D.C. PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

BOARD MEETING

PUBLIC HEARING AND PUBLIC MEETING

MONDAY
MARCH 23, 2020

The D.C. Public Charter School Board
met by video teleconference at 6:30 p.m., Rick
Cruz, Chair, presiding.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

RICK CRUZ, Chair
SABA BIRED A, Vice Chair
STEVE BUMBAUGH
LEA CRUSEY
RICARDA GANJAM, Secretary
JIM SANDMAN
NAOMI SHELTON

STAFF PRESENT

SCOTT PEARSON, Executive Director, DC PCSB
BRIANI BOYD, DC PCSB
NICOLE COLE, DC PCSB
HANNAH COUSINO, DC PCSB
ABBY GETZEL, DC PCSB
OLIVIA GUSMAN, DC PCSB
PETER PETRIN, DC PCSB
MELODI SAMPSON, DC PCSB
NIKHIL VASHEE, DC PCSB
RASHIDA YOUNG, DC PCSB
ALSO PRESENT

JASON ANDREAN, Achievement Prep
AIYANA BELGUDA
CANDACE DAVIS
ANAYA EARLY
KADENCE EARLY
STEVEN FOSTER
MICHELE GRAY, Social Justice PCS
SHERRY INGRAM, Paul PCS
BRANDON JOHNSON, Social Justice PCS
MYRON LONG, Social Justice PCS
GINA MAHONY, Paul PCS
STEPHEN MARCUS, Achievement Prep
ELFREDA MASSIE, Global Citizen Public Charter School
JACQUE PATTERSON
SUZANNE WELLS, Ward 6 Public Schools Parent Organization
SHANTEILLE WRIGHT, Achievement Prep
TRACY WRIGHT, Paul PCS
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Hearing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening Remarks</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Comment</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Amendments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement Prep Public Charter School (PCS) - Campus Reconfiguration</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice PCS - Facility Public Hearing</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve Agenda</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve/Deny Charter Continuance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul PCS 20-year Charter Review</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve/Deny Charter Applications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Arabic</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Education School of Business and Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Experience Lab</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Citizens</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent Calendar</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Business</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjourn</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAIR CRUZ: All right, this is Rick Cruz, Chair of the Public Charter School Board. I'm going to begin our meeting now.

If I can get the high sign from our team and board members that they can hear me. Excellent. And I believe you're all unmuted.

So welcome to our first ever virtual board meeting. And I know we all wish this were under other circumstances. This is new for us as it is for all of you. But we wanted very much to continue on with the business of the District while making sure everyone is safe.

As always, I'm joined by our Board Members, Steve Bumbaugh, Ricarda Ganjam, Jim Sandman, Naomi Shelton, Lea Crusey, and our Vice Chair Saba Bireda. They are all unmuted at this moment, so I think you can all participate.

I want to first acknowledge the unprecedented situation we're in as well as the extraordinary effort that our schools have made
to set up, amongst many other things, a distance learning programs.

I also want to acknowledge the hardships that this situation places on both students, their families, teachers, and school staff and leadership.

And again, I want to acknowledge all that that school staff and leadership has done to support a whole host of needs of our families and our students, including, but not limited to, meal distribution, which many of our schools are doing in conjunction with DCPS.

Tonight I'll ask you all to be patient with us as we hold this meeting virtually. Even if some things take a bit longer than normal.

I'm going to play the role of IT coordinator for a second and make sure that everyone is familiar with the instructions with respect to using Zoom.

Everyone on the line, save for our Board Members, are currently muted. And Briani, our meeting administrator at PCSB, will assist by
unmuting individuals one at a time, when it's
their turn to speak.

For those participating in the matters
before the Board this evening, either school
leaders and their representatives, or the list of
public witnesses who have signed up already. If
you're using the Zoom app, we'll be asking you to
raise your hand, which you can find under the tab
labeled participants. And that will allow us to
unmute you.

For those that are joining to
represent schools at different times, we ask that
only one person speak at a time. And if you're
not speaking, we'll ask that you be muted.

And again, as usual, our public
witnesses will have two minutes to speak.

I'd like to ask Scott Pearson, who's
been working closely with representatives from
education and other agencies across the city, to
share a bit about how PCSB is supporting schools,
our schools during this time, and some of the
priorities that the Public Charter School Board
has with respect to the COVID-19 response.

Bri, if you might unmute Scott for a few moments?

MR. PEARSON: Thank you, Rick. So as Rick said, this is unprecedented. None of us have ever been through any of this, and so we're all in uncharted waters. We began communicating with schools in very early March asking them to prepare for this eventuality, and it's been very heartening to see how schools have risen to this challenge.

Our expectation, we have communicated to all schools that we have an expectation that despite the difficulties and the challenges that every one of them find a way to continue to engage with their communities in teaching and learning. And we've been in touch with every single LEA, and I'm happy to say that all of the LEAs are engaged in that.

PCSB, at this point, is 100 percent telework. Our work does go on. And in addition to our regular priorities, I have outlined for
the team six broad priorities with respect to how we respond to this coronavirus pandemic.

The first is to support our schools anyway we can. And one of the most significant ways that we think we can do that is by facilitating a lot of experience sharing.

Schools are learning every day how to do this better and better. And we think we can serve all kids by making sure that every school and every school leader has the benefit of the learning that is going on at all the other schools in D.C. as well as some of the best practices that we're seeing from around the country.

The second priority is recognizing that our entire accountability structure for schools needs to be reconsidered this year in light of the cancellation of state assessments and the significant interruption in onsite learning. So accountability revisions.

A third is to be really collaborative good partners across the city. To collaborate
city-wide, solve city-wide problems.

What we've done with food, in terms of standing up food distribution across charters and DCPS where every school that is a city-wide distribution center I think is an example of that. And there are many other challenges that we're working with our partners at the DME and OSSE, Department of Health, and other agencies to work on behalf of families and children.

The fourth is to find ways to effectively oversee the distance learning that our schools are engaged in.

The fifth is an internal priority. And that's just enabling us to do our work effectively in a telework environment. And hopefully a successful board meeting tonight will be an example of delivering on that priority.

And then the sixth is communications, both to schools and to community members and families. And that's really about communicating essential information that needs to get out, as well as communicating what our schools are doing.
so that people are aware of that.

So those are guiding our work. And I'm really heartened by the way the entire staff has risen to this occasion, commensurate with what we're seeing from all of our schools. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Scott, for providing that update. Before I turn to our public witnesses this evening and our agenda, I want to start by thanking the founding groups who have submitted new charter school applications this year, which we'll be voting on this evening.

Many of you have spent years bringing together students and families to shape programs and develop school models to benefit the D.C. community.

Thank you also to the educators, community leaders, various partners who are supporting the founding team. I know our collective goal is to improve educational outcomes for D.C. students. And I'm very proud of the work that all of you have done, no matter
what the votes lead to this evening.

    Like the applicants before us tonight,

every public charter school goes through a
rigorous process with the Public Charter School
Board here in D.C. Our goal is to approve school
models that support all students and improve
student achievement.

    Charter schools are a public school
operated using public dollars and overseen by
volunteer boards with the majority of those board
members being our neighbors that live in D.C.

    I know that many citizens in the city
have opinions on how many public charter schools
we need, but the role of this Board is to look at
the data, assess the need, and evaluate the
quality of the proposals, even in trying times
such as these.

    Before we approve any new school,
there is a rigorous process that applicants must
follow. They need to demonstrate need, an
ability to succeed, a commitment to quality, and
the dedication to openness to all students.
And we expect applicants to consult with the community and be a good neighbor. And we also look at the changing demographic patterns in the city.

This has been our commitment in the time I've been on the Board, and that will continue being our commitment going forward.

Some say that we opened too many schools. We don't believe that is true. In fact, we have a very rigorous process.

In the time that I've been on the Board, we've received and reviewed 35 applications, but only approved a little more than a third of those. Our forecasts show that the new seats we've approved amount to well under half of the forecasted growth in school-aged children.

So that is just a little bit of a context for the decisions we'll be -- or the applications that we'll be voting on later on in this meeting.

Now I'd like to open it up to the
public witnesses that have signed up to speak
this evening. Bri will be unmuting you.

If you didn't sign up by sending your
name to Bri before this meeting, everyone may
submit comments to publiccomment@dcpcs
.org.

So we've got, I believe, 12 members of
the public who would like to make statements this
evening. I am going to ask the first, Aliyyah
Ferguson, to raise her hand in the Zoom app or
press star-9 now. We'll be asking you to stick
to two minutes.

Please, again, state your name and
organization. And, again, we'll be starting with
Aliyyah Ferguson. Bri, do you know if she is on
the line?

MS. BOYD: She is not. I don't see
her.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Well, we'll create
another time later on in the meeting to come back
to her.

Next on this list is Suzanne Wells.
Again, press star-9 or raise your hand in the
Zoom app.

MS. BOYD: Suzanne Wells is on the call. I am going to unmute her. Her hand is not raised however.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. If you can find her.

MS. BOYD: Okay. Suzanne, you're unmuted. Oh, I don't think she has --

MS. WELLS: Okay, ready?

MS. BOYD: Yes.

CHAIR CRUZ: Suzanne?

PARTICIPANT: We can see her.

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes, I saw her name pop up.

PARTICIPANT: But she is muted at this time.

CHAIR CRUZ: She appears to be muted.

MS. WELLS: Can you hear me now?

CHAIR CRUZ: Oh, yes, we can. Thank you.

MS. WELLS: Okay. All right, do you want me to read my testimony now?
CHAIR CRUZ: Yes. You have two
minutes. If you want to state your name and any
organization you're with --

MS. WELLS: Yes.

CHAIR CRUZ: -- and give us comments.

Thank you.

MS. WELLS: Okay. My name is Suzanne
Wells, I'm the President of the Ward 6 Public
Schools Parent Organization, and I'm testifying
about the vote the Public Charter School Board
plans to take this evening on the opening of four
new charter schools. Two of them are planned to
be opened in Ward 6.

In May of 2019 the DME issued a
facilities assessment of new public charter
school applications. The DME raised concerns
about approving any new middle schools or high
schools because our city already has a
significant number of middle and high schools
operating with low enrollment, has available
empty seats, and a relatively limited number of
middle school and high school students.
The concerns raised last year by the DME are valid this year. Our city especially does not need any new middle or high schools; our city already has 49 high schools and adult education programs, many of them with enrollments around 300.

Our city especially does not need new middle or high schools in Ward 6 where we have quality seats and the city has invested hundreds of millions of dollars to renovate Eastern High School, Stuart-Hobson, Jefferson Middle School Academy, and Eliot-Hine Middle School.

I hope you hear from people in Ward 7 and 8 this evening about the redesign efforts at Anacostia and Ballou High School that will lead to expanded career academies at both schools and last year's opening of Bard Early College High School where students earn an associate of arts degree in four years.

The same concerns can be made for the elementary schools, Wards 6, 7 and 8, where the elementary schools planned to open have many
available quality seats, and new schools are not warranted.

Beyond the lack of need for new schools, I seriously question the wisdom of holding a vote this evening while we are in a world-wide pandemic and Washington, D.C. is essentially locked down except for essential services.

Nobody has a crystal ball and can say with certainty what the economic impact of all this will be. One thing you do not need a crystal ball to know is that when this is over, Washington, D.C. won't be in a situation with a budget surplus, and the city's resources will be greatly reduced.

We now have schools closed through at least April, standardized testing suspended for the year, schools focusing on feeding students who rely on breakfast and lunch being provided at their school.

MS. BOYD: Time.

MS. WELLS: Briani, did you have my
testimony?

MS. BOYD: Yes.

MS. WELLS: Can they get a copy of it so they can see the rest of it?

MS. BOYD: Yes.

MS. WELLS: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you very much, Ms. Wells.

Next on our public testimony list is Steven Foster. Again, for Steven Foster, either pressing star-9 or raising your hand in the Zoom app.

MR. FOSTER: Can you hear me?

CHAIR CRUZ: Oh, Mr. Foster?

MR. FOSTER: Yes.

CHAIR CRUZ: Excellent. Thank you.

You have two minutes. Please introduce yourself and any organization you're representing.

MR. FOSTER: Sure. My name is Steven Foster, and I'm speaking on behalf of Global Citizens Public Charter School.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.
MR. FOSTER: I'm excited to speak in support of Global Citizens Public Charter. I've been in educational leadership in Ward 7 and 8 since 2009. My hope is to share my direct experience with working with the founder and CEO of Global Citizens, Dr. Natalie Smith.

I first met Dr. Smith, formally Dr. Arthurs, as we, in my role as assistant principal at Maya Angelou Public Charter School. At that time Dr. Arthurs was tasked with delivering leadership, professional development, coaching, and ongoing support to all administrators in the middle school and high school.

Dr. Arthurs individually led each administrator through a regimen of assessments designed to identify areas of strength and areas of growth aligned to the key areas in Paul Bambrick's Leverage Leadership, data-driven instruction, planning, observation and feedback, professional development, and school culture.

Dr. Arthurs's biweekly professional development and one-on-one coaching sessions were
delivered with a level of candor and expertise that allows each administrator to confidently address areas of growth.

It also allowed us to raise a level of engagement with our teaching staff because we started to conduct ongoing observations and debrief meetings.

Our administration team was working closely with Dr. Arthurs and resulted in a more consistent protocol for observations and feedback and provided us the opportunity to develop more cohesive, positive, and trusting relationships with our teaching staff, which in turn supported us in closing the achievement gap that our students were experiencing.

After supporting the administrators at Maya Angelou Public Charter School, Dr. Arthurs was selected as the head of school at Sela Public Charter School, the District's only Hebrew language immersion public charter school.

I was able to witness her use the same strategies and principals she introduced to me as
she led Sela Public Charter School to become a Tier 1 school.

As you are aware, Global Citizens Public Charter School has the ambitious goal of immersing students in the Spanish and Chinese languages, along with focusing on social justice and whole child wellness.

I cannot think of a more qualified or skilled individual to lead this effort. The District of Columbia will be a greater educational space for the existence of the school. And I highly recommend your approval of this charter. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay, thank you, Mr. Foster. Next on our public testimony list, Dr. Elfreda Massie. Dr. Elfreda Massie, if you would press star-9 or raise your hand in the Zoom app, and Bri will unmute you.

MS. BOYD: Elfreda, you are unmuted.

MS. MASSIE: Thank you. Hello, I'm Elfreda Massie, a member of the founding board of Global Citizen Public Charter School and also
former chief of staff and interim superintendent of the District of Columbia Public Schools.

First I'd like to thank you for continuing with this meeting in spite of the difficult situation that we in the nation are facing due to the health crisis. I do hope that your families and you all are in good health and good spirits.

I am calling in to offer my support for the school and specifically to inform you of my confidence, my high-level confidence in Dr. Natalie Smith, the school's founder and CEO.

Research tells us that effective principals are the key to stressing teaching and learning in schools. I believe that Dr. Smith is uniquely equipped to implement and lead the school because she has a strong record of success leading a dual language immersion school in D.C.

She has varied experiences providing professional development and training for teachers and principals around the country and is very skilled at building and sustaining positive
relationships with students, all staff, not just teachers, and community leaders.

Natalie's passion for starting a Chinese Mandarin immersion school was evidenced when I met her four years ago. I was one of the persons who encouraged her to pursue her dream of providing a stellar education program for students in the District of Columbia.

I am confident that the leaders and staff of this school will inspire and prepare the next generation of brilliant global citizens. I believe that our multi-tiered system of support will ensure that every student who attends our school, regardless of their age or grade level, will receive appropriate supports and interventions to meet their academic and social and emotional needs.

At each tier level classes will have highly qualified teachers who will provide differentiated instructions and small group instruction inside and outside the classroom, as well as research evidence-based intervention.
At all levels we will have additional staff, such as interventionists, special education teacher, and an English language learner teacher to support staff who speak Mandarin and Chinese.

Natalie has helped school leaders in the District on how to set up and successfully implement multi-tiered systems within their schools. We need more schools that serve students through this model.

I look forward to continued work with the Global Citizen Public Charter School and its families. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Dr. Massie.

MS. MASSIE: You're welcome.

CHAIR CRUZ: Next in public testimony, Kadence Early. Kadence Early, star-9 or raise your hand in the Zoom app, and Bri will unmute you.

MS. BOYD: Kadence Early, you are unmuted.
MS. EARLY: Hi, my name is Kadence --
oh, can you hear me?

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes.

MS. K. EARLY: Okay. My name is
Kadence, and I am a high school freshman. And my
sister and I are speaking on behalf of Global
Citizens Public Charter School.

MS. A. EARLY: Hello, my name is
Anaya, and I'm in 7th grade.

MS. EARLY: For our testimony I will
be speaking Chinese, and she will translate it in
English.

MS. A. EARLY: We both started
learning Chinese in 2013. This is Kadence's 7th
year learning Chinese. Learning Chinese has
impacted us and opened many opportunities for us.
Speaking and understanding Chinese has allowed us
to stand out. For example, when applying to
different programs, the schools and companies
remember us and are impressed that we can
fluently speak Chinese.

Even at a young age we were able to
use our Chinese to make friends and help others translate.

Lastly, incorporating Chinese in our daily lives is fun. There are many other ways that we can use Chinese daily. We hope that you guys will use our experience to consider adding Chinese to the curriculum.

Thank you for your time.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Thank you, both. That was like the best part of my day so far.

How are you both keeping up with your Chinese while virtual learning? Are you able to do that this week or last week?

MS. K. EARLY: Yes. So I am constantly in contact with my Chinese teacher. We FaceTime at the school on the app. I am in the boarding community, along with my teacher, so I am able to speak with her in school and outside of school.

CHAIR CRUZ: Wonderful. Well, thank you. Thank you both for making the time this
evening --

MS. K. EARLY: Thank you as well.

CHAIR CRUZ: -- for your time. Thank you both.

All right. Next on the public testimony list, Anaya Early. And star-9.

MS. K. EARLY: We were all together.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay, easy. All right, thank you both.

MS. A. EARLY: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Then we have next, Candace Davis and, I believe, Aiyana Belguda testifying together. Again, it's star-9 or raising your hand in the Zoom app.

MS. BOYD: Okay, we have Candace Davis here. I'm unmuting you now.

MS. DAVIS: Hi, this is Candace Davis. I am a former vice principal from Ingenuity Prep. And now that this coronavirus has suspended classes indefinitely, we are even more concerned about the poor leadership at IP.

On one hand this pandemic has been a
blessing in disguise for several students in this Ward 8 community who come from stable homes with lots of love and structure. These students now have peace away from the daily trauma that they experience at IP, and their parents are able to teach them more than they have learned all school year.

On the other hand however, several students are definitely suffering at home right now due to neglect, abuse, harmful exposure, or just lack of mental, physical, and emotional stimulation.

So what does distance learning look like for these underprivileged students and how are leaders preparing teachers for their return? We know for a fact that this school leadership team does not have the capacity to properly receive our babies back to school whenever that time comes because Will Stoetzer has blatantly refused to acknowledge the fact that he doesn't understand the needs of at-risk communities.

In order for IP to fully be prepared,
the entire executive team needs to be replaced by
those with credentials and experiences related to
serving students who suffer from poverty and
trauma and/or have Level 4 special education
needs.

Once leadership is qualified, they
will quickly discover the need for extensive
support for mental health professionals, along
with research-based systems and strategies that
protect the learning environment for those
students who do not present the same level of
need and should be progressing at the rate of
their peers in higher performing schools.

Since we know that Scott Pearson's
assumption that Ingenuity Prep leaders are,
quote, on their best behavior every minute of
every day is false, we recognize that providing
you with sufficient evidence of continued
malpractice is not enough for you to save our
students. Therefore we are asking that you
seriously evaluate the process you follow to hold
schools accountable.
If analyzed with fidelity, our hope is that you see your system is not protecting and serving students at IP. More importantly, we have reason to believe that several charter schools serving at-risk students are suffering in the same way while others are just equipped with caring qualified leaders who are resilient enough to perform under a failed system.

In closing, since November we keep hearing that you are following the systems and processes in place according to the law. However, we serve a sovereign God. Therefore we know that systems, processes, and laws can be changed, so we are here to do whatever needs to be done so that IP leaders are held accountable and students are safe.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Will Ms. Belguda be testifying as well?

MS. DAVIS: Yes.

CHAIR CRUZ: Bri, can you open up Aiyana Belguda's line?
MS. BOYD: Okay. Aiyana, I'm unmuting you now.

MS. BELGUDA: Hello. Can you hear me?

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes.

MS. BELGUDA: Okay. Good evening, this is Aiyana Belguda, a former vice principal from Ingenuity Prep, here again to share the most recent violations and safety concerns since our February testimony.

The following information has been shared with us from current teachers, staff, and parents who continue to reach out to us as they do not trust CEO Will Stoetzer and board chair Peter Winik.

It was reported that Dean's List, the behavior reporting system, can have over 50 entries in just one day, which mainly includes students eloping and fighting.

Specific examples of recent behaviors include students ages 5 to 7 punching each other in the face so badly it caused extreme bleeding and bruising and students running up and down the
K-2 hallway ripping bulletin boards from the
walls.

Just weeks ago a teacher was placed on
administrative leave for protecting himself from
a violent student. The, quote, positive place
has been reported ineffective due to adults'
 inability to de-escalate students when they enter
the room.

The K-2 self-contained classroom is
only servicing students from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00
a.m. The schedule will not fulfill requirements
for students with more than 15 hours, which
violates the terms of their IEPs.

As of late, the 2nd grade inclusion
classroom has no special education teacher.
Related service providers and special education
teachers are unable to fulfill IEP hours due to
heavy caseloads and literally no space in the
building.

Middle school principal Jazmine Allen
illegally removed a dedicated aid from a 6th
student to assist with teaching and behavior
support.

Even though your audit report revealed high retention rates, leadership is still planning to retain students without sufficient data.

During a meeting with parents to address OSSE's investigation, a rightfully frustrated parent voiced many concerns and questions. In response, she was dismissed by special education coordinator Joseph Carter and threatened to be banned from the building by Will Stoetzer.

Finally, as mentioned in our most recent email to you, we have concerning recordings and conversations and chaotic classrooms that we can provide upon request.

Since November we have consistently reported these serious concerns that directly impact the well-being of students and teachers at Ingenuity Prep.

Unfortunately, so much has changed at IP, but there are no real improvements, even
after your recommendations, OSSE's mandates, and continued complaints from teachers, staff, and parents. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Belguda/ Thank you, Ms. Davis.

We're going to turn to our next public witness, Jacque Patterson. Bri, if you would let Mr. Patterson in. It's either --

MS. BOYD: Yes. Jacque Patterson, you are unmuted.

MR. PATTERSON: All right, you can hear me?

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes.

MS. BOYD: Yes.

MR. PATTERSON: All right. Thank you for having me this evening. I would like to testify as a resident of Ward 8 for over 25 years and begin with a little story about my daughter.

I came here as a single father and moved to Ward 8 as a military member 25 years ago. And as I was looking for schools I finally found one in Ward 8, and she went to Thurgood
Marshall. And she had an opportunity that was presented to her to learn Mandarin Chinese.

And I would just like to say that it changed her whole outlook in what she could do as a student. And she did it for two years. And she ended up going to Spelman just because of the opportunities.

So I'm here to testify on behalf of Global Citizens Public Charter School because I know personally as a parent, learning a foreign language, what that can do for you when you're trying to get your daughter into a great school, especially a college like Spelman.

It was just such a life-changing experience for my daughter. She actually got to go to China and study there as well for a couple weeks.

And the other thing I would like to say is about Dr. Smith personally. I met her back in 2015 when I was just starting to work with Rocketship.

And what I just love about her so much
as a person who works in the community is that
she really cares about community. We have sat
down recently and talked about what her community
engagement strategy would be if she was afforded
the opportunity to open her school east of the
river.

And I must say, as a person who, like
I said, really works with communities, both in
Wards 7 and 8, she has a strategy that really
talks to parents and would be open to communities
to make sure that they are knowledgeable about
the type of school that she's bringing in there
being very transparent about what she does. I
just think she is an awesome person, and she
would do well coming to this community.

And I also know that many parents east
of the river, although we have a few languages
that are offered over here, there is not a
Mandarin Chinese east of the river. We have
Houston that has Spanish and Elsie Whitlow that
offers Spanish and a few other languages.

But bringing Mandarin Chinese over
here east of the river would be a big benefit to families who long to have the opportunities to try different languages and to have schools that have programs that are dual language. So I am very supportive of that.

If she is approved, I look forward to even working with her as a community leader on her community engagement strategy. Thank you for the opportunity.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Mr. Patterson. And then next on our public testimony list is Nia Nicholas. So, again, raise your hand in the Zoom app or press star-9. Nia Nicholas.

MS. BOYD: Nia Nicholas, I'm unmuting you now.

MS. NICHOLAS: Thank you. Greetings. Can you hear me?

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes, we can. Thank you.

MS. NICHOLAS: Great. Great. Greetings. I'm coming from -- I'm speaking on behalf of Anacostia and Ballou High School redesign. I'm the community engagement coach.
So I would like to start off by saying
Anacostia has heard from over 700 stakeholders
and Ballou over 1,000. And all the stakeholders
are ready to meet the needs of the students in
Ward 8.

Many of the school components aligned
with regarding school health and will achieve,
have already been redesigned by Anacostia High
School. Which includes work-based learning,
culturally affirming mental health support
community framework, but also we already have a
significant amount of high schools already in our
Wards, in obviously 6, 7 and 8, that are already
meeting the needs of our students. And that also
includes charter schools.

So speaking on behalf of the redesign,
redesign is offering Anacostia and Ballou high
school nav certification programming -- both
college and readiness classes, college and career
coordinators, 3D-E and PDL instructional models
that integrate both the community, business and
colleges in the area, internships and jobs that
are competitive enough that will ultimately lead
to full-time employment, languages, I know we've
heard about languages, but offering foreign
languages for entering 9th grade and following
all the way until they graduate.

And also a dream team that helps
support the student and the family from 9th until
they graduate. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Ms. Nicholas.

Next on the public testimony list, I mistakenly
cut off Anaya earlier, who is our Mandarin
translator. I'm sorry, Anaya.

Bri, if you would allow her in.

Either press star-9 or raise your hand in the
Zoom app, Anaya.

MS. A. EARLY: Okay. So --

CHAIR CRUZ: Sorry about that.

MS. A. EARLY: How Chinese can benefit
is many places like traditional Chinese
restaurants, the menu can often be wrong, so me
and my sister, we always go back and forth
finding out the correct words, and then we order
in the correct language and the correct words. And also, the people that work there can understand us too, and they enjoy it. Yes. And my sister, she also went to China. And in China, it was very different for her, but she could still communicate and go back and forth fluently with the people there, so I was hoping someday that I could go to China and do the same thing that she did. Yeah.

CHAIR CRUZ: Excellent. Well, again, thank you very much to both of you for testifying and joining us this evening. We very much appreciated it.

MS. K. EARLY: Thank you.

MS. A. EARLY: You're welcome.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. All right. Well, I think we've got maybe one or two other public witnesses that weren't available earlier, we'll get to during the public meeting.

Now I want to move to two matters at hand for our public hearing. We're going to open for public hearing two charter amendments. First
starting with Achievement Prep Public Charter
School, their campus, proposed campus reconfiguration.

   Bri, if you could unmute Rashida Young, our chief school performance officer.

   As well, could whomever from the Achievement Prep team who is joining to speak this evening, raise your hand on the Zoom app or press star-9.

   MS. YOUNG: Okay, hello. My name is Rashida Young, chief school performance officer.

   And this is a public hearing to discuss Achievement Prep Academy Public Charter School's charter amendment request to reconfigure its campuses and correspondingly reduce its enrollment ceiling.

   In early February, the school submitted written notification to the D.C. Public Charter School Board stating that, due to under performance of its middle school, it planned to cease to serving grades 4 through 8 at the close of school year 2019/2020.
As such, the school is requesting the following amendments. One, to decrease its maximum enrollment ceiling by 355 students from 1,040 to 685, to reflect the closure of Wahler Place middle.

And two, to reconfigure from a two campus LEA to a single campus LEA authorized to serve grades pre-kindergarten 3 through 8.

The school seeks to serve grades pre-kindergarten 3 through 3 in school year 2021. Then, beginning in school year 21/22, enroll a new cohort of 4th grade students and add a new grade each year until it reaches maturation serving grades pre-K 3 through 8.

Representatives from the school are here to answer any questions you may have.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Bri, are you -- thank you, Rashida.

MS. BOYD: Yes.

CHAIR CRUZ: Bri, are you able to unmute them?

MS. BOYD: Yes.
CHAIR CRUZ: Do you need them, okay.

MS. BOYD: Jason, Stephen Marcus, and Shantelle Wright, you are unmuted.

MR. ANDREAN: Okay, thank you. My name is Jason Andrean. I'm the Chair of the Board of Trustees for Achievement Prep. And as previously stated, we are here today to request that PCSB approve our technical amendment to reconfigure our LEA from a multi-site LEA to a single-site pre-K 3 through 8th grade LEA.

And due to our decision, to close our current middle school campus and decrease the overall enrollment by the corresponding number of middle school scholars.

While we believe today is a technical amendment and within our rights as LEA, much of our work to date with this Board has been requesting PCSB's support for us to partner with Friendship Public Charter School.

We do want to make sure we address questions around our decision not to move forward with that partnership and to not have a temporary
middle school campus operated by Friendship at
our Wahler Place Middle School campus.

As you know in January, our board made
the difficult decision to close our Wahler Place
Middle School because it wasn't meeting the high
standards we had set for ourselves. We
appreciate all the work you have done with
Achievement Prep and Friendship.

To find the best solution for our
families, our partnership with Friendship was
solely premised on the desire to keep our
scholars in their current school location for
another year, enrolled in a higher performing
LEA.

The plan you supported in February by
allowing Friendship to open a one-year campus at
Wahler Place Middle School campus site, was
intended to minimize as much disruption to our
families as possible, allowing current and rising
Achievement Prep Middle School scholars to be
enrolled in the temporary Friendship campus at
Wahler Place. We truly appreciate your support
On March 2nd, the Deputy Mayor of Education, Paul Kihn, issued a formal letter to Friendship that states that any enrollment in this point -- at this point by Friendship at the Wahler Place campus outside of the District common lottery, My School DC, would be deemed improper enrollment and potentially violate the principles of open enrollment as set forth by the D.C. Official Code, which requires that all District students have the opportunity to be randomly selected for new charter school options to ensure a fair process for everyone.

The letter further stated that a paper application by Friendship would violate the rights of other District families and the My School DC common lottery process as almost 1,000 families at that time had indicated interest in Achievement Prep or Friendship campuses serving grades 4 through 8. We truly believe that our plan was what was best for our scholars and for the students at Friendship.
We have to follow the law though.

Since there was no clear path forward for our Achievement Prep scholars to attend the Wahler Place campus, the Board decided not to move forward with the temporary campus at Wahler Place Middle School.

As a governing board and a charter school that served as a founding board member of the common lottery board, we fully respect the process put in place by the District to ensure equal access for all children, recognizing the children we serve benefit the most from such processes.

Even though we wanted our proposed plan to benefit our families, the Board of Trustees of Achievement Prep would never want to be part of setting precedent in any way jeopardizing the importance of fair and equal access. We teach our scholars to be good citizens, and so supporting a plan that does not fully follow the law is not something we can do.

Achievement Prep's Board is simply not
comfortable going against the Deputy Mayor of Education's determination that our proposed course of action would violate the law.

We know that the majority of Achievement Prep's current 3rd through 7th grade families applied in the initial lottery round of My School DC by the March 2nd deadline and will know their lottery seats for the 2021 school year this week.

For those families who did not meet the March 2nd deadline, the majority have entered the post-lottery to be placed on a wait list for the schools they selected.

We, along with the family enrollment specialists from PCSB, have been working to support these families in understanding the post-lottery process and their school options moving forward.

This is not the result we hoped for, for their scholars and their families, but the law is the law. Although our decision does not proceed with the Friendship plan, excuse me,
although our decision does not proceed with the Friendship plan -- was difficult, we grafted -- excuse me, we were gratified to receive a gracious note from Paul Kihn endorsing our decision.

And here is what he said in his note.

"Many thanks for sharing this letter and for letting me know about what must have been an extremely difficult decision for you all. I have extraordinary respect for Shantelle's leadership and the good work of Achievement Prep, and I have followed your decision making in as supportive a way as possible. I very much look forward to working with you, the Board, and the school community in any way you may think helpful during this tough transition, and certainly going forward. I know you are in touch with PCSB's expert staff. If you would like any support from DCPS, OSSE, or the My School DC team for your schools to complement PCSB's help, please do not hesitate to ask."

We would now be happy to answer any
CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Bri, are all the board members unmuted?

MS. BOYD: Yes. I have Stephen Marcus and Shantelle Wright.

CHAIR CRUZ: Excellent. Stephen and Shantelle, would you like to make any additional comments or remarks at this point?

MR. MARCUS: Good evening. This is Stephen Marcus, counsel for the school. I'm here to answer any legal questions that may come up. But I have no out comments to make at this point.

MS. S. WRIGHT: And same with me, Rick, thank you. But I'm happy to answer whatever questions you have.

CHAIR CRUZ: Great, thank you. Board Members?

MEMBER SANDMAN: This is Jim Sandman. I have a question related to the financial situation of Achievement Prep.

The staff memo says that the school has the ability to cover operating deficits for
each of the next five years. It says also that
the school will be required to make an additional
principal payment or payments for the new market
tax credit loans as of May 2024.

My questions are two. What is the
amount of the outstanding principal on the new
market tax credit loans and what is the prognosis
for the school's ability to pay the principal for
running operating deficits for the next five
years?

MS. S. WRIGHT: Yes, so we have,
currently we have a, I think it is a $30 million
new market tax credit, $10 million of which will
be forgiven in 2025.

We also have right now about a $7.5
million reserve that we would be operating off
during this time. So while the financial short
operating deficit does not reflect that reserve,
so that's where the up to, I don't know that I
think, Jim, it's up to five years. I think when
we forecasted it, it said up to three. Or maybe
we were just being conservative on our end.
But there is a loan forgiveness, as you know, that's what tax, new market tax credits do, it will relieve $10 million of that debt in 2025. And right now we have the $7.5.

MEMBER SANDMAN: But will you have a principal payment due in 2024?

When will you have any principal payment due?

MS. S. WRIGHT: In 2025. So after the forgiveness, that's when we start hitting the principal.

MEMBER SANDMAN: And do you recall what the first principal payment due will be?

MS. S. WRIGHT: I don't know that offhand. I mean, I can get that information to you or the financial person, I don't know what his name is, at PCSB.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Okay, thank you. But my question is, it just appears to me that there might be some risk that if you use your reserves to cover your forecasted operating deficits for the next few years, I'm not clear that you will
necessarily have the ability to make the principle payment when it comes due.

    MS. S. WRIGHT: If we don't, we start serving our gray configurations. That is the case, yes.

    MEMBER SANDMAN: Okay, thank you.

    MEMBER SHELTON: I have a question. So, if the Board were to approve the school to continue to grow, after this reconfiguration, what have you all discussed to put in place to ensure that you don't have the same issue arise once you start to serve middle school again?

    MS. S. WRIGHT: Yes, so, middle schools across the city are struggling right now. And we, it's to meet the needs for our children, and Achievement Prep is no different.

    And in an effort to expand our impact, we grew Achievement Prep network to include early childhood to elementary grades at a time when we should have been focused on responding to the instructional demands and shifts that were required by transition to Common Core.
Instead we were growing our schools, building up the network office, onboard tons of staff and engaging in that $31 million facility build, all while the bar was changing. And as a result, our output declined and our scholars suffered.

So, as we think about doing this again as you've seen with our elementary school, we have taken a much different focus in terms of teaching and learning and what that looks likes. Moving forward, we plan to work with a consultant to create a green lighting process that the Board would follow before we started serving those grades.

We also anticipate restarting that 4th grade out of our current elementary schools, that our 3rd graders would be those incoming 4th graders. Maybe feeding in a few small class.

We also plan to make the school smaller. We let the school get really big. The school was almost 500 at one point, and that's a pretty big middle school to run from grades 4
through 8. So we plan to continue to work with small classroom sizes and smaller enrollment all around.

And so, part of our goal is to create a very clear green lighting process that shows when we're ready, to make sure that we're ready to meet the needs of our scholars.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thank you. And have you all considered serving PK3 through 5th grade before moving forward with growing into middle school?

MS. S. WRIGHT: Our Middle school has always been 4 through 8. We start in middle, when we opened up we were a 4 through 8 middle school.

And that is because, when children move from learning to read to having to read to learn is generally at that 3rd grade going into 4th grade part. So that's always been deemed middle school for us, even though other schools seen it another way.

We have not talked about doing that.
That's not completely off the table. I think it would change our, well, I know it would change our financials completely, but it's not something that we had talked about.

MEMBER SHELTON: Okay, thank you.

MS. S. WRIGHT: Yes.

MEMBER GANJAM: Can you tell us a little bit about what you're doing to support your current middle schoolers in terms of getting them placed for next year?

MS. S. WRIGHT: Well, before COVID-19 it was a, this has been a whole different reality for all the schools in the District. Quite honestly the charters.

So, before that we knew that the majority of our families were in the My School DC lottery before January 2nd, but there were a large number who were not. So what we did is we worked specifically with those families to, we held a series of parent meetings after the Board decision was made to inform families of where we were and what was going on.
We pulled out the laptops then so families could enter the post-lottery so that they know and understand.

I have to say, from the PCSB side, Lenora Robinson and Charlene Mickles have been very helpful in terms of getting us information about who is in the lottery and who is not, because that's not information we have access to as an LEA. It can only come to us through PCSB. And it generally comes like Friday afternoon.

So, the last one we got was right before school was closed permanently. So, to the extent, we don't know the, hopefully we'll get another one. I'm assuming hopefully shortly.

Charlene has been really good at getting that to us. And then we just work with our families one-on-one, indirectly, to make sure that they understand the post-lottery, they understand the option and what it is that they need to do.

MEMBER GANJAM: That makes sense. And just in terms of how has the communication with
your families in general been in going through this COVID situation?

MS. S. WRIGHT: Yes.

MEMBER GANJAM: Tell us a little bit about it.

MS. S. WRIGHT: Well, since COVID has been, honestly, our focus has been on, how do we get them the materials that they need to educate, to basically do our job for six weeks, right?

That's what all schools have to recommend, recognize, that we've asked families to do our job for six weeks. Which is extremely hard. Particularly given who we serve and lack of access and all the issues that come with serving our population. So honestly we have not talked to them about enrollment.

Prior to that though we held a series of meetings, once a decision was made we literally had one more week before COVID hit, and we held a meeting sometimes three times a day for our families to get them in the morning. We did it mid-day at lunch, as well as evening and at
dismissal.

So I guess sometimes four times a day, to make sure they knew what was going on and that they heard from us directly.

My communication with my families is always clear, honest and transparent. They give us the privilege of educating their children so we don't hide when we meet that obligation. We also don't hide when we don't meet it.

So they are very well aware of our decisions. They were clearly disappointed in the fact that there would not be a Friendship Campus there.

Although we were very clear that it was something that needed to be approved, we were trying very much so to guarantee them enrollment in their current school as much as possible. And we were just not able, and we talked about that. And we talked about that clearly.

Because we had also said that to families, we were also encouraging them to enter the My School DC lottery at the same time that
they filled out any intent to enroll in
Friendship form.

And so, to the extent that families
didn't do that, we're working with them. We did
home visits, we took laptops to the schools, I
mean, to home themselves for them to be able to
apply and make sure that they understand what's
in front of them.

There are still some families that we
desperately need to get at and figure out what's
going on and where they are. And that will be
our goal over what, we feel like we've got a good
strong remote plan now. That will be our goal
over the next couple of weeks. Especially with
the lottery deadlines, the lottery results coming
out this week.

MEMBER GANJAM: Yeah, absolutely. And
thank you for all you've been doing in these
really unusual times. I can only imagine the
overdrive and the outreach that your team has
been doing, so thank you for that.

And I did want to hear more broadly
even beyond these middle schoolers. Do you have a sense of what percentage of your students and families you've been in touch with and kind of what percentage you might not have touched yet?

MS. S. WRIGHT: Yes. So we did meetings actually with the entire network. So even though middle school was directly impacted, what we know is that we serve families from 3 years old to 13, 14 years old.

So we actually did meetings with both campuses. Our Apple Tree families, our elementary families and our middle school families to talk about that.

I would say, at this point we have touched based with probably 95 percent of our families. There are, I would say our non-public's have been a little difficult for us to get into, and those are the children that are in a much more extreme kind of non-public setting.

That's been a little bit more difficult for us to get in front of. Although we've communicated with them, but because they
don't go to the school it's hard for us to get in
front of them.

And then we serve a population where
there are just some families that it is hard to
get and we've got to do everything that we can,
sometimes going through the child, sometimes
going through friends of parents.

Our fellow parents have been very
helpful for us. Our families know what's going
on, so a lot of times they're talking to each
other and sharing information. So we work with a
very specific subset of our parents to also kind
of be the ambassadors to pass the information
along.

Some of them are board
representatives, but some of them are not, they
just are active parents. And you know who has
social collateral and who doesn't among the
community, and so we've made sure that they know
the actual facts and not the in-between and the
story so that they could also talk to peers as
well.
But there are a few population that we are just saying, like, it's just difficult to get. Particularly once you start getting into those upper middle school grades. That it's just tough to get them to understand.

And even when you do home visits the door doesn't always open the way that we'd like.

MEMBER SHELTON: As a follow-up to that, can you speak to any reports that you all are offering to make sure that the students in that grade band that you were just describing were, in the circumstances you were describing, how you all are ensuring that they are giving adequate support where it's harder for you to manage that?

Is there any way that you've been in touch with any other services, government agencies or such to make sure that there is some type of touch point to make sure that the students are safe in receiving the education that they're supposed to be?

MS. S. WRIGHT: Yeah, so we don't, in
terms of like safety, there is not like a health
and wellness safety thing. We try very hard,
particularly given who we serve, not to get
government agencies involved unless it's
absolutely necessary. That's not something that
my community welcomes. And that has always
worked in their benefit, even when we try.

So we're not worried about anything in
terms of health and wellness at this point,
Naomi, just to be quite candid.

I would think that after this, the
lottery results come out and that starts to move,
and anyone who runs a school knows it's just like
the families you're trying to get in to fill out
a form, they don't think that it's going to
happen until it happens, right?

So it's like last minute in terms of
moving and getting responses. Those are the
families that I'm talking about.

So as soon as lottery hits and they
don't have an answer, those are families that we
know we will also hear from. And those are
families that we know them and we will also
continue to go after.

I mean, we won't stop. We're not
going to just leave family out there where we
can't tell you where every single child went.
That's our commitment.

Not even just for you, that's for us.
They trusted us with their education, it's
important for us to follow through and make sure
that they're in a school and safe.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Thank you for all
this. Your, Ms. Wright, your amended application
states that with the reconfiguration you'll be
eliminating the majority of the LEA's network
office.

Can you speak to which positions
specifically those may be eliminated and how we
feel like you can ensure a strong programming
without those positions?

MS. S. WRIGHT: Yes. So we, I don't
want to mention the exact role because we haven't
had full conversations yet, but I have been very
clear with all our staff about is, you don't have
a huge large network office when you have one
campus, right? Like, that's not what you have.

But also understanding the very, like,
thin line that we are walking in terms of, we are
planning to relaunch and go back so we can't do
that while we're also still, if the network team
and those who are supporting are actually running
the schools day-to-day.

So we will keep key roles and
responsibilities, but I'd actually not want to
answer that on this call just because we have not
had direct conversations with everybody impacted.
As we're still trying to figure out what exactly
is key and what isn't.

CHAIR CRUZ: Questions from any other
Board Members? I have one. Shantelle or Jason,
either one of you, whoever is in the best
position to answer it.

When we spoke with Jason, shortly
after you submitted the letter about the change
in position with respect to the partnership with
Friendship, he also suggested that there was a question about Friendship's ability accommodate the students that factored into your rationale. I'd just love to better understand that.

MS. S. WRIGHT: Jason, do you want to handle that, I don't know what that is about, but do you want to handle that or do you want me to respond?

MR. ANDREAN: No, you should probably respond.

MS. S. WRIGHT: Well, my response is, I don't know what you're talking about, Rick.

(Laughter.)

MS. S. WRIGHT: In this case the Board decided to follow the law and that's what we did. So I'm not sure. There were side conversations and questions about the best way to do this open enrollment, but that was not the Board's main decision, or that I know of.

CHAIR CRUZ: So the point that Jason made to me about the concern about Friendship not
being able to take all of the students being a
factor, is not the case?

MS. S. WRIGHT: Not that I know of.

We had a conversation about the way that the
paper application would happen. But that's not
my understanding.

CHAIR CRUZ: Jason, could you --

MR. ANDREAN: Our primary, sure.

Sure. Our primary, I may have had the facts
incorrect in that regard, but our primary
concern, as I stated to you and Scott on the
phone call, as I stated two or three times during
my opening statement, was that we did not want to
violate the law.

And that was where the Board came down
on their decision, was not being at odds with the
Deputy Mayor on his very clear letter.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Is there any other
questions?

All right, this will be up for a vote
at next month's meeting, God willing that will be
in person but Board knows it will very well,
could very well be in virtual format again.

Board Members, any other questions,
otherwise I will invite us to move to the next
matter opening for public hearing?

MEMBER CRUSEY: Just so that I can,
I'm still not quite clear on understanding. What
is the matter of law that potentially could have
been violated in this case?

MR. MARCUS: I think I can probably

speak to that, Susie.

So the School Reform Act has a

provision that says that if more students want to

enroll in a school than there are seats, then

there has to be a random selection process.

That's a requirement of the School Reform Act.

And what was contemplated here since

Friendship was going to open this new campus

after the date on which the enrollment process

began, is that they were going to have a paper

enrollment process to operate outside of the

normal enrollment process set up by My School DC.

And the Deputy Mayor for Education's
view was, in the letter that he sent on March 2nd, was that by having this process outside of the open enrollment process contemplated by the School Reform Act and by My School DC, that would be a violation both of the School Reform Act's requirement of random selection in open enrollment and My School DC's own policy.

And for that reason the Achievement Prep Board decided they did not want to be at odds with the Deputy Mayor and potentially in violation of the School Reform Act.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Forgive me for not being an attorney and not being quite as, and I should be better versed in the School Reform Act than I am, but that presumes that there would have been excessive demand than supply of seats, is that right?

MR. MARCUS: That is correct. And in fact, if you look at the Deputy Mayor's letter you'll see that, and I forget the precise number, but there were far more students who were interested in getting a seat at either
Achievement Prep Middle School or Friendship Middle School than there were seats available.

And so the Deputy Mayor's position was that in using the paper lottery process, those students who were already in line would be treated unfairly and in violation of the requirement that all students be treated equally and fairly.

MEMBER CRUSEY: But that's based on qualitative feedback. But certainly, we all know that when one expresses interests that is not the same thing as actually having submitted an application.

Is that still an interpretation of demand from an outside, from a party, but that's not necessarily fact until it happens?

MR. PEARSON: Also it would be worth noting that --

(Simultaneously speaking.)

MS. S. WRIGHT: -- this case that the, the fact is in this case, they, Paul, according to his letter, pulled and said that at the time
of this ping there were 190 applications in My School DC for Achievement Prep and there were 148-plus in the actual My School DC lottery for Achievement Prep grades, I mean, Friendship grades serving grades 4 through 8.

So I'm not sure that it's as necessarily as qualitative as of at that point that it was, and for us the bottom line is we were not going to get into a war with a deputy mayor, particular once it was in writing, that this would violate equal access and open enrollment. It's just not a battle that a small LEA, run by a leader of color, needs to be taking on the Deputy Mayor of Education.

It doesn't, that does not do me any well. It doesn't, I get that the PCSB Staff think that it should happen and we shouldn't be concerned about.

As a LEA that has to rebuild itself and a LEA has to restart, we are very much so worried about it. And once the Deputy Mayor puts something in writing saying for us to do anything
else could potentially violate open enrollment law.

It's not something, it raised great concern for our board. And it actually raised great concern for us.

It was one thing when we were talking hypothetically in all of these meetings. It's a whole 'nother thing in writing that this would be a violation.

And that's just, and while there would be no direct recourse, if you will against Achievement Prep, everybody knows, Friendship came to the table at the request of Achievement Prep. Friendship came in this with a complete open heart, open mind, ready to do this work.

And so, them taking the penalty, in essence, everybody knew they came there for us. And so it was not something that we were willing to risk.

Further, open enrollment laws benefit the children that we serve. We serve a population that is constantly pushed out and not
given the equal access to some of the schools they want to go to. So we don't want to be part of any way jeopardizing or compromising that law.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: So just to be clear, the problem really has been with Friendship, or Friendship would have been the one having the off-campus lottery, right?

I don't know if, Marcus or Shantelle, if you want to answer that, it really would have been Friendship's issue?

MS. S. WRIGHT: Exactly. Yes. So, absolutely, Friendship would have taken the hit - -

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Which they were willing to do.

MS. S. WRIGHT: They were willing to do it. However, everybody knows that Friendship came to the table at the request of Achievement Prep.

And so --

(Telephonic interference.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Someone mute themselves,
who is dingig.

    MS. S. WRIGHT: What we weren't

willing to do is risk any aftermath that may come
to us as an even, so whereas Friendship as a
large LEA was willing to take on that hit and
deal with that as they could, we, as a small LEA,
were not willing to.

    MR. PEARSON: Just, we had approved

the Friendship, Friendship had submitted to us
their lottery procedures, and we had approved
those lottery procedures. So that's just
something I wanted to get on the record.

    CHAIR CRUZ: Yes. Thank you, Scott.

    MEMBER SHELTON: In terms of the

approval of their, the paper or original lottery
process that we approved, was that process vetted
and acknowledged by the Deputy Mayor or OSSE?

    You know, I don't know if OSSE would

have anything to do with this, but was that
completely vetted with the Deputy Mayor's office?

    MR. PEARSON: No. The Deputy Mayor's

communication, which went directly from the
Deputy Mayor to Friendship, said that Friendship would be conducting a lottery outside of the common lottery.

And Friendship had signed up to the common lottery. And one of the requirements of being part of the common lottery is that all admissions be done through the lottery. And so the Deputy Mayor was communicating two things.

First of all, that they would not allow this new campus to be part of the common lottery because they felt that by coming late it would be unfair.

And second of all that any lottery run outside of the common lottery would violate the rules of the common lottery board.

As a matter --

MEMBER SHELTON: So --

MR. PEARSON: -- sorry, just to finish, Friendship's charter with the Public Charter School Board grants them the right to conduct lotteries outside of the common lottery.

Grants them the right to, as long as it's done in
a fair manner that uses random selection if there
are more applicants than there are seats.

And so, Friendship submitted to us
their planned procedure for admitting students to
this new middle school. And we had told them
that that procedure met the criteria of their
charter and of the law.

MEMBER SHELTON: So my follow-up
question to that would be, whether or not any
conversation, did the Deputy Mayor come to the
Charter Board at all to raise a flag about this
being a possible issue?

MR. PEARSON: No.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Am I correct that LEAs
opt into participation in the My School DC?

MS. S. WRIGHT: Yes.

MR. PEARSON: Yes.

MEMBER CRUSEY: So My School DC is not
a regulatory body?

MR. PEARSON: No. Correct. The
greatest sanction that My School DC could take
would be to expel a member from the common
lottery.

There was a meeting of the common lottery, and that would require a majority vote by the common lottery board, which includes three charter representatives.

And at the meeting of the common lottery board to discuss this matter there was no appetite whatsoever for taking any sanction against Friendship.

MS. S. WRIGHT: So again, what I will say to answer your question, Lea, while it seems that Scott has a lot of information that we were not privy to, as I said, for us as a small LEA, when I received the letter from Friendship and I forwarded it to my Executive Committee, it raised concerns.

And they wanted to have a meeting on Friday, and we talked about it. And part of that concern was also trying to figure out understanding exactly what Saba and, I don't know who else said it, but that any repercussions would go against Friendship.
We also live in a city where we know exactly how things happen in terms of, well actually, we don't know exactly how things happen, which is part of the problem, in terms of where the repercussions will not come from certain actions that schools take.

And so for us, at this point, without there being a very clear path, to get all or the majority of our scholars in their school, and there being a question about whether or not any kind of enrollment taking place would violate the open enrollment law, it was not something that we were willing to take on and/or that we want to be in a fight with the Deputy Mayor of Education in a changing landscape.

We're going to have a new ED of the Public Charter School Board really soon. We don't know. We are under attack as a sector around charters, and what it means, and what it looks like. And what I don't want to do is have Achievement Prep as we are trying to serve children in a political fight because it looks as
if we have somehow violated open enrollment.

We wholeheartedly went into it knowing that Friendship would probably have to do a paper enrollment. However, there was the request made by them to do it through My School DC.

Once the letter came back, and it was in writing for all to see, and copying multiple people who do have jurisdiction over us, despite what Scott may think, or whoever may think about the power of the Deputy Mayor of Education, it is not something, particularly as a small LEA and led by a leader of color, that I am willing to take on nor was my Board willing to take on.

The law is the law, and we must follow the law. Open enrollment is required. And we tried through the active agreement to work with guaranteed enrollment for scholars. That was not a path that we could take. We then tried through the temporary campus. That's not a path that we could take.

And so while regretful, I'm not sure what the question is about us following the law,
why that would be deemed now something that would in any way ding us as an organization.

CHAIR CRUZ: I don't think the question was asked in that way. I think we're just trying to seek to understand your interpretation of it.

And yes, I think, Shantelle, you can appreciate, as such a full-throated supporter of charter autonomy, that we want to ensure that we're not surrendering to My School DC the rights that our schools have, especially in this case, Friendship through its charter the ability to run a lottery, though paper-based, that had safeguards to ensure the greatest access to the community. So I think that's what we're trying to understand more fully.

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MS. S. WRIGHT: Lea, our point of bringing Friendship to the table was not about open enrollment and making that space available. It was about trying to minimize the disruption to Achievement Prep scholars.
MEMBER CRUSEY: Right.

MS. S. WRIGHT: And what we could not imagine was a world where there was a school that existed in their building, grades four through eight, serving the exact same scholars, the exact same grades. And those children could not have access to that rule, to that space.

And so while I understand, and absolutely I am definitely a stalwart for charter autonomy and will take it on all day long, once we knew, the only reason we asked Friendship to come to the table was because we wanted our scholars to be able to stay in their building for at least another year.

So we were trying to do all that we could to make that happen. Once that didn't happen, our job was not to figure out the open enrollment. As Ms. Brantley has made very clear to us, Friendship is doing a great job serving their scholars in their current buildings and schools.

They were coming to us to help support
us to minimize disruption to Achievement Prep families. Once that was off the table, because it needed to be open, and we were told that over 1,000 children had already gone into My School DC, I'm not sure what more we were supposed to do but be very clear that once that was open and that lottery happened, that I'm sure some of, at least some of those 190 that wanted Achievement Prep, and I'm sure some of those 850 that want Friendship, would have applied to that school. Which means that not all, and possibly not even a majority of Achievement Prep scholars would end up in that space.

So that's the other piece that was key to us in the decision. We were not bringing Friendship to the table just to open up another campus at the Whaler Place Campus. We were bringing them there to serve Achievement Prep families. That's their building, it's their school.

We raised the money for Achievement Prep. We raised the money for that community.
And if that couldn't happen, I couldn't imagine looking at a little sixth grader and trying to explain why they can't have a seat at the school they've been at for all that time. So there was also that dynamic as well. That's why they came to the table.

MEMBER CRUSEY: So I just want to make sure. The meeting that I had the chance to attend gave me a second wind on all this stuff. It was so clear, explicit and implicit. Running, coursing through the room was that the priority was supporting these scholars and minimizing disruption to them.

And the conclusion that the room came to, which had been the idea of opening a one-year campus, that there would be a lottery on paper, et cetera, et cetera, I think that's where I'm still a little stuck. But I don't, and I know that we can resolve it here.

I need to spend the next few weeks before our vote for me to understand this interpretation of it not somehow being legal,
that the emphasis and the very clear priority
that you and your leadership team and your Board
had set seems like the right course of action.

And again, I don't think that we can
resolve it. I'm just not sure that I agree with
the interpretation that somehow it would not be
legal. So I need to get my head around it some
more. Thank you.

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MEMBER SHELTON: Steve, can I just,
for a second, just ask this question? I'm trying
to, Lea, if you, someone who was at that meeting
was there a representative from the Deputy
Mayor's Office in the meeting that you all had
with Friendship --

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: No.

MEMBER SHELTON: Right. So my
question again goes back to why wasn't this flag
raised within the two agencies, you know, one of
them being a quasi and the other being in a
public agency? Why was there not cross-
collaboration or discussion from them to us to
say that this was an issue before we even voted
on anything last month?

I recognize that Shantelle and Pat and
all these other people have been collaborative
with us to figure out how to move forward. I'm
trying to see why this monkey wrench was thrown
into this process. That's my question.

Legal, or they have the autonomy, or
whatever, why was that never raised after we went
through this whole public process? Why didn't
anyone from the Deputy Mayor's Office reach out
to Scott, reach out to Rashida and say the way
that you all are going about this raises these
flags for us. And we'd like to get you all to,
like, a recommended suggestion on how to move
forward?

But, like, to throw this monkey wrench
in there, and as Shantelle has said over, and
over, and over again at an LEA, who was at
another LEA led by a person of color, to come in
and help them, then to have them have to have
this public dispute in the throes of what we know
is a challenge around charters, period. So nobody wants to have to fight within the fight.

MEMBER CRUSEY: And just to follow-up on this, am I right that this letter was only sent to you, not to Friendship?

CHAIR CRUZ: Just to Friendship.

MR. PEARSON: It was only sent to Friendship. It was not sent to Achievement Prep, because it only related to Friendship's desire, their first desire to try to do this through the lottery.

And that was what the principle import of the letter was, was to say no, you can't do it through the lottery, because we think admitting a new school to the lottery at this late date would not be consistent with the principles of the common lottery.

To my knowledge, there was no communication with Achievement Prep about this, because it had nothing to do with Achievement Prep in terms of who was running the lottery.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Is it possible that
the, I don't know, the unique nature, but the
contours of Friendship's charter was not fully
understood by all parties?

MR. PEARSON: No. We explained it
very clearly to both the Deputy Mayor and the
Common Lottery Board.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. I'm going to
bring us to a close on this. Again, we'll be
voting on this --

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: I just wanted ---

CHAIR CRUZ: -- next month. Oh, I'm
sorry, Steve.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: So I was in that
meeting too. And I agree with Lea that the
energy in the room was to try to figure out a way
to support Friendship and Achievement Prep to
keep those students at the school they've been
attending and to not disperse them.

And we did, the issue of the DME, and
My School DC, and OSSE, all of that was raised in
the meeting. But as Shantelle said, they were
hypotheticals. And I just think, you know, we
I can agree or disagree with the position that Achievement Prep's Board has taken on this. But I think we can all understand their logic too, that they're a small school that doesn't have an appetite to get into the middle of a political fight.

And I just want to say, like, I hoped that we didn't have to disperse these kids, because it's a bureaucratic fight between agencies in the city. But we are not bearing this risk.

And I just want to say it feels to me like we're up here saying that Achievement Prep's position is unreasonable. I just want to say that it's unfortunate, but I don't consider it to be unreasonable. I understand the logic. I understand the logic also that Friendship might have, and that many of us might have, that we should just fight the DME on this. But I also understand why, you know, Achievement Prep doesn't want to.

So I just want to say this is a
complicated situation, and the resolution is not

clean, particularly for students. But that I
don't feel, you know, if we're going to talk
about autonomy, Achievement Prep has the right to
make the decision that they want to make even if
we don't like it.

MEMBER SHELTON: And I would also like
to say that the decision that was made, that
precipitated where we are today, was made by
adults not keeping kids in mind. That's what ---

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MEMBER SHELTON: -- this is for me

that people were not keeping -- the effort that
every adult that was in that joint meeting made
to have the children at the forefront of the
decision that they made, adults came in and
pulled the rug from underneath people, whether
they sent a letter to Friendship, whether they
sent it to, whomever they sent it to, there was
clearly a power play there that I think was just
completely unfair to the families that these two
schools had worked collectively to move forward
to continue to serve.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Okay, thank you, all. Shantelle, Jason, Steven, thank you for joining us this evening. Again, we'll be voting on this next month. And certainly, if the Board has additional questions, we will reach out.

MS. S. WRIGHT: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. All right, next item up for public hearing, open for public hearing this evening, Hannah Cousino from our staff, our manager of Equity, Audit, and Support, bringing up virtually the Social Justice school staff. So whoever's joining on behalf of Social Justice, please make yourself known so that Brie can unmute you.

MS. COUSINO: Yes, I see Reggie, the director of Operations, and yes, there's the rest of the team there. Perfect. Okay, I can get started on my script.

CHAIR CRUZ: Great, thank you, Hannah.

MS. COUSINO: All right. Hello, my
name is Hannah Cousino, manager on the Equity, Audit, and Support team. This is a public hearing on the proposed facility location of Social Justice Public Charter School.

The school received conditional approval to operate on May 20th, 2019, and one of the conditions for full approval is securing a facility. Social Justice PCS plans to co-locate its facility with Rocketship Education DC Public Charter School at its Fort Totten campus at 5450 3rd Street NE, in Ward 5.

Pending its full charter approval, the school will begin operation in School Year 2021 seeking to enroll 65 students in grades five and six. By School Year 2022-23, it will reach maturity, seeking to serve a total of 300 students in grades five through eight. This vote is scheduled to occur on May 19th. Representatives from the school are here to answer your questions.

CHAIR CRUZ: Excellent. Would anyone from Social Justice like to make any opening
Mr. Long: Hello, not sure what's going on with the audio, but if you all can hear us now better?

Chair Cruz: Yes.

Mr. Long: Okay, cool. So as you can see, our team has expanded. So we have Michele, or director of Student Support Services, Brandon Johnson, our founding principal, and Reggie, or director of Operations. And we're really excited to have this conversation this evening. And thank you all for taking the time.

Chair Cruz: Excellent. All right, Board, who wants to start with any questions for the Social Justice team about their proposed amendment and location?

Member Shelton: Hi, this is Naomi. So can you just give us a quick overview of how your planning year has gone so far?

Mr. Long: Yes. So this year has been a year of iteration. We've had a ton of design challenges, a set of iterations on schedule. So...
for example, we are scheduled Version 23 and Budget 23.5, probably will do 24 by tomorrow.

But throughout all of this process, we've learned how to work together as a founding school team and have been really thoughtful about how we engage our families, especially during this very difficult and challenging time, and ensuring that we are always operating from this place of our principles and our values as a school.

And aiming that, you know, this year has also been, because it's a year of iterations, it's been a year of challenges as well. But as a result of our commitment to design teaching in responsiveness to the community, we really feel like we have applied our principles in order to continue the progress towards launch.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thank you. And in terms of the application, could you just tell us really quickly where you are in your, and I know this is a completely different set of circumstances, but where you are in your
application, numbers-wise, what do you anticipate, Lord willing we are able to open school in the fall?

MR. GALLOWAY: Yes. So currently, we're at 57 applications, and our target is 65. We intend of being fully enrolled by the time it gets to fall.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi, I think you were on mute.

MEMBER SHELTON: I'll pass the mic to someone else.

MEMBER CRUSEY: How does your, sorry, this is Lea. How does --

MEMBER GANJAM: What kind of stakeholder feedback and community ---

MEMBER CRUSEY: I think the Internet is losing me for a second. Can you hear me?

CHAIR CRUZ: Oh, yes. We'll give you a chance to, Lea, to ---

MEMBER CRUSEY: Yes, totally, I'm --

CHAIR CRUZ: -- to reset yourself. Or, Ricarda, why don't you ask your question.
Let's give Lea a chance to get her wi-fi working again.

MEMBER GANJAM: Okay, sure, thanks.

I just wanted to ask about community engagement ---

CHAIR CRUZ: You're freezing.

MEMBER SHELTON: So because everybody is having challenges ---

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MEMBER SHELTON: So she's probably asking about community engagement. Could you walk us through what that has looked like to, you know, what that has looked like, not only in your recruitment phase but also in just making sure that you are bringing community into your process.

MR. GALLOWAY: Definitely, and thanks for that question, Naomi. So at Social Justice School, we believe in building with, not for the community. And we've had the opportunity to engage both Ward 5 and the larger Washington DC community in three ways. And those ways have
been through canvassing and tabling, through
ingagement with civic associations and the ANC,
and also through school partnerships with schools
in the area.

  So first, with the canvassing and
tabling, we've had the opportunity to canvass and
table throughout the city at Metro stations and
also community events for the past eight months.
So it's been actually a blast. Me and residents
of Ward 5 at Chuck Brown Day, at the H Street
Festival, Adams Morgan Festival, we've had an
opportunity to participate at those events and
meet families and spread awareness. We've also
been canvassing at Metro stations consistently.

  In addition, we've had the opportunity
to engage with various members of the Ward 5
community through civic associations. We've
presented at the North Michigan Park Civic
Association meeting twice and also the NoMa Civic
Association meeting. In fact, one of our
founding parents, Mrs. Bees, who you have a
letter of support from, is going to be sending
her daughter to the Social Justice School.

And also with the ANCs, we've been to every ANC meeting since August to present to the community. We've done that twice. But really, we've had the opportunity to meet with the ANC 5A Commissioner where our school will be located to get their feedback and thoughts about the school.

And in addition, we had the opportunity to present at ANC 4B which is also adjacent to our school. We were fortunate to receive a letter of support from ANC 5A back in January.

And then finally, school partnerships, we've had the opportunity to really form great relationships with local elementary schools in the area, particularly, I know they're not elementary schools, but Briya, Bridges PCS, and DC Bilingual. And they gave us the opportunity to meet the families and share news about the Social Justice School as a new option for scholars.

MEMBER SHELTON: Awesome. So just in
the sake of full transparency, have you all received any pushback? Could you just give us a little more exposure to what people have said, have there been challenges, or things that they've raised flags about? And that includes the traffic issues, et cetera.

If you could also point us to, you know, of course in light of all that's happened with COVID-19, what are you doing to ensure that you are able to meet your recruitment measures? You know, what are you all doing to continue to kind of till the soil on what's possible?

MR. LONG: Definitely. So in all those different strategies that we've talked about in terms of canvassing, ANC meetings, and school partnerships, we've also asked families to give us feedback on not only our instructional model but just our presence in the community.

And so some of the feedback that we've received has been around traffic and parking, and also security. And so to mitigate some of the challenges around the traffic, we have been
working in partnership with Rocketship by
attending bi-weekly project meetings that we have
in order to ensure that we have an easy flow of
traffic.

And what that looks like operationally
is a staggered start time and end time, a
staggered start and end time also for the start
of school as well to ensure that we have
operationalized the traffic.

In terms of the parking, there is only
a few parking spaces in year one. I think it's
about 12. And so we are definitely going to
encourage families and our staff in order to take
the Metro. Because again, our campus will be a
seven minute walk from the Metro station with a
path directly from the Metro station. For
families and for staff members, we're already
thinking about ways that we can incentivize that
through, like, Smart Benefits as well.

And then in terms of security, again,
the work with Rocketship to ensure, one, I know
that my job as the ED is to ensure that all of
our families feel safe and secure. What that looks like operationally is ensuring that there's 100 percent ID check, ensuring that the building is built with the function of a system that will match IDs to different registrars to ensure that the folks who are coming in our building are folks that should be actually getting out a student and also ensuring that there's only one entrance in and one entrance out.

And the school representative will have an administrative person in that particular corridor to ensure that there is an opportunity to assess students that are coming in the building, excuse me, members that are coming in the building.

In terms of ensuring that our students are engaged during this unprecedented time, we have been really thinking about that. And so the first thing that we did when the state of emergency began to happen is actually we just picked up the phone and called our families and said you know what, we're here with you. And
please let us know what you need.

And here are the three ways that we can support you at the school. One, we wanted to address food shortages. So we've been sending out gift cards to Giant, and Walmart as well, and also doing Uber rides and Uber Eats where each family is struggling with public transportation, and also offering office hours for families to help with their own homework at their current, existing school and community circles that are virtual as well.

And response overall has been so positive. We sent out about 17 gift cards over this past few days and have office hours scheduled as well. We have a virtual community circle as well.

And so even for the families who didn't actually need the support, they just really appreciated this commitment to making sure that we create a school where students feel like they matter and our families belong, even if they aren't even getting enrolled in our school.
We know that this is going to bring a significant challenge and strain on our gift, which is being in front of folks, but we're using digital marketing strategies to make sure that we continue to leverage and gain more awareness about our school, and also doing Virtual Hope, and Houses, and virtual RX stores as well.

MEMBER SHELTON: So the only thing I didn't hear, necessarily, answered was about negative feedback. Some more, in terms of anything else that, oh, it has changed, like you said, you're on the 25th, 26th, iteration. Can you give us insight into any pushback from the community that has shifted things that you all are iterating on and are thinking about.

MR. LONG: Yes. So the three areas that were major feedback were the parking, security, and traffic.

MEMBER SHELTON: Okay, so that was it?

MR. LONG: Yes.

MEMBER SHELTON: Got it, all righty.

Thank you.
MR. LONG: Thank you.

MEMBER SHELTON: Ricarda, is your sound back up and running?

MEMBER GANJAM: Yes, I think it is.

Is it?

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes.

MEMBER GANJAM: Okay, awesome. But you actually addressed my question just right, so thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: I've got a question in the chat from Saba who has her four-year-old in the background. So the question for the Social Justice team is with regards to how you're preparing to co-locate your middle schoolers with the pre-K through two crowd and creating appropriate sort of space and safeguards there.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. So as Myron had spoke to earlier, Angel is the principal of Rocketship, and I asked her during monthly phone calls in which we talked about logistic concerns of start and end times, in terms of when we do lunch recess duty, as well as where we're going
to have, like, our breakout spaces.

And so currently we're in the process of, as we go to the school, as we do these hard hat tours, and really look at the physical layout of the space, just making sure that we're having continued conversations to make sure that the space is going meet the needs of all the students that are going to be in the building and that we can be assessing and accommodating with each other.

You know, they're part of our crew now, we're part of their crew. And so we know that communication is going to be vital to making sure that this partnership works. And so we just continue to be up front about the needs that we have and our desires. And they're doing the same, and hopefully that will continue to engage us in a strong relationship.

MS. GRAY: Just as an example, just last week, I think it was, maybe a couple of weeks ago we were working on our schedule, our class schedule. We knew that we couldn't have
recess before a certain amount of time, because the pre-K kiddos at Rocketship were doing that.

So we had to make sure that we were doing our school and class schedule that, during the time when that was happening, there were no loud middle-schoolers outside, playing outside their windows.

So I think just having that kind of information and the constant communication, frequent communication between our two schools and our two leadership teams, really helps inform our design process as we are designing what will be best for all of the scholars.

MR. LONG: And as the physical property continues to expand, so there's different phases of growth, in the second phase for year two, Social Justice school will actually have, like, their kind of own wing within the second building.

So again, that will create, you know, the natural distance that is needed while also maintaining communication through the Cooperation
Committee and the calls around standardizing
profits using Operations as well.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Lea, did you
have a question?

MEMBER CRUSEY: Yes. I'm sorry about
that earlier. The question that I wanted to ask
was, given anticipated enrollment for next year,
in contrast with the plan and your budget, is
that causing you to have to readjust anything?

MR. LONG: Great question, thank you.
So we built our budget around the projection,
which is 65 students, because we wanted to be a
fiscally responsible organization. And we have
developed contingency plans in the event of
shortfalls.

And so we work with our Finance
Committee, our Treasurer, and Ed Op to make sure
that all of those contingency plans work
financially and accomplish three particular
objectives, one, to ensure that we have a
positive net income; two, to ensure that we will
exceed the amount of cash on hand required, and
then; three, that we can implement our core curriculum.

And some of the contingencies that we've developed are, you know, mostly around decreasing staff leadership salaries, and also decreasing the average teacher salary as well. And in some scenarios lowering our FTEs. But again, our bottom line with those top three things are around positive net income, ensuring that we have enough cash on hand, and also ensuring that we give them our core model.

Also, as a school we've been very humbled and fortunate to raise a significant amount of money in our pre-planning and planning year as well. And so we've had the opportunity to receive additional facilities grants.

And we've also created a, as a part of our licensing agreement we have to put down a deposit that we were able to do because of our facilities grants. And we've also been approved as an OSSE grantee as well to address any potential shortcomings in the event of not
meeting the enrollment target.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Good, thank you for that.

MR. LONG: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Board members, any other questions for the Social Justice team?

If not, we will see you back next month for the vote. Thanks for all that you're doing. Thanks for the update. And we'll look forward to hearing more in four weeks' time.

Good luck with everything.

MR. LONG: Thank you.

MS. COUSINO: The vote will be in May, by the way.

CHAIR CRUZ: Sorry, in May, I stand corrected.

(Laughter.)

MR. LONG: Close to my 40th then.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

PARTICIPANTS: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right, so we are now
moving the Board from our public hearing to our
public meeting. And if I could start with a
motion to approve the agenda and then, because
we're virtual, on the overall call vote as well.
So if I could get a motion to approve the agenda?

MEMBER CRUSEY: I move to approve the
March 23rd, 2020, for the Charter School Board
meeting agenda.

CHAIR CRUZ: Can I get a get a second?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Second.

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

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam?

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim Sandman?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton?

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda?

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Aye.
CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey?

MEMBER CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: And I vote aye as well.

Unanimously we have an agenda voted on. All right. Okay, are there any public officials on the call who wish to speak or be recognized?

Brie, I'm sorry, if you press Star nine, or raise your hand through the Zoom app, Brie can unmute you. Any public official?

MS. BOYD: There is one hand raised by Gina Mahony. I'm unmuting you now.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay.

MS. MAHONY: Oh, I'm sorry, I was just anticipating the next item on the agenda. I'm not raising my hand as a public official.

CHAIR CRUZ: We'll get by it. Brie, if there aren't any other, we did have one person who signed up earlier who is not -- to be a public witness, Aliyyah Ferguson. Is Aliyyah Ferguson on the line? If you are, press Star nine or raise your hand in Zoom.

(No audible response.)
CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Again, if there is any public comment that anyone wishes to submit, in particular items that we discuss this evening, public comment at dcpcs.org.

If not, no Aliyyah Ferguson, we will then transition to our first vote item of the evening, the Paul PCS 20-year charter review. Nikhil, I believe you are leading the introduction there, and then we'll invite the Paul School leaders, in addition to Ms. Mahony, to join us.

MR. VASHEE: Yes. Good evening.

Tonight the Board will vote on the charter review for Paul Public Charter School. I'll start by reading the standard of review. The school format requires the DC PCSB review of schools charter once every five years.

The Board must determine whether the school committed a violation of its laws as well as whether the school has met the goal in student academic achievement expectations set forth in its charter.
If DC PCSB determines that the school has committed a violation of the law, its charter, or has not met its goal, DC PCSB may, at its discretion, revoke the school's charter.

Additionally, there's a fiscal component to this review. We are required to revoke a school's charter if we determine that the school has engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement or is no longer economically viable.

With that standard stated, we'll now discuss Paul Public Charter School's 20-year internal review. Paul Public Charter School educates students in two campuses in the same facility in Ward 4, Paul Middle School, serving grades six through eight, and Paul International High School, serving grades nine through 12.

The school chose the performance management framework as its goal and committed to earning an average PMF score of 50 percent over the course of the review period at each of its campuses.
The high school campus averaged a 54.8 percent and therefore met its charter goal. The middle school campus, however, averaged a 42.5 percent, thereby missing the goal. Therefore the school overall has not met its charter goals.

While performance at its high school is strong, and performance at the middle school is improving due to ongoing turnaround efforts, these efforts have led to an 11 point increase in the middle school's PMF score from school year 2017-18 to school year 2018-19, as well as the school earning three stars on the Office of the State Superintendent of Education STAR framework in the last year.

However, Paul Middle School's overall PMF score has never reached 50 percent over the entire dates of the review period, and progress towards meeting that target has been inconsistent.

Therefore, DC PCSB staff recommends that the Board exercise its discretion to continue the school's charter with the following
conditions. Paul Public Charter School will cease admitting new students in grades six through eight and phase out its middle school if it does not meet a series of progressively higher PMF targets, in part a score of three stars on OSSE STAR framework in each of the next three years. The targets are as follows, a 47 for school year 2019-20, 49 for school year 2020-21, and at least 50 for school year 2021-22. Staff from the school are here to answer any of your questions.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Brie, well, first of all, anyone from Paul, if you could raise your hand on the system, press Star 9, Brie will unmute you.

I just wanted to share a few thoughts on accountability before the staff from Paul speak, and that's to share and go a little bit deeper on what Scott shared at the top of the meeting which, I think, is very relevant as we go into this vote.

Staff's recommendation here includes
conditions that require the school to meet
specific performance targets on the PMF which
Nikhil just shared with us. And those begin this
school year.

I'm going to vote in support of this
recommendation, however I want to remind everyone
that there are a number of schools like Paul that
are under similar high stakes performance
conditions for this year.

Our world has changed, this has been
noted several times during this evening, by the
COVID-19 crisis. And as a result, we're thinking
carefully about the impact that the pandemic will
have on school performance and our accountability
expectations.

For that reason, we're looking at all
aspects of our accountability systems including
the performance management framework, a financial
analysis report, individual school goal, the
standards for reviews and renewals, compliance
expectations with the DC PCSB policies and
federal and local laws, and specific conditions
that certain schools are held to.

Our goal is to assess what changes need to be made in response to this unprecedented situation. So as part of this process, we will be holding listening sessions with school leaders to learn more about their perspective and ideas on accountability, academics testing, and other items for this year and next year.

Our goal is to provide concrete suggestions for the PCSB Board at our April meeting that will open for public comment, and then hold a public hearing on this in May, and a vote in June. However, it may be that some changes need to be made more quickly, in which case we'd be accelerating that schedule.

So more to come there, but I think particularly important as we're talking about such a high stakes vote that we are taking this evening with respect to Paul. And we'll continue to entertain public comment as some of the specifics become, as we bring more of the specifics public across the next couple of
months.

With that I would love to open it up to the Paul team to share any remarks. And then the Board certainly can give you an opportunity if you have any questions.

MS. BOYD: Okay, Tracy Wright, you are unmuted. Gina Mahony, you are unmuted.

MS. MAHONY: Thank you very much. Good evening, my name is Gina Mahony, and I'm the chair of the Board of Trustees of Paul Public Charter School. I've been on the Board since 2015, and I'm in my second year as the Board chair.

First, I would like to thank the PCSB for its forbearance in our review that was scheduled for February. As you know, the school community is mourning the loss of two of our scholars. I am joined tonight by our Paul CEO, Dr. Tracy Wright, as well as six board members who are on the same call.

As all of you know, based on meetings with Dr. Wright and additional communications, we
do not believe that any conditions should be imposed for continuing our charter.

However, as we have made clear in other communications, if the PCSB decides to impose conditions they should not include stair-step conditions that include automatic closure of our middle school for failure to meet a PMF target.

Since the staff recommendation has not been amended to reflect the expected cancellation of the PARCC exams, we are interested in learning more about how the Board will proceed. I now ask Dr. Wright, Paul CEO, to speak more on the school's behalf. Thank you.

MS. T. WRIGHT: Good evening. My name is Dr. Tracy Wright. I am the CEO of Paul Public Charter Schools. I also want to echo Gina's sentiment and thank you for your flexibility and allowance of time for us to engage in the grieving process after we lost our two beautiful scholars, Jaime Zelaya and Malachi Lukes.

I also want to thank you for your time
and for your consideration of the concerns that we raised with the PCSB staff's recommendation to continue our schools, specifically our middle school, with stair-step conditions that include automatic closure.

As we come before you this evening, we are keenly aware that the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly shifted our climate. And as such, we are prepared to have a different conversation.

The cancellation of PARCC, which is huge, especially when you think about our middle school, especially when you think about the fact that approximately 80 percent of middle school PMF is connected to PARCC assessment data, the cancellation of the ACCESS tests, both assessments are very important metrics that are included in the STAR framework and other high stakes tests. Along with the introduction of distance learning for an uncertain period of time, all these things have significant implications for the conditions proposed by the
PCSB staff.

In light of this uncertainty, we respectfully request that the PCSB Board reconsider and vote to continue our charter with no conditions. We're here to answer any questions and look forward to this evening's dialogue.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Board members, any questions?

MEMBER SHELTON: I guess my question would be more so to the staff of the Board. Because of all of the things that are up in the air as far as measuring performance, et cetera, what bearing does that have on the conditions that have been laid out and who will be revisiting those conditions that are -- to just keep in mind that things are rapidly shifting because of COVID-19?

MR. PEARSON: This is Scott. I think it's inevitable that we will be revisiting these conditions. However, our recommended approach to the Board is that you vote on the conditions as
is, because this is exactly the way we have treated other schools in similar situations.

We will then have Paul be one of several schools that have stair-step conditions, and we can come back to you in April for a recommendation on how we treat all schools in that condition. And it's virtually certain that we will suggest changes given, as the school representatives mentioned, there will be no state assessment given this year.

MS. T. WRIGHT: I actually have a question about that. In our preliminary report, there's a statement in there that says that after the PCSB Board votes, that there will be a charter amendment that we would need to sign off on by April 30th.

I have some real significant concerns, given the fact that we're not sure what the PMF is going to look like moving forward. We're not sure what the STAR framework is going to look like moving forward. We are in uncharted territory.
Unlike financial modeling, and also modeling around the spread of this virus, there is no modeling that lets us know how deeply our students learning will be impacted moving forward and beyond this year.

And so we're in a place where almost next year is like a new baseline where we'll learn a whole lot more about how our children being in this distance learning period really impacted their outcomes.

That said, just have some real concerns about a vote for stair-step conditions in an environment that is unlike an environment that other schools may have received those conditions where there may be no PMF, where there will be no PARCC scores, where there are no ACCESS scores. How do we, in good conscience, enter into an amendment where there's all that uncertainty?

MR. PEARSON: I think those are all fair points. I would just note that the date to sign your charter amendment would be after the
proposal by the Board for how we would make
global changes to accountability including global
changes to stair-step conditions.

And I don't know if Sara Cheatham is
on and wants to comment further on that. But I
would hope that any signature to the charter
amendment would be done with an understanding of
what our intention is for addressing
accountability changes that we'll be proposing in
April.

MS. T. WRIGHT: I think, I'm not sure
that that fully answers my question. So we're
voting on conditions today that we have no idea
what accountability will look like that would
trigger those conditions?

MR. PEARSON: We're recommending that
the Board vote on conditions that are similar to
those that several other schools are under and
that then we would address all of those schools,
which are all in similarly situated positions,
together at the next Board meeting.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Could I just come in
for a moment, please? I understand and appreciate the staff's desire to treat all schools equally. When we voted on the conditions for other schools we voted on them under very different circumstances.

And I understand that we need to figure out how to proceed with Paul and other schools. I don't really see much of a point in voting on conditions that you're going to have to come back and redo. I just think it makes more sense to do all of this in one fell swoop.

Because we have a major job on our hands to figure out how we're going to measure performance at schools. And that's a bit of a blank slate right now. So whatever vote, I just want to say we're all confused, we're all doing the best that we can.

But I don't see the point in taking a vote that's purely perfunctory, that we're going to have to redo in some short period of time. I think we should put our energy as a Public Charter School Board into figuring out what the
accountability metrics are going to be.

MEMBER SHELTON: So I don't disagree with that. I know that we probably need to defer to legal counsel. But I also just want to note to the school in the record, that it is from the school that the tremendous gains that you all have made have definitely played into how we're thinking about this.

Do not undercut your own, like, trajectory of growth and what was possible before COVID-19, before all of those things that you are already on, such as significant trajectory, that these conditions would be exceeded, right.

So the idea of going into this with a mind of fear isn't necessary. And I know, in the considerations that I'm making, I know that you all are taking every effort and putting forth all of the resources to make sure that you continue that growth.

So just keep that in mind and know that once we hear from Sara what we need to do to make sure that we're meeting the legal
recommendations in terms of what we have to do to make sure that you all can continue, and you have the continuance of your charter, that we are going to have to do a hard reset on everything.

But I will leave that to legal counsel. But please do not undercut yourselves in terms of the growth and the trajectory that you all are on in terms of putting forth resources to turn the page in terms of the performance of your school and your students.

PARTICIPANT: Second what Naomi just said.

MS. T. WRIGHT: Absolutely, thank you so much for that. And we absolutely are going to always continue to push hard for our children. Because, you know, that's our moral responsibility. It's what we all signed up to do.

With that, I do have do have to express deep concern with, again, you know, signing off on conditions in this kind of world and atmosphere of uncertainty.
I've been doing this work for 25 years in Washington, D.C. I have never experienced something that I think is going to have the magnitude of impact on student learning, and outcomes, and social, emotional growth and development that COVID-19 may have on our students.

And so when we think about this accountability model, if we're going to be super responsible and do due diligence to make sure that it is accurately capturing student growth and achievement after COVID-19, and that is going to take some time, again, we almost need to plan to baseline school-year 2021. We're going to have to see what impact this has had on our students and then make decisions moving forward from that place.

And so I am grappling with how we, in good conscience and for the protection of our students, sign on to an amended charter with conditions that, again, we have absolutely no clue what this whole thing is going to look like.
CHAIR CRUZ: So a couple of thoughts.

One is that I just want to echo what my colleague Naomi Shelton said in terms of the support that you should be feeling from the Board who's made the, where the proposal put forth by the staff suggests that we use our discretion to continue the school.

And the conditions come from a place of wanting to do that in such a way that we feel comfortable that you will continue to meet the goals and continue to grow. And having visited the school, you can see the growth that you've made.

I support the conditions as they're currently set out, because I think it is very important that the way we treat Paul is consistent with the way that we've treated other schools who found themselves in a similar situation where we've used our discretion to continue the school yet have concerns where they haven't met their goals, and we need to see continued performance.
I completely hear the concern about the situation, the context that we're in right now. My greater fear is that we treat Paul at this point any differently knowing that we are going to be looking to create a consistent way to apply accountability across all of our schools, schools that are on stair-step conditions and schools that aren't.

It's going to be a major project to make sure that we, again, are transparent and consistent in how we do that. I would hate to create and don't feel comfortable supporting a one-off that, on the flip-side, we're not sure how the adjustments we make to the accountability process moving forward are going to impact the way we evaluate that school. So that's what I'm uncomfortable with and knowing that we are undertaking a pretty massive review of how we're going to accommodate for this unprecedented situation.

So that's sort of where I sort of stand on that. I don't feel comfortable adding
another variable into a time, and a moment, and
into an accountability structure for your school
that we don't know how that's going to interact
with the changes.

Whereas, we can anticipate and will
need to anticipate how whatever accountability
looks like moving forward will interact with the
stair-steps that are conditions which we have
done for dozens of schools now.

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MS. MAHONY: I think it's the way this
is.

PARTICIPANT: Right, exactly.

MS. MAHONY: I mean, how many other,
you talked about consistency with the Board's
actions. How many times in the history of PCSB
has the Board been faced with a situation where
the state assessment has been cancelled and
students have been moved to a distance learning
environment with around two weeks' notice?

It is, as you said, unprecedented.

And you have, I'm not an expert on the
proceedings here, but it seems to me there's
another option available.

            CHAIR CRUZ:  So in my mind, the safest
route forward, and other Board members may
disagree with me, is to stick with the process
that we have in place at the moment and then vote
---

(Simultaneous speaking.)

            CHAIR CRUZ:  -- and then vote on a set
of accountability changes that we're going to
need to make across the board.

            MEMBER SANDMAN:  This is Jim Sandman.

            VICE CHAIR BIREDA:  Go ahead, Jim.

            MEMBER SANDMAN:  I agree with Steve's
recommendation.  I think we should defer this.
The first stair-step applies to this academic
year.  It's inconceivable to me that we're not
going to have to reconsider these conditions in
light of the current circumstances.  I just can't
see that not happening.

            And I think that would be treating
Paul then consistently with the other schools.
They would all be subject to whatever revisions we decide are appropriate in light of the current circumstances.

I think the wise thing to do right now is to defer rather than to adopt a condition for the current year that I can't imagine will be applied.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: I'd like to just say I agree with both Jim and Steve. I do think I might differ with some Board members in that I do think Paul is different. It is a middle school connected to a Tier 1 high school.

I do think that the stair-step conditions we've had for other schools may not apply here, just given that difference that we have a Tier 1 high school connected here for accountability purposes. But I absolutely agree with Jim and Steve. I just think at this point we don't have enough information for our Board members to assess the different options that are available to us.

And I would like to also agree with
Naomi. I really don't actually think you're ever
going to be in a situation of facing closure,
because you are on an upward trajectory. I even
think you'll be able to withstand whatever impact
COVID-19 has.

I've been to your school. I see the
dedication of your teachers, and your students,
and your families. You've already earned three
stars. I really don't actually think you're
going to have to deal with this situation, but I
do appreciate it. I think you are in a different
situation than some of the other schools we've
had.

MEMBER SHELTON: And this is Naomi.
I have said that I think we should defer as well.
So I agree with Steve, Jim, and Saba in that, you
know, us taking a vote just for the sake of
taking a vote, I think it was good for us to have
this conversation, but just in light of all the
different elements that are up in the air right
now, I don't, no pun intended, that we should
probably table this. I don't know what we need
to do in terms of ---

MR. VASHEE: Can I just, sorry, I just
wanted to make one statement about why delaying
the vote could be problematic. The reason that
we try and have all reviews done by the end of
March does have a lot to do with the school
lottery and the fact that people will know in the
coming weeks what schools that they are into.
And knowing which schools have been
reviewed and continued gives families the ability
to make that decision, knowing that the school is
going to be continued.

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MEMBER SHELTON: In terms of the
technicality, is it possible for us to amend the
conditions or to amend what we're going to vote
on to say that, you know ---

MR. VASHEE: We could vote ---

MS. MAHONY: Excuse me, could we
unmute Sherry Ingram, please, our attorney. I'm
sorry to interrupt.

MS. BOYD: She's unmuted.
MS. MAHONY: Thank you.

PARTICIPANT: Go ahead, whoever was speaking. I think it was you, Naomi.

MEMBER SHELTON: I was hoping that we could have Legal Counsel from the Board go ahead and walk us through what we need to adjust so that we can take the vote for this, we know that the charter is continuing, but at the --

MS. INGRAM: May I add something before that? I mean, the vote you have to take and what the legal standard here is, is the vote to revoke the charter or not. Unless there's a motion to revoke, and it's four votes to revoke, the charter will continue. You don't have to vote to continue. This charter will continue unless the Board has a majority vote for revocation.

MEMBER SHELTON: Right.

MS. INGRAM: And I say that because I agree with what several of the Board members have said which is that if you vote for the recommendations that are put in front of you
right now, which includes a PMF target for this year, there won't be a PMF for this year. Because you couldn't fairly come up with a score when there's not a PARCC.

Eighty percent of the points, or something north of 75 percent of the points, come out of a PARCC test that's not going to be administered this year.

And what's, I think, even more troubling for me is, and it's going to difficult for you as a Board if you think the accountability going forward, is I have a child at home. We're doing distance learning. I'm not a teacher. I'm doing the best I can. My teachers are supporting me the best they can.

But the students are losing instruction time. They're going to lose probably three months of instruction time if the schools don't go back this year. Fairfax County isn't going back. I don't know what DC is going to do. That's not just going, so there's not going to be a way to have a PMF for this school year.
So you'd be voting on conditions that I couldn't advise my client to sign off on, because I know they can't meet it, because there's not going to be a PMF for this year that they could be measured on.

So you're going to have to negotiate on that anyhow. But it's not just going to affect this year. I think if you hold task meetings with school leaders, which you should do, because you need to hear how distance learning is going.

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MEMBER SHELTON: Right, and we are. So I think ---

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MR. PEARSON: I think it's important that this Board not take legal advice from --

MS. INGRAM: I'm not asking --

MR. PEARSON: -- the school's counsel.

MS. INGRAM: Scott, I wasn't finished talking. And if you could wait, I would just like to say that you hear from leaders that it's
going to not only happen this year, but it's
going to happen next year.

And so voting on conditions that we
know they can't meet because you're not going to
have the PMF this year to meet them, and I
wouldn't advise my client to sign off on PMF for
next year until they know how this year is going
to go, I think that you have the discretion to --
not asking to treat the school differently,
you're going to have to deal with what has
happened here and have the discretion to revisit
it.

MEMBER SHELTON: Ms. Ingram, thank you
for that. I do want to point out that we have
been thoughtful about this. I know that Scott
and the team have been thinking about how we are
going to address all of this going forward. So
know that those considerations are being, like,
that is being taken into account, of how all of
this is going to move forward.

I would like for Scott, if we could
have whatever we need to do to be able to move
forward today on this particular matter, with this particular school, can we have what the recommendation is for, what's the action that the Board should or should not take today?

MR. PEARSON: First of all, I believe that the Board needs to take action at the five-year review, and at the ten-year review, and every five years. That is specified in the law. So not taking action, I don't think, is an acceptable option. However, the Board does not need to act tonight. If the Board would feel more comfortable waiting, it can do that.

The other alternative would be that if the Board isn't comfortable voting on the specific recommendation as staff has laid it out, you also have the option of voting to amend the recommendations to continue the school subject to conditions that will be proposed by staff at the April Board meeting.

So I'd say you have three options. One is to defer the vote entirely. The second is to take the vote as is, or the third would be to
vote but amend the recommendation to vote based,
to continue the school based on conditions that
will be proposed by staff at the April Board
meeting.

(Simultaneous speaking.)

PARTICIPANT: Go ahead.

MEMBER CRUSEY: The third option would
be to Nikhil's point, so that there can be a
signal to families before lottery results come
out.

MR. PEARSON: Exactly.

PARTICIPANT: And I think that that
has been an ongoing question and/or a concern.
What is the signal the families said that the
PCSB is attempting to send about Paul, the school
that has increased their enrollment
exponentially, the school that backfills seats,
the school that has almost 50 percent of their
student population that has unique learning
needs, and with that we continue to push forward
and have a Tier 1 school and strong gains in the
middle school. What is the message to families
that we're raising to send about our performance?

    CHAIR CRUZ: Well, we would be sending

a signal that, if we were to take one of the
options proposed that we would vote to move
forward with the continuance of the school but
that we would delay the vote on a set of
conditions that we could vote on at a later time.

    MS. MAHONY: And, Rick, what would the

process be for the new set of conditions? Would
we get those in advance? What would the
timetable be for consideration?

    CHAIR CRUZ: I think we would need to
determine what that would look like based upon
the process that we are going to need to
undertake in order to ensure that we've thought
through what accountability changes and policies
we would need to make to address all schools'
challenges.

    So we would need to dovetail that with
the larger project of understanding and proposing
a set of rules looking forward as to what
accountability would look like.
MS. MAHONY: So we don't know how much advance time we would have to review the conditions, about 30 days from now, right?

MR. PEARSON: But I also want to emphasize, when we are working with schools that have not met their goals, these conditions are not negotiations with schools. They are conditions that the Board is establishing to be comfortable continuing the school. It's not a negotiated set of conditions.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: May I jump in for a moment? We are all flying blind right now. And we're all doing our best, but we're all flying blind. And we could have this conversation go on a long time.

I don't think we are prepared to take a vote tonight. We have to, we as a public charter school board, have to keep our finger on the pulse of what is happening in our city, and we have to figure out fairly quickly how to evaluate our schools. I don't think we are prepared to do that tonight.
And I would propose that we delay this vote until a point when we have accountability measures that take into account no PARCC this year and all of the other changes that are likely to take place. That's my proposal. I don't know if I need to say that in a motion, but I don't think we're prepared to take a vote tonight.

CHAIR CRUZ: I'm comfortable with deferring the vote. So, Steve, if you want to, I don't even know if we need to vote to defer that, but if we want to defer the vote until the next meeting, I'm for that.

MEMBER SHELTON: If we don't have to vote to not vote I'd ---

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes. I think we just delay it. We can just delay it.

MEMBER SHELTON: We just say that we're deferring or delaying ---

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes.

MEMBER SHELTON: -- or whatever we need to, Sara, what do we need to say?

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes.
MEMBER SHELTON:  Roberts Rules, like, what do we need to do?

CHAIR CRUZ:  We can delay the vote. And I think that is the will of the majority of the Board.

MS. MAHONY:  Great, thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ:  Thank you.

PARTICIPANT:  Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ:  So just one second. I just want to make sure that we don't lose one thing on this, is that I think you hear from all of our Board members a real hopefulness in this time of not much hope about the work that you all have done at Paul and in the middle school.

And I want to make sure that that is, to the points made by other Board members, not lost and that we, you know, had very much been looking forward to seeing the continued progress and development of the work at the middle school. So I hope that you can appreciate that sentiment from our Board.

MS. T. WRIGHT:  Thank you. On behalf
of the entire Paul team, thank you.

MEMBER CRUSEY: And I just want to
jump in and offer, Dr. Wright was kind enough to
take some time to chat with me earlier this week.
And she shared with me that during these early
days of distance learning they had over 90
percent, 94 percent attendance rate.
They had, on the heels of unimaginable
trauma, quickly managed to figure out a way to
serve students who were getting very, very, very
hands on, in person trauma therapy and figure out
a way to adopt that into a virtual environment.
And so amazing work, thank you for all that you
do.

MS. MAHONY: Thank you, Lea.

MS. T. WRIGHT: And we have 275 to 300
kids a day coming to the school for meals. So we
are keeping our arms around them which, I think,
gives a lot of comfort to the staff too.
And they are getting direct
instruction every day. They're getting
counseling services, social work services, even
an AP boot camp to get ready for the AP test,
whatever that looks like. It's tremendous work,
and we're really, really proud of it. And thank
you so much for your support.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Thank you all.

All right. So we are going to switch gears now
and if we can invite Olivia to the panel and
begin with our new charter application.

MS. GUSMAN: Thank you. Hello.

MEMBER GANJAM: Hey, Rick, could we
take a five-minute break?

CHAIR CRUZ: Sure.

MEMBER GANJAM: I don't know when you
were planning on taking a break. But I need one.
Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay, shall we take a
break? We can take a break.

(Simultaneous speaking.)

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. We're going
to take a five minute break, Olivia, and then
we'll go from there.

MS. GUSMAN: Okay.
(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 8:54 p.m. and resumed at 9:02 p.m.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay, Olivia.

MS. GUSMAN: All right. Hello. I am Olivia Gusman, I'm a specialist on the Fidelity Applications and School Climate Team. Tonight DC Public Charter School Board staff will ask the Board to vote on four new charter, on four new school charter applications.

These applications have been carefully considered by DC PCSB's staff review team. DCPSCB also works with external expert consultants when appropriate.

All applications were evaluated against our standards for approval. DC PCSB's charter application review process includes the assessment of a written application, capacity interview, a public hearing, and when needed site visits.

All materials, including the written application, transcript of capacity interviews
and public hearings, and staff analyses can be found on DC PCSB's website.

Tonight we reviewers will provide a brief overview of the respective applications before asking you to vote. All ANCs were notified regarding these applications. Any applicants approved this evening will still need to identify a location. And the DCPCSB Board will hold a separate hearing about that topic.

I'd now like to invite the lead reviewer of Washington Arabic to present.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay, great. I think that is Abby, if you can unmute her.

MS. GETZEL: Great. Hello. My name is Abby Getzel. And I'm the lead reviewer of the Washington Arabic's charter application. Tonight I'm asking you to vote on this application.

The Washington Arabic's founding team proposes to open an Arabic language immersion school, with a commitment to early literacy in both English and Arabic.

The school's mission says, we believe
that the intellectual promise of each student is enhanced in a multilingual community that incorporates and celebrates diversity.

We challenge students to think critically and creatively. To know themselves as learners, developing into a global citizen in a joyful environment.

The school plans to locate in Ward 6, but is also open to locating in Wards 1, 4 or 5. At capacity the school proposes to serve 544 students in Grades Pre-K3 through 5. This team applied last year.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Is this for me to jump in?

CHAIR CRUZ: You can go, Lea.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Okay. Hi. I am the Board Member that was assigned as team lead on this application. I had opportunity to engage with the applicant team, and understand the changes that they had made to their plans since their first submission last year.

I want to offer at the onset how much
I appreciate how incredibly thorough the PCSB staff is in ensuring that we understand the standard of approval.

That we understand the rigorous process they go through, particularly for applicants that apply again, to understand the differences that may have been made to the application and the applicant's team since the previous application.

I'll say that for this team I'd been intrigued last year, intrigued with the idea. But I understood that the application just was not yet thoroughly developed.

I've been impressed over the past year to see how the founding team in particular have expanded to bring expertise in early childhood development, expertise in building a immersion language school all together, and expertise in Arabic translation, and in an immersion environment in public schools.

I continue to be very intrigued with this application. I've been thinking and
reflecting on the concerns raised by the staff on
the need to further develop the plan.

And have engaged in some questions,
and to try to understand throughout the charter
spectrum when other schools that are similarly
kind of new in concept, where there haven't been
a lot of other examples elsewhere in the country
to work from, what had been the questions years
ago when those applications have been presented,
and those models were presented, and what they
have learned, to try to anticipate what that
could look like for a school like this.

I'll offer that I'll be, I intend to
vote in favor of this. As much as I understand,
and appreciate, and respect where the staff has
been on this application, I find myself in a
moment where we all need to be inspired by
something.

Throughout this sector there are many,
many leaders, social entrepreneurs who are coming
with new ideas to think about the future of
learning, the future needs of students here in
D.C. now, and anticipate going forward in what families are looking for. And I find myself optimistic that this founding team will be able to manifest that over the course of the next year or so, in getting their plan into place.

I'd like to pass the mic to my colleagues who may have other questions or comments, as they have requested on this resubmission.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Thank you, Lea. Other Board Members, any other remarks before we take a vote?

I'll jump in here as well. I was similarly encouraged and intrigued when this school came before us last year. And I think I was one of many of us who encouraged them to address some of the shortcomings, some of the gaps that we discussed at the time last spring, and come back to us.

And I was pleased to see them come back, having addressed many -- if not all -- of the areas that I thought -- and I think many of
us agreed --- were areas that they needed to continue to develop.

I was also particularly impressed with the additions that they made to their team across the last year to -- not only on paper and in their plan further develop their idea, and demonstrate to us how it would come to life, but to also share with us how they have broadened the team that would take that idea to execution.

And I -- as Lea just shared, I too intend to vote in favor of Washington Arabic, and will be -- if approved, will be excited to see how they proceed in the coming year and a half.

Do any of our Board Members have any other remarks they'd like to share? Naomi?

MEMBER SHELTON: So, I do. I absolutely agree with Lea in terms of the idea of these new iterations of schools coming forth, and being helpful as we think about what's possible for students here in D.C.

I think my challenge here is the number of recommended conditions, to me,
demonstrate that the application is not as thorough as it could or should be.

So, I will be more than -- I'll be voting to deny this application. But not without the idea of the amount of work that they did take to turn the corner and bring on additional staff and experts into their process.

But with the number of conditions that are outlined here, it just feels like there's some work still left to be done. But that's not to say that the work that they have done from last year to this was not substantial.

But just the idea of all of these things having to be considered, to me that demonstrates that there's -- that their founding team just is not ready at this time.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Naomi.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: I share some of those concerns. I do think the team came back stronger this year, and really listened to a lot of the suggestions by the staff.

Probably most concerning to me ---
which will be a theme tonight for me -- is the lack of demonstrated demand. I think it's a fascinating idea. I just don't think that the team has been able to show there's enough demand for a school of this size, given our current environment and available kids to fill those seats.

So, I will also be voting to deny this application. But do want to recognize the hard work and the ingenuity that went into this application.

MEMBER SANDMAN: And this is Jim. I agree with Naomi and Saba. I do appreciate the changes in the application from last year to this.

I wasn't on the Board last year when the prior application was submitted. But I have read the materials carefully and do see the improvement. The -- I agree that all of the conditions are -- the proposed conditions are necessary.

But I think Naomi has put it well.
The number of conditions that are necessary is a signal of something to me. It's a signal that more work needs to be done. That the application isn't yet where it needs to be, before I would be comfortable approving it.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Jim. Unless there are other remarks that want to be made, I'm happy to take a motion on this. And we'll see where the Board is.

MEMBER SHELTON: I move -- and this is Naomi. I move to deny the charter application of Washington Arabic, based on the issues identified in the Board proposal.

MEMBER SANDMAN: I second the motion.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. So, we have a motion to deny, and a second. All in favor of denial, I will go through -- I will just take a roll call vote, and we'll see. We'll see how this fares. So, Steve Bumbaugh.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam.

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.
CHAIR CRUZ: I'll come back to -- oh, Ricarda?


MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton.

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Nay.

CHAIR CRUZ: And Rick Cruz, my vote is nay. The ayes for denial have it. The motion to deny the charter application will stand. All right.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thank you to the team for all of their hard work. I do not -- I want to underscore that the work in turning the corner from last year to this year was substantial. But thank you all for your work.
CHAIR CRUZ: Great. Melodi Sampson will now be presenting us with the Garden Education School of Business and Entrepreneurship.

MS. SAMPSON: Hi. My name is Melodi Sampson. And I'm the lead reviewer of the Garden Education School of Business and Entrepreneurship's charter application.

Tonight I'm asking you to vote on this application. The Garden Education's founding team proposes a high school focused on developing students' business and entrepreneurship skills.

The school's mission says, you're holistically preparing students to build their future. We aim to intellectually grow, culturally affirm, financially educate, and emotionally support the next generation of innovators.

This school seeks a Ward 8 location, with 410 students at capacity. This team applied last year.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right.
MEMBER GANJAM: Should I go ahead?

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes, Ricarda, please.

MEMBER GANJAM: Okay, great. Hi, everyone. I and Naomi both had the opportunity to take a lead in looking at the Garden School application this year.

And I want to start by thanking the school team and the DC PCSB staff for all of the intense work that it took to review this application, to be a part of this process. And also recognizing this was the second year that this application has come forward.

I am really wowed by the passion of this founding group for bringing this new urge to the city. I do believe that more programs focused on middle skills and preparing students for entering the workforce through new career and technology endeavors is highly needed. And we need more than traditional college preparatory programs in the city.

They've also -- the team has shown a deep expertise in community building, and the
systemic issues that continue to perplex our citizens in the Ward 7 and 8 community.

And they've really showed that they could engage the community and build some support for the idea of this school.

They've also built some strong relationships to support entrepreneurship, with many successful entrepreneurs who we heard from at the last Board Meeting. And really appreciated the support that they have started to collect in the region.

With that said -- and really appreciating everything that they've done -- there are significant areas that we felt still needed attention.

And while I appreciate the shift in aligning the school with the desire to meet the needs of the community, this shift in a curriculum still leaves many questions open around the career and technology education and curriculum that would be provided there in order to make the program successful.
The career tracks remain largely undeveloped. And the team had concerns about the plan for an inclusive model that works with the spectrum of students with special needs in D.C.

The other piece -- I think their team has great school experience, notably elementary experience. We do know however that the experience with high school matters for student achievement. And there is a need for more high school relevant academic experience in this application to detail out the high school curriculum.

So, while I'm really excited about the idea around middle skills and career education opportunities, at this point I didn't feel that the application was ready to move forward and I will not be supporting this application this year. Naomi, do you have anything you'd like to add?

MEMBER SHELTON: So, think it was -- it's really important we acknowledge the representative from the redesign team, Ms.
Nichols star-9:19:07, from the redesign team of
the two schools east of the river, and how
they're making strides in terms of meeting some
of these needs, addressing some of the challenges
that we've heard and seen over the last few
years. And really being thoughtful about how to
support students in the economic climate that
we're in now, and how we've, you know,
overcorrected around some of the work that was
being done in schools. And they're trying to
close that gap.

So, while I truly appreciate the
team's leaning in, and the amount of community
support that was offered at the last meeting, I
think there's still some significant gaps in
terms of what I've read. But also in what the
staff has provided as examples of some, you know,
legitimate concerns.

In the shifting curriculum, there's
still some questions in terms of how the school
would work through those things. And I think any
recommendations we would have in terms of
conditions would just be too heavy of a lift to try to say that this is ready to go, locked and loaded.

So, I, like Ricarda, am very pleased with the tenacity of the founding group to pivot from last year's application to this year. However, just in terms of meeting the standards and the conditions that would be necessary, I don't think -- I will not be supporting the application.

But I also want to just give a head nod and appreciation to the team that has been redesigning the high schools that are east of the river.

And that is to everyone's credit, in terms of having competition, having there be the idea of what do we need to do to be as competitive in this market as some of the other schools that have come onto the DC Public Charter School Board docket. So, thank you.

MEMBER CRUSEY: I want to build onto what my colleagues have offered. I found the
public comments during whatever that -- the
meeting before all this happened, to be really
quite inspiring.

The chorus of demand and interest in
-- for something of -- something like this.
While I will also not be voting in favor of the
application, I am really hopeful that there are a
number of potential partners and stakeholders
that could realize an adaptation of this.

Maybe not manifested as a school, but
something similar that I think our city could
really benefit from. So, I'm hopeful that there
are a number of -- those stakeholders paid
attention to this, and have their creative juices
flowing for how to build on what has clearly
gotten started, and sparks a lot of interest from
people who have a whole lot to offer our city and
the broader region. So, thank you to the team.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: I really agree
with Lea. I think that was so well said. I kept
thinking during the public comment, like yes, we
want to continue to see this type of activity and
work, especially east of the river.

And there was obviously just so much passion with the team that I -- while I will be voting them to deny a charter here, I do hope that you continue that work. Because it would be really a shame to not follow that energy and focus it.

And to hopefully -- maybe working with the Anacostia and Ballou teams that we heard from tonight. There's a lot of room for collaboration in high schools east of the river. So, I hope that happens.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: If I could jump in? I would just like to say that in the fall --

(Telephonic interruption.)

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: -- served on this Board, the Garden School and I Dream Academy really stand out as two teams that co-architected a school idea with community members.

There is a woman who spoke, who said, usually these school leaders come and ask us for our opinion about their idea, rather than asking
about, you know, she said, our ideas.

The difference to me with the Garden School and I Dream Academy -- I want to be really precise here -- is that I Dream Academy's team worked in the community for three years.

They went across the country looking at models from which they could build out a template for their school. And their founding team had 50 years collectively of in-school experience.

That's the part with the Garden School that's missing for me, is that beyond Ms. Nah, there wasn't a lot of direct school and classroom experience.

So, I think you got a big part of the formula right. But it's still a school. And it was the experience of working in and running a school that to me wasn't completely -- it didn't meet our standard.

So, sadly I will also be voting to deny the application.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Thank you, Steve.
Any other remarks?

MEMBER SANDMAN: This is Jim. I agree with my colleagues.

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes. Thanks, Jim.

Similarly, I am aligned with the rest of my Board Members. And again, just want to express how thankful we are to have teams of such talented people, with Ms. Nah as leadership of this team, working with communities, in communities to help uncover what they want.

And as my colleague Steve just so well said, the missing piece is the team to execute on that vision, that would have distinguished this from -- to an application that we could have -- or I could have voted in favor of.

So, with that, I will take a motion on the Garden School.

MEMBER SHELTON: I move to deny the charter application of the Garden Education School of Business and Entrepreneurship, based on the issues identified in the Board proposal.

MEMBER GANJAM: Second.
CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. We've got a motion and a second. Roll call vote. Steve Bumbaugh.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam.

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim Sandman.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton.

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: And I'm an aye as well.

Thank you again to the Garden Education School team. As I hope you'll take away from tonight's commentary -- if not the vote -- is a belief in both the idea that you have, and also the way you've gone about in fleshing out that idea and engaging the community.

And I hope from this Board that you'll find another way to manifest that vision. So,
thank you. Thank you all. All right. Next
application, Nicole and the Capital Experience
Lab.

MS. COLE: Hello. My name is Nicole
Cole. And I am the lead reviewer of the Capital
Experience Lab charter application. Tonight I am
asking you to vote on this application.

The Capital Experience Lab's founding
team proposes an inquiry and community-based
learning middle and high school program.

The school's mission is to empower 6th
through 12th grade students in Washington, DC to
harness the resources of their world class city
in the service of their dreams.

The school seeks a location in Ward 6.
In that capacity it plans to serve 700 students.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Nicole. So,
I'll jump in here and start off the conversation,
as I was a Board lead on this application,
alongside my colleague, Jim Sandman.

And as a Board lead, we had the
benefit of not only doing a deep read of the
application, but we had the opportunity to participate in the capacity interview, ask questions of the leadership and the full founding team, and listen firsthand to their plans for how to go about making this vision a reality.

We also, as did my --

(Telephonic interruption.)

CHAIR CRUZ: -- rest of the Board Members. And by recognizing the work and the creativity that went into the development of models proposed in the application.

It's a compelling idea and one that really resonated with many students and parents. And one that's garnered the attention and support of leaders in the community.

It's not lost on me who came forth to speak in support of the application, both folks new to what it means to build a new school, and a new charter school, as well as many individuals who have long-time experience and history in this city supporting school and education.

I'm intrigued by what this school
proposes to accomplish and many of the approaches it seeks to employ. I also am really appreciative of the piloting that the school has done over the course of many years, testing various approaches and methodologies. And especially providing students with a window into what the school one day might look like.

I'm really supportive of the vision and the passion that the founding group brought to the application. All that said, I simply don't believe that the plan is -- in its current state --- developed enough to meet our standard of approval.

This can be remedied, but I think the gap is significant enough that it couldn't be addressed through conditions. Instead, I believe that the founding group would do well to take another year to further develop its program.

Several of our most innovative and successful schools have benefitted greatly from additional time. And I think the Capital Experience Lab would as well.
Specifically, three things that pretty much swayed my decision and my vote. One is, the plan to deliver on the core ideas, to make real the integration of the academic content and the real world experience, came across to me as insufficient. In particular in the high school years.

Lack of clarity for me, number two, around the academic leadership of the program that would drive the ongoing development of the program between now and into the planning year, and to day one.

And then, I also have questions remaining -- still have questions about the case for demand, and whether it's robust enough. So, I will not be a vote in favor of approving this application. But I'd love to hear what my other Board Members are thinking.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: I'd like to weigh in here.

CHAIR CRUZ: Steve.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: So, I will be voting
in favor of this application. And I'd like to explain why.

One, this is an innovative model. And the reason I continue to be excited about the charter sector is because I think it is a laboratory of innovation. And this is an example of that.

Also, seven years ago I helped to run a teacher fellowship in this town. And Alison Gillmeister --- one of the co-founders -- was a fellow. And of the 100 or so fellows I worked with, Allison was the single most impressive. So, I have the fullest faith in her ability to be able to deliver on this.

Third, I've been struggling to think of a single application in the time I've served on this Board that has three years of data informing the model.

I fully understand that a summer program and a school are not exactly the same. But it is as much of a proxy as we've seen in the five years I've been on this Board.
And they have pivoted, and they have adapted their models in ways that are reflected in test score rises on standardized tests that we all recognize.

I also thought this was easily the best and most thorough application in this pool. And one of the best I've read in the five years I've been on the Board. So, that's why I'm going to vote yes.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Steve.

MEMBER SANDMAN: This is Jim. I participated with Rick in the meeting with the proponents of the application. I agree with Rick.

There are four reasons why I'm not comfortable supporting the application. But I do want to say that I agree that this is a very attractive concept.

It's -- I think it is true that we have a unique resource here of enormous educational potential in the combination of our museums, and the Government institutions, and
monuments, and arts organizations.

There is great potential there. I like the idea very much. But there are four reasons why I'm not comfortable approving the application at this point.

First, I don't think that there has been an adequate demonstration of demand, likely enrollment, and need. I -- to me the camp concept that underlies the case for opening a school is not a good proxy for a school experience.

I looked at the surveys that have been completed over the past four years. And I counted only 28 that had been completed by family members. That strikes me as a small sample size of the people who are going to be the principal decision makers about whether to send their students to this school.

And I don't think there's really been any testing of the attractiveness of the concept to high school students. So, first is, I just don't see the demonstration of demand of it I
would want to see for -- in support of a concept that is brand new in our city.

Second, I don't think the proposal for the high school component of the application has been adequately developed. It doesn't get sufficient attention in the application.

Third, I am concerned about what the staff reports regarding historical outcomes with similar schools in other cities trying to serve the same populations.

And finally, I don't think that there has been an adequate demonstration of addressing the needs of special populations, particularly students with disabilities and English learners.

I think it could be further developed. The application could be further developed to meet my concerns. But those four things make me uncomfortable with voting to approve at this time.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Jim.

MEMBER CRUSEY: I'll follow. I don't think I'll have much more of a unique perspective
to offer than what Jim just outlined. I agree
with him on them.

My initial concern when I met with the
team a few months ago -- well, first -- my first
reaction when I met with the team first a few
months ago was, wow, this is a really cool idea.
And I'm somewhat surprised we haven't heard of it
yet here in D.C.

But the extrapolation of expressed
enthusiasm from camp to what a decision of
parents or child -- student might make for
actually enrolling in school, particularly high
school, is one that I'm not sure I'm fully bought
into yet.

My -- I have a question that I don't
think has been adequately responded to by the
team yet on how this could work. Is the inclusion
of a high school solely about the concept and the
program model? Or is it really about making sure
that a budget can work for this school?

And I know that the response during
our public hearing last month was, the program
model requires it. I'm just not -- I'm not -- I haven't gotten convinced on that part of it yet.

So, for the four reasons that Jim just outlined, without elaboration, I'll also not be voting in support. I'll just express that I hope this team does continue working on this plan and does come back.

I'm very compelled by the strong recommendation and expression of confidence in Alison's leadership. And I understand that an idea like this, with something that -- School Without Walls had been like in its original concept many years ago, so that there -- communities in D.C. are familiar with a somewhat out of the box idea like this. So, I hope to see the team come back again with the -- with a plan that's more fully developed, based on the guidance from the PCSB team.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thanks.

MEMBER GANJAM: So, I'll just weigh in a few things as well on this application. First, I was absolutely wowed by the founding team for
this school.

I think that -- I also met with them on -- as they were developing their program. And was really fascinated by the plan that they were putting together.

Having been through the middle school selection process myself three times in the last four years, I do feel that this is a middle school program that many parents would be compelled to engage in.

And I think that the strong pilot program that they've done over time has given them valuable feedback that they've incorporated.

I do agree that the high school program needs more development. And that is the piece that has given me a little bit more pause.

I am -- was very excited about the academic experience that they would provide. And I think that -- even in this time as we're in COVID, the first emails that I started to get from schools was the virtual museum tours that are available to students.
And so I was thinking about ways that a school like this could take advantage of the technology available to them as well. But that may be because I worked in technology too.

But anyway, my point is, I was completely supportive of this middle school program. I would love to see a way to support this school in the future as they continue to develop out the high school program.

And really, thank you to this team for coming forward with such an innovative program. And I do also know that they have worked hard to build relationships in Ward 6. And I'm pretty confident that they would find an acceptable site to make this school happen in Ward 6, and accomplish the goal.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Ricarda.

MEMBER SHELTON: And I'll just piggyback Ricarda's statement. And also add that I believe two years ago I had asked the staff if it were possible to approve a school with a two year runway, versus one year, in the case that
there were -- there was a school that we truly believed in, but just needed more time.

Because that's not possible, I think I still will vote in support of the application, because I believe it is strong. And there will be conditions that could be put forth that would meet some of the concerns, which the concerns here are very different from the other applications.

But in the thought of how we have gone about this in the past, and schools being able to come back and resubmit. I think that that would be my recommendation to this founding team. And to, you know, kind of rethink, because I think the sweet spot here is middle school. To rethink the application as it currently stands.

We know that across this city, but across the country there is a huge gap in terms of what's possible in innovation in middle schools. We also know that that's a very troubling time, and hat tip to all the former and current middle school teachers.
So, I vote more so out of the confidence of what's possible versus we not having a process of a two year runway, but just one year.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Naomi. So, at this time I'll put it to a vote. And I will take a motion. Someone?

MEMBER SHELTON: I move to approve the charter application of Capital Experience Lab based on -- I'm sorry. I move to approve the charter application of Capital Experience Lab with the conditions as proposed by staff.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: We have a motion and a second. Okay. So, roll call here. Steve Bumbaugh.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam.

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim Sandman.

MEMBER SANDMAN: No.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton.
MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.
CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda.
VICE CHAIR BIRED: Nay.
CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey.
MEMBER CRUSEY: Nay.
CHAIR CRUZ: And this is Rick Cruz, and a nay. So, that motion failed. So, could I get another motion?
MEMBER SHELTON: I move to deny the charter application for Capital Experience Lab for the issues identified in the Board's proposal.
CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Naomi. Can I get a second?
MEMBER SANDMAN: Second.
CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Start again. Steve Bumbaugh. Motion to deny.
MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Nay.
CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam.
MEMBER GANJAM: Nay.
CHAIR CRUZ: Jim Sandman.
MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.
CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton.

MEMBER SHELTON: Nay.

CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: This is Rick Cruz, aye.

And the motion passes. The charter application is denied. Again, Capital Experience Lab, I think you heard from all of us as to how much we believe in the vision and what you're trying to do.

And I think it was a unanimous belief that this could add real value to the children, the students, the families of D.C. And hope that you do indeed come back next year.

All right. Fourth and final application before us this evening, Pete Petrin. And he'll be presenting the Global Citizens application.

MR. PETRIN: Hello. My name is Pete Petrin. And I'm lead reviewer of the Global
Citizens charter application. Tonight I'm asking you to vote on this application.

Global Citizens proposes to show in a dual language emergence program, offering tracks in both Spanish and Mandarin. This school intends to serve students in grades PK3 through 5. And the program's mission is to inspire and prepare the next generation of global citizens. The school seeks to locate in Ward 7 or 8, and educate 525 students at capacity.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank, Pete. Who would like to open this up?

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: I'll open this up, Rick. So, there were two language immersion applications in this group of applications. And I felt that both of them had some very promising elements. And each of them also had some holes that should be filled.

With Global Citizens, I thought -- I was encouraged that -- or I am encouraged that they're proposing to meet a demand that we've heard about for quite some time for language
immersion east of the Anacostia River.

I think opening a school for which there is not -- where the community doesn't have a lot of experience with that type of school, opening it with a relatively complex model like two languages is something that this team should reconsider if their application is approved.

The reason I'm going to vote in favor of Global Citizens -- whereas I did not for Washington Arabic -- is because of their founding team.

Dr. Natalie Smith and Jennifer Moore have experience standing up a Tier 1 language immersion school in Sela. And that is enough to give me confidence that in the year and a half they would have to stand up the school, they could fill in some of the holes that I --

(Telephonic interruption.)

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: I will be voting yes on this proposal.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Steve.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: I can go next. I
was very excited about this application. I
definitely see the need for more immersion
choices east of the river. Although I will
acknowledge that we have seen some growth in that
area, which is an excellent development for our
city.

I very much appreciate the hard work
the team has done to assess demand for their
school. The Saturday school and other language
meet-ups are a great way to introduce this idea
to communities east of the river.

Unfortunately, given the number of
unfilled Pre-K seats in Wards 7 and 8, I don't
believe there will be sufficient demand to
support this school opening in the year 2021.

And as you know, we have opened
several elementary charter schools east of the
river. And I have concerns that those schools
will not be able to reach full capacity. So, I
have really grave concerns about the ability to
bring another school into that area and to the
sector.
If the school is not approved, I do encourage it to -- do encourage the team to continue doing its work to bring language instruction east of the river. And very much appreciate, like I said, all the work that's been done so far.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Saba. Any other Board Members like to make any remarks?

MEMBER SANDMAN: This is Jim. I think this is a strong application from a strong team. I do agree with Steve's suggestion that the founding team reconsider the dual approach.

I just wonder if they're biting off more than they can chew. That's not a reason for me to deny the application as presented. But I do share Steve's concern about that.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Thank you, Jim.

MEMBER GANJAM: Hi. I'll just say, to reiterate what Steve and Jim have said, also very excited. And, Saba, excited about east -- about dual language programs. And also share the concern on opening with two languages and would
encourage the team to consider scaling back to one language as they open. But very excited about the promise of this school. And thank you to the team.

   CHAIR CRUZ: Thanks, Ricarda.

   MEMBER CRUSEY: This is Lea. I agree with both of those remarks, on the enthusiasm and the preparedness of the team in the application, the concept. And encourage the team to -- I share that same concern about filling seats. So, with all that said, I still intend to support this application.

   CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Lea. Naomi.

   MEMBER SHELTON: I second, third, and fourth the previous comments. I do believe the strength of the founding team and their experience speaks volumes.

   But the concern around -- specifically the programs that we've seen go into that area of the city, and whether or not there's a demonstrated desire for a school like this to be there in Ward 8.
I don't necessarily see that. I've truly appreciated beyond a shadow of a doubt the students who spoke on behalf of the school earlier. And I do think it's important for language immersion schools.

But the idea of two languages has -- how all of those things would happen in terms of the enrollment process, et cetera, I just have questions around -- and that's my dog sneezing in the background.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. I intend to vote in support of this application. I so appreciated and valued the enthusiasm of the founding team.

But more so than the enthusiasm and the vision, the competence and the quality of this team, plus a great team to move forward with building this unique resource for students and families in D.C. So, I'll be voting in support of it. Can I take a motion?

MEMBER SHELTON: Could I ask whether or not it's possible to have a friendly
amendment?

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes. A friendly --

MEMBER SHELTON: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: A condition?

MEMBER SHELTON: A condition of like

a period of time where the school opens with one

language, and adds a language later. So -- if

there is even an interest in that.

CHAIR CRUZ: If -- perhaps given where

it seems the Board's intent is on this

application. Pete, are there -- could you share

with us the current conditions that we might want

to move forward with so we can consider if there

is another one that we'd want to add?

MR. PETRIN: Absolutely. And for all

of these conditions, they would be subject to

revisions and final approval by PCSB, consistent

with our charter application guidelines.

Staff currently has four proposed

conditions for this application. One being the

reduced enrollment ceiling, that would have the

school open with 100 students in PK3 to PK4 in
the first year of operation, and grow by 50
students each year to reach a maximum enrollment
of 400 students, serving PK3 to 5.

Also, our second condition is
submitting a comprehensive plan detailing its
support for students enrolling in non-entry
grades. So, for students enrolling in Grades PK4
to 5, what that support would look like.

Our third condition is a promotion
policy detailing how their standards-based
grading system will be used in decisions about
student promotion and retention.

And our fourth proposed condition is
serving -- a plan for -- a supplemental plan for
serving students with disabilities. Describing
how its curriculum, staffing plan, and
professional development plan will support
students outside of the general education setting
full time.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Thank you.

So, given the smaller student enrollment that is
a condition, I wonder if Board Members continue
to have concerns about two languages?

    MEMBER CRUSEY: Say that again?

    CHAIR CRUZ: Given the smaller enrollment that's being proposed as one of the staff conditions, whether there remains concern about the -- some of the complexities that were expressed earlier.

    MEMBER CRUSEY: I mean, to me that just raises other questions, but there's also kind of multi variants. Like, do we know of expressed -- do we have an idea of the expressed demand of one language over another?

The -- for me, the question around the complexity of introducing one or two languages at the same time has only so much to do with the end size of the student population. Like, if that hadn't been a reason why I agreed with my colleagues on that. So, I don't know if it actually changes anything for me.

    MEMBER BUMBAUGH: That's fine. I'm not comfortable imposing that as a condition. They have a year. If this is approved, they have a
year and a half to come to this conclusion on their own.

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes. So, Steve, you would go with the conditions that -- as they're currently laid out, without adding an additional one?

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: That's what I would propose.

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes. That's where I am as well. I don't know if -- how strongly other Board Members feel about adding an additional condition about one language.

MEMBER SHELTON: Right. I think we could move forward with the proposed conditions to see where we land in terms of approval.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Yes. For me this is not something that would change my vote.

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes.

MEMBER SANDMAN: I agree with that. The founders have heard our concerns.

MEMBER GANJAM: Yes, right.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Let's let them
exercise their good judgment.

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes. I think that's good. And given that we've moved the -- this is the first year that we've moved the cycle back a few months, which gives them a few additional months to prepare, that they can fully take into account what we've shared this evening.

So, if that's the case then, can I get a motion for how we move forward with Global Citizens?

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: I move to approve the charter application of Global Citizens with the conditions as proposed by staff.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. I've got a motion and a second. All right. We're going to go through this again. Steve Bumbaugh.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Aye.


MEMBER SANDMAN: She looks frozen.

CHAIR CRUZ: She looks frozen? Okay,
I'm going to move on. Jim Sandman.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton.

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Nay.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: I am also an aye.

Ricarda, I'm going back to you. Oh, all right.

Okay. Well, we do have five of the six votes in favor of the school. And she says she's lost her connection. The motion passes. Global Citizens, you have gotten your charter.

We're very excited. And you've also heard from this Board as to some of the considerations. That one particular one that we'd like you to investigate and consider as you go about your planning in the next 16 months.

I'd also say that now that you are approved, we'd encourage you to meet with education leaders, Deputy Mayor of Education, to
talk about available facilities, coordinating school opening, along with other education plans in the city.

That time will be apparent as we come out of the next couple of weeks and months. But we're there to support as well, to help make sure you're sort of thinking about locations, as well as engaging the community as you get closer to identifying where --

(Telephonic interruption.)

CHAIR CRUZ: Pete has already shared with us the conditions, I think. And that closes out our charter applications for --

MR. PEARSON: Excuse me, Rick.

CHAIR CRUZ: -- this year. Yes.

MR. PEARSON: I had a text message from Ricarda that she supports the application.

CHAIR CRUZ: Okay.

MR. PEARSON: I'm not sure that meets the standard for a vote. But I thought just for the record we should make sure that's on the record.
CHAIR CRUZ: Okay. Okay.

MEMBER GANJAM: Thank you. I think I'm back.

CHAIR CRUZ: Oh, there you go. Okay.

MEMBER GANJAM: So, aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Aye, okay. So, six and seven, versus five and six. The school still -- motion passes and the school is chartered.

Excellent. Well, congratulations to that team.

We'll move on to the final matter for this rather unusual virtual meeting, which is, are there any items from the consent calendar that any Board Members would like to remove, or state a refusal for the record?

If not, I'll take a motion to approve the items on the consent calendar.

MEMBER SHELTON: I move to approve all items on the consent calendar.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: A motion and a second.

All right. Take a roll call vote. Ricarda Ganjam.
MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim Sandman.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye, with thanks to the staff for revising the improvement policy.

CHAIR CRUZ: Excellent. Steve Bumbaugh.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton.

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda.

VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: And this is Rick Cruz, and aye. Okay. So that -- motion passes to approve all the items on the consent calendar.

Any new business? All right.

Before we request a motion to adjourn, I just wanted to again thank everyone for your forbearance as we've moved forward with this meeting virtually.

And appreciate everyone who came out
-- both with matters before our -- before the
PCSB, but also the public that testified on
various matters.

And as well, thank you to this Board
who continues to do this work in this context.
So, I will take a motion to adjourn at this
point.

MEMBER SHELTON: I move to adjourn the
March 23rd, 2020 Board Meeting.

CHAIR CRUZ: Can we get a second?
MEMBER CRUSEY: Second.
CHAIR CRUZ: All right. And then roll
call vote. A motion on the table to adjourn.

Steve Bumbaugh.

MEMBER BUMBAUGH: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam.

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim Sandman.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton.

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda.
VICE CHAIR BIREDA: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey.

MEMBER CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: And Rick Cruz, yes, aye.

Thank you, everyone. Meeting is adjourned.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 10:01 p.m.)
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Public Hearing and Public Meeting

Before: DCPCSB

Date: 03-23-20

Place: teleconference

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

______________________________
Court Reporter

NEAL R. GROSS
COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C.  20005-3701
(202) 234-4433
www.nealrgross.com