting.

Yes, I'm a serial entrepreneur. I'm also an overachiever. I created a store in the Third Grade at Martin Luther King Elementary School. I drew sneakers. I cut them out. I made dollars and I cut them out. I would give them to all my classmates and then I would sell them.

I had the entrepreneur bug in me since I was maybe 8 or 9 years old. I never knew what a "B" was in my life. I was a straight "A" student and an overachiever. But I'm sad to say that all the As that I got, it didn't help my family become wealthy. Right? In 2016, I was considered one of the top black 100 men and
businessmen in the country by Black Enterprise.

I feel like we're in the best market in the country for small business and local business. We have the opportunity to spark and nurture the entrepreneur spirit in our youth. All of these accomplishments that I have, they didn't come easy. Like anything in life, there's going to be challenges and barriers. The successes I have took me until I was 35 years of age to get to. And I learned that through trial and error.

Let's be honest, most of us growing up east of the river, we don't have 35 years to get it together. Thirty-five years in order to get my family out of poverty is crazy. Not when I showed my teachers that I was an entrepreneur in the third grade. I wish I had the opportunity as an adolescent to be exposed to these businesses. By 35, I would have been a billionaire already. I'd be able to give back directly to the community and the city that exposed me to this platform.
We are in the age of tech and the youth across the country are doing big things. They're dreaming bigger. They're not afraid. I wasn't afraid in the third grade. If I had the Garden School to help me nurture my entrepreneur spirit, like I said before, I probably would be a billionaire right now. My companies right now, all of four of them are grossing well over $2 million a year annually.

I also do technical and small business assistance for businesses in Ward 8. That's through trial and error. No one taught me how to be an entrepreneur. We have to fuel and spark the entrepreneur spirit in the youth. It's going on across the country. You know, there are millionaire tech kids right now. There are millionaire business owners. There's a baby on YouTube right now who is I think 6 years old and is making millions of dollars. The Garden School is the way to go. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MR. MAJEEDE: How you doing? My name
is Waress Majeed. I am the founder of Yay Me and
also the creator of the Young CEO Curriculum. I
definitely support the Garden School and exactly
what it means.

Just to piggyback off the gentleman
just a second ago, I'm also one of those
individuals who has business ADHD. I love
business. I love teaching business. Even more I
love teaching business to our young people.

Growing up east of the river, I've
faced a lot of challenges. And I know what it
means not to have the support to be an
entrepreneur. A lot of our young men and young
women are entrepreneurs, but just need that extra
push. They need that support.

And just to know that the name of this
school is the Garden, right, it means that you're
planning something. And for a garden to grow and
to be a beautiful thing, it's going to take the
community to tend to that garden. To water that
garden. And that's how we look at our young
people east of the river as parts to this
beautiful garden.

And I know by meeting the leadership for the Garden School that they are committed to involving the community. To involving everyone to come and be a part of this garden. To help these young people to achieve the greatest part of themselves. And if I had that opportunity, I might not be a billionaire, but I'll take as close to a billion as possible.

But I do know that if we come together as a city and support schools like the Garden, that we will have so much talent in this city that we're able to actually water and see it grow. Because east of the river, we have a lot of talent that's dying. These gardens are dying because we don't have the right people, the right leadership, the right community that's willing to step up, do what's necessary, have the hard conversations. And make a school like the Garden work and grow. And that's what we're asking for today. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you to all of you.
MS. HOUSE: Can I say one last thing, if that's not a problem? Again, my name is Carla House. One last thing that I did want to mention, I do have a son in Ward 8. My daughter is here. She's also in Ward 8 as well. But recently he was suspended from his school in Ward 8, some technical difficulties with him and behavior issues. But he ended up having to go to a Maryland school now, move in with his dad. So moving from out of Ward 8, but in the midst of that, he started his own clothing company called Independent Soldiers Only.

And so the whole concept, as I read my statement, I just kind of thought more about really the importance of him and if he had a school like this, how much more beneficial that would have been. He is a cancer survivor, so he's eight years cancer free as of November 2019. So opening up his own business was really something that has been really sparking his interest and excitement in life again after being
suspended from, you know, high school and not making his requirements for the 10th Grade.

So when being asked to speak here today, I thought I had it all figured out what I wanted to say. And then really listening to everyone and hearing how important entrepreneurship really is -- just listening to the owner of, you know, the museum and hearing from parents in Ward 8, I really hope you guys understand the importance of children feeling important about their talents and about their crafts and about the skills that they hold.

So I didn't expect to cry and get emotional, which I don't normally do, but I just really started thinking about the excitement of my son and my daughter about how they feel about being an entrepreneur. They've only seen me as an entrepreneur for the past nine years. So all they know is to work for yourself. So it's been very exciting for them to get excited about entrepreneurship. So when I heard about the Garden, it excited me.
I'm more than happy to speak on behalf of the Garden and Ms. Nah and the entire committee who's putting that together. So I hope you guys take everything that we're saying into consideration, which I know you will and approve the Garden. Thanks a lot.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Thank you to everyone who's come to share this evening. Next up, Steven Foster, Marche Graham, Angel Abrego, and Laila Butler.

MR. FOSTER: Good evening. Thank you for having me here this evening. My name is Steven Foster. And I'm a father of elementary school and middle school age children. I've served in the capacities of Dean of Students, Assistant Principal, Interim Principal, and CTE School Leader. I've led schools in both Wards 7 and 8.

I'm here in support of PCSB's decision to approve the Garden School of Business and Entrepreneurship. I first learned about Ms. Nah and her work with mental health through
Instagram. A couple of months later, I learned that she was going to open a high school in Ward 8. I was immediately intrigued by the idea of a school being designed by the actual students and the communities who deserve it the most. I served in these communities for years, so I understood the importance of what she was doing.

I then signed up to attend one of the community design sessions.

Little did I know that our paths would cross before this. I physically met Ms. Nah at a former work place summer training. Her hair was different so I didn't immediately recognize her. But I knew that I knew her from somewhere. I said to her, I think I've met you before. And she modestly said to me, well I mean, I used to work at Rocketship. And after being that I'd never worked at Rocketship, I knew that, that wasn't it. When I recognized where I knew her from, I decided to watch and see if her reputation on social media presence matched her actions and who she was in person. It did.
Ms. Nah is the most modest, honest, trustworthy, and hardest working school leader that I know. It's one thing to say that you care about the community's input, but it's another ballgame to actually value and implement the community's input and vision. Ms. Nah is a leader that values this community and has pushed the community's agenda forward.

The community design sessions that I attended were proof that parents, students, and residents were able to choose the curriculum that was being used, the hiring systems, and the discipline structure. It was powerful to watch a community that is typically told what's best for them actually choose what they believe is best for them.

Thank you for your time. And I hope that you take the community's input into consideration to approve the Garden.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MS. GRAHAM: Good evening. My name is Marche Graham. I'm a K12 educator, a Hampton
graduate, a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, and an advocate for more culturally aware and affirming schools in DC.

I support the Garden School of Business and Entrepreneurship because the beliefs, mission, and actions of its leaders embody and resemble the HBCU experience. The Gardens core values are rigor, voice, consciousness, and community. That means that students will be pushed academically. Their voices will be heard and not silenced. Their identities will be affirmed and developed. And they will be in an environment that teaches them to love the skin they're in, who they are, where they're from, and to positively contribute to their culture and their community. Students will have the freedom to explore and challenge systematic structures where the teachers around them are pushing them past the status quo.

Historically when I think of W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington and what they created separately, the Garden perfectly unifies
their idea of academic intellect and career and
technical education together. Time has shown us
that we need both and our students can have both.
The Garden will provide a culture of rising of
positivity of moving forward in the right
direction. It will be a nurturing environment
for students and teachers, all of which have been
significant hallmarks for HBCUs.

Thank you for your time. And I hope
you move forward in approving the Garden School
of Business and Entrepreneurship's Charter
application.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MR. ABREGO: Hello. My name is Angel
Abrego Montro. And I currently go to Benjamin
Banneker Academic High School. I love to learn
more and more about the world around me and love
the idea the CapX staff community has shown me.
I came here today to talk about the experience
working in the CapX community.

The idea of bringing students to learn
is pretty common in every school. But not every
school uses the environment around them to help
their students learn. This is what makes CapX a
really unique teaching method. Learning can be
very boring and hard. But while in CapX during
the constant visits at other places other than
just the walls in the class, it felt great to
move and interact with what we were learning.
This just wasn't to keep the students
entertained, but also to help better remember
what we're learning.

A great example was when we went to
the U.S. Botanic Garden to explore how chemistry
could connect to plant life. And when we went to
the Natural History Museum to see how atomic
structure effects the shape, color, and other
properties of minerals.

When I had just finished 7th Grade, I
was already learning high school level Chemistry.
We also prepared projects for the community to
see. And that was great because it encouraged us
to learn ourselves and try to show others what we
learned. We did this not just in Science, but
also in Math. I can't thank CapX enough for this because I would have been lost in high school right now without my experience two summers ago.

In 10th Grade, I'm learning about how Chemistry is applied in everyday life. And is found everywhere and how to find the slopes or rate of changes in graphs. I had already explored these ideas at CapX. They managed to help set groundwork and remember important lessons in my future that I didn't notice until I faced it. So this is why I approve for CapX to become a school for others to be inspired too.

Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. I'll call our next four public witnesses. RuQuan Brown, Samantha Triplett, Abdelwahab Gubartalla, and Martin Ayaba.

MR. GUBARTALLA: Would you like me to start?

CHAIR CRUZ: You may start.

MR. GUBARTALLA: Good evening. First off, thank you all very much for your time --
your valuable time. I appreciate it. My name is
Abdelwahab Gubartalla and I am currently an
Arabic teacher here in the city. I taught
overseas for a long time. And I moved back to
Washington DC in 2006 where I taught at Capital
City Public Charter School, E.L. Haynes Public
Charter School. And now I teach at St. Anselm’s
Abbey School.

When I first started teaching at the
Abbey School in 2013, it was the first year that
Arabic was offered as a four year program. And
today we are the largest language department in
the school. We also offer Spanish and Arabic.
This year I had 18 children sign up for Arabic I
out of 32 8th Graders. Three years ago, we had
to hire a second Arabic teacher to help with the
load.

I just want to share my perspective as
an educator on the ground in terms of what I am
seeing Arabic do for students. I have seen
Arabic be a tremendous equalizer for students.
And the ability to share at home with what they
are learning because they realize that their parents can't tell them how to do their homework or share their experience. So it gives the kids a tremendous amount of confidence because they get to not only learn something that they know that their parents don't know, but they can teach their parents, which is quite often a homework assignment. So they have to go home and teach their parents.

I don't need to tell you the value of bilingual education. I'm sure you all are very well versed in that. But I want to share my opinion as someone who is multi-cultural that providing a multi-cultural learning environment is incredibly valuable. It helps break down imagined barriers between cultures. I think it also highlights similarities between cultures. And I think we all can agree that, that is really important right now in our world.

I think that being the nature of our teaching Arabic by nature itself, we not only have to teach the language, we really have to be
specific about how we teach the culture as well. So we are not only teaching language, we are teaching cultural proficiency. And the kids immediately take to it. Because without culture, language is useless.

Some of the most valuable experiences for my students is when we do Skyping sessions with students in the Arab world. And the connection that the kids make is real. And they continue conversations outside of class over WhatsApp because they make friends. I also think that -- Well I think providing that opportunity for students in the city is incredibly valuable. There's only us and Washington Latin School that provide that opportunity right now in the city.

So once again, I just want to share my enthusiasm for you approving the charter for the Washington Arabic School. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MR. AYABA: Good evening, everybody. My name is Martin Ayaba. I am a DC resident. I've been living in DC for the last 12 years. I
came here as an immigrant and went to get my Master's in Public Administration from UDC. And I started my own small business.

I come here this evening, both as a parent and as a resident to throw my support behind the application for becoming a school to CapX. Because I think the model that they are using can really improve the quality of education in the District of Columbia.

My son, Randall, is 12 years old. For the last two years, he has been going to CapX during summer periods. And he has had a lot of experience in terms of the hands-on training that he has been learning visiting most of the District archives and museums. He has gone literally to every -- to most of the museums and learned a lot.

I have had the opportunity to interact with the staff of CapX. And one of the things that they have really improved on Randall's ability is to build his confidence. Randall moved here with his brother, with his sister
three years ago. And coming from Africa, he was really naive. I knew that he had a lot of talent, but when I told the staff of CapX that they needed to help boost his confidence, they really impressed on me. And now Randall can make presentations in public. I think that is a very, very impressive methodology on how we are going to compete as a District. And how we are going to lift up our young students to become the best in the country.

So thank you very much. And I hope that you take this into consideration about how CapX has been able to integrate a diversified culture into their program and make sure that our students are the best. Thank you very much.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MR. TRIPLETT: Hi. My name is Samantha Triplett. I am now a 10th Grade student at Thurgood Marshall High School here in the District. I am a former student of Washington Global Middle School where I met the staff of CapX Lab. I participated in a session that I
have really enjoyed. They were inspiring, while educating you, plus we had fun while learning.

If there were to become a school, I would tell all the parents that I come across to let their children go there. I like my middle school as well, but I feel as if we need more schools or more people who really care for our students.

In CapX Lab, my experience was very fun and educational. I was in the African-American studies with them in a program and I learned a lot -- like a lot. And it's helping me now in school because I do African-American studies and DC History and World History now. And like my experience there is like unforgettable. It's very fun. Not only do they make it fun for the students, but it's like you can go back -- Like you could remember -- like everything -- you remember everything; the experience, what you learn.

They set up very great programs. I met two famous people -- well not famous, but
they were on CNN because I love writing. I love Journalism. And those two helped me like guide and like you know, learn how to present, speak well. And do everything that I need to do to achieve my goals.

So I am here today to help CapX Lab become a school. And I ask you can you grant that for us please?

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MR. BROWN: Good -- good evening, actually. My name is RuQuan Brown. I'm a senior at Benjamin Banneker Academic Senior High School. I am here on behalf of the Garden School as an extreme supporter in the vision and what it will be.

Being at Banneker is primarily academic, and there's no focus on any other aspect of the experience outside of community service. That community service experience can be very limiting, depending on who your supervisor is and what their intentions are.

Before I continue to why I support the
Garden, God has allowed me to earn 25 scholarship offers to play football at the next level.

(Applause.)

MR. BROWN: Thank you. It's very hard for me to enjoy that sometimes because my stepdad, who taught me everything I know about the game, was murdered in 2018. A year before that, my teammate, Robert Lee Arthur, Jr., was murdered at Roosevelt Senior High School. So as great as it is to have seven of the eight Ivy League schools calling me and inviting me to their institutions, it becomes harder and harder to enjoy those experiences because I'm not with my loved ones.

I started a clothing line called Loved One because I wanted to not only memorialize my brother and my dad, but I also wanted to help end gun violence. My clothing line, Loved One, takes 20 percent of its proceeds and donates it to an organization that buys guns off the streets and turns them into art.

For me, life is also about taking my
gifts, taking what God has blessed me with,
allowing the attention, the platform and
everything that comes with that and divert it to
somebody else that needs it more than I do.

A school like this will allow so many
students to do that. A school like this will
allow so many students that don't even know yet
how to give back or some that haven't even been
given to, an opportunity to do that.

A school like this will propel,
conserve, so many leaders that need to be served
and propelled. Of those 25 schools, I chose to
go to Harvard.

(Applause.)

MR. BROWN: I made that choice because
I wanted to be a part of a network of people that
have not only been where I'm planning on going,
but also trying to go where I would like to go.
An opportunity like this with people like myself,
Greg, and other amazing entrepreneurs from D.C.
and their network, there is no reason that
students won't be exceptionally exceptional.
Thank you.

(Applause.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, and congratulations. All right. The next group of public witnesses, Vanessa Bertelli, Robert Crosby, Raven Freeman, Hui Li, and Jay Twine.

MS. FREEMAN: Good evening, everyone. My name is Raven Freeman. I'm a Ward 8 resident and a parent of a three-year-old. I'm also a Board member for our Global Citizens School.

I am a fierce supporter of Global Citizens School because it is everything I want in a school for my son, for other families in my community, and for children in the District more broadly. Global Citizens is a language immersion school that has a deep commitment to social justice, a strong plan for balancing social, emotional, and academic learning, an experienced leadership team, and it will be located east of the river.

This type of school does not exist where I live today. My husband and I know the
cognitive benefits of learning languages at a young age and want our son, Blase, to attend a dual language school; however, many of the schools we selected in the lottery were more than a 25-minute drive from our home and outside of Wards 7 and 8. To find out we were not matched with a language-immersion school was a great disappointment, but not a surprise.

As we've experienced and discussed with friends and neighbors, the options for dual language schools are limited east of the river, and simply do not exist for Mandarin specifically.

So it is great that we have been able to attend a number of the Global Citizens School weekend Mandarin classes at the Capitol View Library. My son actually said to me when I left the house today; Hey, Mommy, that's the shirt from my Mandarin class. He gets it, and he loves learning Mandarin.

Blase and the other children in our community deserve a school like Global Citizens.
The founding team has experienced working at high-performing language immersion schools and is deeply invested, personally and professionally, in nurturing and promoting the greatness of black and brown children and communities.

They have the skill and life experience to launch and lead a school that will prepare our kids to thrive, not just survive, in an increasingly diverse, interconnected world.

As a parent of a black boy and someone who works with schools nationally to recruit and retain experienced teachers and leaders of color, I am confident in the abilities of the Global Citizens team. There is so much research the refers -- I'll wrap up -- to the importance of increasing black and brown school leaders. The Brookings Institute writes that black leaders and advocates may not only create more inclusive equity center policies, but they may also embolden others to advocate on behalf of all students.

Natalie Smith and Jenifer Moore are
both black mothers and educators, and they will
partner with families and the broader community --
they already have -- to prepare and inspire the
next generation of leaders. I implore you to let
them lead and to make it possible for my son and
my neighbors and others to attend Global
Citizens. Thank you for your time.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. BERTELLI: Good evening. My name
is Vanessa Bertelli, and I'm the executive
director of the D.C. Language Immersion Project;
for short, D.C. Immersion.

D.C. Immersion works to increase
equitable access to opportunity to multi-lingual
education, and on behalf of D.C. Immersion I
would like to thank the Board for its support for
dual language programs in D.C.

Your support matters because, in
addition to what others have said before me,
families should have access to the programs they
want for their children, and students who are
furthest from opportunity should have access
equitable access to opportunity-boosting
programs.

My School D.C. recently analyzed the
school year 2018-19 lottery data and found that
of the 5,187 wait-listed at a dual language
school, 3,191 or 62 percent of them went
unmatched in any school.

Only five of the current programs, of
current dual language programs, are effectively
available to non-siblings. And lastly but most
strikingly, 1,012 applicants only applied of dual
language programs. In the context of school
choice, that is a very heavy data point.

A longitudinal study we conducted with
the University of Maryland on the demographics
and equity of dual language immersion programs in
D.C. points to dual language programs being
racially and ethnically more diverse than other
programs, with no instance of segregated schools.

The study also points to a stark
inequity in participation of black and at-risk
students in these programs. Twenty-one percent fewer at-risk students, in large part due to the current geographic location of the bulk of existing dual language programs as the lady before me was mentioning.

This matters because decades of vigorous research, as most of you know, indicate that dual language programs benefits students regardless of racial, ethnic, linguistic, or socioeconomic background. These programs lead to higher academic achievement; they're highly effective in long-lasting intervention for EELs, and lead to improved access to constant jobs.

The last point I'd like to leave you with is that nine out of 10 employers in the U.S. rely on employees who speak a language other than English. So by authorizing Global Citizens Public Charter School in Washington, and Washington Arabic Public Charter School, the Board would not only contribute to meet demand, but also increase equitable access to opportunity-boosting programs. Thank you.
CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. LI: Good evening; my name is Hui Li. I'm an educator in the Mandarin Language Immersion School here in Washington, D.C. Tonight I'll lift my voice in support of Global Citizens School. I believe in the school model expanding access to language immersion schools in Wards 7 and 8, and in Dr. Smith, our leadership.

Because of this, I'm excited to support and advise her in the ongoing development of her Mandarin Pathway, including recruiting Mandarin teachers to field it.

I have worked with Dr. Smith for the past six months to plan and teach as a part of her pilot at the Capitol View Neighborhood Library in Ward 7, and her community engagement in Wards 7 and 8 over this time.

I have grown as a teacher, as a classroom manager, and as an interventionist. I have also learned about the history of public education in Washington, D.C. and what are the
means to engage the community.

I teach and beyond the students, I teach, and the parents and guardians that love them. I worked with Dr. Smith, her team, and her board makes me confident in how students will become bilingual and will care for themselves and others, and happy and healthy.

It has also given me first-hand experience of how teachers will be supported to be their best. If we're happy and supported as teachers, the best recruitment, Strategy 4, identify other high quality teachers. Dr. Smith has a dedicated recruiter in me. Please support Global Citizens School. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CROSBY: Good evening; my name is Robert Crosby. I'm a Ward 8 resident and a D.C. educator, and I'm speaking on behalf of Global Citizens Public Charter School. I'm a firm believer that a high-quality education should not be a lottery bet for children in D.C. The
relatively small number of high-quality seats available in schools in Wards 7 and 8 reveals a profound inequity that currently exist in our city, and as a Ward 8 resident in the process of adopting an infant myself, I'm deeply concerned that my child will not have a high-quality school to go to in my neighborhood.

There is only one school, elementary school, in Ward 8 that is at a five-star rating, and there are zero dual language immersion programs in Ward 8. Therefore, I am in full support of Global Citizens Public Charter School's application to the D.C. Public Charter School Board which seeks to open in Wards 7 or 8.

There's a clear need for Global Citizens, as it will be the first dual language immersion elementary public charter school offering Mandarin and Spanish is not only focused on academic excellence, but social justice and whole-child wellness.

The vision outlined by Global Citizens and formed by the community and the founding
group offers a clear plan for a school that will prepare and inspire the next generation of leaders to achieve academic excellence as well as reach their full potential in a nurturing, learning environment.

I've spent the last 11 years as a teacher, a school leader, and non-profit leader, working mostly in the D.C. education sector, and I've seen time and time again that the most significant indicator of a school's success is the strength and integrity of the school's leader.

The founding leader, Natalie Smith, is a proven leader with a track record of not only leading schools to Tier 1 status but also coaching and developing school leaders and teaching across Wards 7 and 8. I'm confident in her ability, but not only her ability, but what further gives me confidence is that teams, her leadership teams, school leader experience, and Tier 1 language immersion programs. They are inherently qualified to lead Global Citizens to a
five-star school that Ward 8 deserves.

I currently provide capacity building for school leaders at local non-profit and formerly served as an elementary school leader. I am confident to say that Natalie Smith and the other school leaders in the founding team are some of the strongest I have experienced. I'm closing up.

Further, the experience and the commitment that Natalie and the team has done alongside and working with the community in the continued effort to engage families along the way makes me equally confident that I would elect to send my child to Global Citizens.

I've committed my entire career to enhancing education opportunities for our children in D.C., and my unwavering support for Global Citizens furthers this commitment. I urge you to support them.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

(Appause.)

MR. TWINE: Good evening, Chairman
Cruz and members. My name is Jay Twine; I am a Ward 8 resident.

As a Ward 8 resident I am excited to share my support for Global Citizens Public Charter School's application. There are more than 1,100 students in Grades 1 through 5 who are waitlisted for charter elementary schools east of the river. This is just one indicator of the need for more high-quality elementary education options in my neighborhood.

I have seen first-hand the difficult of officials wrestling with trying to make the best decision for a school system. My father served for years on the district school board in my home town, and I witnessed him weighing the decisions of resource allocations and hiring decisions.

This decision is an easy one. Should the Board approve a high-quality dual language program for Wards 7 and 8? The answer is an emphatic yes.

Numerous studies have consistently
demonstrated that education is one of the best indicators of a family's economic mobility. Children in Wards 7 and 8 face more than twice the rate of poverty as those west of the river, which further highlights the need for more high-quality education options in the District in general and east of the river in particular.

D.C.'s lottery system, while well intentioned, is not the panacea for lack of education opportunities and fails to address some of the logistical hurdles that exist when kids only have access to high-quality dual language education opportunities by leaving their communities.

Living in poverty is expensive, and by not having ready access to more education opportunities within the community only adds to the cost of being poor in the District. My partner, a lifelong educator, school and non-profit leader, and me, a career diplomat, have lived and traveled all over the world and had experiences we could not have imagined. All of
this was possible because of our recognition of
the importance of a high-quality education and
access to it.

Our families were steadfast advocates
of our educations. I have volunteered and
supported American and international schools
during my time living abroad, and this statement
is my latest salvo in an attempt to bring higher-
quality education east of the river.

My partner and I are in the midst of
the newborn adoption process. When we purchased
our home in Anacostia two years ago our plans to
start a family, we were concerned about the lack
of schools in the neighborhood and quite frankly,
we are still concerned.

As we advance in the adoption process,
we are hopeful that more education options will
materialize over the coming years as our child
reaches school age, and that is why Global
Citizens is so important, not only to the
community, but to us in particular.

The Board has the power and the
opportunity to make access to high-quality dual language programs east of the river a reality with the approval of this application. Thank you very much.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, everyone who has testified this evening. We'll have another opportunity for public comment a little bit later on in this evening's meeting. At this point if I could have Hannah Cousino and Rashida Young join us for opening of the public hearing on our charter amendments. Sorry, two last public comment, and then we're ready.

MS. IRAHETA: Good evening, my name is Evelyn Iraheta. I am a D.C. resident, but more specifically, I am a Ward 5 resident. I have two daughters; one is currently in first grade, and my oldest daughter is in fifth grade. They both attend the Montessori School LAMB PCS in D.C. since pre-K.
I'm excited to be here to share briefly with you my experience with the Montessori Method. As an educator before my daughters were born, I have researched and visited almost every Montessori school in the District.

I was convinced that my daughters would benefit highly from the Montessori education because I had learned that Montessori is a method of education that is based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning, and collaborative play.

In the Montessori classroom, children make creative choices and learning while the classroom and the highly-trained teacher offer age-appropriate activities to guide the process. However, when my oldest daughter was ready to start school I looked more closely into the different schools and was disappointed to learn that the options were not only limited, but my family could not afford the high tuition costs for the Montessori schools.
Luckily, my oldest daughter was placed through the lottery during pre-K four, and they have remained in the program since then. My daughters love going to school every day. They are happy, and their performance is outstanding.

I can tell you that my oldest daughter has a Lexile score of over 1000 in high PARCC scores, and this has been achieved in a relaxed, child-centered environment. I cannot tell you enough in words how excited my family is about Truth being a local option for us and all the Ward 5 families.

My oldest daughter will be entering sixth grade in the fall, and she is excited to learn about Truth as well.

We plead the Board approves Truth to be located in the Taft Building at 1800 Perry Street, N.E. so we can continue with the Montessori education in our neighborhood and also allow other children to experience the amazing benefits of a strong Montessori education led by highly-experienced professionals like the ones at
Truth. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MS. VAUGHN: Good evening, all. My name is Leah Vaughn. My family and I have been Ward 5 residents since 2009. While pursuing my undergraduate degree in education at Northstate University, I was introduced to the Montessori education model. I was aware that it was the education of the elite, but I swore if ever given the opportunity, that I would enroll my children. What an amazing way to develop life-long learners.

We were fortunate enough to have two opportunities to enroll in the Montessori environment; my girls first. Our tenure at Lee Montessori Public Charter School granted us the opportunity to be active in extending the Montessori beyond the traditional elementary stage.

As a family, we were active participants in introductory conversations, student feedback, just to name a few. Students
in systemically segregated public schools are
less likely to graduate from high school and earn
on average 25 percent less than their more
affluent, middle-to-upper-middle-class peers over
a lifetime.

Even with additional resources like
laptops, because they lack the resource literacy,
these underserved schools and populations will
continue to fail even with the expectation to do
well, because resources were provided through the
public school.

With every year a student falls
behind, it is harder for them to catch up. Our
schools are the background for equality and
inclusion. Public charter schools have given
parents, students, and families like mine the
opportunity to choose. The power of choice is
what we make, and it makes all the difference.

The Truth leadership's identifies are
wrapped in equity. I recognize my privilege and
choice, and I know that my decision is having a
direct impact on education throughout the D.C.
public school system. School is where you go, and life lessons are what you take from those four walls and a roof that shape your life.

I have continued to share my love of Montessori and the opportunities that are available to students, families, and their communities through Montessori education. It is imperative that this opportunity be afforded to the Sojourner Truth community, our Fifth Ward community. Parental choice, parental power.

Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. All right. Are we ready to have the Sojourner Truth team come up?

MS. COUSINO: Hello, my name is Hannah Cousino, Senior Specialist on the Equity, Audits, and Supports Team. This is a public hearing on a proposed facility location of Sojourner Truth Public Charter School. This school received conditional approval to operate on May 20th, 2019, and one of the conditions of full approval is securing a facility.
Truth intends to locate at 1800 Perry Street, N.E., in Ward 5. The facility would be shared each in distinct sections of the building by Truth Public Charter School, LAMB Public Charter School, Perry Street Prep Charter School, and St. Jerome Academy, a small private school.

Upon the school meeting all conditions, you will vote to fully approve it to open for school year 2021. This vote is scheduled to occur on May 19th. Representatives from the school are here to answer your questions.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Do you guys have any opening statement or whatever remarks you'd like to share?

MR. LESSEK: Hi, Justin Lessek. Good evening; Executive Director at Truth. We're just grateful for the opportunity. We're thankful that we found a location really at the heart of the parent movement that sort of spawned this project in Truth; also the home of three of the District's public Montessori campuses. So again
we feel fortunate to be up here to talk about the
Taft Building this evening. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: And I wonder if everyone
else could introduce themselves, and the we can
open it for questions if you don't have any
additional remarks.

MS. EDWARDS: Good evening, and thank
you for the opportunity again. My name is Denise
Edwards, Principal at Sojourner Truth.

MR. ABEL: Hi, I'm Ryan Abel, Director
of Operations for Truth.

MS. GREEN: And my name is Sharon
Green; I'm the Parent Engagement Specialist.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay, thank you. All
right, Board members? Ms. Shelton.

MS. SHELTON: Thanks. Just to kick it
off, how has your planning year gone so far?

MR. LESSEK: It's going quickly.

(Laughter.)

MR. LESSEK: It's been busy, but it's
been good. We feel very good about this
leadership team. We're really excited about the
new staff that's coming on and excited for August
to take on new students.

   MS. SHELTON: And how many
applications have you received so far?

   MR. LESSEK: As of about 60 seconds
ago when I last checked, we're at 116.

   MS. SHELTON: And of those
applications, how many have ranked you as their
first choice?

   MR. LESSEK: Thirty-seven, I believe,
most recently.

   MS. SHELTON: Okay. And in terms of,
if you were to -- of all 37 of those students
came in, how would that impact your budget if you
only had those 37 student?

   MR. LESSEK: If it were just 37
students, it would be an incredibly significant
impact.

   MS. SHELTON: How many of them have
ranked you as their top three?

   MR. LESSEK: I believe it's 65 right
now, yes.
MS. SHELTON: And those are all Montessori families, or is there --

MR. LESSEK: No. So we're pretty excited right now. A little under 25 percent of our students are coming from prior Montessori placements, so more than three-quarters are coming from a non-Montessori background.

MS. SHELTON: And what is your outreach base to the Montessori families that are in the ward that you would like to locate

MR. LESSEK: Yes, we've had strong outreach to those Montessori families, but also sort of at a broad level. So from the beginning really, our mission has been to make this a school for all, so we have had a very broad outreach. But you're interested in just specifically Montessori families?

MS. SHELTON: Well, the Montessori families with all of your outreach. What does that look like, and what do you intend to do between now and the selection period?

MR. LESSEK: Yes. So our outreach
within the Montessori community has been a bit of a, I guess, less of a heavy lift, just because we were sort of already known, a known entity in a lot of our original stakeholder parent design members were coming out of that Montessori community.

So we've done things like parent open houses and info sessions at each of the current public Montessoris. But I think where really probably most of our energy has been is in outreach beyond that sort of core, initial Montessori group.

So we've been hustling to be in as many middle school fairs, both DCPS and charter. We have worked extremely hard. I think last time we were up here speaking to you we were talking about how we had worked with every leader of a public elementary in the city.

So we really worked those connections to try to get in front of as many families as possible. In Ward 5 we -- I think we were -- this was always sort of our target, to be in Ward
5, and our engagement with Ward 5 leadership goes back almost a year.

So just before I think our conditional approval, we had been engaging with Council Member McDuffy. We were doing door-to-door canvassing in the neighborhood of 1800 Perry Street, N.E. by June of last year, knowing that was really an ideal spot for us.

We were engaged with Zach Parker, State Board of Ed representative going back to last summer, so we feel fortunate that -- we don't feel like we've been put in a place where we need to scramble for buy-in from the neighborhood over the last couple of months, but we've been able to do so really over the last couple of years.

MS. SHELTON: And what contingencies have you developed in the case that you aren't able to meet your low or medium goals, enrollment goals?

MR. LESSEK: Yes, so our ceiling is 90, and we are still pushing hard to meet that
goal of 90. I'm still hopeful we'll get there. We know that our sort of break-even point with our given staffing model is between 80 and 82 students, so that's the point at which we would begin adjusting the actual staffing model, once our enrollment is at 80 or below.

And then from the standpoint of what specific effects on our staffing model it would have, we would want to be informed by who the students are before we start saying that we would lose particular positions off our model.

MS. SHELTON: So in addition to positions in staffing, what about your -- the lease itself and the financial implications of that?

MR. LESSEK: From a lease perspective and from a cash perspective, we are confident, given our current scenario, that even if we were to drop to probably close to 50 percent of our target enrollment, that we would have the funds in the short term to cover the lease.

MS. SHELTON: Thank you.
MR. SANDMAN: Will you have to do any work on the space in the building before you occupy it?

MR. ABEL: Fortunately for us, since the space is being used as a school currently, we can kind of move in to it pretty easily without much renovation. The only thing we have to do truly is increase the height of the rest room stalls because it's an elementary school so they are a little low, so our middle-schoolers are going to want to raise them up so they can have privacy when they use the facilities.

MR. SANDMAN: Thank you.

MS. CRUSEY: I've read the letter of support from your ANC commissioner. Have you received any negative feedback as you pursue this facility from members of the community or other stakeholders?

MS. GREEN: So great question. I had the opportunity to present at that ANC meeting, and the community was very receptive to us coming into the neighborhood. Of course, they asked
questions in terms of expectations; what does a school day look like? How do you handle traffic? Because other schools currently occupy the space there, so not necessarily concerns about us coming in, but just general concerns and questions about another school coming in and if it would disrupt the flow of what's currently taking place in the community.

It's been some time since a middle and high school were in the space, so they were still very favorable about us coming in after hearing about our overall academic program and what adolescent Montessori looks like and how they could potentially also be involved with the school. So it wasn't just the school coming in; it's how we can work with the community and community members to make this truly like a community effort in coming together as we move into this space.

MR. LESSEK: And that is -- I think I mentioned that. Initial canvassing we were doing in this particular neighborhood goes back to last
summer. Around November and December of this year we started to shift to try to figure out what concerns might be and solicit concerns. So a lot of flyers that we did in the neighborhoods and the doorknocking and stuff. We were giving our personal numbers and email addresses and inviting them to open houses to voice their concerns, and we've been fortunate that we have not gotten any direct concerns.

MEMBER GANJAM: What are some of the considerations that are taken into account with cohabitating with other schools, and are there things that you're going to benefit so that cohabitation or any concerns?

MR. LESSEK: The co-location is something -- this is another area where I think it benefits us that this was one of the original sites, we were hoping might become available because we were working with our street prep as early as last summer. Conversations, of course, with LAMB from the very beginning. So this was not a surprise to anybody, so we had a lot of
time to work out what the partnership will look
like and, to as much as possible, look at it from
an asset perspective.

You kind of alluded to this idea of
how can we programmatically elevate one another.
And of course, there's a lot of opportunities
directly with LAMB being in the same sort of
annex of the building and them also being a
Montessori.

But we think and believe that we'll
have some similar opportunities to partner in a
positive way with Perry Street. Our gardening
program is one thing we've talked about. We've
talked to them; they have more students in
general, so they have a little bit more capacity
for things like sports, which are important to
use as well. And so trying to figure out how we
can get some of our kids to maybe play on their
basketball team, soccer team, stuff like that.

MS. SHELTON: So I have a random
question. In looking at the terms of your lease,
there are no parking spaces available. I have
been over to Perry Street to visit my pseudo nephew. What is that going to look like in terms of teachers and parents coming to visit? That is adjacent to a neighborhood. There's a field there, so there's not a ton of street parking.

What does that look like for you all?

MR. LESSEK: Yes. That was something the first time we saw it, we were a little about surprised by that as well, we'll admit. LAMB also doesn't have any spots, so LAMB has been making that work with zero spots and a full staff in that building for as long as they have been there. So we're going to take their lead there.

Teachers, many of whom drive, do use the neighborhood for parking. We've also heard similar things from their leadership about, they do have that lot, which I'm sure you're familiar with, down behind it, but that doesn't quite stretch enough for their full staff either. But that's a good question.

CHAIR CRUZ: So the initial terms of the lease are for one year with a provision to
extend it. How does that impact the longer-term
vision for where this school locates itself?

MR. LESSEK: We've thought a lot about
that as well. It is disappointing to start with
this 12-month lease; it's disappointing from our
perspective as leaders in the space, but even
more importantly, we thought a lot about families
and what a family endures as they get moved in
the turbulence that's caused. So that's one of
the reasons, I think, that we are suited to build
strong relationships from the very beginning to
try to mitigate it as much as possible when there
is a movement.

As some of you might know, there is
space; there's quite a bit of space in the Taft
Building beyond what we are currently under lease
for, and so we've already been in conversations
with the stack of leases above us -- it's quite a
stack -- and we're hopeful that that building
itself will be actually be able to stretch beyond
the 12 months. But I concur; we already have an
ad hoc committee of our board, along with some of
the people we have been fortunate enough to work
with in the real estate market; we're already
looking beyond, whether that's 12 months from now
that we're in need of a new building, or whether
it's 36 or 48 months from now.

LAMB's current lease goes for three
more years in that space, but as you probably
know, they are consolidating over to Kingsbury.
Right now they do plan to keep students in South
Dakota for the next three years, but we've even
been in conversation with them about some
creative use of space along with Perry Street.
But we don't want to take anything for granted or
make any assumptions, so we're working hard to
figure out where that next space will be.
Hopefully it will be not far in Ward 5, fingers
crossed.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Thank you.
VICE CHAIR BIREDA: I'm curious with
that building how drop-off works and how you guys
are planning on timing and start and stop times.
And then secondly, some free advertisement.
Well, let me just hear about the kinds of questions you're getting from perspective families, the kind of program you're going to do to introduce families to the Montessori model that are not familiar with it. Let people hear the high web traffic we have left in this meeting.

MR. ABEL: All right. To your first question, we have been at the building. There's a side entrance on South Dakota that we're currently hoping to use as our main entrance.

We've walked through the space with folks to ensure that it's code compliant and always to be a second entrance, or rather, to be our main entrance so that we can kind of keep three different schools operating with their own entrance without having kids to necessarily interact with one another as a part of their daily experience.

So we're currently working with DDOT on figuring out what we can do to arrange for drop-off on that South Dakota side. There's a
little pull-off across the street on South Dakota that we're thinking we could potentially have a crossing guard to have folks cross the street. But we're truly working with them to get their guidance on what they anticipate the best solution would be on drop-offs.

MS. CRUSEY: That's a busy street to have kids running across.

MR. ABEL: Yes, but we're definitely leaning into the expertise of DDOT to give us what we should do.

MS. GREEN: So to start with, some of the questions, of course the first question is, what is Montessori? What does it look like in middle school? So explaining to families what that adolescent plane entails at that third plane during adolescent development. So have done a lot of work with just having open houses and workshops with families to explain to them what adolescent Montessori is, and also how it looks a little different from primary and upper and lower elementary Montessori and also describe some of
the experiences that students would have during that time.

Another thing is for, since we are getting a good number of students who are not familiar with Montessori, not been in a program, will also have a summer bridge opportunity where students will come and literally have a day in the life of that student. So they'll have that opportunity to be in the space.

They will engage in projects; they will engage with local community organizations and partnerships that we have forged, so students will have the opportunity to complete projects and things of that nature to get acclimated to what the day would entail.

Another question is before and after care. So I've been in secondary ancillary high schools so to hear that question I was like, Hmm, before and after care.

But after a lot of research, seeing that middle schools do offer extended hours for families, so we are working with a local
organization to be able to provide early morning
drop-off as well as a later afternoon pick-up.
But then also working with local organizations to
have a very robust after-school program so
families -- we're serving families and students
to see what it is that they're interested in and
then working to find partners who are able to
provide that after-school experience for
students.

So boys and girls mentoring, coding,
soccer, things of that nature just to name a few;
those are some of the things that we have already
secured.

Will there be a uniform? What's the
discipline policy? Expectations about
attendance; will students have to sit for PARCC
even though it's a Montessori school?
Opportunities for families to engage with the
school day and how parents can also be involved;
volunteering, community service.

But also, we're asking families for
resources: Who are you connected to? Because
that can also open up the doors in terms of who we could be connected with in terms of providing some very unique and authentic experiences for students.

MR. PEARSON: Just very quick answer.

When you reflect back to when you were applying for your charter and you thought about recruiting, would you say that the experience that you've had recruiting students has been harder, about the same, or easier than you anticipated?

MR. LESSEK: That's a great question, and coming from some experience in DCPS with recruitment, recruitment was always a challenge and a hustle. I could speak maybe from the middle school perspective, and maybe your experience did you said the high school level, but it think it has been about as expected, to be honest.

We wish our numbers were higher. They're not where we want them to be, but from a standpoint of, again, where we think we can get
them, and where we think we'll end up, we're feeling good.

MS. GREEN: Yes, I would say about the same as well. There have been some schools that we have reached out to that were not as welcoming as we had hoped they would be, so that has posed a bit of a challenge. But we just kept rolling with it and just continuing to get into the doors that will open up for us.

MR. LESSEK: I think we benefit from being a Montessori school, which comes with some recognition from a portion of the community or at least recognizable even to some others who might not know much about it. So I think that has played in our favor, which we know that not all schools have the benefit from.

MR. PEARSON: Thank you.

MS. VALENTINE: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Are there any other questions? So this matter is back before us next month for our vote, so -- May, sorry. So we'll have a lot of time before we see you again.
Thank you.

MS. GREEN: Thank you.

MR. LESSEK: Thank you all.

(Applause.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Rashida, shall we bring up those coming before us on the vote on the new campus for Friendship?

MS. YOUNG: All right. Hello, I'm Rashida Young, Chief School Performance Officer. This is a public hearing to discuss Friendship Public Charter School's charter amendment request to open a new campus for school year 20-21.

Earlier this month the D.C. Public Charter School Board received written notification from Achievement Academy Public Charter that it intended to cease serving Grades 4 through 8 at the close of school year 2019-20. To avoid displacing affected students, Friendship Public Charter School offered to open a new campus serving Grades 4 through 8 in the facility currently occupied by the Achievement Prep Middle School.
This campus would be called Friendship Wahler Place Middle. Because the proposed campus is being approved too late to participate in the My School D.C. Lottery, students would enroll through the post-lottery application process through My School D.C. under written authorization from PCSD as provided in the My School D.C. policy guide, or if My School D.C. was unable to accommodate this new campus in its systems, the school is authorized to conduct its own application and lottery, which is permitted per the school's charter agreement.

Our staff would like to expedite this charter amendment request to ensure a smooth transition of the school for families at Achievement Prep, particularly given the various lottery deadlines that are approaching.

As a result, we are having the public hearing for this proposal tonight and the vote later in the night as well. The school is here to answer any questions you may have.

CHAIR CRUZ: If you all would like to
introduce yourselves and if anyone has any
opening remarks?

MR. HENSE: My name is Donald Hense;
I'm the founder and chairman of Friendship.

MS. BRANTLEY: Pat Brantley, CEO of
Friendship.

MW. WRIGHT: I'm Shantelle Wright,
the founder and CEO of Achievement Prep.

MR. DAVIS: My name is Rufus Davis.
I'm a parent.

MR. HENSE: Good evening. I'd like to
thank the Board on behalf of Friendship Public
Charter School for considering our application.

I do want to say that I am proud that
Friendship has the capacity to take this school
on and that it will, in fact, thrive under our
system. We believe that; thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MS. YOUNG: I'll be brief. First of
all, thank you again for considering our request.
As you know, Friendship has been a member of the
D.C. community for 23 years, serving all wards,
but a good portion of kids from Ward 8.

Sixteen years ago we opened our first
campus in Ward 8 Southeast Elementary, which was
the site of the first charter closed by the
Public Charter School Board. We then went on to
open two more campuses next to Southeast
Elementary in middle and high school.

We're here tonight to address the
urgent and immediate need for middle school seats
that will occur upon the closure of the
Achievement Prep facility and Wahler Place for
middle school students.

It has not been an easy road to get
here. We went through many iterations of what
would work, working very closely with PCSB staff,
Achievement Prep, and with the families. A hard
road, but we believe it's an important one, and
we believe it's the right one.

We are committed to the families; we
can run a school, as Mr. Hense has said, that
will provide quality seats. Thank you for your
consideration.
MR. DAVIS: Thank you for this opportunity. Once again, my name is Rufus Davis. I'm a parent of three scholars that attended Achievement Prep, two of which moved on. I have one scholar attending Achievement Prep right now. I also attend while serving on the Achievement Prep Board. I would like to share with you this letter.

We are parents of scholars at Achievement Prep, and we are writing to support the proposal from Achievement Prep and Friendship Pubic Charter School. We ask that you approve the plan so that our scholars have a clear path forward for the 2020-2021 school year with no disruptions and an easy transition.

We agree that immediate change needs to be made at Wahler Place Middle School, and we believe that the plan to redesign the middle school is the right path forward. All of us on this letter have signed our collective 210 scholars to attend the Friendship campus at our Wahler Place School, and we are working with
fellow parents to ensure they do the same.

Allowing Friendship to use the Wahler Place Middle School campus instead of Achievement Prep Middle School scholars at that site for the 2020-21 school year ensures continually for our scholars a school site they know.

Many of us have scholars at the elementary campus, and this plan allows us to plan for that in the coming year, instead of having to figure it all out now.

We are also excited that Friendship Charter School go through high school and will allow our scholars to stay in the same school to graduate high school.

We know Ms. Wright and her team, and we trust that they all think of scholars first. We understand that we have not been part of the many discussions that went into consideration, and we are sure that you, like us and the leaders at Achievement Prep and Friendship want to put the scholars first.

We do not know all the politics, but
like parents everywhere, we just want what's best for our scholars. We encourage you to embrace this partnership approaching and gives us peace of mind that our scholars will have high-quality education options for next year. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ms. Wright, is there anything? Okay, excellent. We'll open it up our Board members for any questions they may have on the proposal before us. Ms. Shelton?

MS. SHELTON: Yes. So in the last year you all have taken over two campuses, so how can you ensure maintaining academic standards at those schools, at the schools you had prior to taking on those schools, and moving forward and taking on this additional school?

MS. YOUNG: Thank you for the question. So Friendship has a robust leadership and staff development program. We have added new staff, Nicky Mickelson (phonetic), who is here with us in the audience, is coming on to support the new campus and all Friendship Schools.

We have launched, with our top
principals, a program called the Friendship Way, where we will have fellows who are in being trained in Friendship standards. And then for Ideal, which is the newest campus, Joseph Spade, who was former Tier 1 principal with Friendship, came back to lead that campus.

So how do we do it? It's personnel. It's people that are committed to the children of Washington, D.C. that have agreed to work with Friendship and make sure that our program can be replicated responsibly.

MS. SHELTON: And just to familiarize folks in the room with this sort of transition, how many of the staff members from the current staff will be transitioning to the new campus?

MS. YOUNG: So we have not yet reviewed the staff that's there, so I can't give you exact numbers. But we, in any type of partnership like this, we interview anyone who wants to interview with us, to review what their needs are and what our needs are, and to provide an opportunity if one exists.
MS. CRUSEY: Thank you for this, and for the time last week or the week before. That was really informative, and I felt like that was a really constructive meeting. So thank you for all that you do.

As for the takeovers from last year, can you speak to us how those are going so far and what you may have learned from them as you anticipate bringing on more scholars next year?

MS. YOUNG: Sure, absolutely. I'll start with the middle school grades at Armstrong, which had been approved to move to middle school, although the original approval was move one grade at a time, and when we took on City Arts, we of course took all the grades.

We have integrated really well in terms of the arts program, and so we're quite proud of that. The upper grades 7 and 8 are very strong in math and ELA because we were able to get seasoned teachers, some who had worked with Friendship before. Many of the arts teachers, though, coming from City Art to us, which was the
strongest part of their program, so that's going very well.

At Ideal, we took over a school that was one of the lowest performing in the District of Columbia, and there hadn't been investment and staff development in that school unfortunately for some time. So we did take about 40 percent of the staff that had been there before, and we've been working with math experts Robin Silby. We've added ELA experts to the site, and so that school has improved dramatically from when we opened in August, but still has work to do to move up to what we need.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Thank you for sharing the letter from the parents. I really appreciate that. It was very helpful to hear their support. I'd love it, Ms. Brantley, if you could speak a little bit to what your staff is hearing. Is there a beginning to work with parents and community members as to what they're looking forward to in your assuming responsibility for the middle school?
MS. YOUNG: Sure, absolutely. So first we are hearing a deep commitment to Achievement Prep. I mean, to the credit of Achievement Prep. People believe in a leadership of Achievement Prep and so take it very seriously that Achievement Prep wants to see a very strong middle school program there.

Families want to stay in that location. They realize that they don't have as much time to participate in the My School D.C. lottery. They don't have the time that other families would have had from the beginning of the year, so the timing is a challenge.

What we have heard is that people really value the idea of having access to Friendship's Tier 1 tech prep high school. If they're with the Friendship family or an opportunity to be a part of the International Baccalaureate program at Woodridge or the arts program at Armstrong or the very strong science and math program at Chamberlain, and so being part of a network provides those opportunities to
families.

We have heard that people want to see the great investment that we can make in staff development and also the leadership that we can bring to the site. And just our expertise in the curriculum. We do share similar curricula to what Achievement Prep has in place, and so being able to bring in more investment to get people up to speed and using that curriculum's fidelity will be important.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay.

MS. YOUNG: Lastly, I'd say, and Aaron's the one to talk to if they want to, is that Friendship has lots of before and after school and summer programs. I would say that we have more of those types of programs than what the middle-schoolers have now just because we are connected; elementary, middle, and high. And so we are able to bring those programs into the Wahler Place site.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. One aspect that the families experience will be the process by
which we get them from the Achievement Prep
School to Friendship School, and do we have an
approval or a way forward, at least from the My
School D.C.? Who's that -- might have been
happening on Friday, or --

PARTICIPANT: They haven't decided.
CHAIR CRUZ: They haven't decided yet,
so we have two strategies to deploy as was laid
out in the memo, and I just wanted to see if we
had a decision on that yet.

MS. YOUNG: Unfortunately we don't
have a decision yet. Your approval is one step;
we'll have to take the other steps to work with
My School D.C. to see whether or not they can
accommodate this new campus, but it is likely.
We don't know yet how they will consider this,
but there is a second option. Obviously, we will
have to work through it with My School D.C. and
your team.

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes. Thank you.
MR. PEARSON: Just a follow-up to
that. If it's premature for these questions,
just say so. But if you were to run your own lottery, do you have a sense of what the dates would be? That is, when you would take applications until; when you'd run the lottery; how you would ensure that families across the District were aware of their opportunity for the open enrollment?

MS. YOUNG: We have dates; it's somewhat premature, so I won't say them now, but I will send them in a memo to your staff tomorrow.

The contract that that school signed with My School D.C., that contract is fairly explicit that we will not run a lottery outside of My School D.C. And so technically we have to think through the language and what would happen.

A lottery would only be necessary if there was demand for seats above the actual enrollment level that we would have. Given the late date; given that families are already choosing their seats, we don't think that that demand will happen, but we do need to work
through the technical details first.

    MR. PEARSON: Okay. Thank you.

    CHAIR CRUZ: Any other questions from the Board?

    MEMBER BUMBAUGH: I just want to acknowledge the Friendship team and the Achievement Prep team for working hard and being creative about ways not to displace students. Thank you.

    CHAIR CRUZ: I think that will be echoed across our board for what is, I know, a challenging decision to make, and also a challenge that Friendship has stepped up to. So I appreciate that.

    MR. HENSE: Before we sit down, I'd like to once again, since I've got all of the Board members here, encourage the Board to consider its own lottery. My Charge D.C. sounds perfectly all right with me, and I hope you work really hard over the summer to put this into effect. I do believe that we have way too much authority to what began as a computer program.
Now the computer program has an advisory committee; it has a staff. Give me a break.

Come on. It's way too much. There's nothing that says that we need them at all. And that, I believe impedes us to be connected with it because people are confused, going, looking through 200 schools. They really are. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Mr. Hense.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thanks. All right.

We'll be voting on this in just a few hours. Just a few hours. We're in it for the long haul, guys. I don't know about you all. All right.

Katie, do you want to bring everyone -- how do you want to do this? Bring everybody at once? Okay, perfect; excellent. Okay.

MS. DAMMANN: Hi, good evening. My name is Katie Dammann, Senior Manager in the School Performance Department, and I'm joined by my colleague, Olivia Gusman, a specialist on the School Performance Department.
Tonight you will hear from four founding groups that are applying to open public charter schools in Washington, D.C. Their written applications have been reviewed by a D.C. PCSB review team, including expert consultants when needed, and each founding group has had an opportunity to explain more about their program during the capacity interview portion of the application process.

The purpose of tonight's hearing is for the public to hear from each applicant group and for the Board to ask any questions that remain unresolved. Each group has about two minutes to introduce themselves and their proposed school, and then the Board has about 30 minutes to ask questions.

The full applications can be found on D.C. PCSB's website, and the Board will vote on each application at our regularly scheduled March Board meeting.

At this time I would like to welcome the Washington Arabic School to the table. They
will be followed by Global Citizens, the Garden
Education, and then Capital Experience Lab.

(Applause.)

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. You guys were
last last time, so you're first this time. Smart
negotiating. We will let you start with any
remarks you may have.

DR. WISE: So good evening. My name
is Dr. Valaida Wise. I'll be the prospective
principal for Washington Arabic. We have almost
25 years of leadership experience in K-8, as well
as four years of leading inclusion model
preschool.

I'm currently the board chair for
Creative Minds International Public Charter
School and frequently serve as a consultant for
the PCSB conducting QSRs in area public charter
schools. I've been studying Arabic for the last
three years.

MR. ABO AWAD: My name is Hani Abo
Awad. I am the prospective head of school and
the founder of the school. I've been an educator
and administrator for 18 years, and I've been
working to support this program with this
wonderful team for three years now.

MR. CALLIS: I'm Daniel Callis. I'll
be the prospective board chair. I'm from the
D.C. area, and I also have experience living,
working, and teaching in countries where the
native language is other than English, including
Arabic, Russian, Dari, and Serbian.

My professional experience is in
corporate governance and banking supervision,
which includes performing financial analysis on
various types and sizes of businesses.

MS. GUBARTALLA: Good evening. My
name is Jamie Shores Gubartalla, and I'm so happy
to be here again tonight. I'm the prospective
director of special education inclusion. I've
had 15 years of experience in public charter
schools in D.C. as a general educator, EL
inclusion teacher, special educator, and interim
EL coordinator.

I currently work as a special educator
at Washington Yu Ying Public Charter School, Abdul Immersion Mandarin English Public Charter School. I also have had experience living, traveling, studying, teaching, and building cross-cultural relationships in countries where the language spoken is Arabic, Japanese, and Spanish.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MR. DAVIS: Hi, my name is Lee Davis. I'm a prospective board member and the prospective treasurer. I've lived and practiced corporate law in the District for 10 years. I advise public and private companies on a wide variety of corporate governance and transactional matters.

I also have a pre-school-age daughter who attends Friendship Chamberlain Public Charter School, and for seven years I have participated in and then led our firm's participation in the after-school tutoring program for Thurgood Marshall Academy.

DR. WISE: I'd like to introduce one
more team member who unfortunately couldn't be here tonight because she's in Kuwait. Her name is Fatima Abdulkazem, and she's our Arabic curriculum coordinator. Ms. Abdulkazem has a Master of Art from the University of Arizona. She holds a certificate in elementary education with a specialty in Arabic.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay, thank you. All right. Any opening statement? Do you have --

DR. WISE: (Speaking Arabic.) So on behalf of our community here tonight and all those throughout the region who have expressed their support for Washington Arabic Public Charter School, we want to take this time to than the Charter School Board for encouraging our re-application, and for your ongoing feedback and support.

We have taken the time to build out our team a bit and to continue to engage with our community, refining our program as a result of your feedback. We are excited to share our vision of and passion for the creation of an
Arabic language public charter school in Washington, D.C.

MR. ABO AWAD: Washington Arabic Public School will be an Arabic immersion school for D.C. children in pre-K3 to fifth grade. We built on the belief that diverse, multilingual educational community can challenge students to think critically and creatively, thus enhancing students intellectual promise.

Our aim is to ensure that students evolve into multilingual scholars who know themselves as originals and go on to become thoughtful advocates for social change.

DR. WISE: The Washington Arabic Model is built on six foundational pillars: Arabic language immersion, global citizenship, diversity by design, positive school culture, character development and, of course, lifelong learning.

MR. CALLIS: We are committed to identifying and eliminating systemic racism, bias, and oppression in our school community, and outreach as it impacts the greater community.
Recognizing that racism creates systemic power imbalances, Washington Arabic seeks to dismantle traditional hierarchies within the organization and fully incorporate racial equity within our decision-making by including all voices of our community and by hiring teachers who use cultural responsive instructional practices.

DR. WISE: Washington Arabic will provide a 100 percent Arabic immersion program for our pre-K and pre-K 4 students, as current research suggests that children at this age are in an absorbent mind period and are much more able naturally to absorb languages; in fact, a variety of languages almost effortlessly, especially when it's presented in a playful, joyful, language-rich environment.

But beginning in kindergarten and continuing through fifth grade, students will be instructed in a 50/50 Arabic-English immersion model. This model recognizes the importance of ensuring proficient English language development
for students in each grade while developing the
second or third language for some students that
pass these at the optimal age for each child's
life.

MR. CALLIS: Washington Arabic
language immersion model and commitment to
serving a diverse community of learners requires
that we have a low teacher-student ratio.
Research has demonstrated that adequate planning
time, regular, honest, communication, and
respectful collaboration are key ingredients for
effective classrooms, benefitting all students,
but particularly students with special needs.

Each pre-K classroom will have 16 to
18 students with one Arabic teacher and one
teaching assistant in the classroom full time, as
well as push-in teachers for students with
special needs or EL needs.

Each K through 5 classroom of 12
students will have one general education teacher
working with students full time, as well as
regular push-in additional co-teachers who will
support EL students, students with Tier 2 intervention, and students with special needs.

MR. ABO AWAD: Arabic is the most commonly used spoken language and the fourth most commonly-spoken language in the world and the third most in demand language by employers in D.C. Adding an Arabic immersion school will provide opportunity, a unique work opportunity for them to see thousands of D.C. students who are currently on the waiting list for language immersion programs.

Learning Arabic will open the door for them to learn this critical language, to become powerful advocates for social change.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. All right. Let's start off with Lea.

MS. CRUSEY: I had the privileged opportunity to sit in your capacity review a few weeks ago, so thank you for that.

I'll start it off with welcoming Dr. Wise to the team. Can you share with us why you joined the team and some inputs you have had on
developing and improving the team's plan since last year?

DR. WISE: Actually it is my pleasure, because if was serendipitous. I had been interested in the Arabic language for several years now and was taking Arabic and working with it, and then got to meet Hani Awad. If you know Dr. Awad at all, you recognize the fact that he can convince you to do just about anything. His excitement and enthusiasm for what he wanted to bring to students in D.C. just kind of drew me.

My other passion is early childhood and specifically, I consider early childhood pre-school through about fifth grade. This is a critical time, and I felt that global citizens have to be those individuals who have multiple languages, and Arabic is one of those languages.

I brought to them, I think, the idea that early childhood programs, especially pre-school, we should not be looking at a skill-based program. But we've broadened it to look more at an inquiry-based program.
We changed our program from the very beginning now so that it is much more in line with what research has demonstrated is really effective for young children, and we are going to be blending that right into our early education, early elementary program as well.

MS. CRUSEY: Well, that's a perfect segue to my follow-up question.

MR. ABO AWAD: Yes, I just wanted to add that she also brought us a lot of experience and sometimes I wasn't sure about a few decisions, and she will come with her experience and say, No, it's not done like this in Grades 3 and 4; especially when it comes to building and operations, which she is adding to the curriculum; also the operation piece.

MS. CRUSEY: That's helpful, thank you. Naming the curriculum; we don't have information yet on what the curriculum will be. You've, at a high level, explained kind of the framework. Concern you speak to us in a little more detail about what that will look like?
DR. WISE: Absolutely. So one of the things we've looked at and considered in terms of the research was what an immersion curriculum would look like for early childhood. There's a ton of research about that. The National Association of the Education for Young Children uses that as the model of what early childhood education should look like, so we are using an immersion model.

An immersion model is also called enquiry-based. What that means is that the children and the teachers co-create the curriculum together, so it is not already canned and pre-described.

I use this curriculum also at the National Child Research Center, which is about a 100-year-old institution in early childhood that is inclusion modeled. What we found was that children who have this opportunity in education and were able to create a curriculum along with their teachers, were much more advanced and had a deeper understanding of what their role was as an
educator, as a learner, and their role as a
creative force within their classroom. So that
would be what the curriculum will be.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Jim?

MR. SANDMAN: Can I follow up on that?

It's understanding you would be taking in
students in K-1 and 2 who had not been in the
pre-K 3 and 4. What is your plan to integrate
students? Let's take the extreme case, the
student who doesn't come in until Grade 2. At
that point maybe joining a class with students
who've been in immersion Arabic for four years
already. How do you integrate that person?

MS. GUBARTALLA: Good evening.

Specifically for students who are coming as
newcomers in kindergarten, first, or second grade
like you were saying, specifically also if the
student possibly doesn't have native language of
English, two main way that we are going to
support that child.

One is that our current Arabic
language curriculum coordinator will be the
support person for any collaboration with teachers. Support with planning differentiated instruction; supporting direct instruction for that child.

Second, she will be the leader of creating a resource room with a specific Headstart kit that will build foundational literacy in Arabic or English. That kit will include survival phrases, sentences, vocabulary. It will also include the use of transliteration and repetition to build foundational understanding and connections between Arabic and English, Arabic and another native language.

This is a very useful technique for newcomers that are specifically coming into a new language. There will also be a plethora of visuals and reality that will be used in that resource room and will be available for teachers to use as well.

DR. WISE: And just one more thing. One of the most powerful teachers within a classroom for children who are emerging in
language is another child. So those children who are coming up through the program who are going to be associated with young children will have a model for them to follow.

MR. SANDMAN: Is there research on the point of no return in immersion programs where it's just too late to integrate a new student because the rest of the class has been in immersion for too long?

DR. WISE: The research is scant, but what we know is that even adults can grow their brains. So the reality is, as long as we have a supportive environment -- and that's why we're using responsive classroom -- encouraging, and it's about relationships between teachers and students; as long as that's there, I think we can take just about any child through that program.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MS. SHELTON: During the capacity interview, you guys mentioned that you have a database of about 20 families who have expressed interest. If you are approved, what would your
approach be to go from 20 to 120 students?

MR. ABO AWAD: Honestly, we have I think more than 100 families who actually responded back. We stopped building a database for the families different from the database that we had that particularly asked parents what grade their child would be, in what year, and we have more than 22 already now without a program, who want to secure their seats for school year '21-'22.

We do explain to the parents that we're going to participate in the D.C. My School lottery, and this is just a way for us to build a database and help them when they want to register for the school.

DR. WISE: I think it's also important to know that we have worked really hard to reach out to the community. We've been at all the ward meetings; specifically we have been invited, and we are happy to participate. We are also participating at local area libraries and encouraging them to learn more about our school.
But I think what's most powerful is

some of the things we're giving back to the

community. So we're considering things like yoga

in Arabic; Arabic story hours; all of those

things to help integrate and help people get

excited about this program.

MR. ABO AWAD: I also want to add to

this. Since last year, since the meeting, the

public meeting last year, a lot of families have

reached out to us and asked us about the program

and asked how they can help. We feel the demand

among the families in D.C. that there is need for

an Arabic school.

I shared with you the survey that we

did about the wards and how it crossed all wards,

all families. We believe that Arabic can

actually be a strong program that can bring

people together and we are very encouraged. We

are very happy and proud of the support that we

get from the community in D.C.

MS. SHELTON: And who is responsible

for the community engagement on your team?
MR. ABO AWAD: Basically, we are working as a team. We all working as a team; I am leading the team; Val is on the team; Daniel has a part, but we all work as a team. Each one of us, and we have a lot of other members who are in different communities, what I really like in our team is that it's a team work.

We're trying to reach to everybody in the city with different languages, different approaches. You can see in the survey that we shared, it's almost from Ward 3 to Ward 4 to Ward 1, 2, 5, 7, 8; all wards who actually came to us to want the school.

MS. SHELTON: And who would be responsible for that, going forward? Like once the school is established, what does that look like, because everybody's going to have an actual job.

MR. ABO AWAD: Again, as head of school, I am responsible for this. I've been with this for three years, and people actually know me as the guy who wants to open an Arabic
school in D.C.

So I will be leading this, but we will use the community resources. We will also use organizations that work in D.C. like PAVE and D.C. Immersion that Vanessa spoke today in front of you. I will be leading the effort on this, but again, we all work as team, and we mean it when we say we work as a team.

In the meetings that we went to in different wards with PAVE, each one of us went to a different ward, and we all sit and negotiate and talk to each other about the feedback that we had. So I will be leading the effort of that community engagement and we will work as a team again.

MS. SHELTON: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea?

MS. CRUSEY: We've asked other groups tonight a couple of questions around enrollment, and during the capacity interview we asked how would this budget continue to be viable if you had a significantly different number of students
enrolled. Can you walk us through that?

MR. ABO AWAD: Yes, sure. Thank you for that question actually, because the last time when we asked the question, we didn't understand exactly what Mr. Scott meant with the question.

But we actually built our model after research in D.C., after immersion school and based on the need for an immersion school in D.C. So we put this number as a cap for our school. However, as Washington Arabic Public Charter School, we will be able to do work, and save and keep our unique model and work financially with us.

In the last two weeks I have been working with ops, and we had actually prepared an alternative budget that we can be official with 298 students. And still the model can be unique and effective. We don't have this new budget, but I will happy to share it with you.

MEMBER GANJAM: How are you thinking about teacher recruitment in terms of the balance of knowing the grade level and also knowing the
language?

DR. WISE: I am so glad you asked that question because I asked Hani the same question. I was thinking to myself; Where are we going to get these teachers from? I was shocked by how many individuals in our area, in the Maryland, D.C., Virginia area who are already Arabic speakers already in our schools.

He literally gave me a stack, and I brought that to the capacity hearing of resumes, about 40 of them, who are totally appropriate. In fact, when we interviewed for the curriculum coordinator there were people who were teaching in schools or were coordinators in schools who want to come to D.C. and will be a teacher and not curriculum coordinator anymore.

In other words, moving from an administrative position to a teaching position because they so believe in being able to speak their own language. So it is not that we don't have enough teachers; they hadn't had the opportunity to teach in their language. So that
is not a worry for me anymore.

MR. ABO AWAD: And I want to add to that. In addition to marketing our school as a good teacher-based school with benefits, we also work with organizations like George Washington. We work with organization like QFI, that has summer institution to train teachers in immersion schools.

I also reach out to a program in Michigan that's called Teachers of Tomorrow. They certificates for all teachers, and honestly, I was talking to a few of my colleagues, Nikita from Yu Ying and Erica Bryant, and they love the idea that we can actually work something out with GW and other schools to copy and adjust this program to the D.C. immersion schools.

I think the need for, not just Arabic teachers, but all language teachers in immersion programs who will just increase in the next three years.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: We have a lot of language immersion schools now in the charter
sector and in DCPS, and I'm wondering if you've incorporated them into your learning agenda. For example, the questions that Ms. Crusey and Mr. Sandman were asking about what you do with non-Arabic-speaking students who come in late. This is the sort of question you could pose to experienced language immersion schools. Have you used them as a research resource in developing your plan?

DR. WISE: I'm going to start this, but I'm going to hand it off to my colleague, Jamie. Not only have we used them, but we have one on our team. So someone who is actually in a school that's highly successful. So, Jamie, you might just want to pull in with that.

MS. GUBARTALLA: With students who have come as newcomers late -- in fact, I work with a student right now who came in in second grade.

PARTICIPANT: And your Union?

MS. GUBARTALLA: I'm a Washington Union, yes. She came in the second grade, and
she is also a student with special needs. She has worked hard, and she has needed to work hard, not just to work learning two languages, but also working with some of her attention needs. She has grown up through Washington Union for the last several years.

And these students that I work with that are newcomers have a lot of support from the teacher in the classroom, the general education teacher. They differentiate resources; they differentiate the worksheets that they are using. But they also have push-in support, which we plan on having with intervention teachers as mentioned in the budget.

They also use those intervention teachers to pull out small groups when necessary, and it's supporting not just the newcomers that come in second grade, but any students that need that extra support with any particular target language.

MR. ABO AWAD: I also think in the strategic planning when we start working very
close with Yu Ying, D.C. Bilingual, and EW stops, I have to be honest that I was really surprised and glad of the support that they offered to us.

I also want to mention that Jamie worked in Yu Ying, and we continue supporting her and working with her to prepare her for her role in our school. So the fact that we are coming to complete the picture, and we learned a lot from schools that actually did the work, and I have to be honest when I say that these schools have some challenges at the beginning, specifically when it comes to language.

So we hire teachers, and also we learn a lot from them and how they try to improve their engagement with the community. And I don't want to mention schools by name, but we did reach out at least more than 10 emerging schools, and I worked very closely with Daniella from D.C. Bilingual; Nikita, Ericka, and Josh from Salah (phonetic).

MS. GUBARTALLA: I want to add one more thing. Even though it's not an immersion
language school, that my experience at Capital
City Public Charter School really taught me
invaluable information to be able to work with
students of a second language. I had first-hand
experience working with students who came to the
school in the first and second grade where their
native language was Spanish or Amharic, and had
to integrate them into an all-English school
setting.

This was definitely more challenging
than what I've seen in a 50/50 immersion school;
however, it can be successful. Many of these
students who entered in first and second grade
didn't even know the English alphabet, and by the
end of that year or possibly year and a half,
were proficient with reading at a beginning
level, mastering those alphabetical skills; being
able to read and write in English.

MR. ABO AWAD: We also reach out
Arabic schools nationwide. Jamie and myself
visited the Houston Arabic school and the program
in New York. We also learned a lot from their
programs, their curriculum, how they live with
their community and this was very helpful to us.

I visited Houston twice and New York
twice, and Jamie did each school once.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: I just wanted to,
I guess, continue to probe on the questions
around students with disabilities and students
with special needs. And it seems like you
probably are the person with the most expertise
there. Can you kind of describe the fullest
range of continuum of services that you're going
to be able to offer? Will you be prepared to
have a self-contained classroom? And then, how
would those students be able to access the Arabic
aspect of the school in that respect?

MS. GUBARTALLA: Thank you so much for
asking that question. That question came in the
capacity interview. And again, it will depend on
what students we are receiving in the school.
So, we don't know what that population will look
like. However, depending on whatever that
student's individual IEP will have, then we will
work out a program that will meet their needs.

Specifically, if a student requires a smaller classroom and a smaller setting before they possibly transition back into the general education classroom, it could look like part-time in the general education classroom, part-time in just a smaller setting where they receive, if they need it, occupational therapy, if they need a speech and language pathologist. It really will depend on that individual child's needs.

As far as Arabic -- and I answered this in their interview, and really I can't answer it unless I have that student there -- depending on what their individual needs are, we will, then, develop a program that would support them learning Arabic, whether it's in the general education setting with direct instruction or, if that child needed, instruction in a smaller classroom and provided with direct instruction.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: And this is just a -- oh, go ahead.

DR. ABO AWAD: I just want to say
like, in general, I just want to say our
commmitment as a leadership, as a school, is to
serve all students with all needs who come to our
building and be a part of our community.

VICE CHAIR BIREDAA: At the pre-K
level, I noticed that it was 100 percent, right?
So, will you have two Arabic-speaking teachers in
the pre-K classrooms or will there be one teacher
responsible for some English development?

DR. WISE: One general education
teacher who is Arabic and, then, one assistant
teacher.

VICE CHAIR BIREDAA: Okay. Will the
assistant teacher be for Arabic?

DR. WISE: Be Arabic, too, yes.

VICE CHAIR BIREDAA: Okay.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Any other
comments at this point?

(No response.)

All right. If not, thank you. We'll
see you back here next month.

MS. GUBARTALLA: Thank you very much.
(Applause.)

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. If I could ask the team from Global Citizens to join us?

(Applause.)

All right. Welcome, Global Citizens team. If you'd all introduce yourselves? And then, you have an opportunity to make some opening statements, and then, we'll get to questions.

DR. SMITH: Good evening. Hi. I'm Natalie Smith, founder and CEO of Global Citizens Public Charter School.

MS. MOORE: Good evening, and thank you for this opportunity. I'm Jennifer Moore, founding principal of Global Citizens Public Charter School.

MS. SMALLS: Good evening. My name is Taura Smalls, and I'm the Board Chair of Global Citizens School.

MS. FREEMAN: Hello again. I'm Raven Freeman, and I'm the Board Treasurer. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.
DR. SMITH: Thank you so much for this opportunity to share our vision and plans for Global Citizens Public Charter School with you and the D.C. community. My team and I are grateful.

Again, I'm Dr. Natalie Smith. Washington, D.C., has been my home since I started college 22 years ago, and I have spent nearly half my life as a teacher, instructional coach, school leader, and leadership coach in local public schools, with a lot of that time spent east of the Anacostia River.

As a daughter of Chinese-Jamaican immigrant parents, and a first-generation college graduate, I was taught the value of a strong education. As a child, my mother removed me from my neighborhood public school and placed me in a private school, with the hopes that it would open up windows of opportunity for me, and it did.

But, for the first time in my life, I was subjected to racism. And the school was not yet equipped to help me deal with it. Each day I
had to leave my Chinese-Jamaican culture and
to the door before entering the school
building. This led me to feel as if I did not
belong. This has, in part, fueled my passion for
opening a dual-language immersion school with a
focus on whole child wellness and social justice.

MS. MOORE: Hi again. I'm Jennifer,
and I'm a native Washingtonian and I attended
D.C. public schools.

I have always been an educator. In
fact, my first classroom was on New Hampshire
Avenue on my grandparents' porch in 1988, and my
students were my cousins and my neighbors.

I was fortunate to be educated by
teachers who cared about me and who were invested
in our community. I remember the pride Ms. Cates
instilled in me when she told me that I was
young, gifted, and black. It was only fitting
that both my first teaching and school leadership
roles would be east of the River.

Global Citizens Public Charter School
will be the first dual-language immersion public
elementary school in D.C. offering Mandarin-
English, and Spanish-English, the top three
languages spoken in the world. We will locate in
Ward 7 or 8 to provide our black and brown
children with access to dual-language immersion
programming in their own communities.

We plan to launch offering pre-K-3 and
pre-K-4 in 2021, and expand an additional grade
level each year until we reach fifth grade in
2028. We will immerse children in the Mandarin
and Spanish languages, promote the value of
diversity, and equip them with the knowledge,
skills, and mindsets they need to contribute to a
better world.

We are driven by our belief that dual-
language immersion paired with social justice
curricula will equip our children to become
empathetic, globally-competent, and socially-
minded leaders who are prepared for a future we
cannot yet imagine.

In pre-K-3, we will use a 90/10 model
where children learn in the partner language 90
percent of the time and in English 10 percent of the time. We, then, shift to a 50/50 model for kindergarten through fifth grade.

DR. SMITH: My team, Board, and community believe that our school must exist. Because of its benefits, D.C. families have been demanding seats for their children in dual-language immersion schools. There are a total of 25 dual-language immersion schools in D.C. Twenty-three of them are west of the Anacostia River. Just two are located east of the Anacostia River.

That means that, even though families in Wards 7 and 8 are demanding seats in and on waitlists for dual-language immersion schools across the District, only two dual-language immersion schools are located in our community. Our community sees this as a social justice issue because it has resulted in our most underserved children, majority black, being furthest from accessing this opportunity.

As former heads of schools of a Tier
Jennifer and I have experienced firsthand the impact dual-language immersion schools have on student achievement. Children attending our school, including children with special needs, exhibited increased cognitive development, executive functioning, and critical thinking skills. Our outcomes supported what research has already proven: children in dual-language immersion schools outperform their peers in reading and math, and English language learners are more likely than their peers not in dual-language immersion schools to reach English proficiency by the end of elementary school.

At Global Citizens Public Charter School, we believe that it is our responsibility to our community to provide access to these benefits. We are joined by a passionate and capable leadership team, Board, and advisory committee, with the capacity to design, govern, and operationalize our vision.

We are members and educators of the
community we aim to serve, designing a solution
with one another in response to the persistent
demand the community has had for more dual-
language immersion schools. Through our
community engagement and ongoing pilots, we
continue to experience the excitement the
community has for Global Citizens Public Charter
School being an option for our children. We hope
to serve as an example of how a community can
work together to solve its challenges.

Again, thank you for this opportunity.

We look forward to answering your questions.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Thank you.

DR. SMITH: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Who would like to begin?

Mr. Bumbaugh?

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: So, we hear a lot
about the kinds of schools that families east of
the River want, and we often hear dual-language
immersion. One of the challenges is that, if you
look at the dual-language immersion schools in
the charter sector, they tend to serve the lowest
percentage of at-risk students. You're going to the part of town that has the highest percentage of at-risk students. And even the newest dual-language immersion school there has a very low percentage of at-risk students. How do you all propose to crack that nut? Because like what's the point of jumping across the River to provide a service that families there aren't using?

DR. SMITH: Thank you for that question. So, both of us have had experience, of course, in a previous dual-language immersion school that was not located east of the Anacostia River. However, we had families that would come to our school from Ward 7 and Ward 8.

We also, in our tenure, we had increased the percentage of children deemed at risk at our school when we were there. We are building a school with, not for, the community, and we have already begun our community engagement with families east of the River. We know that location is really key for families having access to our school. And so, that's why
we're even thinking about the location that we want to have. We want to be close to a Metro station. We want the community to know that this school is for them.

We believe, also, that we won't have the same type of challenge as a school that already existed and, then, moved east of the Anacostia River because families also moved along with that school. And so, we know, and we've even seen in our offering Mandarin classes on Saturdays at Capitol View Neighborhood Library, that all of our participants are from Ward 7 and Ward 8. So, we really do believe that we will be serving the community we intend to serve.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Thank you.

As a Ward 7 resident and a parent of a child at an immersion school east of the River, this is quite exciting to me. I'm going to probe a little bit more on what Mr. Bumbaugh asked. And I guess this is a hard question, but we hear from many ANCs and neighbors that come to use from Ward 7 and 8 and say, "Please don't build a
school in our neighborhood." You're telling us
that you have a core group of families that are
telling you, "Yes, build this school in our
neighborhood."

So, I guess I'd like to hear your
experience with some of maybe the naysayers or
the folks you went to who have expressed some
concerns or opposition, and how have those
cconversations gone? Have you talked to the same
ANCs that have come to us and said, "Please don't
bring more schools."? Have you talked to the
Education Councils?

DR. SMITH: So, I'll start, and then,
I'll pass it to Raven.

So, we've had a wonderful experience.

We've been to every single Ward 7 Education
Council meeting, for example, in the Ward where
you are. And if you attend those meetings, you
will see that sometimes there are naysayers in
regards to just charter school in general, with
people thinking that we're taking away resources
from neighborhood public schools.
I truly believe that that's an issue in general that all of us -- we can all serve children really well, and that it's not necessarily one school taking away resources from another. That's just a general thing we've heard.

Fortunately and unfortunately, I haven't had naysayers come and say, "I don't want this." I was able even to participate in the Ward 7 School Fair as a participant offering Mandarin classes. And that was really important for us to know that we felt, and they made us believe, that we are part of this community.

And so, we have gone to ANC meetings. We have gone to community events. We have participated in community events. We have done community walks. And fortunately, or unfortunately, we haven't had a lot of naysayers. People are saying it's about time. What people have expressed is, you know, that have informed the parts of our school, as you know, is I want the emotional and physical safety of our
children. That's at the forefront of my mind. And that has informed key parts of our pillars, but we haven't really heard like, "We don't want you here."

There's a bigger conversation going on in terms of charter schools and DCPS schools. And I've also coached and have dear friends that are DCPS principals. And so, we see this as a partnership, and I'm truly grateful for that.

MS. FREEMAN: I want to acknowledge the challenge you're naming and thank you for asking the question. I live in a neighborhood and community where a school is attempting to be built, and I know you have talked to some of my neighbors. So, I appreciate it and, also, had to ask myself that question when joining the Board for Global Citizens. I had to hold myself accountable, so that I could look my neighbors in the eye.

And what I will say is, I think the biggest disappointment with my personal experience is that the school coming into our
neighborhood did not engage the community appropriately. We felt that their engagement was very deep and seemingly committed after the fact, after the plans had been made, after surveyors were on my neighbors' lawns.

And as a Board member, I commit to ensuring that we are engaging, continue to engage, the community early and genuinely, but I also know that Natalie, Jennifer, Taura, all of our team cares deeply about this being a school for the community, not done to the community. And in order for that to happen, they have to be involved often, authentically, and early.

DR. SMITH: Thank you, Raven.

Thank you for that question. One thing I will note is that one of our very early events in September was the Ward 7 Community Day Festival. It was the first time we participated there, and we were floored by the amount of interest and the amount of awe and the amount of people that actually signed on a piece of paper to stay in touch and to join our Mandarin
classes. We had over 25 people in just a short amount of time sign up at just that one event.

But we didn't stop there. We continued to immerse ourselves in the community frequently, often, attending lots of the meetings, while also going to community walks, talking to people in the library, talking to people in recreation centers, and engaging with children as well.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Thank you for that.

So, going from the really high level to the specific community that you're thinking of locating in, I noticed your projections for students with special needs range around 10 to 14 percent, which is around the city average. Ward 8, I believe, and Ward 7 have a higher percentage of students with special needs. So, I'm curious why you have a lower projection there, and then, how you will be prepared for giving a much higher, significantly higher, because we have schools that have as high as 25-30 percent, kids
with special needs.

DR. SMITH: Thank you for that question. We really believe that we want to serve all our children well. And so, preparation and being intentional is very important. To be totally honest, when we prepared, when we were looking at the application and we prepared for it, we looked at early -- we're starting with pre-K-3 and pre-K-4. And so, what we did initially was look at all of the schools in Ward 7 and Ward 8, and just to look at what were their percentages of children with special needs.

We saw that that was an average of about 7 percent. Because, of course, in early childhood, we don't over-represent, over-evaluate children. And then, when we looked to the average in Ward 7 and 8, we did see that the average was a little bit higher than 16 percent. And then, I started to look at specific schools and specific areas.

And so, really, we just were conservative budgetwise, but we internally are
preparing for serving the needs of all of our
children.

VICE CHAIR BIREDIA: Tell me a little
more.

DR. SMITH: Okay.

VICE CHAIR BIREDIA: Just in terms of
like you may get children at level 3-level 4.
You may have self-contained classrooms. How will
this model be accessible for them?

DR. SMITH: Yes.

MS. MOORE: Sure. I can take that
one.

DR. SMITH: Yes.

MS. MOORE: So, we are aware what the
District faces when serving our students with
special needs, and we understand that these
children often are underserved. And at Global
Citizens, we believe that this is an issue of
equity. We believe that all students deserve a
right to have quality education.

And so, if we think about some of the
features of our program, we believe that students
with special needs should be included in all of our assessments. We believe that students with special needs should have access of general education curriculum. We believe that positive behavior should be promoted among all of our students in our entire community, and we know that it's important to collaborate and partner with the family. And so, with that, we will have a special education coordinator that will support the implementation of our program and to ensure that we are in line with IDEA.

Additionally, we will have teacher trained to support our students, so our general education teachers as well as our special educators. We believe at Global Citizens that it is the responsibility of everyone in the building -- language teachers and English teachers -- to provide environments where all students will thrive.

And, you know, we thought about this, and we've had some experience in being dual-language immersion leaders where we had to create
a space where a student needed to be in a one-on-one environment. And so, we thought about that and prepared a plan for that as well.

And a little bit about what that would like is that we will create a classroom for that child. We will use the additional funding to make sure that we're supporting that child in a self-contained space, and that child will have access to language.

And we thought about the social-emotional impacts. You know, we've had some experience with what this means when you're pulling a child out of their general environment. And so, we have a plan to make sure that those students still have access to their peers and access to the general education environment when it's possible.

And finally, what we know, and what research shows us, is that students with special needs can thrive in dual-language programs when it's planned and prepared for.

MS. SHELTON: So, in addition to you
thinking about special needs and serving the community east of the River, in your application we see a decline in the percentage of black students. Can you tell us how you came to those projections? Can you tell us in terms of equity what you're thinking of to ensure that you're not only meeting just the basic needs of folks east of the River, but also the mission and vision of your school?

DR. SMITH: Thank you.

We know that we would be a public charter school. We know that we are making sure, and intentionally making sure, that the community knows that we're building a school with them east of the River. And we also know the reality of D.C. and the demand there is for language immersion programs. And so, we were just trying to imagine that, as we have, for example, more Latino families, usually families spread the word to other families. And so, we just know that, as the District is changing in population, that we just have to account for the possibility that our
enrollment might shift along with the District
and the school population that attends public
schools in D.C.

MS. MOORE: The only thing that I
would add is, when we were about student
retention, I think the major strategy is being
accessible to these black and brown students in
Wards 7 and 8. So, our location is really our
big tool for recruitment of that population.

MS. SHELTON: And looking at the team
that you're building, what are you thinking about
in terms of the gaps in their experience? I know
that you both have vast experience in the space,
but what are you thinking about in terms of the
staff that you would bring on and what the gaps
would possibly be with them, with the varying
levels of populations, and what could change,
what may not change, whether or not you get a
very high population of students east of the
River? What are you thinking about in serving
them?

MS. MOORE: I'll start. We thought a
lot when making this model of what makes this
school unique. We've listened to the community.
And so, one of the things we really heard from
the community is the importance of safety, which
really informed our pillar around whole child
wellness. And so, when designing our
recruitment, as well as our professional
development model, we thought about what it would
take to make sure that the adults can provide the
environment necessary for students to thrive.

And what we've learned from experience
is a strong professional development program to
support opportunities for leaderships to support
our adults and an environment that is healthy.
And so, we know that this sounds like a lot.
We're asking adults to come in and to be able to
focus on the language and social justice, whole
child wellness, and we still have to have
academic excellence. And we recognize that. And
so, we know what we have to do as school leaders,
and we've had some experience in doing that.

That is providing the adults in the
building with training and an opportunity to be successful. And so, we've developed a robust professional development plan that is aligned to the pillars of the school. They really focus on equity in education. They focus on dual language. They focus on Common Core Standards and co-teaching, because that's a big part of our model.

In addition, we made sure that our teachers have planning time, and we also have created in our model a schedule where teachers are able to -- each week we close early for professional development. And that could look like professional learning communities, workshops, but also time for wellness, because that's important to our model. It's important for our adults as well as our children.

And, Natalie, I don't know if you want to add.

DR. SMITH: Thank you.

I'll just add that it all starts with even just hiring and recruiting. And so, we were
really intentional about creating a central mindset that we want every single staff member to have. So, there are five of them. They're mission-driven, collaborative, growth mindset, leaders of equity and justice, and curious initiators. And we wrote those out, deliberated on them intentionally.

Especially when you look, and we say we want our children to pursue social justice as anti-racists. We know that first stems from their teachers being anti-racist. And so, just from our experience leading a language immersion school, we know that you will have teachers that range with their backgrounds and experiences and their biases. And it's been so amazing because we actually started that work at our previous school, and it was very impactful not only to see the influence that teachers had on children with their beliefs and their mindsets, but also the impact that that training and that ongoing professional development, coaching, and support had on the teachers themselves and their
families.

And so, I just wanted to call that out, that even in the hiring, it will be really important for us to really look for those things. They're pretty much our non-negotiables when we're looking for staff. And then, also, what Jennifer mentioned was how we will retain our staff.

Yes, I was going to go into some of our hires, but did that answer your question?

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Mr. Sandman?

MR. SANDMAN: As I understand it, you're going to be offering two different tracks, a Mandarin track and a Spanish track.

DR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. SANDMAN: How are you going to manage enrollment and teacher recruitment as between the two tracks? Do you have a goal of half and half? If so, what information do you have about community demand for Mandarin as opposed to Spanish? At what point are you going
to know what your student population wants, so
you know what kind of teachers to hire?

DR. SMITH: Thank you for that
question. So, at Global Citizens Public Charter
School, we will implement a robust student
recruitment plan. We've actually already
started. I'll just name what those four key --
we have four key strategies that we'll use.

So, not only do we use the
neighborhood canvassing, direct mail, digital
outreach, we'll also open houses and information
sessions.

The third thing we'll do is student
recruitment events and community events, such as
Ed Fest, such as school fairs, that we've already
participated in. We'll continue to do that.

And the fourth thing is our
partnerships with feeder schools and daycares.
We've already engaged with many daycares in Wards
7 and 8. And then, our partnerships with other
language immersion schools in the District that
have over a thousand children on the waitlist.
And so, I mentioned when I first started to say that we've already started the recruitment process when we started to launch our Mandarin classes in Ward 7, soon to be Ward 8, when we have a spring break camp in Ward 8 in April. And so, we've already begun to see -- and we did that because we know that there is not yet a school or a program that offers Mandarin.

So, we started with Mandarin on purpose, to see -- No. 1 was to offer the community something they did not yet have. And then, No. 2 was to see what would the demand be for Mandarin east of the Anacostia River since there is not yet a program offering Mandarin.

So, we've already begun to see what the numbers could potentially be without even having a school. But we've also set goals to say, you know, by April, we want to be enrolled at least with 150 children versus 100 children on My School DC. And so, we've created goals and signposts that will tell us where we are.

We do believe at this point that we
would have a waitlist and that we would have an equal amount of demand for both language paths at this time. However, we know how difficult and challenging it may be to recruit for a language that is not yet offered in a part of the city. And so, we've started that process and we will begin to -- we have some contingencies in case we are not able to meet the particular enrollment, which we don't imagine will be the case at this time.

MR. SANDMAN: Do you have an idea of a minimum viable enrollment size for one language, one of the languages, to be able to proceed? Well, what happens if you have lots of demand for Spanish and very little demand for Mandarin? What do you do?

DR. SMITH: Yes. So, what's amazing is that we're starting with pre-K-3 and pre-K-4, and there's lots of benefits from mixed age groups. So, say we only have 16 children interested in pre-K-3 and pre-K-4 on the Mandarin path. We are still viable.
We were running our budget models just to make sure that that would be the case. Even if we have a slight shift, we could adjust our staffing and still be true to our model. So, we play a lot of different scenarios, some worst-case scenarios that we hope we don't have to run into. But we know that, even with just 16 children, even if that happened even on the Spanish side, which we don't imagine, we could, then, have smaller class sizes and we would stay true to our model by having 90 percent immersion that we have with a language teacher and a language instructional assistant.

And then, we would, instead of having an English teacher be in every single classroom, we could have on English teacher that would, then, cycle through the classrooms to provide that 10 percent of English instruction with read-alouds and early literacy and early math skills. So, we've run a lot of the numbers and scenarios that could happen. And so, we know that, even in the worst-case scenario, we could have just 16
children on a path and be okay.

MR. SANDMAN: Thank you.

DR. SMITH: You're welcome.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Do we have any other questions from the Board?

(No response.)

All right. If not, thank you very much. We'll see you back here next month.

DR. SMITH: Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

We appreciate your time. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thanks. Thank you.

We're going to take a five-minute break because we've been up here for a while. And then, we'll be back and we'll be bringing up the Garden School.

(Whereupon, the foregoing matter went off the record at 9:44 p.m. and went back on the record at 9:52 p.m.)

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. We are going to get started again. And if we can have the Garden Education group, the Garden Education
School, come up, please?

All right. And I'm going to get your name right, The Garden School of Business and Entrepreneurship. Sorry. Sorry about that.

It's getting late.

So, as with the other groups, please take a moment to introduce yourselves, and then, we welcome any opening remarks. And then, we'll get into questions.

MS. NAH: Good evening. Saymah Nah, EdD.

MR. JENKINS: Good evening. Jimmie Jenkins, Board Chair.

MR. MILLS: Good evening. Jemar Mills, Board member and academic lead.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay.

MS. NAH: Good evening, Board Chair and PCSB, and community. We'll start now.

When we reflected on the significant movements in history and the leaders at the frontlines, we saw a trend amongst our youth. Miss Claudette Colvin, the Greensboro Four sit-
ins, John Lewis, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The actions of these students all led to events in time that shifted the world's way of thinking and our way of living.

We are ready to add the Garden to that list. Our school is homegrown, created and led by students, and affirmed and developed by the community.

In 1865, slavery was abolished in the United States of America. And one of the first attempts at reparations, free blacks were promised 40 acres and a mule. This promise was historically reversed by President Andrew Johnson in the same year. This was one of the first steps into the cycle of generational poverty, as former slaves had the assistance needed to stand on their own two feet ripped out from underneath them.

At the Garden, we share with our community a vision of economic development, closing the racial wealth gap, and transforming
student outcomes through academics, CTE programming, and whole child development.

Our school implements a career and technical education model with three career tracks in business, marketing, and entrepreneurship; a wellness center to support SEL needs, and a culturally-affirming character-developing framework that's support the development of the whole child academically, economically, emotionally, and culturally.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are over 500,000 job openings in business and marketing. At least 30 percent of these openings require a certification that our students will obtain at the Garden. These jobs include, but are not limited to, just to name a few, sales engineer, marketing and communication specialist, or program manager.

According to Millennial Branding, one in three U.S. employers seek entrepreneurial skills of creativity, innovation, and critical thinking in its new hires. As an
entrepreneurial, our students will develop skills, and by their senior year, they will produce and present their own business plan with all its elements.

Regardless of what career our students choose, they will enter college and the work field with the certified knowledge, experience, and relationships needed to compete and succeed in our world. Our homegrown school model is how our community is taking the right steps to attack poverty in our neighborhoods and grow our students academically.

Like one of our summer design students stated, "I'm tired of being broke." It's time we listen to the voice of our students and a demand of our whole community.

Thank you, and we're ready to take up your questions. And we're also excited to share with you guys our growth.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

All right. Go ahead.

MS. NAH: Can I say one more thing?
I'm sorry.

CHAIR CRUZ: Oh, sure.

MS. NAH: Yes. Before we get started, as you guys know, it is late. Our achievement lead may have to leave. And if it's possible, can we push the academic questions towards the front, if that's possible. Thank you, guys.

CHAIR CRUZ: Great.

MEMBER GANJAM: Sure. So, I had a chance to sit in on the capacity interview and got to see some of the changes that you all have brought forward since last year. And one of the questions I really wanted to ask about is the CTE programming in a little bit more detail. What are the specific skills that you're anticipating to really build in the students to help them get jobs and move on to the next steps?

MR. MILLS: So, two of the big components of the program is around project management as well as Microsoft skills. And so, through CTE, there's going to be a ton of kinesthetic learning which inhibits (sic) not
only just the traditional reading, writing, and arithmetic on grade level, but it's also going to require them to be hands-on in a lot of skill sets. And so, when you unpack what it means to actually be a project lead, there's a ton of just ideation that needs to occur. There's a lot of extrapolating of others' ideas in order to get them on the board and to form them from the clay into something that can actually move forward and be successful.

And so, as someone who's going to be pursuing an entrepreneurialship that needs to really identify for them what their dream is, what their purpose is, that's going to be a skill set that's going to drive them into a place to identify what it is that they want to do with their future and their success.

And so, we feel that those two skill sets, one being a project manager or assistant project manager, as well as having the ability to actually do the soft skills things, such as type, such as draft a letter, or use Excel
spreadsheets, we know the power of it when you can actually be proficient in those things in terms of building business or being an entrepreneurial.

MEMBER GANJAM: So, do those tie specifically into the OSSE business management program of study? Or how did you choose the OSSE business program management of study?

MS. NAH: Absolutely, I can speak to that. So, when it comes to choosing the OSSE framework, we chose it because OSSE has done a lot, extensive research on what CTE looks like in D.C. and what we want it to look like over the next 5, 10, 15 years.

Specifically, the work that OSSE has done, they consulted with DENPAY. They consulted with DOES. They consulted with the Maryland Task Force as well to ensure that CTE in D.C. was moving in the right direction.

We also looked at and we compared the OSSE framework to another school in Rhode Island who also is going a business and
entrepreneurialship program. It's called the Met. So, we wanted to see what the difference was and what we were focusing on, to make sure that we were also moving in direction by choosing the OSSE framework.

The biggest thing that stood out to us the most was the high wage and high demand portion. So, specifically talking about business and marketing, both of those courses were on the high wage and high demand list. And what high demand is, it is the amount of jobs that D.C. has, right, and what high wages is looking at what students are making at the entry level, but also what are the percentages of them being promoted as well.

So, with our certifications, students will be, I believe, yes, it's 30 percent, students are 30 percent more likely to be promoted with the certifications that they receive from our school. And then, they are also 20 percent more likely to just be hired.

We also looked at what it looks like
for college transition. And one of the advantages that we saw, speaking with college directors and, of course, acceptance directors, enrollment people -- I forget what to call them -- but we also had conversations with them to see how will our students compare to other students coming into your school. Because we know that classes like AP put you ahead, put you at an advantage. So, how will CTE skills put our students at advantage as well? Because we want our students to go to college, and from there, of course, we want them to go into a career.

So, we wanted to know what position our students were in. So, things that they listed that will make us unique applications -- and that's what they called it -- is flexibility, right? They're looking for: are students flexible? Are students taking initiative? How are they taking initiative? And those are things that our CTE program shows.

Also, to be a part of a CTE program, it takes a lot of discipline, and that is
something else that we will be growing within our students. And I think that's what colleges are really moving towards, because they're not more so focusing only on getting students into college, but also looking at their percentages of how many students finish.

And three things that came up, like I stated, was flexibility, taking initiative, and discipline.

MEMBER GANJAM: Okay. So, as you think about the skills and some of the opportunities that you want to provide to your students, are there organizations that you plan to partner with --

MS. NAH: Uh-hum.

MEMBER GANJAM: -- to give your students these experiences? And have you started that outreach? And tell us a little bit more about that.

MS. NAH: Absolutely. So, right now, we're working on our partnerships. For our founding year, we will need 20 partnerships, but
we're looking at 25, just to make sure that we
are good to go. Right now, we have already
consulted with and confirmed five. And we wanted
to see exactly how long it would take to confirm
these five, so we can know and map out what our
planning year will look like. So, we have five
already confirmed, and it took about a month to
confirm those five.

What we want to do is have 10
confirmed already, which means that they have
been vetted; they have been validated. They have
been validated by us. They know what we want to
achieve through the program. We have already
spoken to them about our needs and our non-
negotiables when it comes to sites, what students
are going after, what we want them to achieve.

Because we have a list of things that
students will be doing at these sites. So, we
wanted to make sure that the sites were onboard
to ensure that this happens on their sites and
our students are not just gofers or people who
get coffee. We want to make sure that they are
going towards, they're moving towards their goal
of their projects each week, and also, they have
a checklist as well when it comes to
professionalism and learning how to write a
professional email, professional tone, and how to
have a professional disagreement, right? These
are things that they will be checking off on a
weekly basis, on a daily basis, to make sure
they're gaining the skill. But we wanted to make
sure that these sites were onboard, so to do all
these things that are program entails.

So, we're focusing on 10 to confirm,
and we're using these 10 based off the interest
that we've already seen. So, we know students
are really excited about fashion. We know
students are really excited about culinary,
right? So, we're choosing these things at the
forefront to make sure these partnerships are
already done.

Now, when it comes to the next 15,
we'll also have those programs validated and
vetted, but our plan is to keep them in a vault,
and based on if we bring them on for the school year, which is why we're going for 15 instead of 10, so we can be able to choose based off our students' interests in the incoming year.

MEMBER GANJAM: So, who on the team will be responsible for the partnerships and establishing those?

MS. NAH: Absolutely. So, Jimmie has taken -- Jimmie, our Board Chair, has taken lead on bringing in our partnerships. And we've gotten a load of community members who want to be a part of our program. But, again, we want to make sure that our students are not gofers and they're going towards their projects, and they're going towards the skills that we want them to develop.

So, Jimmie has done an excellent job of bringing on community people who want to be involved in our school and community partnerships. And now, we're going through the process of validating them, vetting them, I would say. As we go throughout our planning
year -- well, not a planning year -- but, as we
go through the founding year, our college and
career readiness person will take over this
process.

What we have heard, because we really
wanted to ground ourselves in consciousness.
Those are our four growth values: consciousness,
rigor, community, and voice. And we wanted to
make sure that we were grounding ourselves in
those things in each process of our school.

So, when it came to building out what
it looked like for this college and career
readiness person to take on this workload, we
wanted to connect with other CTE instructors,
SYEP instructors, to see what this capacity and
workload looks like. Because we all know, right,
being in a school, and being school leader, you
can plan for a thing, and then, when you get to
the first day of school, day to day it gets
really different, right? And the plan that you
made does not look like the plan that you made on
a day-to-day basis.
So, we wanted to make sure that we were grounding ourselves in consciousness to be aware of what goes on on a day-to-day basis for these people and for our college and career readiness person. And what we took away from that is that, one, we want to pre-choose our sites. That's a piece of feedback that we received, and we took that very significantly.

We also heard the CTE instructor that contributed to our design sessions that the second thing that we want to focus on is how students are -- I'm sorry, I lost my train of thought. But how we are contributing to students' placement, right? It shouldn't only be one person that decides where these students are placed. It should be a community of teachers.

And we strategically created time within not only our weekly planning schedule, but also our PD schedule for half-days, as well as our whole-day PD, to ensure that teachers that have interacted with these students on a day-to-day basis are also contributing to where students
will be placed. So, that's how we're looking at it as we go into the school year.

            Jimmie, if you want to touch a little bit?

            MR. JENKINS: So, I would say that, also, earlier today we had two of our partners who wanted to come to just really -- because we all are new to this process. Myself, I am a vendor at DOES doing a lot of programs with them and, also, with the ONE's office.

            And so, I think it's important that we also vet folks who have relationships with kids that can really communicate with our kids to really get them to be successful with the CTE. I think that's another component that we've been looking into, is finding folks who can really get our kids to really buy into the CTE partnerships that we have, but also know our kids' background. Because a lot of folks bring programs to the community, but don't have strong relationships. So, they cannot see kids being successful with programs that they bring to the community. So,
we want to also be intentional with folks that we bring in with that partnership.

MEMBER GANJAM: Okay. I have just one other question. As we look at the enrollment data at high schools in Wards 7 and 8, we know that there are many under-enrolled high schools. How are you going to address this, so that you'll have a full school? What are your thoughts on that?

MR. JENKINS: I'm going to go first. Saymah will take a long time.

I will say recruitment has always been in my background. I know you're familiar with Perry Street Prep. When I first came home from college, I was on that team with Kelly Smith and Rachel Crouch, with Hope Turner. I was lead athletic director and lead community engagement person there for two years before I got into politics. And so, recruitment wouldn't be an issue for us.

We have relationship with almost all the middle schools in Ward 8, with principals.
We've also been doing community sessions where we have families come out, students come out from all ages. We even have elementary kids there talking about they want to be a boss, want to be an entrepreneurial. And I thought that was good to have kids at the early age to have a voice.

And also, some things that I did notice were that, even though it was a little different from public school principals, they were engaged into bringing the Garden to Ward 8 because they've been having trouble with getting some of their kids into the Duke Ellingtons, the McKinley Techs, because the kids were Ward 8 kids.

And so, being able to have this school right in their backyard, it was something that the community loved and was interested in. And myself, growing up in Ward 8, born and raised, I know what it was like to travel across the bridge to Hyde Leadership Public Charter School, where I was a graduate there, and how tough it was for people to try to get into Hyde. And so, being
able to bring this school to Ward 8, I think it will be something that the community will love.
And I really believe and know that.

MS. NAH: Yes, and I'll just go a little further. When it comes to recruitment, again, we wanted to ground ourselves in consciousness and community, right? We wanted to ensure that we were leveraging our community and our relationship that we have with our community.

So far, community has been our street team kind of, you can them. And they've been really passionate about spreading the word and getting referrals and telling other community members about our program.

But when we think about the research that we've done, specifically speaking to our experience with recruitment, we're looking at what we have learned from our school experience with recruitment; we're looking at what the mistakes were; what other schools are doing; what they are missing, and what we can do better.

One thing that we also looked at is
the high schools who are struggling currently
with enrollment to see what they are doing. And
we found three things that we have already
started to drive towards. And those three things
are, specifically when we're talking about high
school students, we know high school students
love social media. And we know that it's a big
component when it comes to recruitment for high
school students.

So, one weakness or challenge that I
would say for high schools right now is their
social media presence. Yes, they may have a
page, but when it comes to their content, it's
weak. And when it comes to their interaction,
it's low. And when I say "content," I mean, what
are they giving their viewers and their
followers, specifically high school students, to
look at and to bring them in and to gravitate
towards their program? And when we talk
about interaction, how are they interacting with
their viewers? So, if a person were to comment
on your page, what's your response and what's
your response time? Those things matter. It may seem low level, but they do matter specifically when we're talking about high school students.

We're also looking, we've also broken down our recruitment into tiers. So, we have canvassing, and we've already started that process. And that's a little bit about and that connects back to our street team that we have. And we have gained numbers on that. I know we shared our numbers with you guys. Our goal was 500 students, and we actually achieved that goal. And our goal of supporters was 1,000, and we actually achieved that goal as well, because we know that recruitment is hard and we know that we need to have a robust program when it comes to it.

So, the next tier is canvassing, not canvassing, digital, which we talked about with the social media, and also, the face-to-face interaction.

The next challenge that high schools have, and not only high schools, but middle
schools as well east of the River, is community presence. So, we made a very intentional move to not only be in the educational space, so Education Council meetings, because we know the same seven people go to those meetings every month, right? We've been at those meetings, and we know that. And we wanted to make sure that we were broadening our reach. So, we were intentional about what events we were going to.

So, events, when you talk about, when our community is talking about gentrification, when they're talking about lowering the age to vote, when they're talking about understanding how to pay their Pepco bill, we're at these meetings to ensure that we are drafting these people as well to understand what they want and how they interact with schools as well, so we can plan for that.

We're also looking at how every opportunity that we are in front of the community is an opportunity to recruit. Regardless if we're telling you about our school, we are
presenting our school to you, even if we're not saying, "Hey, let me tell you about the Garden," or "Hey, do you have a kid?" Even if we're not doing that, we are still recruiting and we're in recruitment mode because, again, we know how hard recruitment is. And recruitment for Rocketship, right, when we opened, we opened with 300 kids. That was hard. And just going into this process with that mindset, and making sure we get ahead of the game.

So, the last thing that is a growth area for high schools, of course, not only looking at them, but also talking with them and learning and going through their strategy of what they're doing, also, their keep warm strategy. And what a keep warm strategy is, it is your interactions between the first time that you interact with a family up until day one. So, we're being very intentional about what happens with families while they're in their pipeline.

So, there's actually two pipelines that people don't typically look at, and it's
pre-application and post-application. So, your first interaction with a family up until when they apply, and from when they get their seating, from that point up until day one. Because we know that just because they applied, and just because they got their seat, does not mean that they're coming on day one. And we know there's a lot of transition between that time.

So, we also wanted to be very strategic of what's happening in that pipeline. So, how many interactions are we having with families? How are we keeping them warm? And how are we making sure that they move from warm family leads, which is pre-application, into warm family action, which is the actual application. And, of course, on day one, how many people show up?

But we're not waiting for day one, of course. We are tracking our numbers weekly to ensure that we are moving in the direction that we want to move in.

Currently, we are building -- and we
heard from another group that said, you know,
they're reaching out to schools, but they're not
getting a response back. And what we've seen is
that, yes, because although you may have made the
relationship, you need to contribute to the
relationship. So, those are things that we are
doing right now in this process. We're
contributing to these middle schools'
relationships. We know that the end of the year
is coming up, right? We want to make sure that
we are strategically placing ourselves to support
them during this high-volume time. So, when the
time comes around, we can actually cash in on
these relationships. I don't know if that sounds
bad to say "cash in on a relationship".

But, also, Jimmie has been extremely
helpful in creating bridges to these schools
because he's already familiar with the school
counselors. He's already familiar with the
office managers. These relationships are already
there, but we want to make sure that it isn't
Jimmie that they see, but the school. So, we
want to make sure that our school is contributing
to these relationships. So, when it's time to
actually have these school fairs and be invited
to these programs and be able to table during
gym, not gym, lunch, we are able to do this and
we have the access to do it without going through
the emailing and not answering emails.

We are thinking about, because we are
in a climate where new schools are being
developed every day, we already have schools that
already have the recruitment tools that we don't
have, right? So, we're looking at that.

And we're also looking at, what makes
us different? How can we capitalize off of that
difference when it comes to early engagement,
because that's very important, which we've
already started. We've already started looking
at numbers.

We've already started asking, you
know, what's your interest level? We've already
broken our families into three groups of families
that are extremely invested, students that want
to come. They don't need anything else, right? They know that's where they want to go. And then, the second group of kids and families, they're not sure. They're still getting a grasp of the program. And then, students that have no idea, family members that don't have any idea what business marketing and entrepreneurship is. And what our process looks like for each of those types of families.

And then, Steve, you also had a question earlier with another group about -- and I'm sorry if I'm talking too long -- but you also had another question about how you will ensure that you're in this community and that these students will actually come to your school. That was a question that one of our family members had during our community design session. And it was a push because our program is becoming very popular and we're getting a lot of response from Ward 5 and Ward 6 students and families. So, our communities of Ward 7 and Ward 8 pushed back on us to say, you know, how will you ensure, because
you're supposed to be here and we're supposed to build this school, how will you make sure that our students get to the school?

And I think the answer to that question is where you recruit, and we want to push our hard recruitment because we're a public charter school, so we're open enrollment. We're open to everybody. But we want to be very strategic in our hard recruitment strategy within the schools that are east of the River.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: I didn't ask you that question because I don't have that concern with your school.

MS. NAH: Thanks, Steve.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi?

MS. SHELTON: If you can tell me very succinctly, because I wanted to ask that of the gentleman that just left, how are you planning to work with your special ed populations? How are you thinking about -- and if you have students
that have to have self-contained settings, how are they going to have access to the entrepreneurship component of your program?

If you just in the --

MS. NAH: Very quickly.

MS. SHELTON: Yes.

MS. NAH: Absolutely.

So, when it came to our population, and just our special population in general -- we know this was a growth area for us -- we broke it up into four components: staff, our traditional session, and our summer session, and, of course, college transition.

So, when it comes to staff, and I think that's more towards what you're talking about when it comes to self-contained, we divided the responsibilities of push-in, pullout, and self-contained, and what that looks like and the amount of people that we'll need.

So, we divided the responsibilities, just really quickly, into our coordinator. They will support case management, IEPs, and the self-
Our teacher, our special education teacher, will support self-contained and pullout, where our interventionist will support push-in and pullout. So, we divided the responsibilities up to ensure that these people have the capacity, because we know that we will get a large population.

And we're also looking at how we can maneuver in our budget, not necessarily change our staffing, but intentionally move one person to hire another teacher, just in case we need to. So, we have that flexibility.

Did that answer your question? Would you like me to add?

CHAIR CRUZ: Just one question I have is, so many of the public witnesses who came before and supported the school earlier spoke to the promise of the school in closing the wealth gap and in ending the cycle of generational poverty. How do you anticipate living up to that? They've obviously worked -- or you've worked with them to build up that expectation,
that set of goals and objectives for the school. How do you expect to live up to that?

MR. JENKINS: First, I just want to say I never in a million years thought I would be up here. For myself, I can say I know what it's like to grow up in poverty in Southeast D.C.; to be today 30 years old and have so many thriving businesses based in Ward 8 where we're bringing in a million dollars in the last two years, but being a 30-year-old, and know what it takes.

But, also, understanding networks and connecting with folks who are some of our thriving entrepreneurs in this city that wouldn't mind backing a school like this, having strong relationships with folks like MCN Build and Redbrick, and Council members. I think stressing to the city that it's our job to really support economic opportunities for kids east of the River, and actually being able to have those folks build out their own model and speak towards what they want. I think just knowing that we have folks who are onboard financially, having
people that want to support us financially, I think that's the key to really reaching capital gain.

I think a lot of times folks have vision, but don't have plans and don't have capital. I think having folks who are some of the big entrepreneurs and folks who are bringing in a lot of capital to stand behind us is going to help move us into that direction.

Does that answer your question a little bit?

MS. NAH: Yes, and just to go a little further, we were very transparent with our communities when it came to closing the racial wealth gap to ensure that we knew that, you know, this type of change does not happen in a year. It doesn't happen in four years. It might not even happen in 10 years, right?

And to ensure that we were creating transparency of our growth, and that I think was key with our community, is that we understand, and our community expressed to us that they
understand that this takes time, which is also why they're choosing us to be a part of this change and choosing the school to be a part of this change, because they want to make sure that they're hitting it from all avenues, right? And us, as educators, they wanted to make sure that we were going at it from that avenue as well.

So, just to back up a little bit, we wanted to make sure that, the families and communities wanted to make sure that they were seeing growth over time and what we're tracking. So, we were very transparent and we built it out actually together of what we're tracking and being strategic. So, looking at what happens with MKV families, how are they prospering out of their situation? Also looking at at-risk families, are they returning, right? Because we know that what defines "at risk" is their income levels. So, how are they moving from that income level as they graduate, and how are we tracking those numbers? And ensuring that they, of course, come back to the community and contribute
to the community. So, those are things that we're looking at.

And again, as a community, they understand that this doesn't change within a year or four years. But that's how we're looking at it, to grow with our community.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Thank you.

Other questions, Board Members?

(No response.)

MS. NAH: Is it possible that I can go back to Naomi's question because I think I understand it now? You were asking more towards about providing access within our program, so how we're providing access with our traditional program. So, on a day-to-day basis, during the regular school year, how we're providing access to our program and through the summer programming. Was that your question?

Okay. All right. Just making sure.

Okay. Thank you.

MR. JENKINS: Could I make a final comment?
CHAIR CRUZ: Sure.

MR. JENKINS: This is new to me.

I want to say thank you all. I was in tears when I was hearing some of the people come up and make public comments -- okay, says the person who's been going long all night.

I want to say that it's really an honor to be sitting here advocating for my community. I sit on the frontline for Ward 8 in all different capacities. And I know that education and economic opportunities is something that we've been lacking since I was young. And I'm grateful of this. I believe in this, and I can see nothing but success with this model. And now, like I said, I appreciate this. And for my people who have been a part of poverty, we all should be a part of prosperity.

So, you all have a great night, and peace and love to you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Thank you.

(Applause.)

All right. I'm going to invite the
Capital Experience Lab up now.

(Applause and cheers.)

All right. Did you all ask to be signed up for the last slot? No?

Awesome. All right. All right.

Introduce yourselves, and then, please take a few moments to make any opening remarks, and then, we'll have some questions.

MS. DAILEY-REESE: So, I'm going to do our opening statement, and then, we'll jump to questions.

The U.S. Botanic Garden, the National Portrait Gallery, NASA Goddard Visitor Center, the African-American Civil War Museum, the Supreme Court, the Kennedy Center, and 17 Smithsonian museums, these are just a few of our region's many sites that offer opportunities to explore the past, shape the future, appreciate the arts, connect with scientists, and see our government in action. Capital Experience Lab will turn these places into exciting classrooms for learning and exploration.
Good evening, Public Charter School Board Members, staff, families, students, members of the D.C. education community. Tonight, on behalf of the over 100 students, families, and teachers, community partners and educators who participated in its formation, we are excited to introduce Capital Experience Lab Public Charter School, or CABXLAB, as we like to call it.

Capital Experience Lab is a sixth-through-twelfth grade school that immerses students in project-based learning across Washington, D.C.'s museums, scientific research centers, and cultural institutions.

My name is Lanette Dailey-Reese, and I bring 15 years of leadership experience to my role as the founding Executive Director of CAPXLAB. I am joined by my cofounder Alison Gillmeister, an experienced and passionate middle school teacher, and the CAPX Board of Director, Nik Apostolides, who's the Deputy CEO of the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center.

The mission of CAPXLAB is to empower
students in Washington, D.C., to harness the resources of our amazing city in the service of their dreams. Through a CAPX education, students will develop strong academic skills. They will also develop skills for seeking and making the most of opportunities that are available in their community.

Our city's institutions of learning are often used as one-off field trip destinations and tourist attractions. At CABXLAB, students will use these institutions as their classrooms on a regular basis, based on a rigorous academic community, base-learning curriculum, aligned to the National College and Career Readiness Standards.

MR. GILLMEISTER: When our team began developing a school model over four years ago, we drew on our collective years of teaching experience, and we also invested time in interviewing students and families. We heard the same thing over and over: too many middle- and high-schoolers feel bored.
A Yale study published three weeks ago substantiated this pattern for high-schoolers, in particular. The emotions students were most likely to report at school were tired, stressed, and bored.

Our team is made up of middle and high school teachers who have spent a lot of time with students. Our experiences with young people's inherent curiosity and creativity lead us to reject any claim that rampant boredom is inevitable or acceptable.

At CAPX, we combine high expectations for academic outcomes with high expectations for the quality of the student experience. We can work towards strong academic outcomes tied to college and career readiness and design learning experiences that are meaningful and memorable because they connect students to people and places beyond the classroom. We can bolster academic achievement and support the whole person through social-emotional learning. This is what parents and students have told us they are
looking for.

We have designed a project-based/place-based education to ensure the quality whole person education that parents and students want. Our team has tested this model over the last three years through full-day summer school and Saturday programs. This has allowed us to gather feedback from students, families, and teachers about our curriculum, schedule, and overall approach.

Our pilot students have been diverse: English learners, students with disabilities, high achievers, artists, athletes, a student on the Spectrum, a student with plans to become a cardiothoracic surgeon.

And our students have been clear that the CAPX approach to education works for them. One of our favorite quotes from an anonymous student survey said, "Keep the museum part of the day because the things we learned there were better than the internet."

(Laughter.)
Yes. Testing the model over time has allowed us both to confirm that the CAPX approach meets students' needs and to refine the details of our model to be better prepared for a smooth and successful launch.

A student's day at CAPX begins with morning meeting and advisory, followed by direct instruction and hands-on activities that build knowledge. Students investigate further at museums such as the U.S. Botanic Garden or community sites like the Frederick Douglass House two afternoons per week.

These cognitively sticky experiences at D.C. institutions help students build knowledge and mental frameworks that serve as the foundation for creative problem-solving. Students apply what they learn in the context of meaningful standards-aligned projects. They share final products with audiences of experts, families, and community members.

Through each unit of study, students have the opportunity to meet professionals in a
variety of fields, such as science, medicine, and civic leadership. What starts out as career exposure in middle school develops into high school opportunities to participate in internships, mentorships, and professional networks that can change the trajectories of students' lives.

MS. DAILEY-REESE: D.C. students have the advantage of living in a city with access to people and resources at the global, national, and local levels. Because of our school's instructional model, CAPX students will learn from and make their own contributions to experts and communities of both local and national significance. As a result, CAPXLAB's graduates will be prepared for college and career. They will have broad content knowledge, expertise in specific areas they care about, mastery of presentation skills, and the confidence to navigate new places and build relationships with new people. Most importantly, they know from their experience of meaningful projects
undertaken over their sixth-through-twelfth grade years that they are valuable contributors to both the local and national conversations.

We thank you for this opportunity to share CAPX with you. We look forward to answering any questions you have about our project-based/place-based learning model rooted in the love of our city and our students.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Thank you so much.

I'm going to jump right in with a few questions that I have.

So, engaging with the application and looking at the museum-based learning schools that you cite, most of those serve much more affluent populations. And the one example that that serves a population that's more comparable to what you would likely be serving in our community doesn't have the greatest outcomes. So, I'd love to know how you've incorporated that into your thinking about the program that you would be offering here.

MS. DAILEY-REESE: So, I'll start and
I'll allow Alison and Nik to share.

Well, we have also looked at schools across the country who do this work, and we've also heard about some of the challenges with outcomes based on some of the students that they serve. The thing that makes CAPX different in that way is that we've been doing this work for three years, working with those exact populations across the city. And that's through recruitment from teachers who serve those students and bringing them into CAPX because, in order for us to know if the model would work, we wanted to test it with students who we wanted to serve.

And so, while across the country you may see different results for students who are participating in museum-style programming, what makes us different is that we've been doing this work and tested the model, worked with those students, worked on the feedback; also, made adjustments to our programming as we've grown as a school. So, I think that's the one thing that separates us from those experiences, having the
network.

MR. GILLMEISTER: I'll just add that, as Lanette said, that it has been the purpose of our piloting program, and we've been really intentional with what we test. So, for example, winter 2018, we, as reading teachers, several members of the team really believe in the power of background knowledge to support strong outcomes on reading comprehension assessments. And we see that that's in research. And so, we did a pilot where we did zero multiple choice practice and we just built knowledge through museum-based experiences and students doing a project. And then, we did a pre- and post-assessment of multiple choice Park-aligned questions.

And we said, do we see kids all the way to mastery if we do zero multiple choice practice? And the answer was no. We saw kids improve. We saw them do excellent on their project presentations, and we saw them get really strong feedback from the experts who came in and
evaluated their presentations.

But what that taught us was that we have to include elements of assessment format questions that students will see on things like Park. We can't have a model that is 100 percent inquiry-based with zero exposure to Park-like assessment items, and then, put a Park assessment in front of our students and act as if that's fair to them.

So, that's a type of thinking that we have as we've been working with students. It's always about what are we doing with students; what are the outcomes from them? And then, how can we improve our instruction to make sure that we get what they deserve?

CHAIR CRUZ: So, were you able to look at what was not successful in other models with comparable populations, so that you could pilot them here? So, I appreciate that you actually have done work in the communities that you want to serve, and that's a great set of examples. But, then, on the other side we've got a school,
at least one, who is committed to this fully.

MR. GILLMEISTER: Can you mention which specific school you're talking about?

CHAIR CRUZ: I will find that, but it's -- I'm trying to remember, staff, the name of the specific school. Okay, we'll get it to you.

MR. GILLMEISTER: Okay.

CHAIR CRUZ: And I'm just trying to understand because, again, what struck me most in looking through the application was that most of the examples were much more affluent populations. And then, there were one or two examples where the outcomes were not great. And that just should inform how you go about testing the different programs and approaches that you would offer here.

MS. DAILEY-REESE: I think the one piece that you're raising, also, is an equity question. And that's another part of our thinking, is saying that students who have exposure to these models are usually more
affluent families and affluent communities. And for us, it's about righting that inequity here in D.C. and saying that kids who are underserved, at risk, all the labels that we use for kids who are struggling to meet the achievements that we want, CAPXLAB specifically provides an opportunity for kids to learn in multiple modalities, which allow us to not only look at it through the lens of multiple choice assessments, but how kids can do on performance tests. What products are they producing? So, we have a couple of different measurements in place to determine how kids are progressing and growing that go beyond just the strictness of an assessment.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay.

MS. CRUSEY: I'd like to build off that, if I may.

CHAIR CRUZ: Uh-hum.

MS. CRUSEY: Because I think what we're looking for is pressure testing evidence in practice of what hasn't worked well elsewhere. So, you can test against it during this period of
time when you don't actually have a school in
place, and the stakes aren't quite as high.

And so, related to that, I'm curious
to hear how you've correspondingly pressure
tested evidence of demand. So, I remember when
we spoke a number of months ago, and we read in
your application you have some positive feedback
from those who participated in your pilots over
the last few years, which is a snapshot of what
the program could look like, but it is not
actually -- that's what a pilot is.

So, how have you pressure tested and
looked for disconfirming evidence to kind of
understand how that may translate or could
translate to real demand for this program in both
middle school and high school settings?

MR. APOSTOLIDES: I'm going to let --
I'm Nik Apostolides. I'm the Board Chair for
Capital Experience Lab. I'm going to let Lanette
and Alison address your question specifically.

But I do want to just say that I think
something underlying the question, we've piloted,
we've tested more than almost any charter school
I know of, not only in D.C., but around the
country. And I don't think that we should be
penalized, our application should be penalized
for the fact that we have tested so much.

And with that, I'll let the staff
address the specifics that you raise.

MS. DAILEY-REESE: I'll go back to
around the demand piece, particularly when we
think about what our parents are saying to us as
part of our feedback and what students are
wanting from us over the course of the last three
years. They say, yes, this should be a school
because it is a markedly different experience
from the conventional schools that they're in.
And so, that's one piece of the puzzle.

The other piece is around the demand
that we shared in the report from the Public
Charter School Board around what are parents
asking for. Experiential learning and language
immersion and arts integration are the top three.

And for us, we fit right in the sweet
spot of experiential learning with a level up
around the frequency by which we do that in our
classrooms, but also using the city as the space
to do that. And so, I think that helps around
the advanced piece, too.

And then, the enrollment numbers that
we saw from last year and previous years for
families on waitlists across high school D.C.,
and using that data to also inform will families
want to do this. I think in our first pilot it
was a question of, while we all might think this
is a great idea as adults who are nerds, families
may not find it as intriguing.

So, the first pilot was about testing
whether or not kids and families -- one, would
families trust us? And one, would kids want to
go back to the same place multiple times for
deeper learning? And what we found unanimously
is that it was a yes.

MR. GILLMEISTER: Lea, I had thought
of an example of the negative evidence regarding
academics. Would that be helpful now also?
MS. CRUSEY: Kind of to this question.

MR. GILLMEISTER: Okay. So, I'll start with that. Just that, one, in terms of things that have not worked well in other places, and then, us testing them out and, then, adjusting our program correspondingly.

So, one of those is project-based learning in math. So, across the country, schools that have taken a project-based learning approach, many schools have taken that, like a whole across all disciplines because of the outcomes that we do see for students in terms of creativity and collaboration and problem-solving through a project-based learning approach.

However, there are some schools that have seen difficulties, seen strong academic outcomes in math when they use a project-based learning approach. So, when we did summer 2018, we did a full-fledged project-based learning approach in math and used pre- and post-Park-aligned assessments. And we saw that kids were not making as much growth as we saw in the ELA
area.

And so, we shifted to adopt the Eureka Math curriculum with community-based experiences embedded that enhanced the application problems that are part of that curriculum. That doesn't take away from the community experiences that are part of our model, but that's a discipline-specific decision that we've made that we feel good about because, at the end of our day, our value is learning.

Like we need kids to have a strong education and get the outcomes that they need to be college- and career-ready. And so, if that means that we use a project-based learning curriculum for part of the day and a curriculum that looks a little bit different and ties in the community experiences during math in a different way, that's what we're going to do. Because at the end of the day it's about the learning outcomes for our students.

MR. APOSTOLIDES: One other example, there is a project-based learning school in New
York City, a museum school, which we learned in speaking with them have not -- and this is in the transcript from our capacity-building interview, as we mentioned it there as well. They did not have success with their standardized test scores in high school, especially in math and science.

And what we learned from them is that they had started with an arts and humanities curriculum, and later they tried to graft on and add a science and math curriculum. So, that was something we learned very early on in our research. We had to bake in the full STEM-STEAM curriculum at the start.

And so, in our first pilot year, we piloted that chemistry module, which you heard one of our students testify about tonight. So, we've tried to learn from where there had been failures with related types of models. And from the start, we've tried to build out academic model towards excellence across a full broad curriculum

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: I just want to
correct, I think, the questions we're getting at.

No one is penalizing you for doing piloting. I think it's a huge strength of your application.

Our question, which I shared with you in our meetings, is just numbers. Like what drives your decision to have a high school given, as we asked just the last group, we have so many under-enrolled high schools. It's literally just like a numbers game. Like how will you actually get to those numbers?

MR. APOSTOLIDES: Can I just say something before you all talk about the specific numbers?

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Uh-hum.

MR. APOSTOLIDES: Because I think it's very important for the Board, since I'm here representing them. This is a continuum that we're providing for students. So, really, the reason that we have to have a high school is because we wouldn't be serving our students properly if we didn't have one.

Our high school will be unique. It's
built on our academic model and what it means for student achievement. And the activities that are core, that are essential to our learning model, they're not supplemental activities. They're core to the academic excellence, to building back our knowledge and student engagement.

So, the reason we're starting the younger grades actually is to make sure that, when students get to high school, that they're prepared to really take this to the next level and to prepare themselves for college and career. But I think that the great potential of this learning model is achieved in the high school, and where it positions these students as they move on in their lives and in their studies. So, I don't think that it's something that we ever really considered not having a high school.

I'll let you all talk about the specifics of the numbers.

MS. DAILEY-REESE: As we think about the numbers, the one thing I think that we can give you credit for is giving us another year of
planning by moving the deadline for application up. And so, that allows us to start, to continue
the work we've done around partnering with organizations to deliver our model, but also creating what we mentioned in our application around popup opportunities for parents to try CAPX before you buy it, essentially, and other opportunities around partnering with the local schools in Ward 6, particularly because that's where we wanted our location to be, and having conversations with them early and often around recruiting, so that we can expose families to CAPX from now until it's time to make the decision about selecting us as No. 1. And so, families have multiple touch points with us because we have a longer runway from now until when schools have to be selected. And so, that's an important piece of how we get to that recruiting number.

And the second piece I'll mention is around the capacity of the CAPX family.

Obviously, many of the people here who have been
here this evening, because we've been doing this
for three years, we have a team that's large
enough to do that lift when it comes to the best
practices of neighborhood canvassing and doing
surveys, and all those things, but also being
able to deliver programming across the city in a
broader way.

MR. GILLMEISTER: I'll just add that
the programming, that is just a continuation of
the relationships that we've begun to build. And
we've intentionally begun expanding them into new
neighborhoods that are still accessible along the
yellow and green and blue and orange line to our
target area.

So, last week was winter break for
DCPS, and we ran a winter break intern program at
Jubilee Housing because like those are students
who could potentially be our students someday.

We have commitments to run programming
with project transformation at one site by the
Congress Heights Metro and one by the Benning
Road Metro over the summer.
Earlier, some of our friends from GOODProjects focused in D.C. and the Greenleaf Housing Development were here, and I've been at their Saturday school program and we're running Saturday programming with them.

So, our goal is to, as Lanette mentioned, have multiple touch points with families and students to build a relationship over time, because, as all the schools have shared, we know that recruitment is going to take a lot of effort and long periods of relationship-building as we invite families to try this experience for their students.

CHAIR CRUZ: Steve?

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: So, I really liked this application. You have a rock-star founding team. You have three years' worth of learning, which I thought was a real asset, and you've learned and you've refined the model.

What you articulate as your underlying philosophy is that you want to give these incredible resources that we have in this city to
under-resourced students, to students and families that tend not to take advantage of these rich resources. What I wonder is, when I read this, what struck me is, boy, this is a really excellent opportunity to intentionally develop an integrated school. And integration to me actually feels like a resource. So, I would like to hear your thoughts on that because that's the piece, as I read this, that was not in there, if that's intentional, or what your thoughts are about that.

MS. DAILEY-REESE: Just a quick clarifying question, Steve, around the integration. Racially, socioeconomically? I just want to get a sense of how you are defining that integration piece.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: In this city, I think of it more as socioeconomically, but it's both, because there's such a large professional black class. But both and all, especially if you're going to be in the center of the city, which is what you're endeavoring to do, where you
can pull from a whole variety of neighborhoods. What are your thoughts on that?

MS. DAILEY-REESE: Our thoughts are, as you say, intentional. That's why the location of where we want to be is critical because we want to be able to serve kids across the five to six Metro lines in one stop. So, we think about that from a safety capacity, when we talk about middle school students traveling with us to school, but also our proximity to the Mall and ability to walk back and forth in a safe way. So, that's one thing, why that location is intentional, like access.

I think the other piece, when you talk about being able to have what is called an integration, it's about how we're aware and how we recruit. And you're correct, serving students furthest from the proximity of those resources has been a part of our work and a core charge as I model. That's why equity is one of our core values, is because we really want to make sure that we can bring kids who traditionally have not
had a sense of belonging and agency in that part of the city with those resources and in those institutions, and shifting that in a way where they begin to own those as their own learning spaces.

And that's some of the evidence of why Nik started what he wanted to call Smithsonian High some time ago. And now, we've shifted from that, but really saying that was part of his idea for the school to say, how do we right those inequities of access and how do we do it through an education model where kids can be successful, as well I know that Alison has gotten that feedback through our piloting process as well.

MR. APOSTOLIDES: Can I just add, piggyback on what Lanette said? I don't think we'll have any trouble attracting students from more affluent areas of the city. Let's say the students and parents for whom these institutions are already a place that they spend time.

And my experience in 20 years in museums and public management in this city, and
as a lifetime Washingtonian, one of the early projects that I did that inspired me to want to go down the road of starting a school was a project that was done with the Hirshhorn Museum and the D.C. Public Library and the Portrait Gallery. And the Hirshhorn Museum had no problem attracting students from upper Northwest D.C., from affluent backgrounds, to their educational programming. They weren't attracting the students who were in downtown D.C., in Gallery Place hanging out on the steps of the Portrait Gallery.

So, I think the equity mindset that we have is to make sure that we're recruiting students for whom there has not always been access because of the legacy of racism, segregation, and slavery in this city. But we know from all the research that that integrated model is actually where all students succeed when there is a diverse socioeconomic background of students. So, those students who are more at-risk, you might say, benefit by being in an
environment of academic excellence and rigor with students from a more --

MR. SANDMAN: Can I follow up on that? I recall, Lanette and Alison, when we met back in December, you mentioned that you had picked up some indications that some of the students that you might like to recruit from east of the River have had negative experiences in the museums of our city. They don't have a positive association with what you're trying to sell.

How have you factored that into how you would go about recruiting? That's not just a matter of going to the right neighborhoods. It's a matter of overcoming negative impressions that people might have. That can be a very tough sell. How are you going to deal with that?

MR. GILLMEISTER: I want to hit one last point on Steve and, then, come to your question.

Just that you mentioned something really important about the students, as you said, I think, integration as an asset. And so, I just
wanted to name that we are prioritizing recruiting students who have historically not had as high a level of access to some of these opportunities. But when we are together, every student is an asset to one another, and like that is part of the joy of CAPX, in like uncovering our individual gifts and interests and passions and our backgrounds and sharing them with each other.

And so, whatever the population of our school will be, that mindset that you're talking about, Steve, that is fundamental to who we are as a school. That's why relationships is one of our core values.

So, overcoming possible negative experiences, which we have heard about from students, it typically has either to do with going through security or being maybe corrected in a certain way for standing close to a piece of artwork or possibly going through the cafeteria experience. Those are the types of stories that students have shared with us about why they might
not feel welcome in a museum.

In addition, like certain collections are not representative of our students. In those spaces, like you can take an equity lens in the space that creates opportunities for critical conversations and we can shift our mindset and talk to kids about how the museum needs to be changed in order to be responsive to our community.

So, for us, it's about two strategies for overcoming those experiences. One is inviting students to get to know us in their own space first, like at their Saturday or after-school activity that they go to, and then, inviting them to come with us on an experience over time. So, one is like them trying it on their own after they get to know us in a space that's comfortable and familiar for them.

And then, the second is leveraging our CAPX family of students. We've piloted with over 75 students up until now, and you met some of them today. And they will speak excitedly about
their experience and what they've taken away from it. And we find that they can be our most powerful ambassadors.

MEMBER GANJAM: Can you share just a little bit about your thinking around electing the PMF as your goals, especially with such a unique program?

MS. DAILEY-REESE: Well, at CAPXLAB we value all the indicators that the PMF represents. It's about school environment. That's important to us. Academic achievement, that's important to us. How our students grow with us through re-enrollment, growth measures, all of those things are important to us as we think about our academics, when we're talking about making sure kids are college- and career-ready.

The one piece that makes us different is how we have the internal measures to measure our competencies when we talk about our core values. So, we have a framework that we're developing aligned to what do we want to be able to see the kids know and can do aligned to those
core values.

So, for us, it's not "or". It's "and". So, it's yes to PMF, and what are the internal pieces that tell us that our program model is working, and that we're delivering on our four design elements? And those are the pieces that we want to look as reflections, not the matter that we don't want the PMF as a part of our measurement, because parents and families in the community rely on that to give them information around how to make choices about schools. And so, for us, we want to be a part of the community and being able to stand on that and say, as the PMF grows and shifts, we, as a school, can make sure that we can be a part of that landscape.

And also with the STAR Framework, that's another measure that we'll have. And so, for us, it's not about separating ourselves in that way. It's about how do we measure up against other schools, but also what are the other level-ups that we have as a school from our
internal framework to measures?

MEMBER GANJAM: Thank you.

MS. SHELTON: Two questions, the first being just to put this out there. How does the Board feel or what will the Board do to ensure Ms. Dailey's success and addressing any concerns that folks may have around her leadership?

And the second question being, we talked about the high school, that being a major component. Can you speak a little more about the experience of your team and who has the experience related to high school?

So, the first?

MR. APOSTOLIDES: Sure. So, speaking for the Board, you heard from Pat Brantley earlier, and she also addressed this issue during our capacity-building interview. So, I refer you to her remarks which are so powerful.

But we think so highly of Lanette's experience at City Arts and all that she's learned, and we think she carries that forward to the Capital Experience Lab, and her more than 15
years of experience in the charter sector at a
national level and in Philadelphia. She's
participating in the Camelback Fellowship Program
this year. And so, from a Board's standpoint,
we're going to do everything, we're going to
continue to do everything that we can to scaffold
and support her leadership development and
coaching during this incubation year. And we're
committed to that on every level.

But I will say that I think one of the
things that we've learned is that a school's
success isn't just based on whether it's open or
closed. It's based on the community. It's based
on the students. It's based on much more than
just one metric. And we feel very confident that
we've picked the right leader who has already
done tremendous work since June, when she joined
our team, and who will carry this forward to be a
very successful charter school, if we're
approved.

MR. GILLMEISTER: High school
experience, uh-hum. So, when you look at our
broader team of teachers, three of founding team members come from the high school realm -- one in math, one in science, and one in English language arts. And they've helped us develop the model up until this point. And one of them is the person who wrote the sample unit for high school ELA. So, those members of the team have helped shape the model up until this point.

And Lanette and I have immersed ourselves in high-school-related learning experiences, starting over this summer. So, we are participating in the High Tech High High School New School Creation Fellowship, and that involves multiple opportunities to spend weeks at the San Diego Campus of High Tech High, as well as doing other school visits to connect with high school leaders in places like New Orleans and Denver.

And then, locally, because we know it's important to specifically be connected with high school leaders and high school settings in D.C., we're members of the High School Practice
Exchange. So, since the beginning of this school year, we've been gathering one day a month at a D.C. high school with other D.C. leaders, D.C. high school leaders, to discuss a problem of practice. We're up this Friday to share our college and career readiness, our pathway to post-secondary learning, and to get feedback from that team.

So, we're meeting on a monthly basis with high school leaders, so that we can continue to grow, as we also look for additional members of our team who will help us to launch the high school successfully.

MR. APOSTOLIDES: And just to mention that our Board, our academic committee meets monthly and we have two Board members, as you know, who are leading Tier 1 Public Charter Schools in D.C., including at the high school level. And so, we're very focused for the incubation year of developing a structured plan to support Lanette and the team, especially as we make some critical hires to develop out that and
pressure test that high school planning model.

CHAIR CRUZ: If we could spend one
more second on the high school, as you look
through the application there are a lot of open
questions there with regard to the community
project, the internship elective,
extracurricular, AP courses. How do you
anticipate that being developed across this next
year? Or the next few years?

MS. DAILEY-REESE: Yes, the next few
years. That's the great thing about having some
time to do that, is that we will continue to use
our pilots. We've been using that work, the
structure for that to take that to the high
school level and saying, what are the things we
need to prepare for as we look at things that are
left kind of undone with the high school piece
and things that we want to address and make sure
are ready to launch when it's time to have our
high school?

So, we have three summers to continue
to do that work, also using the input from our
high school alumni. We have kids currently in high school. They are a part of that process and conversation with informing what's happening in their schools to help us better understand how we can support in launching our school.

MR. GILLMEISTER: And I'll just add that the model, the high school model, that's in the application is like our best draft. Like all of those choices in there are intentional and researched. And we can explain why did we choose AP and not be an IB school, or why do we have this dual option for the internship or the community project. Like those are intentional decisions that we've made, based on conversations with other high school leaders, the high school teachers who have been on our team, and the schools that we have visited, and how we've learned about high school. So, those are there because we believe in them.

CHAIR CRUZ: Was there any point in which you considered applying as a middle school?

MR. GILLMEISTER: We did talk about it
because of the challenge in the city right now, and because people have shared -- you know, we are aware of the challenge around enrollment in some high schools. And so, we discussed that, and then, we came back to our why and what is driving us, which is what we hear from students and parents about the boredom that they're experiencing.

One high school leader we talked to who works at a DCPS school was talking about doing a learning walk. And there are great things. Like I follow all the DCPS high schools on social media and see highlights often of great things that are happening with really strong teachers.

But we've also talked to leaders who say, "We went on a learning walk last week, and I went to five classes and I was not engaged in any of them." And I'm thinking of a specific student who had to go to three of those classes today, and I'm thinking about what is that student taking away.
And so, for us, the "why" is, can we fundamentally transform the way that we use space in our city when students are in high school? How could we have a fundamentally transformative and different experience by thinking about space differently? And for us, the potential for students to learn in a new way was enough for us to say, yes, we want to go for the high school because of the potential outcomes for students.

MR. APOSTOLIDES: And I can just tell you in terms of the museums and the types of institutions that we're partnering with, the greatest traction that they reach is with these teen audiences. And so, to prepare them through sixth to eighth grade, and then, bring them forward into a high school is really where they are going to be able to create more meaningful deep learning engagement through their projects with world-renown experts in this area from NIH to NASA, to the Smithsonian. And it's going to transform the opportunities that our students have. So, a high school is essential.
VICE CHAIR BIREDA: I'm just building off of Jim's question around students not feeling welcome, and there are actual boundaries to some of the students being able to access some of these places, either through language or disability. How have you thought about how those students will experience the school in the same way as other students?

MR. GILLMEISTER: We're really excited about the potential for real-world learning experiences to provide an entry point and a moment of engagement for students who are acquiring English or students who have a learning disability. So, when we think about universal design for learning and the opportunities for students to intake information more than one way, whether that's through a video that's at the museum, a conversation, a hands-on experience that's there, all of those provide opportunities for a meaningful dialog using prompts, like one of the parents spoke about, and having a meaningful conversation in writing that's rooted
in a tangible experience.

We know that those are the types of experiences that special education teachers, like myself and Patrice Jones, and other members of the founding team, we try to recreate that at school so often by like, how can we provide access to this text for a student who's acquiring English by supplementing it with pictures, for example?

The museum has sort of jump-started that process, and then, we can layer on top of that, adding academic language and stems, in order for students to have that immediate entry point, and then, build the academic skills on top of it.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: And the actual physical limitations, like not being able to walk to museums or --

MR. GILLMEISTER: Yes, so we catch that.

MR. APOSTOLIDES: Just to say, the last five years, the museum field, especially in
D.C., with Mornings at the Museum at the
Smithsonian, at the Botanic Garden, the Capitol;
we do a museum program. The accessibility for
students on the Spectrum, for example, with
sensory challenges, has been tremendously
improved in the last few years. And the museums
are anxious to do this work with students and
with classrooms.

MR. GILLMEISTER: And so, also, in
terms of audio resources, like most of the
Smithsonian resources are available with an audio
recording for a student who might be visually-impaired. Because they are world-class
institutions, they also have a high level of
access to braille material that you wouldn't
necessarily find in some smaller institutions.

And then, finally, I would add that
the majority of the collections are available
digitally online. So, if we needed like come up
with a problem-solving situation to bridge while
we figured out how we can bring the student in
and include him or her as fully as possible, we
could use the Smithsonian online collections to
give full access to the academic content.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Any other
questions or comments?

Steve?

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Just a thought.
This reminds me very much of what School Without
Walls used to be, what it was when I was in high
school. And so, there are hundreds of alum in
this city who I would encourage you to use as a
resource.

MR. GILLMEISTER: Thank you.

We have met with two. So, we have
several hundred to go.

(Laughter.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Excellent. Thank you
all. We'll see you back next month.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. I can't
believe I'm going to actually now call the public
meeting to order.

(Laughter.)

So, if I can get a motion to approve
the agenda for this evening?

MR. SANDMAN: I move to approve the February 24th, 2020 Board meeting agenda.

CHAIR CRUZ: Can I get a second?

MEMBER GANJAM: Second.

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

Okay. It's unanimous.

Are there any public officials in the audience who wish to speak or be recognized and/or any public comment at this point?

(No response.)

All right. If not, Nikhil, please join us up here.

MR. VASHEE: Good evening, everyone. I'm Nikhil Vashee, Specialist on the School Quality and Accountability Team.

Tonight, the Board is going to vote on the charter reviews of three public charter schools. I'm going to read the Charter Review Standard once, and it's going to apply to every school.
"The School Reform Act requires that DC PCSB review a school's charter at least once every five years. As part of that review, the Board must determine whether the school committed a violation of applicable laws or a violation of its charter, as well as whether the school has failed to meet the goals and student academic achievement expectations set forth in its charter. If DC PCSB determines that a school has committed a material violation of applicable law, its charter, or has not met its goals, DC PCSB may, at its discretion, revoke the school's charter.

"Additionally, there's a fiscal component to the review. We are required to revoke a school's charter if we determine that the school engaged in a pattern of non-adherence to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, has engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement, or is no longer economically viable."

So, with that standard stated, our first school is Capital City Public Charter
School. The delegation from this school can please now join me.

Capital City currently educates 990 students at a single location in Ward 4. The school is made up of three campuses: the lower school, which serves grade pre-kindergarten through four; the middle school, which serves grades five through eight, and the high school, which serves grades nine through twelve.

The school chose the Performance Management Framework, or PMF, as its goals, and therefore, was required to earn an average PMF score of 50 percent at each of its individual campuses. Every campus has met the 50 percent standard. So, the school has met its academic goals. The school also passed our financial and compliance review. Based on these findings, DC PCSB staff recommends that the Board vote to fully continue the school's charter.

Staff from the school will now introduce themselves and they're available here to answer any of your questions.
Thanks.

CHAIR CRUZ: Mic, the button. There you go.

MS. DRESDE: Hi. I'm Karen Dresden. I'm the head of school at Capital City. I'm also one of the school's founders.

And I have a few remarks, but I know you're tired. Okay?

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes, keep going.

MS. DRESDE: Sorry, everybody is tired.

But I'm pleased to be here as you consider our 20-year charter review. Reaching 20 years is quite a milestone. As I'm one of the school's founders, I'm incredibly proud about how far our school has come and, also, how deeply connected we still are to our core values and our original vision.

Through our EL education model, we provide our pre-K through 12 students with rich and authentic learning experiences. We have been recognized for many years as a mentor school for
the EL education model, and we support other 
schools, including other D.C. charter schools, 
with their implementation.

We have a strong focus on social and 
emotional learning and supporting students in 
developing the habits and skills they need to 
reach their full potential and be successful 
beyond their time at Capital City. We were proud 
to have our social and emotional learning program 
featured in a case study by the Aspen Institute 
in 2018.

We were the first parent-founded 
charter school in D.C., and we continue to have 
strong parent engagement and satisfaction. We 
are a pre-K through 12 school with high 
enrollment and we build relationships with 
families over many years.

I am most proud of the success of our 
graduates. Since we first graduated students in 
2012, 100 percent of our graduates have been 
accepted to college. Our high school graduation 
rates continue to outpace the District and
national average, and our college graduation rate is more than three times the national average for first-generation students.

While we have a lot to be proud of, we are always focused on continuous improvement and providing the best possible education and opportunities to our students. Continuing to increase math achievement and improving the outcomes for our growing English-learner population are top priorities for us moving forward.

And with your approval, we look forward to the years ahead. So, thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Well, thank you, and congratulations on 20 years.

MS. DRESDEN: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: And on a lot of great work that I've seen firsthand as I've visited.

MS. DRESDEN: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Could you just say a little bit more about some of the areas of growth that you noted --
MS. DRESDEN: Yes.

CHAIR CRUZ: -- and that the staff also noted in their summary report?

MS. DRESDEN: Yes. I think we're very reflective. We've very data-driven, and we're also really in touch with our constituents. So, I think we do know the areas we need to focus on.

Our population of English language learners as grown significantly over the years. In fact, we now have almost 50 percent of our lower school students are classified as English learners. And when we started this five-year period, we were at 29 percent. So, I think we've been learning how to serve this population of students better.

And I think some of the levers that we're really working on is just making sure that our teachers have enough training. Like when you have a population that large, you can't rely on having one or two English Learner Specialists working with students. Like everybody in the program needs to be an English Learner
Specialist, and that really takes time. That's not about having people who have just had, you know, one or two workshops. It needs to be continuous training.

And so, we've been partnering with the Center for Applied Linguistics. We've been training some of our folks as trainers, and we've been working at really building the capacity of our staff.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Thank you.

MS. DRESDEN: Uh-hum.

CHAIR CRUZ: Board Members, any questions for Karen?

(No response.)

Don't take it as a sign that we don't care.

(Laughter.)

MS. DRESDEN: It's late, I know.

CHAIR CRUZ: If we had questions, we would ask them.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: I guess I have one question. Just given the often tumult we see in
middle school, what do you accredit the jump from Tier 2 to Tier 1?

MS. DRESSEN: Yes. Well, I'm really proud of our middle school team. I think we've had a lot of consistency, both with the leadership and with the staff. And that continuous focus on improvement, I think they've each year made some tweaks. But I think we've had both the retention of the students and the retention of the staff and strong leadership. And I'm really proud that what they've seen is really steady growth over time.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Congratulations.

MS. DRESSEN: Thank you.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Similarly, explain why the PMF scores are so much higher in high school than in elementary and the middle school. Divine the mystery for us.

MS. DRESSEN: Well, I would also like to say that most of our high school students came through the other programs. So, I think that --

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: They get smarter and
smartier the longer they stay there?

MS. DRESSEN: You know, that's what we work towards. So, I think that we really see that we build these habits and skills in students over time. I also think there's the focus on college readiness that we have really throughout all of our program, but that is something that's recognized more in the high school PMF. And I think that's something that we really focus a lot on. In our end game, while we know that Park is important, our end game really is about preparing kids for college and careers, and I think that those are things that we've shown that we've been successful with.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. One last call for questions.

(No response.)

If not, I will take a motion.

MS. SHELTON: I move --

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: One more. Are you the only pre-K-3 through 12th grade school in the charter sector?
Are they?

MS. DRESSEN:  Are we?

MR. PEARSON:  I think they're the only one at a single site.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH:  At a single site?

MS. DRESSEN:  At a single site, yes.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH:  Just it's an interesting model worth digging into more deeply.

MS. DRESSEN:  Yes.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH:  And it looks like you have continuous improvement.  So, it's impressive.

MS. DRESSEN:  Thank you.

MS. SHELTON:  Thanks, Steve.

I move to continue the charter of Capital City Public Charter School.

CHAIR CRUZ:  Can I get a second?

MEMBER GANJI:  I'll second.

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

Congratulations.

MS. DRESSEN:  Thank you.
CHAIR CRUZ: If there were more people here, they'd be applauding.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

Thank you. Thank you.

MR. VASHEE: All right. Cedar Tree is next.

Cedar Tree currently educates 357 students in grades pre-K through K at a single campus in Ward 8. The school adopted the PMF as it goals and committed to meeting a 50 percent average on the PMF over the course of the last five years. The school met this target with an average score of 87.9 percent. The school has also passed our financial and compliance reviews. Based on these findings, staff recommends that the Board vote to fully continue the school's charter.

Staff from the school are here to answer your questions.

MS. HENDERSON: Hello, everyone. My name is LaTonya Henderson, and I am the CEO of
Cedar Tree Academy.

MS. EDISON: Hi. I'm Celenease Edison, the principal of Cedar Tree Academy.

MS. RAY: Good evening. I am the Vice Chair of the Board of Cedar Tree Academy, Monica Ray.

MS. HENDERSON: And we are just happy to be here and we look forward to serving Ward 8 for 20 more years.

(Laughter.)

And I know the hour is late, and whoever from PCSB put this together did a phenomenal job. It tells our story very well. And we just look forward to your vote to give us an opportunity to continue to grow and serve our children.

We're happy to answer any questions that you have.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

Board Members, any questions?

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Keep it up.

(Laughter.)
MS. HENDERSON: Thank you.

MS. SHELTON: Your social media presence is --

CHAIR CRUZ: Oh, mic.

MS. SHELTON: That wasn't official.

(Laughter.

CHAIR CRUZ: Oh, okay. It wasn't official.

MS. HENDERSON: Thank you.

MS. SHELTON: Just your social media presence --

MS. HENDERSON: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Given that you do have the platform, congratulations on what is a great review. And I think you'll have a positive vote from this Board.

You mentioned the next 20 years. What does the next five years look like, in two minutes or less?

(Laughter.)

MS. HENDERSON: Well, we're adding first, second, and third grade. And we know we
will continue to provide a quality program for
the community. We will continue to have great
community partnerships and relationships and
continue to grow our program.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MS. SHELTON: And how are you tracking
the students that leave your program and go on to
other schools?

MS. HENDERSON: So, that's very
difficult, and we've started to do more, because
they go so many different places. But because
the school is such a family -- we have a family
feel -- we have a lot of students who come back
and tell us their stories. And we're starting to
track that more, but, honestly, it's very
difficult because they go so many different
places. And adding these additional grades, over
the years we know we will retain more students,
and we can develop a program that will track them
better as we continue to add grades.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: I know it's late.
MS. HENDERSON: That's okay.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: But, I mean, you're in Ward 8 and your PMF scores are just off the charts. So, like what's your secret?

MS. HENDERSON: Our model, we have a three-teacher model. You asked a lot of questions about special education. That's my undergraduate degree. And when we started the program, when I went to the Charter Board and I had this vision to start Cedar Tree, I thought about what we could do differently, how we could really make a difference.

And so, our model, we have three adults in every class, which allows for small group interaction. We have intense pullout sessions where, if we see a child is struggling, we will pull, we have the opportunity to pull that child out of the group and work intensely one-on-one with that child.

And so, it has made a difference, and you can see it in our academic growth as well as our student-teacher interaction, through the
class assessment. And it's just made a
difference. Our model is one that I really think
people should replicate. Just not bragging, but
it works.

(Laughter.)

MR. PEARSON: Just building on that,
as you begin to grow into first, second, third
grade, are you planning to keep that model in
those upper grades?

MS. HENDERSON: So, we are looking at
not keeping the full three people as we get to
third grade because we believe our children will
be more independent and not need as much support.
But we will continue to keep that intense pullout
model, if needed. So, we have left the doors
open for the needs.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. So, I will
take a motion at this point.

MS. SHELTON: I move to continue the
charter of Cedar Tree Public Charter School.

CHAIR CRUZ: I've got a motion --

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

Unanimous. Congratulations.

MS. HENDERSON: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you for the work you do.

MS. HENDERSON: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. VASHEE: All right. So, our last school is going to be Washington Global. Washington Global currently educates 234 students in grades six through eight at a single campus in Ward 6. The school chose to adopt the Performance Management Framework as their goals. As a fifth year school, they were required to earn at least 40 percent of the possible PMF points in at least two of the last three school years, and they did so.

The school also had two mission-specific goals, one for foreign language proficiency and one regarding student engagement in service learning. The school met their
targets three out four years for both of these
goals. Therefore, they are deemed substantially
met.

Based on these findings, DC PCSB staff
recommends that the Board vote to fully continue
the school's charter.

Staff from the school will now
introduce themselves, and they're here to answer
your questions.

DR. CURRISTINE: Good evening. Given
the hour, I'm going to keep this very brief. I'm
Dr. Curristine. I'm Chair of Washington Global's
Board.

So, first, let me thank the DC Public
Charter School Board for holding the Washington
Global Public Charter School's five-year review.
So, thank you for conducting it.

The school's Board and leadership is
proud of the strong instructions that take place
at Washington Global. We believe that's evident
from the school's recent quality site review and
the academic progress that Washington Global has
made over the past five years. So, we look forward to educating students in D.C. for many years to come.

And now, I'd like to turn it over to Dr. Liz Torres, Washington Global's cofounder and CEO.

DR. TORRES: Hi. Good evening.

Also with us is Suzanne Brooks, our Director of Special Education, and Howard Mebance, our Principal. And they are founding staff members of Washington Global. So, they are excited to see the school's five-year review.

I had remarks prepared. It's going to be incredibly brief, like very short.

CHAIR CRUZ: Go for it.

(Laughter.)

DR. TORRES: So, we're a unique educational environment in D.C. I wanted to highlight that over the years our special education population has grown tremendously.

This past year, 25.9 percent of our students were identified as having a disability. We have the
highest special education rate of any standalone, non-alternative charter middle school in the District.

We also offer unique programming. So, all students at Global take a Spanish language class. We also offer a Korean language class, and we're partnering with the Republic of Korea Embassy.

And we also have a thriving service learning program. So, students identify a problem, and this is very student-driven and part of our mission. And it's either a local or international issue. And then, they design and implement a project to make a difference. Students have planned peace walks in D.C. They have conducted beautification projects. They have reached out to help students in rural Cambodia and developed resources for the students.

And we are very proud of our academic growth. Over the past five years, our Park proficiency scores have consistently increased in
both ELA and math. In the past year, we're very proud of our MGP. Last year, we earned a 53 in ELA and a 54 in math. And regarding our students with disabilities, the MGP from last year matched that of the general student population, showing that all students at Global are making progress, and students with disabilities at Global have outperformed the sector average MGP for the past three years in ELA and for the past year in math.

So, those are just some things I wanted to highlight and pull out of my remarks. Thank you very much for allowing us to speak tonight.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

Board Members, any questions?

(No response.)

I did want to sort of both acknowledge my several visits there and just really appreciating learning more about the school and seeing the population, whether it be with respect to students with disabilities, but the general population, both grow and seem to be thriving.
So, congratulations on that.

It was particularly rewarding to see the growth between 2017-18 and 2018-19. That's a significant increase. Any few words you can say about what drove that?

DR. TORRES: Yes. So, there were a couple of things that we did that drove it. We completely recalibrated the way that we approach math at the school. We've developed a blended learning model. We brought in experts who had developed the model in schools across the country, and it was very successful at schools that had kind of lower-performing math scores.

We've always had very strong math teachers. So, it wasn't an instruction problem. It was the model that we used. So, we have a station rotational model, and it's a direct instruction, and then, a blended learning model where students engage in IXL and iReady, which are research-based intervention programs. And then, they have a remediation station. So, usually, two teachers are in the classroom
running this model, and that just really drove up
our math MGP and, also, our math proficiency
increased because of that.

        We also have rolled out a reading
class. So, all students who are two or more
grade levels below in reading take this reading
class, and we use Fountas and Pinnell for the
reading class. And that has been highly
successful.

        We also recalibrated staffing. So, we
hired more individuals to be involved in student
intervention and, also, in special education
services. So, I think those were the major
changes we made.

        CHAIR CRUZ: Good. Thank you.

        All right. If there aren't any other
questions, does someone want to move?

        MR. SANDMAN: I move to continue the
charter of Washington Global Public Charter
School.

        MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Second.

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

            Congratulations on your five-year review.

            DR. TORRES: Thank you.

            (Applause.)

            CHAIR CRUZ: All right. I think that is all that we have for reviews and renewals. I should have noted at the outset that the Paul PCS 20-year charter review has been postponed to March. So, we'll see that on the March agenda.

            All right. Rashida, are you joining us here?

            MS. YOUNG: Okay. Hello again.

            Staff recommends that the Board approve Eagle Academy Public Charter School's amendment request to relocate and rename one of its existing campuses, Eagle Academy Public Charter School, Fairlawn, effective for school year '20-21. If approved, Eagle will continue operating its program for grades pre-kindergarten through three at two campuses in Wards 6 and 8. The school's campus names will be Eagle Academy
Public Charter School, Capitol Riverfront,
formally named Fairlawn Campus, and Eagle Academy
Public Charter School, Congress Heights.

Representatives from the school are present to answer any questions that you may have.

Feel free to introduce yourselves.

DR. SMITH: I'm Joe Smith, the CEO of Eagle Academy.

MR. ENELSWE: Matthew Enelswe, our accountant for Eagle Academy.

MS. AUSTIN: Hi. I'm Karen Austin, Chief Marketing Officer of Eagle Academy.

MR. MENDER: Aaron Mender, member of the Board.

CHAIR CRUZ: Any comments or anything you would like to share?

DR. SMITH: I would say that we started in Ward 6 in the Blue Castle. Where does everybody start?

(Laughter.)

But we were there for a lot of years,
from 2003, where we had a tiny space in there, until we filled the entire first floor, when we finally left. So, we were there and did not leave until 2012, when we opened our large school in Ward 8.

And then, our other school we started that we still have in Ward 6 was, for the last three years, we've never known if we're going to have that building. So, March of every year, they tell us whether we can renew our lease. So, we weren't able to renew our lease. And it's not because they were being mean. They wanted to give us six months' notice, but they weren't sure.

So, we were able to find a new space that remains in Ward 6 right across on the other side of South Capitol Street along Half Street. And we will be the first school that actually matches one of the suggestions the Mayor had at the last meeting, which is we are going to be located in an apartment building. We will have over 18,000 square feet in the first floor, and
the rest of the building will have over 400 units ranging from, as you might imagine, efficiency units to three-bedroom units.

So, it will be a unique operation. I think it's the first in D.C. to do that. We feel very comfortable doing that. In fact, we think it's a perfect way. I'm sure other charter schools would like to also be right in an apartment building with lots of families moving in. It works very well, and we think the area we're moving into will be very supportive of us.

We have Aaron. Aaron is one of our families coming. I think we have 120. We have 120 families that are currently in our school that have signed up to stay with us.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Thank you.

MR. PEARSON: I just have one correction. Apple Tree Columbia Heights is in an apartment building.

DR. SMITH: Oh, I didn't know that. I didn't know. And I know him well, as you know. I didn't know they were in an apartment building.
VICE CHAIR BIREDÁ: Maybe Rashida can help with this, too. I think part of the community response was in reaction to some comments that were made around possibly trying to get more kids and growing. And I actually think you guys clarified that you're really just moving where you've already been for many, many years to --

DR. SMITH: Yes.

VICE CHAIR BIREDÁ: -- to a new location. So, I think, for the record, we should be clear that that is the main intent. It's not to --

DR. SMITH: We are not asking for an increase in enrollment.

VICE CHAIR BIREDÁ: Right.

DR. SMITH: Not at all, no.

VICE CHAIR BIREDÁ: Right. So, to ease concerns that were voiced around, you know, motivation, whatever --

DR. SMITH: Yes.

VICE CHAIR BIREDÁ: -- you will be
serving students that you already serve?

DR. SMITH: Right. Yes, that's correct.

MS. AUSTIN: That's correct, yes.

DR. SMITH: Our marking person knows better than I.

MS. AUSTIN: We are at capacity today, and our Certificate of Occupancy, we cannot go up another student. We're at capacity. So, we feel very confident that, moving a few blocks away, that we'll be able to maintain our current capacity, and then, a few of the families that might move into the building in the next year may also want to join our school.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: And thank you as well for following up on some of the questions that we had at the hearing last month.

All right. Are there any other questions from the Board?

(No response.)

We'll entertain a motion.
MS. CRUSEY: I move to approve the charter amendment request of Eagle Academy Public Charter School and approve the DC PCSB Board Chair to sign a charter agreement amendment on the Board's behalf.

MS. SHELTON: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Approval on the second. All in favor of the motion?

All right. It's approved.

DR. SMITH: Just thank you very much.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

DR. SMITH: We really appreciate it.

CHAIR CRUZ: Meridian.

MS. YOUNG: All right. Staff recommends the Board approve Meridian Public Charter School's amendment request to relocate its middle school program to a new facility at 770 Kenyon Street, Northwest, effective for school year '20-21. If approved, students in grades pre-kindergarten-3 through 5 will remain at the same 13th Street facility, and students in grades six through eight will move to the new
site. And the school will continue operating its program as a single campus across two facilities in Ward 1.

The representative from the school is present to answer any questions you may have.

MR. McCRAY: Matthew McCray, head of school. And I will be honest, at this point I half expected to say good morning to all of you.

(Laughter.)

But I don't have anything to add that I haven't already said the last --

CHAIR CRUZ: It depends on how long you're around --

(Laughter.)

MR. McCRAY: So, I'll take any questions that you might have.

CHAIR CRUZ: Board Members, anything?

(No response.)

Again, not a sign of not being engaged in this particular --

MR. McCRAY: I'm not getting my feelings hurt.
CHAIR CRUZ: All right. This one's pretty straightforward. I think I can ask for a motion.

MS. SHELTON: I move that we approve the charter amendment request of Meridian Public Charter School and approve the DC PCSB Board Chair to sign the charter agreement amendment on the Board's behalf.

MR. SANDMAN: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: A motion and the second. All in favor?

Unanimous. Thank you, everyone. Congratulations.

The last woman standing.

(Laughter.)

You literally are.

MS. BRANTLEY: Good evening.

MS. YOUNG: Good evening.

All right. So, earlier tonight, we discussed the Friendship Public Charter School's charter amendment request. And now, staff recommends that the Board approve the school's
request to open a new campus, Friendship Public
Charter School Wahler Place Middle, for school
year '20-21. And as previously mentioned, this
campus will serve grades four through eight and
will be located in a leased facility where
Achievement Prep-Wahler Middle School currently
operates at 907 Wahler Place, Southeast, for at
least one school year.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Anything happen in
the last three hours?

MS. BRANTLEY: No. I've been very
entertained by the meeting.

(Laughter.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Board Members, any
questions?

(No response.)

I think we had a healthy discussion on
this and several across the last several weeks.

MS. BRANTLEY: Thank you for doing
this.

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes.

MS. BRANTLEY: It really means a lot
to students and to us. So, thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: You go. You go.

MS. SHELTON: I move to approve the charter amendment request of Friendship Public Charter School and approve the DC PCSB Board Chair to sign the charter agreement amendment on the Board's behalf.

MR. SANDMAN: Second.

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

Thank you.

All right. So, the consent calendar. Before we vote on the consent calendar, any Board members who would like to remove an item from the calendar for further discussion or a recusal for the record?

(No response.)

Okay. If not, can we get a motion?

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

VICE CHAIR BIREDHA: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: A motion and the second.
All in favor?

The motion passes.

Any new business, guys?

(No response.)

All right. If there's new business, open the floor for public comment.

And anybody who would like to speak this evening?

(No response.)

All right. Motion to adjourn.

MS. SHELTON: I move to adjourn the February 24th, 2020 Board meeting.

MEMBER GANJAM: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: Motion and the second.

All in favor?

So adjourned.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 11:43 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: DCPCSB

Date: 02-24-19

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.

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Court Reporter