D.C. PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

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BOARD MEETING

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PUBLIC HEARING AND PUBLIC MEETING

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MONDAY
MAY 17, 2021
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The D.C. Public Charter School Board met via Videoconference, at 6:32 p.m. EDT, Rick Cruz, Chair, presiding.

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

STAFF PRESENT
MICHELLE WALKER-DAVIS, Executive Director, DC PCSB
NADA MOUSA, DC PCSB
MELODI Sampson, DC PCSB
RASHIDA YOUNG, Chief School Performance Officer, DC PCSB
ALSO PRESENT

MASHEA ASHTON, Digital Pioneers Academy Public Charter School

PATRICIA A. BRANTLEY, Friendship Public Charter School

REBECCA DOHERTY, Hope Community Public Charter School

CATHERINE MELOY, Goodwill Excel Center Public Charter School

MONIQUE MILLER, Friendship Public Charter School

COLLEEN PALETTA, Goodwill Excel Center Public Charter School

DANYELLE PIPER, Friendship Public Charter School

VIELKA SCOTT-MARCUS, Friendship Public Charter School

RONALD THOMPSON, Jr., DC Resident
C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S

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CHAIR CRUZ: Joining me this evening are our Vice Chair Lea Crusey, Saba Bireda, Naomi Shelton, Ricarda Ganjam, and Jim Sandman. And I wanted to note at the top of today's meeting that Steve Bumbaugh has stepped down from the DC PCSB Board. As some may know, Steve's term ended officially and he kindly stayed on in a holdover capacity through the spring so that we could conclude our evaluation of new charter applications. And after six years, Steve decided he was ready to move on.

He was our second longest serving current member other than myself. And he served during a time of change on many fronts. And I and all my fellow Board Members and the PCSB staff are thankful to Steve for his leadership and for his commitment to the city and to its young people.

It was always clear how Steve put the most vulnerable students at the center of his
work at DC PCSB and beyond and how deeply
informed his perspectives were from his time
working in and with schools. I'll always remember
his contributions to this Board in partnership
around our shared purpose. And I valued the ways
he pushed our thinking across the board.

I also appreciate the challenge he set
for us as we move forward to always revisit our
practices, to ask hard questions of ourselves and
of our charter LEAs, and to listen closely to
what families need and what they wish for in
their children's education. We look forward to
the Mayor putting forward a new Board Member.
And we all look forward to having them join us
when that happens.

Now while we're weeks away from this
school year ending and the start of summer
programming, we're still hopeful that more
students will return to the classroom this school
year. We know how important it is for students
to be in a classroom learning with their teachers
and peers. I'm going to ask our Executive
Director, Dr. Michelle Walker-Davis, to tell us more about schools reopening and summer activities before we get into our public hearing. Dr. Walker-Davis?

DR. WALKER-DAVIS: Thank you, Chairman Cruz. And if staff can help project some slides that I have for the Board, that would be great. Before I start, I just want to continue to acknowledge the hard work of all of our educators in getting through this crisis as we are still wrestling with the next few weeks.

I just want to acknowledge the hard work that has happened across the board in our charter and traditional public school sector. And really, we are just coming out of Charter School Week, but thank our charter leaders and everyone for the effort that they have put in for the best possible time that we could have with our students this year. In partnership with our schools, my team continues to collect information about the operating status of every public charter school.
And since our last Board meeting, I've had an opportunity to visit a couple of our schools. And I plan to visit many -- a few more in the coming weeks before the end of this school year. During my school visits, I was greeted by smiling eyes behind face masks as well as hand sanitizer and a temperature check at the door of each of the schools that I visited.

And so I can say I've witnessed firsthand the health and safety protocols that our schools are putting in place to make the in-person times that they are creating for our students as safe as possible. I saw students that were excited to be back in the buildings. They were getting acquainted in many instances and in some instances reacquainted with normal school.

And teachers were really thrilled to be back in the classroom practicing their craft. It really was a joy to hear student laughter and to see teachers in their element teaching. I want to say a special thanks to Perry Street PCS,
to Cedar Tree PCS, and Friendship Southeast and Tech Prep for allowing me to visit, and I'm looking forward to the visits that I'll have in the coming weeks.

I know that returning to in-person learning isn't possible for every student and family this school year as schools are navigating our health and safety guidance. But I know that schools are working through the challenges. And I will share a few of their concerns a little bit later to ensure that next fall we have as many students as possible in our buildings experiencing in-person learning as our priority option.

As I've said since last March, we will continue to be supportive of those efforts. We will continue to monitor the challenges and to lift up where they are remaining. But we are optimistic that by the fall, every school should be able to offer in-person education five days a week as its primary option.

To date, our health consultants have
completed site visits to 85 campuses to ensure
that schools are following the health and safety
guidance from DC Health and the Office of the
State Superintendent. My team continues to
follow up with schools that are still fully
virtual to help them prepare their campuses to
open for in person in the fall. I am very
excited to say that currently we have over 20,000
public charter school students that are learning
in a school building and receiving some form of
in-person instruction.

It has been a heavy lift for our
school leaders, but we are at the point where we
have close to -- a little over 20,000 students
who are experiencing some form of in-person
learning. The campus level operating status data
continues to be found on our homepage on our
website, and that is updated as we get new
information from schools. But I want to share a
little bit about the breakdown of the campus
operating status.

So I want to start by saying that we
only have seven campuses that are fully virtual
to date. So the remaining campuses have a range
of supplemental in-person learning all the way to
full-time in-person learning. And you can see
here the breakdown.

I will note that we have definitions
for each of these categories on our website
because it's -- there are some distinctions
between full-time and part-time hybrid. But
essentially, the differences would be the number
of days per week that a school -- a student has
access to learning. But it is very exciting to
note that we only have seven campuses that are
still fully virtual.

And the reasons for that range from
facility capacity, ability to provide high
quality virtual instruction and not being able to
do both in person and virtual well, and then also
just really the opinions and perspectives of
school communities. So I'll talk a little bit
about where we are right now. First, I want to
share that in addition to continuing to support
this in-person learning for this semester, many
of our campuses are looking at hosting
programming over the summer.

And that is programmed not only to
help students catch but to build confidence, and
of, it's summer, for them to have fun as well.

So I'll share a little bit about the data around
summer programming as well. We have 122 of our
campuses are offering summer learning
opportunities, and those range from three weeks
up to eight weeks of programming.

We have a number of them who will be
offering that in some form virtually and almost
as many who will offer that in person as well.

So you'll see that there's a split. And many of
our schools are doing both virtual and in-person
options. Those programs will begin as early as
June 28th and will run through August 6. And I

think I misspoke by saying eight weeks, three to
six weeks programming for summer.

In addition to the data that I shared
here around summer, many schools have thought
about starting their calendar year earlier. And so I will be able to come back to you at a later date with a full list of the schools that might start their year a little bit earlier to kind of get back on track for the fall. I want to spend some time just talking about the '21-'22 school year and the reopening efforts as schools are looking to the fall.

I believe you are aware that earlier this month, the Deputy Mayor for Education sent a letter to schools informing them that Mayor Bowser has expressed the expectation that they plan for in-person learning five days a week for all students but that there may be instances where virtual learning will be necessary for students who have a medical condition. And to date, the guidance has been set out that virtual programming will be looked at by exception for students who have a medical condition and that they will have to submit verification of that. As you can imagine, in addition to that particular aspect, some of our schools have
expressed concern that the requirement could have an adverse impact on enrollment and attendance.

And so we are certainly continuing to engage with students -- excuse me, with LEA leaders to find out what specific challenges they have. And what we've heard to date is that there are facility constraints that make a little bit challenging for them to bring back everyone in their student population five days a week while also adhering to the three feet social distancing requirement. But you may also be aware that schools have begun to speak to their facility's needs when we're on the LEA calls.

And we have had conversations with the DME's office about ways that they can support around facilities, help with the coordination with that. And our LEAs are calling on the government broadly to help with access to green space and public facilities and where possible any help in facilitating use of other spaces. Another challenge that's been lifted up is that when it comes to vaccines, some of our schools
have shared that they have a subset of their population that do not yet feel comfortable sending their children to school until all members in their household get vaccinated.

And so while their child may not necessarily have a medical condition, adults in their home are either vulnerable or do have a medical condition. And so that's one of the challenges that has been expressed. And while there is general appreciation for the vaccines being available for adolescents, middle graders and high schoolers, there's still some concern that without it being able to children below the age of 12, there's some hesitation in school communities.

Schools have also noted that the vaccine hesitancy among some families and staff sort of create a conflict for them in raising the confidence level that school is safe. And so they are working not only to get staff within the building completely vaccinated but to create opportunities for families to recognize that
staff are here and staff are staff and there's a
safe return to the building. These are just some
of the many issues that schools are grappling
with as they develop and implement their
reopening plans.

I continue to work with the Deputy
Mayor's office and also our State Superintendent
and her team around what we can do to support the
state's return to school. I had a robust
classification yet this afternoon that in addition
to the challenges presented on the K-12 side that
with our adult and alternative education
population that they have a set of unique
challenges that are separate and apart from the
K-12 area and that as we look at broad policy
across the city that we are mindful of the
impacts that it will have on adult and
alternative populations.

So I want to stop there. If there are
any specific questions that Board Members have on
the data that we shared, I'd be happy to answer
that or invite a member of my team to answer.
But as I said, all of our efforts and our team here is really on supporting not only the schools that have already returned but supporting them for safe return for the fall and to work towards our collective goal of five days a week in person for as many students as possible.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Dr. Walker-Davis. I don't have a question, but I know that we really appreciated and found informative the panels of school leaders coming before us, especially over these last few months, updating us on how they're addressing the needs of students and different phases of reopening. I don't know if this might be the plan for June, but I think it'd be timely to have several come before us, especially if they're addressing different challenges and different ways, and as you mentioned, the adult schools and some of our K-12. I think that could be really additive to the discussion if we can fit that in the agenda.

DR. WALKER-DAVIS: Yes, that would be great. I know our schools are actively building
their continuous education plans. And so they are in the throes of developing the future state for the fall. And so I think it would be helpful to hear directly from them the creative solutions that they have already come up with and that they will, I would imagine, continue to work on for the next few weeks.

CHAIR CRUZ: I'll open up to any Board Members that have questions for Dr. Walker-Davis.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: I really appreciate this update, and I imagine I know the answer is it's kind of in the works. But do you have any knowledge or word from OSSE on expected -- any kind of expected updates on guidelines from them? And secondly, do you think we'll be able to in the months leading up to the school year be able to regularly update members of the public who attend our meetings to hear of -- we had a table that showed the number of campuses with in-person now, but maybe forward looking of the number of campuses that anticipate being able to be open full time in the fall?
DR. WALKER-DAVIS: Sure. So two things that I would say to that. There is a regularly scheduled LEA meeting tomorrow that the Deputy Mayor typically has with LEA leaders. And we will -- I expect that there'll be further clarification on the guidance that was originally sent in that call.

You are right, that there are two places where LEA leaders are looking for clarification. One is if there'll be any shifts at all around the socially distancing requirements or any flexibility within that. And then secondly, clarification about what is or is not relevant for adult programs and pre-K programs.

So the guidance is expressly for K-12. But I think when it was initially rolled out, that clarification was not made. So I think that there is room for clarification there. And then when the continuous education plan guidance was put out, OSSE has not yet sent out the guidance for the health and safety portion of that plan.
So that will be coming, it's our understanding, within the next couple of weeks or so. But there's a separate part of the plan that schools will need to implement, and we'll know more about the specific guidance when that document comes out. So yes, more is coming, and we expect that there'll be clarification over the next week or so because schools are working right now on their plans.

Regarding the updates for the fall, once the continuous education plans come out and are approved by OSSE, they will essentially have the -- they will be reporting on a citywide level where all of our LEAs stand. We will be in constant communication with them about the status for charter schools. But we do not expect to be doing this type of reporting that we're doing right now going into the fall. That will actually be OSSE's responsibility going forward to do the operating status of all of our campuses.

And I want to remind everyone that the
expectation is that we're going to be doing five
days a week in person. And so we would imagine
that there'll be fewer options that we would have
listed in a chart like that. But to the extent
that we see any reason to keep a closer eye for
charter schools, then we will stand up a separate
reporting if that is necessary.

CHAIR CRUZ: Wonderful. Thank you.

DR. WALKER-DAVIS: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Board Members, any other
questions for our Executive Director?

All right. If not, we'll roll into
our public hearing. As we move through each
agenda item, Briani, our moderator for the
evening will unmute DC PCSB staff or individuals
speaking on behalf of the school. If at all
possible, we ask you to use your video if you are
presenting to the Board.

The hand raising feature, however, has
been disabled. So individuals who've previously
signed up to testify will be called upon in
order. As a reminder, all written public comment
is available to the public on our website. And if you didn't sign up by sending your name to the public comment mailbox before the meeting, please submit your comments to public.comment@dcpcsb.org or call our public comment line to leave voicemail testimony at 202-328-2660, selecting Option No. 2.

So Briani, we're going to move on to our witnesses signed up to speak. And I'll ask you to open the line for Ronald Thompson, Jr. All witnesses have two minutes of public testimony time.

MR. THOMPSON: All right. Can everyone hear me?

CHAIR CRUZ: Yes.

MR. THOMPSON: And I will be brief. My name is Ronald Thompson, Jr. I'm a District resident and Washington native. It has been over a month, I believe, since I sent an email to Chairman Cruz and members of the Board regarding comments made by a member of the Board.

I have returned this evening to
express further concerns that were raised during
last month's Board meeting regarding a member of
the Board's role in the approval of DC
Wildflower. The member who I wrote about in my
e-mail was revealed to the public to be one of two
members of the Board responsible for shepherding
the application through its process. And in the
time since I sent my initial e-mail, I have heard
nothing from Chairman Cruz or any member of the
Board regarding the behavior that I outlined
there.

I as a resident and someone who was an
advocate in the education community, I'm
particularly concerned about the way that this
Board carries its business and how it deals with
the public. If individuals are to be maligned by
members of the Board in the course of their work,
what does that say to members of the public who
wish to voice opinions that may be contrary to
the folks who sit on this body? Again, I have
not heard anything from Chairman Cruz or any
member of the Board regarding the behavior as I
mentioned.

And I don't find the comments last month to have placated any of the concerns that were raised in the email, I think. And I'll close on this. I do believe that the comments made by Board Member Shelton were, in fact, more damning than exculpatory.

So I hope to hear from the Board, from the membership, and I hope to do so soon. Otherwise, I will have to be here again in June to express my concerns about the conduct of this Board -- of this body's membership. Thank you and have a great evening.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. I believe that is all we have for public witnesses this evening. So I'm going to move us on to our public hearing item, the first of which is going to be led by Melodi Sampson.

MS. SAMPSON: Good evening, everyone. My name is Melodi Sampson, and I am the Senior Manager of the School Quality and Accountability team. Tonight, the Board will hear from Hope
Community Public Charter School and Friendship Public Charter School regarding the school's acquisition proposal and related charter agreement amendment requests.

Hope Community Public Charter School is a two-campus LEA that enrolls students in grades pre-K3 through 8 in Wards 4 and 5. The school's board is relinquishing its right to operate its Lamond Campus which enrolls students in grades pre-K3 through 5. Friendship Public Charter School seeks DC PCSB's approval to acquire Lamond's assets.

If approved, Lamond students who are in grades pre-K3 through 4 will be eligible to bypass the My School DC Lottery and enroll at Friendship Public Charter School Ideal Elementary for school year '21-'22. This would increase Friendship Public Charter School Ideal Elementary's enrollment by up to 183 students. However, Friendship Public Charter School does not need an enrollment ceiling increase because its enrollment cap is sufficiently high.
Friendship Public Charter School Ideal Elementary is located across the street from the Lamond facility. Friendship Public Charter School intends to purchase or lease the Lamond facility, and I believe the school has an update about its facility acquisition tonight. Either option requires an amendment to include the new site in the school's charter agreement. Hope Community Public Charter School's campus relinquishment will result in a correspondingly decreased enrollment ceiling. It will drop from 1,080 to students to 357 students in school year '21-'22, ultimately reaching a maximum of 460 students by school year '23-'24.

Additionally, as discussed during the April Board meeting, Hope Community Public Charter School has voted to not renew its charter management agreement with Imagine Schools which expires this June. This change will require an amendment to remove references to Imagine Schools responsibilities and the Hope Community charter agreement. Representatives from both schools are
here to answer any questions you have about their requests.

    CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Melodi. Can we have the Friendship -- oh, sorry, the Friendship and/or Hope or whoever is here to speak on behalf of the hearing.

    MS. BRANTLEY: Good evening. Pat Brantley is here. I believe that we have Hope representatives as well. Would you like me to start?

    CHAIR CRUZ: That would be great.

    MS. BRANTLEY: Okay. Well, first, I want to join with others in expressing my thanks and gratitude to Steve Bumbaugh for the moral leadership that he has provided to all of us. I will always value how he challenged the status quo and demanded that we each do our best for children, families, and schools, always, no matter way.

    To the matter at hand, Chairman Cruz, DC Public Charter School Board Members, and to the parents, students, and trustees of Hope
Public Charter School, Lamond Campus, first, let me thank you for hearing from Friendship and for considering how we work together to ensure that the students of Hope have a stable and thriving school home for school year 2021-2022 and beyond. As many of you know, Friendship operates our Ideal Academy for preschool to 8th graders directly across from Hope Lamond. For several months, we have been in discussions and planning with the Hope Board to determine the best way to ensure that Hope students and families have the options they want and deserve for a school home.

But we didn't stop with just the Board. In the months since these discussions began, we have met with staff, we have met with families, we have reviewed programming and space, and we've reached out to the ANC and Council Members to ensure that our proposed plans are known as well as clearly outlined. I'd like to talk for a moment about the families, students, and staff.

These are difficult and complicated
times. In regular times, we'd have been at the campus every day so that families, staff, and students could see us and talk about their hopes and dreams. We would've opened our campus doors so that families, staff, and students could observe our programs, see our facilities, and experience a Friendship education.

While complicated, this work didn't stop because of the pandemic. Instead, we had multiple meetings and engagements, mostly by Zoom and webinars but some in person. Specifically when Friendship staff visited Hope Lamond to meet with both Hope and Imagine staff, our meeting also included town halls, open office hours for staff, information sessions, and parent opportunity sessions, including learning more about Friendship specialized instruction programs for English language learners and students with disabilities.

While we were primarily planning for fall '20-'21 in our work with Hope Lamond to ensure no interruption of services to students,
we also agreed to provide the extended school
year services for all Hope students with IEPs
mandating such and also to open our summer
learning and enrichment to Hope Lamond. It's
complicated to do this work during a pandemic.
But we have endeavored as we always do to ensure
a strong and thriving school home for the
children of Hope Lamond. I want to acknowledge
the real estate.

The Hope Lamond facility is currently
under a sublease with an owner, a guarantor, and
a master lessor. That represented some
complications for both Hope and Friendship. We
approached the work on the real estate with the
idea that we must ensure a fair transaction.

We approached it knowing that we had
to be within norm for charter school facilities
and we must maximize public resources for the
school program -- for the academic program. We
have made significant progress in that regard by
creating a structure for a purchase we believe is
fair to all. To wrap this up, we know that this
is looked at and approved under the terms of
asset acquisition and charter amendment. For us,
we see the people. We see the children.

And thus for us, we are extending our
Friendship family to the Hope Lamond students who
are our neighbors and our friends. We will
create a Hope Lamond Elementary Academy at
Friendship Ideal that becomes the best of both
schools, a place where we will continue the
strong, close-knit culture and character building
for which Lamond is known along with the
extensive program supports and quality of
Friendship and the family feeling that both
Friendship and Hope share and value. Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Ms. Brantley.
Would anyone else from -- I don't know if anyone
from Hope is speaking, or --

MS. SAMPSON: I see Ms. Doherty here
who's the chair of the board. So I think she's
there.

MS. DOHERTY: Good evening. So once
again, good evening, Mr. Chairman, the members of
the DC Public Charter School Board, families, and everyone here who's present. We spoke extensively last month about our request to amend our charter for two reasons, one, to remove Imagine as Melodi rightly mentioned from our charter, and as Pat has extensively explained, to relinquish our charters who operate at the Lamond Campus.

And as a board, we just thank you for the opportunity to be there this evening once again. And Pat has described extensively the process that's gotten us to this point. So in terms of our rationale to even get to this point, we have the vision to provide a world class education for all families that's comparable to any top notch institution of the United States.

And that's something we firmly believe and we stand on pursuing as we focus on our Tolson Campus and provide the best learning opportunities for our students. And in doing that too, we decided to collaborate with Friendship because they value our vision. And
our vision, we have an alignment of vision. And that's why we're here today.

So I know from our community consultations, there's been a misunderstanding of how this actually would work. But I would also like to state this for the public record that it is an acquisition by Friendship. It's not a consolidation because Friendship will be acquiring our students at Lamond. And it's because of our commitment to ensure that the families and the students maintain a stable environment. So once again, thank you very much for this opportunity.

CHAIR CRUZ: Great. Thank you. I'll just start by acknowledging how much work I know how has gone into this over the last several weeks and months on the part of all involved to get it to this point. So thank you for doing that on behalf of the students and families.

And I really do commend the Hope leadership for acknowledging some of the challenges it's had, taking the steps that I
think we all find to be appropriate to ensure that students are getting that world class education that you promised them. So I really appreciate all the work across leadership and both schools' boards. With that, let me open it up to Board Members for what I'm sure are going to be a handful of questions.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: I want to reiterate the same note of gratitude. This is a lot and particularly for the volunteer Board Members. This is on top of so much else that you are doing. So I wanted to see if you could share with us how the Hope family community has responded to this news and these intentions.

MS. DOHERTY: Absolutely. So considering that we are taking two steps, one is to relinquish the charter at Lamond. Families were initially concerned. And once they knew that we were going to be working with Friendship, they had a sense of comfort.

And we really spent a lot of time engaging the community. We brought parents on
and answered all their questions. They got to
know what they will get, including a master plan
of what the building would look like if the
acquisition did take place.

And we're proud to say that I think
we're at a place we can confidently say that,
yes, it has happened. And so really
understanding the vision, understanding what
they're actually getting, the difference in what
they have been getting and what they could get,
recognizing the gaps, for example, a curriculum
that's old as 1998 in 2021. Really understanding
the facts helped.

I think for a long time, the facts
were not clear. The facts were unknown. And
there were some misinformation or potentially
disinformation as well. So I think really
engaging the public by letting them know what the
issues were, letting them understand that we're
potentially getting 4,000 dollars back to each
student's academics made sense to them.

And I think any person who knows your
curriculum is as old as 1998, and as I said at
one of our board meetings, do you think this is a
bad decision? Can I really leave you to your
conscious? So when you know those facts, there's
no reason you would think it's a bad decision.
And the same thing applies to our rationale for
going with PLA as well and ending our operating
agreement. Have I answered your question?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: You have. Thank
you. And actually --

MS. DOHERTY: Thank you.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: -- the same
question for Ms. Brantley, how the Friendship
community with regard to the Lamond Campus --

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MS. BRANTLEY: So they're very
excited. I mean, these are school communities,
and they see each other across the street from
each other, parking cars. There are Lamond staff
that have children at Friendship, some of them in
our specialized programs which they benefit from.
Because Friendship Ideal goes to 8th grade and
Hope Lamond stops at 5th grade, I think families are excited by having the feeder options that's in a neighborhood that they are used to being in.

But I will also say from the staff -- and Rebecca mentioned the age of the curriculum and other things. The -- I think that Hope tried, as many schools do, to sustain the two campuses. But because of just the underlying economics of what was there in the real estate transaction, that was difficult to do. And that's something that had been flagged by the Public Charter School Board in past reviews.

And so when we talk to staff, what we see is this commitment to students and to quality but also an interest in what we heard the most. What is the professional development going to look like, right? What does retention of staff look like?

And there was a lot of excitement. I am proud to say that in just the last couple of weeks with the way that staff has responded to us, we have already started to bring on staff
from Hope Lamond that will continue with students because our work here is really about stability and investing back into the school, the students, the teachers, the program. And so we've had a -- what I would say is a really positive reception from Hope Lamond, right, people really working with us to get this done, but from the Friendship team that is at Ideal.

And many of them are on this call right now, and they can speak for themselves. We are excited to get this done. And there is a great enthusiasm for it.

MEMBER GANJAM: Just to build upon that, you were talking about the experience with acquiring Ideal. And I was interested to know, what did you learn from that transition and that you're applying into this acquisition?

MS. BRANTLEY: I would say we've done quite a few of these now collectively over time. What I've always known but it's reinforced every time is that this is like building a family, right? This isn't -- and I hate the term, asset
acquisition. I understand that's what's built
into the law.

But you are bringing in individual
students and staff members, and there's value in
both their experience and the program that they
had. And so it really is the merger of what I
will call equals. In every school, Ideal had a
very strong focus on an Afrocentric curriculum,
on sort of this idea of family, and on character.

And so what we learned were that there
were things that were happening at Ideal that
were part of their fabric that we wanted to
continue, not only at Ideal but in other parts of
Friendship. And as we have talked to
administrators, families, and staff at Hope
Lamond, there are specifics in their character
building program that are more than just words on
paper that we can use as we build our own
classroom building program.

And so what I would say is that every
school has its strength. I know that the PCSB
has to look at schools in a way that's somewhat
standard across. But I think that even you know
that every school has its strength. And those
are things that we are hoping to enrich, not only
the Hope Lamond program at Ideal but all of
Friendship.

MEMBER GANJAM: Thank you.

MEMBER SHELTON: So I also want to
echo my colleagues sentiments around all the work
that has gone into this joint venture. And Ms.
Brantley, I just have a quick question about,
again, we know that Friendship has been doing
this work for quite some time. But you also have
a mix of Tier 1 and Tier 2 campuses. With the
two campuses having scores below 50 or right at
that mark, how do you plan to address balancing
the academics at those campuses and managing this
transition so that there's a high standard for
all of the Friendship campuses?

MS. BRANTLEY: So first thing I would
say, there is a high standard for all Friendship
campuses. And I also would acknowledge that I
think the PCSB is looking at its own framework
for the biases and the other things that exist
within it. That's that we adopted it and
actually believe in it, right?

I don't there are any perfect
frameworks. But what we know and one thing that
we regret in the -- or maybe I'm the only person
that regrets it was that there wasn't a PARCC
because what we know from our MAP scores is that
all of our schools were improving. There
actually is only one that is -- was right at 49.9
or something like that, but significantly
improving. And so we saw that all along.

But that said, to talk about all of
our programs, mix of Tier 2 and Tier 1 as you
mentioned, is that we keep behind standard for
all of our campuses. We have standardized
curriculum across our campuses. We have also
invested in coaching and leadership.

One other thing that we invested in
was the retention of teachers. And so if you
look across the last three to four years, you'll
see that all Friendship campuses are retaining
teachers and other staff much higher than the D.C. average is for schools. And that makes a difference.

I would ask if she is here and can be unmuted that Vielka Scott-Marcus who's our chief academic officer can talk more about our program and the balance that we do. But before she does, let me say this. Leaders make a difference. And so having experienced leaders at each place -- because sometimes when we saw changes or shifts in the PMF, it was because of what we would say our supports for leaders and leadership tenure.

And so if you look at Ideal, we called back Joseph Speight who brought our southeast campus to Tier 1 and has more than ten years in leadership to be the leader of that campus. And so that is how we are looking at leadership which is that when we're changing a program, we're expanding, putting in somebody with a solid leadership tenure in place because then they're not also growing at the same time as the campus. And I'll end there and ask for Vielka to also add
MS. SCOTT-MARCUS: I think -- good evening, everyone. I think that I would also add to what Ms. Brantley has already shared is that the way that we have been able to differentiate has played a really intentional role in how we are shoring up the equality or the high quality of our standardization of instruction across all of our schools. So what does that look like?

We have implemented a very high quality curriculum. This is going to be our fifth year of implementation going into the '21-'22 school year. And it has allowed us to differentiate in a way in which our teachers are providing much more intentional small group instruction over the instructional periods and blocks that we have.

We are also and have also been shoring up our student support team services through our MTSS process which is a direct -- which is in direct alignment with ensuring that our Tier 1 instruction for all scholars is top rated. And
in all of our elementary and middle school
campuses, for our MAP data this school year,
we've seen improvement at our middle school and
somewhat of a sort of flat standard of
performance in our elementary schools. But we
are moving through even summer programming to be
much more intentional about our high does
tutoring as well as our summer programming so
that students are prepared for the '21-'22 school
year as they matriculate on through our campuses
in our schools.

MEMBER BIREDA: Ms. Brantley, you
mentioned staffing a couple of times and the fact
that you're already working on it and thinking
about it. How will over Friendship campuses be
affected by those staffing decisions? You
mentioned that you pulled a great leader from one
of your schools to go to Idea. Have you thought
about that and what can you share?

MS. BRANTLEY: We actually didn't pull
a great leader from one of our schools. He was a
great leader at our school that had come into our
community office and then started doing other work at another school. And so we brought him back.

And so we built up our community office with sort of experts in education. But we also have a program of residents. So we have leaders that are under other great leaders at our campus, and we will have them as resident principals or resident APs, resident coaches so that as we might expand, we got a built-in person.

Typically, the resident would stay at their Friendship campus that already exists because they know that community. And then the senior leaders can move on to another school if we were expanding. And I know some of these expansions aren't necessarily known, but we felt the need to really invest in our team so that we have people available.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: I had a quick follow-up question for Ms. Doherty. I think you mentioned something about parents not getting
great information, disinformation, misinformation. Can you clarify? Was that from Imagine?

MS. DOHERTY: Well, I don't really have concrete evidence to identify the source. So I'd rather not pinpoint any particular source. But there were instances where things that were not true had been communicated to parents or just unknown.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: About school operations or about the network or what?

MS. DOHERTY: Well, it had to do with what the students were getting in terms of what is considered high quality education.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Okay.

MS. DOHERTY: It had to do with how well Imagine was performing in comparison or contrast to other schools in D.C. and beyond. It also had to do with what was actually being allocated in terms of where the public dollars were going, how much of -- what percentage of public dollars were actually going to students to
their academics versus a lease that put the
school into a deficit each year. No one really
knew that.

No one understood that was the reason,
the impetus behind the decision that led to where
we were today. And I think Imagine could've
taken responsibility to communicate that. And
I'm not aware if that was actually done. But I
don't really have the evidence to pinpoint the
source of information. But it was apparent that
a lot of things were miscommunicated, unknown,
and that needed to be clarified.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Okay. Thank you.

MS. DOHERTY: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ms. Brantley, one
additional question. I know that there's been a
lot of work, not just in general but in
particular in the last few days, about the
facility purchase. So if you could maybe just
say a few words as to sort of the state of that
part of the negotiation.

MS. BRANTLEY: Sure. We think it's
important to try to keep the kids in the school home that they have, even though -- even whether we have capacity in other places. So that said, we have made progress as of today with a purchase agreement that will maximize dollars for the school. As Ms. Doherty mentioned, the lease itself was structured in such a way that it was probably one of the most expensive in charters here which really limited what could be done for the school program.

The purchase agreement is within what we consider to be charter school norms. It will allow us to operate the school and ensure that we are focusing public dollars on education. The purchase is Friendship's purchase. But because there's a lease, there is an agreement that both Hope that has a sublease and SchoolHouse that has the master lease will be terminating the lease and that after it's purchased and their termination, no further obligation for the school. And so that leaves us free and clear to operate in a way that we think makes the most
sense for the kids.

CHAIR CRUZ: Great. Thank you. Thank you. Thanks for -- and thanks for all the work on all ends to resolve that. All right.

Board Members, any additional questions? We are going to be voting on this when we go into the public meeting this evening because of the time sensitive nature and wanting to make sure we can communicate all of this out to families. So now is your time for any last questions.

All right. Well, Hope and Friendship team, we will be voting on this in the next hour or so. Thanks for all the work again, and thanks for answering all of our questions. And it's been an active, again, couple of days and weeks. But we'll see you shortly.

MS. DOHERTY: Thank you.

MS. BRANTLEY: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: And I believe, Melodi, you are still on for our next public hearing item.
MS. Sampson: Yes. The Board will now hear from Digital Pioneers Public Charter School regarding the school's request to establish two distinct campuses within the LEA and to operate an additional facility. The school proposes identifying its middle school as Digital Pioneers Johenning and identifying its forthcoming high school as a separate campus named Digital Pioneers Capitol Hill. The school also proposes operating a second facility located at 4025 9th Street, Southeast.

Ultimately, Digital Pioneers Capitol Hill, the high school, will operate at 709 12th Street, Southeast, which is the existing campus — excuse me, the existing facility. And Digital Pioneers Johenning, the middle school, will operate at the new facility, again, located at 4025 9th Street, Southeast. However, the transition will be gradual.

In school year '21-'22, the new space will house the LEA's incoming 6th graders, and the existing facility will house the 7th through
9th graders. High school year '23-'24, all middle schools will be educated at the new facility, and all high school students will be educated at the existing space. The school is available to answer the Board's questions about this proposal.

CHAIR CRUZ: Great. Thank you. Ms. Ashton, I take it enrollment is going well since we are discussing the extension into two facilities. So as you can imagine, we're interested in hearing about that, in addition to just the overall facility's decision making that's going on.

MS. ASHTON: Okay. Well, good evening, everyone. I have to always start with our kids in mind. So you can see these are our founding kids. On Friday, they came to campus for picture day. So this is our -- they don't graduate. They're getting promoted to 9th grade. And so I just wanted to share with you our founding kids, some of our staff. We said we've only just begun. And so I will give you a
quick update.

But before I do that, I do want to also express my appreciation for Steve Bumbaugh and his leadership. He's been a critical friend but someone who's been a fearless advocate for all kids. And so I just also want to express my appreciation.

With that, I did prepare one slide of update around enrollment. So here's where we are. In terms of our 7th through 9th grade, we are fully enrolled.

At 6th grade which is our new campus, we have had 160 applications. And we currently have 100 students who have completed some or all of their enrollment. As you know, the enrollment process is one of detail.

And so we are at 100 students who have verbally, or at least through a Google form, families said they are applying. Now we're working through the rest. You can see at 7th grade, we have 90 of 97 scholars who are returning.
Just to refresh the Board's memory, last year, we were below our 120 target. But you can see we have over 116 applicants just for 7th grade. We do expect at 7th grade to get fully enrolled at 120.

For 8th grade, we're fully enrolled at 120. We do have seven scholars on the wait list. And this is the date that I'm really excited and proud of and that is our 9th graders.

We started with 120. And right now, we have 106 of our scholars who have completed all of their paperwork to enroll in DPA high school. We did have -- I guess it's probably going to be close to 11 or 12 of our scholars who did go through the My School DC application process and did apply out, many of them to our most selective enrollment schools.

And a couple have chosen neighborhood high schools for family reasons. But we do have 25 students on the wait list, and that is for our 9th grade. What you see here is that every stage we do accept students. Whether it's 6th grade,
7th and 8th grade, we always want to open up spots for families that are choosing us.

And then just really quick, I wanted to share with you just where our kids are -- our scholars are coming from. And so what you see here on the left is our rising 6th grade scholars. These are the scholars who would be new to DPA.

What you'll see in the center is the blue is our 709 12th Street campus. And over here is the 9th Street -- the 4025 9th Street. So you can still see that the majority of our students are still in Wards 7 and 8. That's where we've done most of our active recruitment.

What you see here on the right is this is where our current students are, our current 6th through 8th grade scholars who next year will be our 7th through 9th grade scholars. These scholars -- and just to give you a little bit of a background, we wanted the least amount of disruption as possible for all of our families. So we said for our current 6th and 8th grade,
they will stay at our Capitol Hill location. That's the building that they're most familiar with.

And for our new rising 6th graders, they will go to the 4025 9th Street location, the Johenning campus, because this will be their first time coming to us. Most of them live closer to that facility. Parents have expressed concerns about kids traveling across the city, being on the bus. As you can imagine, even in a pandemic, they expressed concerns about transportation, particularly for our 6th graders. And so we did decide to keep our new 6th graders at the Johenning campus.

The other thing that we also learned in this process is that as of right now, we have 20 siblings whose older sibling go to the Capitol Hill location. And parents have asked for a bus. And so we actually are going to be providing a bus, doing the reverse commute where kids will go to the main campus on Capitol Hill and then we'll take at least 20 scholars to the 9th Street
location in order to make sure that
transportation is not an obstacle for families.

I would also say -- well, I had some
other updates related to satisfaction. But I
think you probably -- I'll stop here and see what
questions you have, either about the facilities
or enrollment, I can go back to. I knew those
would be two that you would be interested in.

CHAIR CRUZ: Great. Thank you. Thank
you. Board Members, questions for Ms. Ashton?

MS. ASHTON: I'm going to put the kids
back up. They look better.

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you, Ms.

Ashton, and congratulations. That's great news.
I think you've already answered this, but I want
to confirm my understanding that no student
currently enrolled at the 12th Street Capitol
Hill facility is going to have to move as a
result of your acquisition of the new facility.
Only brand-new students will be going there?

MS. ASHTON: Correct.
MEMBER SANDMAN: Can you tell me how the number of applicants, 6th grade applicants this year -- did people know the new location when they applied?

MS. ASHTON: Yes. We had to have the
lease per our conditions by February 1.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Right.

MS. ASHTON: And the 6th grade
deadline was March the 1st.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Right.

MS. ASHTON: So we had a month of
over-communication with our families. And as you
know, they weren't matched to us until the end of
March. So even in our matching, they know the
location.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you. And how
did the number of applicants for 6th grade this
year compare to the number you had last year?

MS. ASHTON: Great question. We have
historically every year had 120 applicants for
our 120 spots on March 1. This year, we had 85
applicants. The difference was that 63 were top
1, 2, 3. So we had a lower number of applicants
but a higher number of match 1, 2, 3.

Since the March 1st deadline, as you
-- as I think is the trend across the city, we've
had even more applicants post the March 1
deadline. So I believe we are -- that's where
the 161 comes from. That is both by March 1st
and then post-lottery.

MEMBER SANDMAN: Thank you.

MS. ASHTON: You're welcome.

MEMBER SHELTON: Hello, Ms. Ashton,
and thank you so much for the data that you
provided early on. It was very helpful, and the
clarification you just provided to the Mr.
Sandman.

I wanted to see how you all have
engaged with the various communities. I know
that you have families that are continuing on.
But were they involved at all in terms of how
were they informed about the plans, what did that
look like, what concerns have been raised? I
know you mentioned the shuttle or bus between the
two campuses. But what other concerns have been
brought up by members of your school community --

MS. ASHTON: Yeah.

MEMBER SHELTON: -- the overall

community?

MS. ASHTON: Sure. Great question.

I think there's -- I mean, everything right now
is all about COVID and safety and what are you
going to do in person, remote. And to be honest,
because most of our current parents are satisfied
to very satisfied with our remote program, we are
able to really share that.

And again, at this time, parents are
not sure if we're going to be in person or
remote. So we can talk pretty candidly about our
success of remote school, although we -- and this
is actually the slide I want to show you. We,
two weeks ago, got back in person with our CARES
classroom.

So we are -- just like the city, are
excited to be in person serving students and
families. It has been incredibly -- just
exciting to see our kids back in person. So the
number one question has always been, are you
going to be in person, are you going to give an
option of remote, what are the safety protocols
that you're going to have in place, particularly
for our 6th graders? That continues probably to
be the number one.

The number two is transportation. And
to be honest, we have continued to build
relationships with our local elementary schools,
whether they are a charter or traditional public.
And many of them have been incredibly welcoming
and open.

I've done a number of Zoom information
sessions with 5th grade teachers, again, in both
charter and in traditional public schools because
there's just not as much work that we can do in
person. So I would say the feedback has been
very open and very responsive. Now one other
thing that has come up, it's just around safety.

It's a little bit related to
transportation. This location is kind of very
close to the Maryland line. There's not much in terms of industry around it.

So a lot of our folks are used to going to all the public transportation routes going on the Hill, having the Dunkin Donuts and the Starbucks. This location doesn't have some of those thing, and so a lot of questions around not just transportation from our campuses but the public transportation options. Like, are kids going to be outside by the bus stop? Are they going to be alone? Are we going to have safe passage?

We do all those things even on Capitol Hill. So they've been assured when we've said, no, we're going to make sure kids get on the bus, know how to get on the bus, know how to get off. There's going to be adults kind of monitoring the bus stops so there's no issues there.

And as I think you know, this campus is right next to Early Childhood Charter School. And so the community is used to kids being around, albeit little kids. And so I think that
has also assured some of our families that there's younger children. There's another school there. And so they have been, I would say, more comforted. But more of the issues are related to COVID and spacing and in person.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thanks so much.

MS. ASHTON: You're welcome.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Thank you very much for this. It's exciting to see the momentum with enrollment for next year. Can you share with us what this summer looks like for your scholars?

MS. ASHTON: Great question because depends what the city says in terms of can we be -- no, I'm joking. No, I'm not. Okay. We are doing probably at least a half million dollars of renovation to our existing building to put in more bathrooms, troffers, air purifiers, to get more classrooms with windows because of the restrictions related to COVID which we're super excited by, not.

And we are going to do remote summer
school. So right now -- last year, we partnered with Cadence Learning. We intend to do that again this year, although we really want to be able to open and provide more in-person recreational experiences.

So one model is going to be online in the morning in terms of academic. We're also looking forward to piloting some high dosage tutoring. And then we're really trying to find some recreational activities and incentives for our scholars because we know that is incredibly important for their social-emotional needs and health.

So we are doing all of the above, including offering it probably to our rising 6th graders. And just in these last three weeks, we've started student-led groups. And so our 8th grades, we are going to look to see if they can run student-led groups or clubs, something that they have expressed some interest in.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Thank you.

MS. ASHTON: Thank you.
CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Any other questions for DPA?

All right. Well, congratulations on the good news on enrollment and facilities. Interested, as I'm sure you are, about seeing that 6th grade class fill in. But we'll look forward to hearing more as we get deeper into the year and closer to next year. This matter will be voting on at our June meeting.

MS. ASHTON: Great. Thank you, Chairman Cruz and everyone else, for this time. I look forward to seeing you all in June with a full update. Otherwise, be safe and thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. All right. Next for our public hearing, if I can ask Nada Mousa to join us. And we'll be hearing about more facilities, this time from Goodwill Excel Center.

MS. MOUSA: Hello. My name is Nada Mousa, and I'm a specialist on the School Quality and Accountability team. Tonight, the Board will discuss Goodwill Excel Public Charter School's
request to operate an additional facility.

The school current operates one facility at 1776 G Street, Northwest. It seeks to operate a second site at 1201 Maryland Avenue, Southwest to support its anticipated enrollment increase. The school expects to open the new facility midway through school year 2021-'22 and intends to divide the student population equally across both facilities. Representatives from the school are here to answer any questions you may have.

CHAIR CRUZ: Excellent. Thank you, Nada. Let's see. Sorry. I'm just trying to find everyone. There we go.

(Simultaneous speaking.)

CHAIR CRUZ: There we go.

MS. MELOY: Hello. How are you?

CHAIR CRUZ: I see everyone.

MS. MELOY: Good evening.

CHAIR CRUZ: You all are back.

MS. MELOY: Good evening. So if I could just share just a few comments this
evening. First of all, thank you very much for allowing us this time. We are very excited to sit before you this evening to discuss the Goodwill Excel Center's proposed second school facility which will be at 1201 Maryland Avenue, Southwest.

After numerous site visits and reviews of locations across the city, we have concluded that this location is ideal for our expansion for several reasons. First of all, let me talk to you about student accessibility which is paramount. Our school recruits residents from across the city.

This new facility is walking distance from the Smithsonian and L'Enfant Plaza Metro locations, stations that are really already accessible by many of our students. Secondly, the facility matches space needs for both our school and our child development center. As you all know, we do need a location that allows the childcare center to be on the ground level so it can meet state licensing requirements for
offering childcare to our students. Like our current facility, this new location meets that very need.

And finally, we have learned from our current facility experience and location that students value exposure to an environment that feels, quite frankly, a little bit different than traditional school settings and also from the neighborhoods that they've left and to have a school that is in a professional work setting. This location in a downtown business area continues to meet that need. We signed a letter of agreement -- a letter of intent, I'm sorry, at the end of April and are actively engaging our school community and local neighbors in and around 1201 Maryland Avenue and are receiving extremely positive feedback.

We have met with the Mandarin Oriental staff and hope to collaborate with them in our hospitality training. We have also reached out to our local ANC and hope to connect soon to have more in-depth conversations about our school.
Goodwill of Greater Washington already has an existing relationship with a close by neighbor which is the Bureau of Engraving and Printing where we have had the custodial janitorial contract there since 1987. And that certainly will go a long way as far as our school is concerned.

We also have very strong relationships with several hotels along the waterfront that we hope to leverage that relationship in order to have placement for our graduates after they complete at the Excel Center. We will continue to meet a variety -- with a variety of stakeholders and our school community to raise community awareness and support for the Goodwill Excel Center and to ensure relevant stakeholders are informed and engaged in ongoing planning.

Thank you for listening this evening, and we welcome any additional questions you might have regarding this new site for our Goodwill Excel Center.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Ms. Meloy and
team. Let me open it up for our Board for -- to take any questions.

MEMBER SHELTON: I just have a quick question that I always ask about new locations. How -- what was the community engagement? How has the community responded? And who all have you had feedback from, and what has that feedback been?

MS. MELOY: So Naomi, I would, first of all, say we have had long conversations with the Mandarin Oriental which is literally across the street from 1201 Maryland Avenue and have engaged them in opportunities to where they will be involved with the school. And as you know, we do have hospitality certification that is a part of our school. And so that has been a very strong and beginning relationship. We also have relationships with, as I mentioned to you, the hotels which are along the southwest waterfront and have engaged them in conversation regarding our new location.

And I will also say as far as the ANC
is concerned, we have gone ahead and put several
calls into them. And we know that we'll be
putting together a very strong conversation and
presentation with them in showing the strength of
having our Goodwill Excel Center in that
neighborhood. And I know that Colleen Paletta
and also Chelsea Kirk -- Dr. Chelsea Kirk are on
this call as well. And if either of them has
anything they'd like to add, I would certainly
welcome them to give those comments.

MS. PALETTA: Yeah. I think -- Naomi,
I think Catherine really spoke to sort of our
external community engagement. I think also I
would add internally our staff, our board, and
our student body, we've really been engaging
about expansion and what we need in another
facility and in a location, like, since the end
of 2019, but really intentionally since the
beginning of 2020.

Specifically, what our school
community has told us about what's important in a
new facility, like, small things, like, please
make sure you pick a facility where there's food options because our students need during lunch or before or after. It's really important that they've got low cost food options. Down to things -- Metro accessibility is really important. Many of our students come from southeast, as you know, and being able to have a Metro stop that is accessible by many of them and walking distance to our school. Things such as just square footage of classrooms and the number of classrooms and how many people fit in classrooms, and a lot of small details about what's really important in the interior.

And so all of that information that we started collecting back in the beginning of 2020 specifically has -- like, every time we look at a potential facility, it's with the lens of, okay, what will our staff think about when they're working in here every day? And then for our students, what's really important to them in terms of the layout of classrooms and where they're coming each day. And so I would just say
both have been really important in guiding our
vision of how this new facility is evolving.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thank you.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Thank you for
this. So I understand that your current facility
is at full capacity.

MS. MELOY: Yes.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: You need to be
making some capital improvements to this new
facility. So when do you anticipate being able
to enroll students at this new location, and what
happens if that is delayed?

MS. MELOY: First of all, we
anticipate that May of 2022 is when the
construction will be completed. We anticipate
that we will begin construction this November.
And therefore, we feel very comfortable with that
time frame. And the reason why is I will say,
first of all, the architectural firm that we had
for the first school is the same architectural
firm that we are having for the second school.
And the second school will actually mirror the
first school as far as classrooms, offices, and
also student facilities, the student social area.

And so as a result, we are not
reinventing the wheel. We're just making the
wheel just a little bit larger in this location.
So that is, I think, a very comfortable date as
far as actually having the second location. And
as a result, we'll be able to bring new students
on and have them to participate in this new
school location.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: And so thank you.

Does that mean that the new students would be
welcomed in for the '22-'23 school year?

MS. MELOY: We would begin in May of
that year, yes, exactly.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Okay. Thank you.

MS. MELOY: You're welcome.

CHAIR CRUZ: You all wound up
answering any questions that I had. I was going
to ask about the design of the facility which is
so well represented in some of the Zoom
backgrounds and I know well from my visits. Is
this -- the current space is underground in part, right? Could you say a little bit about the accessibility of the new space?

MS. MELOY: Sure, Rick. What is fantastic about this is it's all on ground level. So it will be all on this one level, and it is on ground level. And it also will be about 26,500 square feet whereas our current location is about 23,000.

So we're actually able to on one level. So you don't need to go down on one level. We will have a larger facility than we do even at 1776.

CHAIR CRUZ: Wonderful.

MS. PALETTA: And I think -- and Lea, I just wanted to also add on one sort of extra sort of nugget to your question. So what we will be -- we will be able to enroll more new students next school year. But the students that are going to be physically kind of finally at our second site will be sitting in that site come term 5 at the end of next school year. So we
will be enrolling new students next school. It's just they won't be physically taking classes at that second site until the end of the year or middle of the year or year round essentially.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: So you have added to your current location to accommodate those new students?

MS. PALETTA: Yes, we are. What we're balancing right now, as you can imagine, with the continuing ed requirements plus the anticipated health and safety protocols coming out for schools plus our current facility, balancing all three against the needs of our students and our unique schedule. So we've got about four or five different plans right now. We also have access to some extra facility space should we need it as we iron out these plans between now and the July deadline when all plans are due. So we're bouncing all three, social distancing requirements for our students, the reopening plan guidance, and our facility space, but do fully expect that we will be able to serve more
students next year with these constraints.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Okay.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Any further questions?

If not, we will see the Goodwill team back next month when we'll be voting on this item. Thank you as always for joining us this evening.

MS. MELOY: Nice. Thank you.

MS. PALETTA: Thank you. Nice to see you all. Have a good night.

MS. MELOY: Have a great night.

MS. PALETTA: Bye.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Nada, you have one more item for us. And I mistakenly thought the Friendship team was done until the vote, but they have another item up in the hearing.

MS. MOUSA: Hello again. Tonight the Board will discuss Friendship Public Charter School's request to revise its graduation requirements. The school seeks to change its
graduation requirements to allow participation in
sports and extracurricular athletic activities to
meet the physical education requirements for high
school graduation. If approved, the school would
allow students participating in a sport at
Friendship or an affiliated external organization
to earn high school course credits for P.E.
Representatives from the school are here to
answer any questions you may have.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. If we can
make sure we have the -- there we go. Ms.
Miller, are you speaking on behalf of Friendship?

MS. MILLER: Yes, I will give opening
comments, and then I will share with you comments
from one of our student athletes via video. She
recorded a video for us and she could not be here
in person. So thank you. Thank you for the
opportunity, Board Members, to speak about
Friendship's request to allow participation in
sports and extracurricular athletic activities to
satisfy physical education credit requirements.

Friendship PCS offers a robust
athletic program in which our students devote
hours of training to compete at the local and
regional levels. We also have students who
participate in programs through reputable
organizations that allow them to train and
compete locally, nationally, and even
internationally. Participation in these
activities instill in our students the mission,
beliefs, and core values of Friendship, the
desire to serve, as well as the behaviors and
skills embedded in the District of Columbia P.E.
standards that include leadership, teamwork, and
lifelong fitness habits. Friendship scholars are
student athletes who often excel in their classes
and are leaders at their campuses.

They are students who take the
opportunity to take elective classes of interest
to explore careers or advance their knowledge in
an area they plan to pursue in college.
Moreover, it is our hope that students will
receive scores in athletics as a pathway to
become more well-rounded and an active
participant in our school community. Finally, students who participate in sports and extracurricular athletic activities have a training schedule in addition to games, competitions, or recitals that require up to eight to ten hours a week of training.

They devote time and effort to become stellar at whatever activity they pursue, and the rewards are the gift that keep on giving in terms of building in them confidence, perseverance, persistence, commitment to what they pursue, sometimes scholarships, and more. This is a change that makes sense because it benefits the students we serve. And now I will share my screen so that you can hear from Robin Montgomery.

(Video played.)

CHAIR CRUZ: We can't hear her.

MS. MILLER: Oh, you can't hear her?

Okay. Let me see. Let me see if I change my screen and move it to my laptop versus my monitor if it'll be better --
CHAIR CRUZ: Okay.

MS. MILLER: -- to see it's still low.

Is that any better or no?

CHAIR CRUZ: We can't -- we still can't -- or at least I can't hear. Board Members, I don't think anyone can.

MS. MILLER: Okay. So let's see. So I will stop sharing my screen and what I will do is I will send this to you so that you can view --

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you.

MS. MILLER: -- after this. But basically, Robin was sharing that she is a junior at the Friendship Collegiate Online Academy, that she is a tennis player affiliated with the -- I'm trying -- the tennis -- the full name isn't coming to me, of course, right now. But it is a tennis club that operates in College Park, Maryland. It's associated with the USTA.

She has decided to go pro. She talks about how she spends a lot of her time training but that she still attends school after she's
done training. She has desires to go to college after she gets settled in professional career.

She is a student who would be interested in exploring other -- sorry about that -- exploring other courses of interest. One that you'll hear in her video is that she talks about expanding on her foreign language. So she's already taken two years of French.

It will give her an opportunity to continue studying French as she travels and competes internationally. And she says that not every country is English speaking. So just being able to pursue those other courses of interest is what she wanted to share with you.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Thank you. And we'll look forward to receiving that, and we'll all view it. Let me open it up to Board Members for questions for Friendship.

MS. MILLER: And I have -- just so you know, Danyelle Piper is also with me. She is a teacher at Friendship Collegiate. But she leads our professional development program in P.E.
CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you for joining us.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Thank you for this. My question is, do you have and do you anticipate either staffing challenges with students and/or capacity challenges with classes that students will choose to opt into instead of P.E.? And how much of the -- of classes that anticipate opting out of P.E. being able to adequately meet the requirement through outside school activity?

MS. MILLER: Yeah. I don't anticipate a staffing challenging for this. We -- at Friendship, we offer a variety of ways in which students can take classes. We have dual enrollment courses. We have AP courses, and we have other -- we have classes through Edmentum courseware. And so I don't anticipate staffing challenges for that.

MEMBER BIREDA: Ms. Miller, can you tell us a little bit more about the process by which you'll determine a reputable external organization? And, like, will students do that
at the beginning of the year and there'll be a
determination? Like, if you could just give us a
little more on the mechanics of it and the
standard by which you'll use to decide if it's a
--

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MS. MILLER: Yeah. So one of the
things -- so when we have external organizations,
number one, they need to be an organization that
is incorporated. It goes without saying that
hopefully their mission aligns with ours, but
that they are incorporated, that they have a way
to track and monitor their student participation,
and that they would be willing to enter into an
agreement with us where they would report on the
students that participate in those activities
through their organization. Without that
commitment, we would not be able to partner with
them.

MEMBER BIREDÁ: And then how are
students going to, I guess, apply for this waiver
or change?
MS. MILLER: So I think it'll be important for us to ensure that well update our materials to let them know that this is an option for them. It's easier for our students who are currently involved at Friendship and who participate in sports activities because of course this would -- this opportunity would be communicated widely to our staff. And they would be able to give their students more information or the scholars who participate in sports more information about that option and would lay out what the requirements are. But it will be very important for us to communicate this to the families of all of our students that this is an option. And so that's how we plan to go about telling them about this.

In addition, there are open houses that we have where our athletic directors and coaches of some of these activities give students information about these opportunities. And so as students are exploring -- especially when students who may not be -- who may not currently
participate on a sport and they have an interest
in it, this is something that could be -- that
would get them really interested in participating
in a sport because they know that by doing this,
I may not have to take a P.E. But I can do this
instead.

MEMBER BIREDA: Thank you.

MEMBER GANJAM: In developing your
plan, did you consult with families at the
school? And if so, what kind of feedback did you
get?

MS. MILLER: So I'll start. And then
if Ms. Piper has anything to add, she can. So we
decided to pursue this because it's something
that we talked about over the years, something
that we've heard from our students anecdotally.
We didn't do a widespread survey in preparation
for this application but just over the years from
hearing from our students in particular about why
would they have to take P.E. if I'm speaking all
of this time training, practicing and doing all
of this physical activity.
And so when we started looking into what other states were doing, other locals just across the country and even locally and seeing how they incorporated this component, then we decided to move forward and present this application to you back in April. So we've spoken to students and to a few of their parents, and this all made sense to them. There was no pushback or concern. They appreciated having this as an option to be able to do.

MEMBER GANJAM: Great. What percentage of your students do you anticipate might take advantage of this option?

MS. MILLER: I am not sure. I am not -- I don't have an exact number of the percentage of our student population who participate in sports. But I would imagine that of those that do, it might be somewhere -- let's see. We have about 500 or so students at Collegiate and about, what, 250 or so, 275 at Tech Prep.

So probably of those, maybe 15, 20 percent of them, around that number participate
in sports. And so it may be upwards of 80 percent who choose to participate. It may be more, but I don't have that number for you.

MS. PIPER: Can I echo as well?

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MS. PIPER: Yeah, sure. And also our coaching staff is behind the model as well. And so just as an option for our student athletes, the conversations have been mentioned to the coaches as far as their rigorous schedules and possibly having, like, a P.E. class right before practice and then going into other training classes. For some of the students, they just have expressed to their coaches, we would prefer to just do the P.E. class through our -- possibly through our sport. And so that number in itself would increase the amount of students that would actually want to participate because of the buy-in with not only the students but the coaches as well.

MEMBER GANJAM: Great. Thank you so much.
CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Any other questions for Friendship this evening?

Okay. If not, we'll be voting on this matter at our June meeting. Thank you, Ms. Miller, Ms. Piper, for joining us this evening.

MS. MILLER: Thank you.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Melodi, you are back to discuss our charter agreement amendment petition submission policy.

MS. SAMPSON: Lots of words there.

Yes, we are asking you to hold a public hearing to discuss the charter agreement amendment petition submission policy which the Board opened to public comment last month. We are extending the public comment period which will now close on June 21. This policy articulates application deadlines for schools seeking a charter amendment. The policy also includes an emergency waiver clause outlining the limited circumstances in which a school may submit amendment petition after the submission deadline has passed.

DC PCSB staff is proposing this policy
to reaffirm and establish charter amendment submission expectations. This policy will improve our ability to coordinate with partner agencies when schools seek significant changes like enrollment ceiling increases and grade level expansions. And I'm happy to answer any questions that you all have about this proposed policy.

CHAIR CRUZ: Great. Thank you. Board Members, any questions on this? Pretty straightforward, I think it does a very nice job of aligning -- or creating the conditions for us to better align with other agencies as we think about charter amendments that impact enrollment, school openings, et cetera. But Melodi is here to answer any questions. And we will be voting on this next month as well, Melodi. Is that correct?

MS. SAMPSON: Yes.

CHAIR CRUZ: Yep.

MEMBER SHELTON: So Melodi, thank you so much and to the team for this overview. If
you could just voice over how this impacts
partners in the education landscape overall and
the city at large just so we can have a better
understanding on the record of what -- how this -
- how these adjustments will help serve us
better.

MS. SAMPSON: So the goal here is to
really increase the timing in which we
communicate these kind of expansive changes to
our community partners. And so by setting a
clearer timeline for schools, we make it clear to
them when they should be working on their growth
plans. And then we give the Board ample time to
deliberate and vote on those changes. And then
in turn, we're able to communicate those
approvals to our city partners. So, like, OSSE,
DME, My School DC, we give them ample time to get
information about school expansions and
significant changes the school is pursuing that
allows the city to just plan a lot better.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi, I'd also add it
allows us to communicate with more advanced
notice to parents as well to the extent that there are any charter amendments that explicitly impact parental choices.

MEMBER SHELTON: Thank you all.

CHAIR CRUZ: Board Members, any other questions for Melodi?

All right. Melodi, I think you might be done. Oh, no. You're not done for the evening. You'll be back shortly. Thank you.

All right. Now we will move into our public meeting and a few items up for vote. If I could get a motion to approve the agenda.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: I move to approve the agenda of the May 17th Public Charter School Board meeting.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. If I could get a second.

MEMBER BIREDA: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. We have a second and I'll go roll call vote. Ricarda Ganjam?

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.
CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you. Saba Bireda?
MEMBER BIREDA: Aye.

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

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim Sandman?
MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton?
MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: And then aye for me as well. Agenda approved, and Melodi back up for a vote on the charter amendment that we discussed earlier. If you just want to remind everyone really quickly, Melodi, and then I think we'll be able to go to vote.

MS. Sampson: Sure. DC PCSB staff recommends that the Board, one, approve the proposed asset acquisition between Hope Community Public Charter School and Friendship Public Charter School, two, approve the school's charter agreement amendment request, and three, approve Board Chair Rick Cruz to sign the amended agreements on the Board's behalf. As discussed
during the April public hearing and tonight's public hearing, Hope Community Public Charter School is relinquishing its right to operate Hope Community Public Charter School, Lamond at the end of this school year.

Friendship Public Charter School seeks to acquire Lamond's assets which will enable Lamond students to enroll at Friendship Public Charter School Ideal Elementary without going through the enrollment lottery. If approved, the acquisition will also result an additional facility for Friendship Public Charter School and a decreased enrollment ceiling for Hope Community Public Charter School.

Finally, Hope Community Public Charter School is ending its partnership with Imagine Schools which requires an amended governance structure. PCSB opened this proposal for public comment on March 23, and the public comment window closed tonight. DC PCSB did not receive any public comment on this proposal.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Melodi. I
hesitate to make the assumption that we don't
have any questions. I will ask if there's any
need for any additional discussion of this
charter amendment involving Hope and Friendship.

If not, Board Members, I will take a
very lengthy and detailed motion. Whomever is
willing to --

MEMBER SHELTON: I move to approve the
proposed asset acquisition between Hope Community
Public Charter School and Friendship Public
Charter School, to approve the school's charter
amendment request, and to approve the DC PCSB
Board Chair to sign the amendments on the Board's
behalf.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. I've got a
motion and a second. Roll call vote, Saba
Bireda?

MEMBER BIREDA: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam?

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim Sandman?
MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton?

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: And it is an aye for me as well. The motion passes. Thank you again to Friendship and Hope Community. And I know this Board will look forward to hearing updates, informally or formally, as this moves forward over the next few months. So thank you on that.

All right. Melodi I think is out of the hot seat. And we're going to ask Rashida Young, our Chief School Performance Officer, to join us.

MS. YOUNG: Hi, everyone. My name is Rashida Young, and I am the Chief School Performance Officer. Tonight, we are asking you to vote on the at-risk preference approval and monitoring policy. The purpose of this policy is to implement the expanding equitable access to Schools Amendment Act of 2020 granting at-risk
students greater access to the schools that they
want to attend and ensuring that those schools
are prepared to serve higher numbers of at-risk
students.

The at-risk approval and monitoring
policy outlines how DC PCSB will approve public
charter schools to offer, renew, or discontinue
an admissions preference for students who are at-
risk. Staff has made several modifications to
the policy based on public comment that we've
received, including, one, extending the amount of
time schools have to submit the application, two,
only requiring the school's board chair to sign a
letter confirming the board's support, three,
including an explanation of the standards for
approval but removing reference to an evaluation
rubric, and four, requiring schools to hold seats
reserved for at-risk families for a portion of
the post-lottery period. And I am happy to
answer any questions you may have.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Rashida.

Board Members, do you we have questions for
Rashida at this time?

MEMBER BIREDAA: Rashida, you've explained it before. But can you explain how it will work for schools to reserve some space for the post-lottery kids -- students?

MS. YOUNG: Sure. So one of the public comments we received explained that there are -- there's data that My School DC has that many families who are at-risk apply for schools in the post-lottery period. So if our policy didn't speak to how long schools should reserve those seats, it's possible that they would be open to the broader applicant pool. And students who did intend to apply to that school would not have a chance to take advantage of this preference. So by having a period of time in which those seats are held, and we've chosen June 1st after conferring with some schools, it allows for those families who are applying in the post-lottery, it allows them time to do that without those seats being filled for the broader applicants.

MEMBER BIREDAA: Thank you.
CHAIR CRUZ: Rashida, I don't have any questions. I just wanted to say I appreciate all the work that's gone into this as the representative of the Board who testified to the Council about this proposal. You did a nice job of reflecting our responsibility in their eyes and are holding schools accountable while also creating the conditions such that schools take advantage of this policy in a positive way, creating more opportunity for our at-risk population of students to participate and getting enrolled in more of our public charter schools and also asking schools to explain how they intend to serve the students and serving them well should they move forward with this. So thank you for all the work the team has done. As well, thank you for responding to the public comment, looking for some greater clarity in a few different areas.

MS. YOUNG: Sure.

CHAIR CRUZ: Board Members, any other thoughts or questions on this? I know we've
spent a fair amount of time discussing it.

If not, I will take a motion.

MEMBER SHELTON: I move to approve the at-risk approval and monitoring policy.

MEMBER BIREDA: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Got a motion and a second. Roll call vote, Jim Sandman?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam?

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda?

MEMBER BIREDA: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton?

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: And it is an aye for me as well. The at-risk approval and monitoring policy passes. Rashida, thank you. And again, thank you to the whole team for the work on this. Next is our consent calendar. To start with, are there any Board Members who would like to note a
recusal for the record before I ask for a motion
on the consent calendar?

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MEMBER SHELTON: I make my recusal for
the Kipp-related vote.

CHAIR CRUZ: Thank you, Ms. Shelton.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: And I for the
YouthBuild vote.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right, Ms. Crusey.

All right. So those two are both noted. And we
can move forward with a motion for the consent
calendar noting that those two recusals on the
two separate items. So I will take a motion on
the consent calendar.

MEMBER SHELTON: I move to approve all
items other than the two that were noted on the
consent calendar.

CHAIR CRUZ: I think you can approve
the entire calendar and we'll just acknowledge
both of you.

MEMBER SHELTON: I move to approve all
items on the consent calendar.
CHAIR CRUZ: And get the two lawyers
to do this vote. It's not -- the two non-lawyers
to do this vote. Thank you. So we've got a
motion. Can I get a second?

MEMBER GANJAM: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. I'll do a
roll call vote. Jim Sandman?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Saba Bireda?

MEMBER BIREDA: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam?

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton?

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: An aye for me as well.

Board Members, any new business at this point?

We are done with all of our other votes for the
evening.

I'll take that as a no. In which
case, I would ask for a motion to adjourn.
MEMBER SHELTON: Move to adjourn the May 17th, 2021 Board meeting.

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Second.

CHAIR CRUZ: All right. Motion and a second. Again, our last roll call vote of the evening. Saba Bireda?

MEMBER BIREDIA: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Ricarda Ganjam?

MEMBER GANJAM: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Lea Crusey?

VICE CHAIR CRUSEY: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Jim Sandman?

MEMBER SANDMAN: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: Naomi Shelton?

MEMBER SHELTON: Aye.

CHAIR CRUZ: And an aye for me. Thank you for everyone who participated this evening. Thank you, Board Members. We will see you all in June. Have a good night.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 8:20 p.m.)
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In the matter of: Public Hearing and Public Meeting

Before: DCPCSB

Date: 05-17-21

Place: teleconference

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

[Signature]
Court Reporter