

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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WEDNESDAY
MAY 18, 2016

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The Public Meeting of the District of Columbia State Board of Education convened at 441 4th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20001, at 5:30 p.m., Jack Jacobson, President, presiding.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

JACK JACOBSON, President
KAREN WILLIAMS, Vice-President
D. KAMILI ANDERSON, Ward 4 Representative
TIERRA JOLLY, Ward 8 Representative
MARK JONES, Ward 5 Representative
MARY LORD, At-Large Representative
RUTH WATTENBERG, Ward 3 Representative
JOE WEEDON, Ward 6 Representative
LAURA WILSON PHELAN, Ward 1 Representative

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

HANSEUL KANG, State Superintendent
JOHN-PAUL HAYWORTH, Executive Director

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

BRIAN CONTRERAS
DESTINEE WHITTINGTON

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Adjourn

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 5:31 p.m.

3 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Good afternoon.

4 The time is now 5:31 p.m. on May 18, 2016, and

5 this meeting of the District of Columbia State

6 Board of Education is now called to the order.

7 The roll will now be called to determine the

8 presence of a quorum.

9 Mr. Hayworth?

10 MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Jacobson?

11 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Present.

12 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Williams? Ms.

13 Williams? Ms. Lord?

14 MS. LORD: Present.

15 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Wilson Phelan? Ms.

16 Wilson Phelan? Ms. Wattenberg?

17 MS. WATTENBERG: Present.

18 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Anderson?

19 MS. ANDERSON: Present.

20 MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Jones? Mr. Jones?

21 Mr. Weedon?

22 MR. WEEDON: Present.

1 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Jolly?

2 MS. JOLLY: Here.

3 MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. Contreras?

4 MR. CONTRERAS: Present.

5 MR. HAYWORTH: Ms. Whittington?

6 MS. WHITTINGTON: Present.

7 MR. HAYWORTH: Mr. President, you have
8 a quorum.

9 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr.
10 Hayworth. A quorum has been determined, and the
11 state board will now proceed with the business
12 portion of our meeting. Members, we have a draft
13 agenda before us. Are there any corrections or
14 additions to the agenda as presented?

15 (No audible response.)

16 There being no corrections, I would
17 entertain a motion to approve the agenda.

18 MR. WEEDON: So moved.

19 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Mr.
20 Weedon.

21 MS. LORD: Second.

22 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Second by Ms.

1 Lord. Also, Ms. Wilson Phelan from Ward 1 has
2 joined us. The motion being properly moved and
3 seconded, I'll ask for the yeas and nays. All in
4 favor, please say aye.

5 (Chorus of ayes.)

6 Any opposed?

7 (No audible response.)

8 The motion is approved. Next on our
9 agenda is approval of the minutes from the May 4,
10 2016 working session. Are there corrections or
11 additions to the minutes? The corrections
12 offered by Ms. Wilson Phelan have been
13 incorporated already -- the additional
14 amendments.

15 (No audible response.)

16 Hearing none, I would entertain a
17 motion to approve the minutes.

18 MS. WILSON PHELAN: So moved.

19 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Ms.
20 Wilson Phelan. Is there a second?

21 MS. JOLLY: Second.

22 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Second by Ms.

1 Jolly. The motion being properly moved and
2 seconded, I ask for the yeas and nays. All in
3 favor, please say aye.

4 (Chorus of ayes.)

5 Any opposed?

6 (No audible response.)

7 The motion is approved.

8 Good evening. My name is Jack
9 Jacobson, and I am president and Ward 2
10 representative to the State Board of Education.

11 On behalf of the members of the
12 District of Columbia State Board of Education, I
13 want to welcome our guests and our viewing public
14 to our Wednesday, May 18, 2016 public meeting.
15 The state board holds its regularly scheduled
16 meetings on the third Wednesday of every month,
17 here in the Old Council Chambers at 441 Fourth
18 Street Northwest. The members of the State Board
19 of Education welcome your participation and your
20 support in our efforts to improve education in
21 the nation's capital. The State Board of
22 Education has been working closely with our

1 friends at the Office of the State Superintendent
2 of Education this year to ensure that the
3 District takes a holistic and comprehensive
4 approach to adjusting our statewide
5 accountability plan to comply with the new
6 federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

7 The state board is taking the lead on
8 making sure that the community's voice is heard
9 in the development of a plan, and within a week,
10 we will be announcing community meetings across
11 the District to ensure that all of our parents,
12 students, teachers, and community members will
13 have the opportunity to speak with state board
14 members and their neighbors about our shared
15 vision for successful schools.

16 I want to thank Superintendent Kang
17 and her team for their commitment to that
18 involvement, and I am excited to announced that
19 the state board has created another avenue for
20 residents to be involved in this process. On our
21 website, sboe.dc.gov/ESSA, we have added a survey
22 in English, Spanish, and Amharic that will help

1 us understand exactly what our residents think is
2 important for us to consider as we develop the
3 statewide accountability plan. Please note this
4 is the beginning of our conversation. This plan
5 will allow us to determine which schools are
6 successful and provide supports to the schools
7 that are struggling.

8 Tonight's agenda includes recognizing
9 four outstanding District of Columbia students.
10 The state board is grateful that the students and
11 their parents could join us here tonight to
12 celebrate their remarkable achievements. I also
13 want to note that our FY '15-'16 student
14 representatives will soon be leaving us for
15 college.

16 Their input has been vital this year,
17 and we are now accepting applications for the
18 2016-17 student representatives and the student
19 advisory committee. The application can be found
20 on our website at sboe.dc.gov/studentvoices. We
21 are also very much looking forward to hearing
22 from Deputy Mayor for Education Jennie Niles on

1 school modernization and facilities, including
2 the reports of lead contamination in District
3 schools. I know that the deputy mayor and her
4 team have brought the full resources of the
5 District government to bear to ensure that our
6 students are safe, and I want to thank her for
7 her efforts. We look forward to hearing more
8 about how her office is ensuring student safety
9 across the District. We're now moving to
10 ceremonial resolutions. We will actually first
11 hear from the state superintendent of education,
12 Hanseul Kang.

13 SUPERINTENDENT KANG: Thank you,
14 President Jacobson. My remarks will be very
15 brief, but thank you for the opportunity to
16 speak. My name is Hanseul Kang. I'm the state
17 superintendent of education. Tonight, I just
18 wanted to congratulate, in advance, the students
19 being honored this evening for their
20 accomplishments and look forward to hearing more
21 about what you go on to do in the future.

22 Secondly, I just wanted to note that

1 all of the State Board of Education members, I
2 think, have been invited and are aware of this
3 event, but just wanted to flag it one more time,
4 that this Friday, the Office of the State
5 Superintendent of Education is excited to host
6 the Second Annual D.C. Educator Awards Dinner,
7 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., which is a reception
8 we're holding in honor of the D.C. teacher of the
9 year, the D.C. history teacher of the year, the
10 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics
11 and Science teaching finalists, and other
12 excellent educators across the District. We look
13 forward to seeing some of you there, hopefully.

14 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you,
15 Superintendent Kang, and my apologies.

16 Now, ceremonial resolutions for our
17 students. Tonight, the State Board of Education
18 is honored to recognize four students who embody
19 the word excellence. I would like to invite Noah
20 Kravitz, Rachel Page, Colby Bosley-Smith and
21 Rachel Snyderman to come to the table at the
22 front of the room.

1 There are four chairs here, if you
2 could all just come forward. Take your seats
3 while we talk about your achievements briefly.
4 The state board will consider the resolutions in
5 two blocks, first the delegates to the National
6 Youth Science Camp, and then the District's U.S.
7 Presidential Scholars. I'd like to ask our
8 at-large member, Mary Lord, to introduce the
9 National Youth Science Camp, and this year's D.C.
10 delegation, and to read the resolutions into the
11 record. We will then ask Ms. Snyderman and Ms.
12 Bosley-Smith to discuss their experience with
13 science. Ms. Lord.

14 MS. LORD: Thank you. Mr. Jacobson,
15 would it be all right if the members who
16 represent the wards that these two scholars hail
17 from read the resolution, so I don't have to do
18 all the talking?

19 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: If they're
20 prepared to do so, we would welcome that.

21 MS. LORD: Okay, thank you very much,
22 and thank you, everyone, for being here tonight.

1 It is my distinct honor and pleasure to have
2 served as the state selection committee
3 coordinator for the National Youth Science Camp.

4 This is an unprecedented opportunity
5 for our young scholars of science, technology,
6 engineering, and math to participate in a
7 prestigious science education program in the
8 beautiful rolling hills of Bartow, West Virginia,
9 all expenses covered. They do science
10 experiments. They hear lectures and seminars.
11 They take fieldtrips to the radio telescopes, and
12 at some point, they come back to the District of
13 Columbia to hobnob with Capitol Hill congressmen,
14 the head of NASA, inventors like Dean Kamen, who
15 created the first robotics competition. In
16 short, it's a big, big deal, and I am thrilled to
17 be able to present the outstanding members of the
18 Class of 2016, one from Capital City Public
19 Charter School, one from Wilson High School, who
20 will be representing the District of Columbia
21 with peers from around the country and around the
22 world this summer in West Virginia. Thank you.

1 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Now, Ms.
2 Wattenberg and Ms. Anderson, would you like to
3 read the resolutions into the record?

4 MS. LORD: Ms. Anderson is still
5 looking for her resolution. Honoring Rachel
6 Snyderman, "Whereas, two graduating high school
7 seniors each year are selected to represent the
8 District of Columbia at the prestigious National
9 Youth Science Camp in West Virginia; whereas, the
10 National Youth Science Camp, which offers the
11 opportunity to exchange ideas, study science, and
12 participate in outdoor learning experiences with
13 peers from around the country and the world is
14 granted to students who have exhibited leadership
15 and outstanding scholastic achievement in science
16 and mathematics; whereas, Rachel Snyderman of
17 Ward 3 will represent the District of Columbia as
18 a delegate to the 2016 National Youth Science
19 Camp in West Virginia this summer; whereas, the
20 State Board of Education notes that Rachel
21 Snyderman has excelled in science and mathematics
22 throughout her high school career at Woodrow

1 Wilson High School; whereas, Rachel Snyderman has
2 been an honor roll student throughout her
3 educational career, as well as an AP scholar with
4 distinction, and will attend Brandeis University
5 to major in physics; whereas, Rachel Snyderman is
6 a member of the varsity crew team, concert choir,
7 and the Wilson Singers Jazz Ensemble; whereas,
8 Rachel Snyderman also serves as a social justice
9 advocate through the Wilson Human Rights Club,
10 Operation Understanding DC, and Youth Action
11 Health Council; whereas, Rachel Snyderman's
12 interest in astrophysics and the universe were
13 cultivated through a 2014 internship at the
14 National Air and Space Museum, an engineering
15 camp at the University of Maryland, and her AP
16 Physics C course; therefore, be it resolved that
17 the District of Columbia State Board of Education
18 recognized Rachel Snyderman for academic
19 excellence and honors her as one of the District
20 of Columbia's most promising and creative young
21 science leaders in the high school graduating
22 class of 2016."

1 Can I just say -- Rachel lives near
2 me. Rachel went to Sunday school with my
3 daughter in elementary school, and then they were
4 together at Deal Middle School. I have known
5 Rachel since she looked very different and was
6 much littler. It's really wonderful to see you
7 all grown up and to see what you've done with the
8 education that you've gotten in our schools.
9 Congratulations to you and to your family out
10 there.

11 MS. SNYDERMAN: Thank you.

12 MS. WATTENBERG: Colby Bosley-Smith.
13 Honoring Colby Bosley Smith, District of Columbia
14 delegate to the 2016 National Youth Science Camp,
15 "Whereas, two graduating high school seniors each
16 year are selected to represent the District of
17 Columbia at the prestigious National Youth
18 Science Camp in West Virginia; whereas, the
19 National Youth Science Camp, which offers the
20 opportunity to exchange ideas, study science, and
21 participate in outdoor learning experiences with
22 peers from around the country and world is

1 granted to students who have exhibited leadership
2 and outstanding scholastic achievement in science
3 and mathematics; whereas, Colby Bosley-Smith of
4 Ward 4 will represent the District of Columbia as
5 a delegate to the 2016 National Youth Science
6 Camp this summer; whereas, the District of
7 Columbia State Board of Education recognizes
8 Colby Bosley-Smith for excellence in science and
9 mathematics throughout her high school career at
10 Capital City Public Charter School; whereas,
11 Colby Bosley-Smith is an all-star athlete on the
12 varsity volleyball and basketball teams and
13 statistician for Little League games and
14 basketball games at the Jelleff Boys and Girls
15 Club; whereas, Colby Bosley-Smith was chief
16 editor of the yearbook, member of the Bike Club,
17 and member of the newly formed Science Club that
18 meets to discuss scientific literature with a
19 retired physicist; whereas, Colby Bosley-Smith
20 has written several award-winning papers on the
21 environment and has been invited to attend
22 conferences on science, technology, engineering,

1 and mathematics education and the environment;
2 whereas, Colby Bosley-Smith intends to major in
3 environmental science at the University of
4 Vermont, where she's been awarded a President's
5 Scholarship; therefore, be it resolved that the
6 District of Columbia State Board of Education
7 recognizes Colby Bosley-Smith for academic
8 excellence and honors her as one of the District
9 of Columbia's most promising and creative young
10 science leaders in the high school graduating
11 class of 2016," signed by President Jack
12 Jacobson, Mary Lord, at-large member, and dated
13 today's date, May 18, 2016. Congratulations.

14 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Congratulations
15 to you both.

16 (Applause.)

17 Now, Ms. Snyderman and Ms.
18 Bosley-Smith, would you like to say a few words?
19 We've got a couple minutes. Just make sure your
20 microphone is turned on. The green light will be
21 shining. Whomever would like to go first is
22 welcome to.

1 MS. SNYDERMAN: Hello, good evening.
2 First of all, I would like to thank the entire
3 State Board of Education for this amazing
4 opportunity. I am really looking forward to
5 spending the summer in West Virginia and learning
6 about all different types of science through this
7 camp. I've always loved science, since I was
8 little. Growing up in D.C., I think, was an
9 amazing opportunity to explore science,
10 especially because my father's office, when I was
11 growing up, was directly across the street from
12 the National Air and Space Museum. So whenever
13 we would go visit Dad at the office, we'd spend
14 the afternoon at the museum.

15 I immediately fell in love. It's been
16 my favorite museum since then. I just couldn't
17 believe all of the fantastical images of far-away
18 galaxies and star clusters that filled the
19 universe and were just outside of our own
20 atmosphere. Since then, I was able to get an
21 internship at the museum two years ago.

22 Really being able to go behind the

1 scenes and learn about the science behind all of
2 the amazing stars and planets in the sky through
3 solar observation and spectroscopy and
4 gyroscopics, I really was able to delve deeper
5 into the science that fascinated me since I was
6 little. Through that, I've decided that this is
7 what I want to study and go into, as I pursue a
8 physics degree in college. Also, when I attend
9 Brandeis this fall, I'm going to be joining the
10 Quantitative Biology Research Fellowship, which
11 is an opportunity for interdisciplinary science
12 research. We will be looking at biological
13 problems through a physics lens. I think this is
14 really exciting, and this is also one reason that
15 I was really excited to apply for this program
16 this summer is because I really loved the idea of
17 looking at problems from different perspectives
18 and being able to use different areas of science
19 in order to solve problems. Thank you again for
20 this amazing opportunity. I'm so glad to be here
21 tonight.

22 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so

1 much. You're very accomplished. Ms.
2 Bosley-Smith?

3 MS. BOSLEY-SMITH: So thank you, once
4 again, for helping me secure this opportunity to
5 attend the National Youth Science Camp. I have
6 also been a huge fan of science for a long time.
7 I am going to the University of Vermont to study
8 environmental science. Living in D.C., going to
9 Rock Creek Park, to the Chesapeake Bay and
10 various places, the Appalachian Trail, I have
11 really been exposed to lots of beautiful natural
12 places. So I hope to learn more about those in
13 the future, this summer, in West Virginia, and in
14 Vermont next fall. I am particularly interested
15 in exploring ecology. This past year, I
16 completed a year-long expedition on oysters in
17 the Chesapeake Bay and their benefits to reducing
18 pollution, so I hope to go into that further. I
19 am also very interested in learning more about
20 climate change and what we can do to mitigate the
21 effects of climate change. That is what I hope
22 to do with my future, and that's what I hope to

1 learn more about this summer. Thank you.

2 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
3 Bosley-Smith. We're incredibly proud of you
4 both, and we thank you for all of your hard work.
5 We know that this is a wonderful opportunity, and
6 we look forward to hearing from you afterwards,
7 if you'd like to send us a note. If you send it
8 to Mary, I'm sure she would send it along to the
9 rest of the board, telling us about your
10 experiences. Members, I would now entertain a
11 joint motion on the resolutions.

12 MS. WATTENBERG: So moved.

13 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Ms.
14 Wattenberg. Is there a second on the
15 resolutions?

16 MS. LORD: Second.

17 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Seconded by Ms.
18 Lord. Now that the motion is properly moved and
19 seconded, I will ask for the yeas and nays. All
20 in favor, please say aye.

21 (Chorus of ayes.)

22 Any opposed?

1 (No audible response.)

2 The resolutions are approved. We'll
3 ask you to stay for just a second.

4 We're going to get some pictures after
5 we do the other two ceremonial resolutions. I
6 would again invite our Ward 3 member, Ruth
7 Wattenberg, to discuss the U.S. Presidential
8 Scholars program, and to read the resolution from
9 the Woodrow Wilson student into the record. I'll
10 take the Georgetown Day student, Mr. Kravitz.
11 Then we'll ask Ms. Page and Mr. Kravitz to tell
12 us about their achievements and plans for the
13 future.

14 Ms. Wattenberg.

15 MS. WATTENBERG: Yes, so let me read
16 this. "Whereas, since 1964, the White House
17 Commission on Presidential Scholars has selected
18 one young man and one young woman from each
19 state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico,
20 and 15 additional individuals across the country
21 who have demonstrated their excellence in
22 academics, the arts, and career and technical

1 education fields; whereas, the Commission has,
2 for the past 30 years, selected 20 individuals as
3 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the arts and, for
4 the first time, 20 U.S. Presidential Scholars in
5 career and technical education; whereas, the U.S.
6 Presidential Scholars Program has honored 7,000
7 of the nation's top-performing students since
8 1964; whereas, the Commission selects scholars
9 based on their academic success, artistic
10 excellence, essays, school evaluations and
11 transcripts, as well as evidence of community
12 service, leadership, and commitment to high
13 ideals; whereas, this year's 160 winners were
14 selected out of 5,600 eligible candidates, based
15 on performance on the SAT or ACT, nominations
16 made by chief state school officers or other
17 organizations; whereas, Rachel S. Page of Woodrow
18 Wilson High School was duly named a U.S.
19 Presidential Scholar and a U.S. Presidential
20 Scholar in the Arts; therefore, be it resolved
21 that the District of Columbia State Board of Ed
22 recognizes Rachel S. Page for her academic and

1 artistic achievements and honors her as one of
2 the District of Columbia's most promising young
3 scholars." Again, I just want to say it's my
4 lucky night. I've also known Rachel since she
5 was very little and a student at Janney.

6 Congratulations to you. I know when Rachel was
7 very young, she was already very involved in
8 writing and got a lot of accolades from her
9 classmates. I believe that is part of what
10 propelled this award, so congratulations.

11 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
12 much, Ms. Wattenberg. I will read into the
13 record Ceremonial Resolution 16-4, honoring Noah
14 B. Kravitz, 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholar.

15 "Whereas, since 1964, the White House
16 Commission on Presidential Scholars has selected
17 one man and one young woman from each state, the
18 District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, and 15
19 additional individuals across the country who
20 have demonstrated their excellence in academics,
21 the arts, and career and technical education
22 fields; whereas, the Commission has, for the past

1 30 years, selected 20 individuals as U.S.
2 Presidential Scholars in the arts and, for the
3 first time, 20 U.S. Presidential Scholars in
4 career and technical education; whereas, the U.S.
5 Presidential Scholars Program has honored 7,000
6 of the nation's top-performing students since
7 1964; whereas, the Commission selects scholars
8 based on their academic success, artistic
9 excellence, essays, school evaluations and
10 transcripts, as well as evidence of community
11 service, leadership, and commitment to high
12 ideals; whereas, this year's 160 winners were
13 selected out of 5,600 eligible candidates, based
14 on performance of the SAT or ACT and nominations
15 made by chief state school officers or other
16 organizations; whereas, Noah B. Kravitz of
17 Georgetown Day School was named a U.S.
18 Presidential Scholar; therefore, be it resolved
19 that the District of Columbia State Board of
20 Education recognizes Noah B. Kravitz for his
21 academic achievements and honors him as one of
22 the District of Columbia's most promising young

1 scholars."

2 Congratulations to you both.

3 (Applause.)

4 I would ask you now if you could share
5 a few words about yourselves with us, and I will
6 ask Ms. Page to start, and then Mr. Kravitz, and
7 make sure you use the microphone.

8 MS. PAGE: Hi, I'm Rachel Page. Just
9 to reiterate what Rachel said, thank you so much
10 for having us here. I'm so lucky to have this
11 opportunity and just thank you for being here. I
12 don't know. I've been writing my whole life,
13 like Ms. Wattenberg said. The Presidential
14 Scholar in the Arts recognition that I got was
15 because of my writing. I write for my school
16 newspaper. I'm the written content editor, which
17 means I edit all of the articles, and I also do
18 creative writing.

19 This June, I'm going to Carnegie Hall,
20 in New York City, for the Scholastic Art and
21 Writing Awards, which is cool. Then in the fall,
22 I'll be attending Columbia University, also in

1 New York City, so I'm hoping to pursue more
2 writing and English and humanities things there.
3 Again, thank you for having me here.

4 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
5 Page, for joining us. Mr. Kravitz.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. KRAVITZ: As everyone's already
8 said, thank you again for having us. It's such
9 an honor to be able to represent the District at
10 the Presidential Scholar's Recognition Week in
11 June. I am interested in a lot of different
12 things. I studied a lot of things, ranging from
13 math to linguistics, though my time in high
14 school. I have to say I like all of it pretty
15 much equally. One of the best things about my
16 high school experience is that I've been able to
17 take in everything in the classroom and go
18 beyond. I've gone into school after hours to
19 work on ceramics projects, and I've worked with
20 math teachers to learn discrete mathematics.

21 I'm currently working with a history
22 teacher to pursue an independent study in Arabic.

1 I'm really interested in learning a lot of
2 different things for learning's sake and,
3 ideally, bringing them together to create
4 something greater. Next year, I plan to attend
5 Yale University, where I still don't know what
6 I'm going to study, hopefully all of the above.
7 Thank you so much.

8 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 I would now entertain a joint motion
11 on the resolutions.

12 MS. LORD: So moved.

13 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Ms.
14 Lord. Is there a second?

15 MS. WATTENBERG: Second by Ms.
16 Wattenberg. Now that the motion is properly
17 moved and seconded, I'll ask for the yeas and
18 nays. All in favor, please say aye.

19 (Chorus of ayes.)

20 Any opposed?

21 (No audible response.)

22 The resolutions passed unanimously.

1 Now we will take a very short recess to give time
2 for state board members to congratulate the
3 students and their families and to take a few
4 photos. We'll recess for five minutes.

5 (Whereupon, the above-entitled meeting
6 went off the record at 5:57 p.m. and resumed 6:2
7 p.m.)

8 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: The meeting of
9 the State Board of Education is now called back
10 to order.

11 Welcome back. We will continue our
12 meeting with public witnesses. The State Board
13 welcomes public participation and activities
14 under our authority.

15 At every public meeting, we begin the
16 testimony from public witnesses on education-
17 related matters. If you are a member of the
18 public and would like to speak at a future public
19 meeting, please contact our staff at sboe@dc.gov
20 or by calling 202/741-0888.

21 We're going to do two batches of
22 public witnesses. We will start with the

1 representatives from Capitol Hill Montessori,
2 Shelby Reitz. And as I call your name, please
3 feel free to come down to the witness table. A
4 parent at Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan.
5 Danica Petroschius, a parent at Capitol Hill
6 Montessori at Logan. Scott Weishaar, a parent at
7 Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan. And Tiffany
8 Brown, a parent at Capitol Hill Montessori at
9 Logan.

10 Feel free to take seats in whichever
11 order. Your testimony can be given to Ms.
12 Jamikka Briscoe-Kendrick.

13 So each have three minutes. Make sure
14 that the microphone light is on and then there is
15 a light notification up here on the top right of
16 the table. Green, you're good. Yellow, you're
17 running out of time, you've got about 30 seconds
18 left. And red, your time is up.

19 Let's start on your left and then just
20 go on down, introduce yourself, and read your
21 testimony into the record, please.

22 MS. REITZ: Good evening. My name is

1 Shelby Reitz. I'm a parent of two children at
2 Capitol Hill Montessori which has students from
3 every ward. We live in Ward 6. Thank you for
4 the opportunity to testify tonight.

5 Capitol Hill Montessori was one of the
6 DCPS schools where DGS recently identified lead
7 in the water sources. This crisis has mobilized
8 our parent community to improve the conditions
9 not only at our school, but at schools across the
10 District.

11 I would like to provide an overview of
12 the problems at our school, how we're working
13 with the broader community on this issue, and
14 what we see as the path forward. The written
15 testimony that I've given to the clerk includes
16 more specific information including data and the
17 links to some of the things that I'll talk about.

18 So in terms of chronology, we learned
19 in April 2016, so just a couple of months ago, by
20 a blog post that tests conducted in August 2015,
21 so eight months prior, found three water sources
22 with lead above the D.C. standard of 15 parts per

1 billion. At no point after those tests, not for
2 eight months until the blog post, did DGS notify
3 anyone at our school of the results. And it
4 turned out that DGS had only tested 9 of our 94
5 water sources.

6 So only after two community meetings
7 with DGS, two rounds of written questions that we
8 submitted, four rounds of public testimony,
9 meetings with Councilmembers Allen and Grosso,
10 plus numerous direct contacts with DGS, did we
11 finally secure comprehensive testing of all 94 of
12 our water sources.

13 Long story short, over the last year,
14 8 of the sources at our school showed lead levels
15 above 15 parts per billion. Four of those
16 sources are unquestionably used by children.
17 Numerous other sources showed lead levels below
18 the 15 parts per billion mark, but still above
19 zero.

20 DGS' failure to maintain a robust lead
21 testing program is a threat to public health and
22 an abdication of D.C.'s responsibility to its

1 children. On top of that, DGS' policies and
2 conduct during this process have really been an
3 embarrassment to the District's public oversight.

4 In terms of working with the
5 community, we feel that getting to the bottom of
6 this issue should not have required hundreds of
7 hours of parents' work. We hope that other
8 schools will not ever have to repeat the effort
9 and we believe that a coordinated effort will
10 ensure a better testing program across the board.
11 So to that end, we have started a number of
12 initiatives, hopefully to make things better.

13 We have a simple two-page document
14 that we have shared with other organizations that
15 summarizes our experience, provides points of
16 contact and outlines a strategy for working
17 productively with DGS. And you'll find that
18 attached to my written testimony.

19 We've created a designated page on our
20 school website for information related to the
21 lead testing. We've formed an environmental
22 committee made up of parents and teachers to

1 study the issue in depth and provide policy
2 recommendations. And finally, we've started a
3 Yahoo Group called Lead Free D.C. Schools where
4 all schools and their communities can get
5 involved and work with scientific experts to
6 hopefully produce policy recommendations that the
7 District can consider.

8 The path forward, I think, must
9 include a major overhaul of DGS' policies and a
10 complete reevaluation of D.C. standards for lead
11 in schools. From the outset, DGS must conduct
12 comprehensive testing of all water sources. They
13 must use unique identifiers for each water source
14 which they have not been doing. They must have a
15 robust system for tracking filter installation
16 and replacements and they must implement a policy
17 to notify school communities of the lead test
18 results. I think these are very obvious needs.
19 They're basically low-hanging fruit.

20 But D.C., which means the City
21 Council, and DCPS and the DME and DOEE and DGS,
22 all working together, desperately needs new

1 protocols and standards for addressing the lead
2 in schools. No level of exposure is acceptable
3 for young children. That means we need
4 comprehensive policies for water sources as well
5 as for paint and for soil. We need reliable
6 testing, accessible data, and meaningful
7 communication. It means that we need new best
8 practices and we at Capitol Hill Montessori are
9 doing our part to determine perhaps what they
10 should be.

11 Our school's committee is working with
12 scientific experts and doing independent research
13 and comparing our testing data to industry best
14 practices to develop our positions. Our experts
15 will use the Lead Free D.C. School's board to
16 draft legislation to protect students from all
17 sources from lead in D.C. Public Schools.

18 I hope we can work productively with
19 all of the public bodies I have mentioned to make
20 our schools safer for kids. Thank you.

21 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
22 Reitz.

1 MS. PETROSHIUS: Hi. I am Danica
2 Petroschius, a Ward 6 parent at Capitol Hill
3 Montessori. Our school is PK through 6th grade
4 in one building, and a middle school in a
5 trailer. And our families come from every ward.
6 We love our school community, the teachers, the
7 principal, the parents, and the Montessori
8 approach, but our building is in need of serious
9 stabilization and modernization. That's why we
10 were shocked and disappointed in the Mayor's
11 Capital Improvement Plan. It under funded the
12 capital budget and therefore left a number of
13 schools completely off the CIP including CHML
14 which had been slated for modernization in FY
15 '19.

16 Our community has pulled together to
17 try to understand what is happening and why. The
18 Mayor's plan as created about public input lacked
19 data and did not prioritize facility conditions.
20 At the Transportation Committee DGS oversight
21 hearing Director Weaver testified upon
22 questioning that CHML facilities had never been

1 assessed by DGS.

2 The Mayor's budget could not have been
3 an objective, data-driven process because there
4 was no data for our school. In addition, the
5 Mayor's metrics to when schools are faulty and
6 inconsistent: one, they do not provide a middle
7 school priority consistently. CHML's middle
8 school did not receive a priority like other
9 middle schools In deciding our capacity rate, it
10 appears that trailer square footage that houses
11 the middle school was counted for purposes for
12 determining building utilization. This means
13 that they do know we have a middle school.

14 Two, they have built on neighborhood
15 and ward metrics that have little meaning for
16 city-wide schools like ours and a city fueled by
17 out of boundary twice.

18 Three, they make facility conditions
19 arguably the important criteria in deciding how
20 to prioritize modernizations less than ten
21 percent weight.

22 We are pleased that the Council is

1 taking a much better approach. They support the
2 \$4 million in stabilization funds for much needed
3 HVAC system and ceiling repairs at our school.
4 And we also support the Council of Education
5 Committee's improved metrics for ranking schools,
6 that one, include all schools. Two, give all
7 schools with children in the middle grades a
8 middle school priority. And three, focus more on
9 facility needs than on population of ward.

10 When the new metrics are applied, our
11 school ranks fourth greatest in need in all DCPS
12 schools.

13 We are disappointed though that the
14 Council budget still does not change the Mayor's
15 proposed CIP which means our school still has a
16 long way to go to secure funding for
17 modernization.

18 To us, the Mayor's budget is misguided
19 and under funded. We strongly support D.C.
20 Council's efforts to improve it, but even the
21 Council's budget leaves too many schools without
22 help.

1 Going forward, we ask one, DGS fully
2 assess our building and include parents and
3 school administration in the process. We are the
4 ones who know our buildings best.

5 Two, the final budget for the city
6 should include our stabilization funding and DGS
7 should work with us to implement it soon.

8 Three, Council should codify the
9 Education Committee's metrics for modernization
10 and the city should use that system for funding
11 decisions.

12 Four, all city leaders should
13 implement policy to make modernization and
14 stabilization data driven, transparent,
15 efficient, and the effective.

16 And five, we should all work together
17 to modernize all schools in the next six years.
18 By meeting this goal we can take a giant step
19 forward towards being our best DCPS together.
20 Thank you.

21 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
22 Petroschius.

1 Mr. Weishaar.

2 MR. WEISHAAR: Good evening. My name
3 is Scott Weishaar and my daughter is a
4 kindergartner at Capitol Hill Montessori Logan.
5 CHML is an elementary and middle school located
6 in Ward 6, but is a city-wide school. As a
7 community, we have had to pull together and
8 really understand what is happening in our city
9 regarding school buildings and the health and
10 safety of the people in them. It's been
11 disheartening at best, alarming at worst.

12 We've discovered the following. Our
13 school building poses significant safety and
14 health issues including lead in the water, as
15 you've heard, and also in paint that had not been
16 disclosed and remediated properly. Our school
17 building had never been assessed, thus, our
18 school was completely left off the modernization
19 budget.

20 We are not alone with these
21 discoveries and we've been working hard to
22 advocate change not only for my daughter's

1 school, but for many other schools as well. In
2 response, we had no choice but to do significant
3 research on these issues at night, after work,
4 and after the kids are tucked in. We have had to
5 organize significant advocacy to urge the city to
6 address all of these issues.

7 We have made some progress, but
8 there's a long way to go. The bottom line is
9 this. We need to implement policies and
10 protocols that address all of these issues.
11 Parents should not have to do this kind of work
12 to have these needs met. To that end, our
13 community is strongly supportive of the Council's
14 efforts to recommend policies to DCPS, DGS, and
15 the Mayor that we hope they will take seriously.

16 Both the Committee on Education and
17 the Council on Transportation and the Environment
18 took significant steps towards addressing areas
19 of need and policy recommendations. The
20 Committee on Education, under the leadership of
21 Chairman Grosso recommended that DCPS one,
22 explore more inclusive ways to garner feedback

1 and input from students during the budget
2 process; and two, establish a strategic
3 communications protocol for alerting school
4 communities on environmental safety matters in
5 DCPS facilities.

6 The Committee on Transportation and
7 Environment, under the leadership of Chairperson
8 Cheh, recommend that DGS one, establish a new
9 systematic approach to lead testing in all public
10 schools; two, pilot a design/build model for
11 school modernization projects; and three, conduct
12 an annual safe and healthy school assessment that
13 would result in a comprehensive report card.

14 We think all of these policy
15 recommendations will be a major step forward in
16 addressing major issues in the safety, health and
17 modernization needs of our school buildings.

18 I thank you for your time.

19 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr.
20 Wishaar. Mr. Brown.

21 MS. BROWN: Good evening, President
22 Jacobson, members of the State Board of

1 Education, Vice President Karen Williams in her
2 absence. She is my constituent as well as my
3 ward representative. Thank you for the
4 opportunity to speak at your monthly public
5 meeting. My name is Tiffany L. Brown. I'm a
6 fourth generation Washingtonian, a proud product
7 of D.C. Public Schools, a D.C. Public Schools
8 teacher, the ANC Commissioner for 7B-02, the
9 Chairperson of the LSAT at Capitol Hill
10 Montessori at Logan, and the proud parent of two
11 children at that school, one in 3rd grade and the
12 other in 2nd.

13 I'm here today as a member of that
14 school community that works tirelessly to ensure
15 that the District has a great Montessori school.

16 I come before you today because we
17 oppose the Mayor's FY '17 through '22 Capital
18 Improvement Plan, CIP, as it is proposed. In
19 addition to the policy issues that my fellow
20 parents mentioned, it is an under assessment in
21 our school's needs. As a community of parents,
22 we are pleased overall that the Mayor's current

1 budget proposal clearly responds to the needs to
2 focus on school modernization as a priority by
3 increasing funding for these projects. The
4 reality is this budget does not go far enough.
5 It leaves too many schools behind.

6 The CIP should cover all schools. Our
7 school, Capitol Hill Montessori, was taken off
8 the budget that had previously been slotted for
9 modernization in FY '19 with no rationale. There
10 are other groups of schools, many like our ours
11 in need of stabilization and modernization, but
12 were just told well, you have to wait until after
13 FY '22 and hope for the best.

14 Many of our children will be long gone
15 from the school by then. In FY '22, my son will
16 be a 9th grader and my daughter will be an 8th
17 grader. As an 18-year veteran teacher of DCPS, I
18 have seen time after time schools get passed over
19 for modernization. During my tenure, I have
20 observed the following: Birney, the first school
21 I worked at was not ever modernized until it was
22 purchased by a charter school. Garfield, the

1 second school I worked, had only surface
2 modernization completed. I remember once during
3 a rain storm the water poured into the building
4 because it was in such disrepair.

5 The next school I had the pleasure of
6 working at was Randle Highlands, that total
7 modernization has never been completed. Next,
8 there was Charles Young, not touched. Then there
9 was Savoy, where I can honestly say there had
10 been a total modernization which had the help and
11 financial backing of 21st Century Schools. My
12 current school, Noyes, was fully modernized in
13 the mid-2000s.

14 I say all this to say that we're in
15 need of a robust stabilization plan based on the
16 health and safety needs of all students. Too
17 many schools have serious health and safety
18 concerns including lead exposure, poor air
19 quality, lack of working heat and air
20 conditioning, high decibel levels, lack of
21 functioning windows, inadequate security
22 capability and the list goes on.

1 No child or teacher should have to be
2 in a school with these present health and safety
3 concerns. These are issues that need to be
4 addressed in Year 1 of any CIP and by measurable,
5 effective, and accountable management of ongoing
6 maintenance and improvement of existing schools,
7 not over five years or more.

8 We need a larger investment to
9 modernize all schools, not just some in six
10 years. Just as called for in the '20-'22
11 campaign for school modernization, the city
12 should commit to funding over the next six years
13 every school modernization.

14 We can't afford to leave any school
15 behind. Gone are the days of the city's
16 financial receivership and security. Our city's
17 economy is booming. We lead other cities with
18 three to four percent annual growth. And with
19 that we have a surplus in our reserve. In this
20 time of economic security and growth, we should
21 make our children and their schools our top
22 priority.

1 In addition, as an ANC Commissioner
2 for 7B-02, I'm asking for your support for the 20
3 percent of the school population that resides in
4 Ward 7. I have two very important constituents
5 that are counting on me with the support of this
6 body to ensure that this happens. We look
7 forward to working with you to achieve these
8 goals and set us on a path to safety and success
9 for every student and every community in the
10 nation's capital. budget.

11 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
12 much, Commissioner Brown. Thank you all for
13 coming. The Deputy Mayor is here and she's heard
14 your testimony which we greatly appreciate. Vice
15 President Williams sends her best regards and is
16 sorry that she isn't here this evening, but
17 thanks you for your testimony.

18 With that, we've got your written
19 testimony. You're welcome to stick around and
20 watch our dialogue with the Deputy Mayor and I
21 think Mr. Weedon will probably have some follow
22 up with your situation in particular. Thank you.

1 We're now going to call our final
2 panel of public comment witnesses. Ms. Merilyn
3 Holmes, Executive Director of Total Sunshine,
4 Incorporated. Peter McPherson is not available
5 this evening. Cedric Hendricks, School Without
6 Walls; Francis Stevens, LSAT and School
7 Improvement Team Chair; and IBe' Bulinda Crawley,
8 Historic Anacostia Arts Education.

9 Again, the microphone has a button.
10 Make sure the green light is on. The upper right
11 corner of the table has an indicator for you.
12 Green, you're good; yellow, you've got 30
13 seconds; and red, time is up. You've each got
14 three minutes starting with Ms. Holmes.

15 MS. HOLMES: Good evening. Once
16 again, I'm back. I'm Eleanor Holmes, the
17 Executive Director of Total Sunshine, promoting
18 smiles in the community. I tell you, as a
19 paramedic in the city for the last 20 years, it's
20 been really interesting and seeing the things
21 going on in the city. And it's really troubling
22 to see that so many young people have as many

1 issues as they do. But when I think about Total
2 Sunshine and being a medic to society and
3 promoting the smiles that we do for our young
4 scholars, it makes me happy. And it makes me
5 feel that our efforts in this eighth year of
6 supporting our top graduates is very much
7 worthwhile.

8 I'm going to talk to you a little bit
9 about a school grade incentive program supports
10 D.C.'s top graduates. I think it's a great segue
11 into me talking about this on this panel with the
12 young scholars that you were all honoring just a
13 small while ago. And I saw so many smiles, oh
14 yes, everyone was smiling and so happy and proud
15 to see these young people excel and going on to
16 Yale and great schools and doing great things.

17 And our D.C. top graduates, all 66
18 valedictorians and salutatorians -- there's my
19 picture. Yes, indeed, they will be going away to
20 college from public schools, from charter
21 schools, but they will be going to Harvard, to
22 Yale, to Stanford, and they absolutely need to be

1 supported.

2 This has been my mission with Total
3 Sunshine over the last eight years as a part of
4 our School Grade Incentive Program and not only
5 do we do this annual ceremony, we do anti-
6 violence, like coping skills seminars in schools
7 and we've been doing that for quite some time.
8 It's been 16 years of Total Sunshine in the city
9 and I'll tell you, it's been quite a road. I've
10 been doing a lot of outreach, trying to make sure
11 that we have the technology for these young
12 people.

13 And this year, Thursday, June 23rd,
14 I'm sure you guys have seen this everywhere.
15 I've been emailing it, and tweeting it, and
16 putting it on Instagram and everywhere. I've
17 been trying to reach out to everyone to make sure
18 that everybody knows that it's time to come out
19 and clap for our best, the cream of the crop that
20 we have from the city, the first, not last, the
21 ones that are doing homework right now.

22 Now we know that all of the

1 valedictorians and salutatorians have yet to be
2 determined because the final grade point averages
3 have yet to be tallied. However, these young
4 people are not just good students. They've been
5 getting straight As for the last four years at
6 least. And I'll tell you, that makes things
7 very, very, very worthy of support.

8 Now at Total Sunshine we try our best
9 to make sure we send them to college with a
10 laptop. Now historically, our funding,
11 unfortunately, has not been able to do that.
12 Last year we gave tablets. RG3 was the
13 contributor for that, his Family of 3 Foundation
14 made sure that these young people, all of our top
15 graduates, which is generally roughly 70 every
16 year and a technological piece for college.

17 Now I had to pray about what I was
18 going to say today, honestly, because I've gotten
19 some really mixed responses and some apathetic
20 responses from some people and places that I
21 thought would perhaps be so happy and willing to
22 support these young people, but I've got to tell

1 you, as I told one of our Council persons, I said
2 you know, I think this is what the Lord wants me
3 to be doing. And somehow I'm very passionate
4 about this. This is not my job. I'm a
5 paramedic. I'm not here to talk about
6 ventricular tachydysrhythmias and talk about
7 other things that have to do with medicine or
8 talk about anything else in my life. And it's
9 really, really busy. I've been moving and my
10 back is hurting and I'm tired. But this is so
11 important to me that I made sure that I got here
12 today, even today, despite everything and I'm
13 sure everyone has a super, hugely, busy schedule.

14 I just met with our Councilmember --
15 Chairman Mendelson this morning and it's been
16 quite a road. It really has. But I'm determined
17 that we're going to send these best young people
18 out of this city with what they need And if
19 someone wants to know more about our school grade
20 incentive program, they can feel free to email me
21 directly at totalsunshine.org. They can look at
22 totalsunshine.org. It's all over the web. Or

1 they can call the Total Sunshine hotline. It's
2 202/575-0462.

3 We're still looking for people that
4 are proud, that want to come out and clap for
5 these young people, just as hard as we were
6 clapping earlier, if not harder, or at least at
7 the same decibel level. And we have actually
8 started to get some of our support letters that
9 we generally give. Councilmember May,
10 Councilmember Grosso and also Councilmember
11 Evans, thank you for your letters of support.
12 Letters are great. Laptops are better. And
13 that's essentially what I'm here for.

14 Now I come out here every single month
15 and I will be back next month with a great
16 update. I'm hopeful on the support for these
17 young people because it will be right before the
18 ceremony. I have our city-wide list and I'll
19 just super briefly go over. Ward 1, 5 schools;
20 Ward 2; 2 schools; Ward 3; 1 school; Ward 4, 5
21 schools; Ward 5; 6 schools; Ward 6, 3 schools;
22 Ward 7, 6 schools; Ward 8, 5 schools, 66 top

1 graduates. They need laptops for college, you
2 all. Thank you.

3 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
4 Holmes. Ms. Crawley.

5 MS. CRAWLEY: Good evening. This is
6 the first time I've ever been here, so. My name
7 is IBe' Crawley. I am the proud parent of two
8 DCPS graduates. I'm also a retired Fairfax
9 County Public School International Baccalaureate
10 Coordinator. And now I am the Director of
11 Historic Anacostia Arts Education and it's an
12 education advocacy that I've started since I
13 retired.

14 So my comments today are regarding
15 advanced learners at Anacostia High School and
16 the programs that support their development.

17 So according to the most recent data
18 posted on Anacostia's home page, the percentage
19 of students who are enrolled in and passing AP
20 exams have doubled from three percent to six
21 percent. And as this improvement is applaudable,
22 we believe that Anacostia community's future

1 really does depend upon graduating of advanced
2 students from our local high school.

3 We need our students who are
4 graduating from our local high school to become
5 our business owners and to become our dentists
6 and our teachers and our leaders and our artists.
7 And so we believe that we have to support the
8 graduating class and we think that the business
9 community has to support advanced academics in
10 order to be able to grow our future leaders.

11 So these student leaders are important
12 to improving not only the link between their
13 elders, people who they live in the community
14 with, who we want to be able to continue to live
15 in the community because those students will
16 provide support for their family members, but
17 also they're the link to the future development.

18 So Historic Anacostia Arts education
19 offers a museum studies and digital literacy
20 project to outstanding Anacostia students who are
21 enrolled in their neighborhood school. Many
22 students who are advanced learners in the

1 Anacostia community oftentimes leave the
2 Anacostia community to attend schools outside of
3 our community. So very few of our advanced
4 learners stay in the community. But those who
5 stay in the community need support.

6 So we have established a cohort of 12
7 Anacostia students who have expressed interest in
8 the arts and in technology. Now sometimes those
9 students may not have been accepted in
10 alternative schools such as Walls or Wilson or
11 Banneker because they may need additional
12 literacy support and we're prepared to provide
13 that support. Because ultimately we want our
14 students to be able to play it forward by being
15 able to offer their new skills to the community
16 whether they're volunteering or participating in
17 community forums or even engaging with businesses
18 that seek to reach and communicate with those
19 high school age students.

20 So I see the light is red, so I'll
21 tell you what I want. I want you all to support
22 us by spreading the word that this is something

1 that we are passionate about and that we want to
2 -- we have 90,000 people in the District of
3 Columbia who read below the 5th grade level. We
4 can change that by starting with one small cohort
5 of 12. And support those kids so they can
6 support their families and those families can
7 grow.

8 So we want support and secondly, we
9 would like for you all to encourage that we be
10 able to have the summer youth employment program
11 support these 12 students because with financial
12 support, they're working throughout the summer
13 and being able to receive some sort of income.
14 It just kind of keeps that enthusiasm that we all
15 have when we receive some financial support for
16 our learning. I'm a life-long learner and so are
17 you. We all enjoy our support. Thank you.

18 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
19 Crawley. We really appreciate you coming down
20 this evening.

21 Mr. Hendricks.

22 MR. HENDRICKS: Members of the Board,

1 I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear
2 before you today. I'm a parent of two children
3 at the School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens.
4 I'm also proud to say I'm a parent of two
5 children that graduated from the high school as
6 well. And they're the reason that I'm at the
7 middle school right now. I had a chance to get
8 to know Richard Trogisch, our principal, back
9 during the earlier experience with my kids. And
10 I should say one of those children wound up with
11 one of those coveted Trachtenberg scholarships.
12 Went on to G.W. University and got a degree in
13 mechanical engineering.

14 So it's that promise that I saw and
15 that's what drew me to the school. Now we have
16 an exciting experience going on there. We have
17 an active parent body. I should say that
18 tonight, right now, our HSA is meeting and I'm
19 not able to be there with them. Today, for
20 example, were elections for our HSA as well as
21 our LSAT. I'm running for reelection and I don't
22 know yet whether I was reelected or not, but you

1 know, we're trying to be as much involved as we
2 can in the governance process of the school
3 system. And so that's why we take advantage of
4 every opportunity to appear and speak on behalf
5 of our school.

6 We, like the panel earlier, have
7 experienced some horror stories with respect to
8 the school modernization process. We've
9 experienced promises made and promises not kept.
10 And that's a very frustrating thing. You go to
11 meetings with the school people and the DGA
12 people at 8 o'clock or 8:30 in the morning, you
13 know, when you've got to still rush off and go to
14 work or you had to get up and get your kids ready
15 for school and handle all this. And then the
16 commitments made are not delivered on time and
17 you kind of are left in the dark, you know,
18 losing confidence in the process, losing trust in
19 the skills and capability of the people that the
20 school system sends out to meet with you and then
21 you wind up after they do what they do,
22 disappointed because of quality and timeliness of

1 the work just doesn't meet our expectations.

2 We're blessed that the Council, as you
3 all know, took some action to remedy some of the
4 problems that we have with our capital funding,
5 but it shouldn't have to be that way. You know,
6 where you engage a process that lacks a bit of
7 transparency and then you wind up having to go
8 play the political process out at the Council to
9 try and get fixed what was done wrong to you.
10 And then you wind up pitting one school against
11 the other, you know, and that isn't how it should
12 be.

13 Now you all probably saw this article
14 in today's City Paper that says Ward 4 parents
15 are upset by delayed school modernization. Well,
16 I venture to say that parents in every ward are
17 upset by the process of school modernization and
18 at some point that's got to be fixed. I think
19 what the Council is trying to do in terms of
20 bringing the rule of reason to the process some
21 objectivity, there's really where hope lies. I
22 think all of the recommendations made by the

1 previous panel are recommendations that I can
2 second. And if just some of that happens, I
3 think we'll all be in a better place next year
4 and we'll be anxious to keep our kids in the D.C.
5 Public School system rather than pull them out
6 and run to one of the private schools in town or
7 in the suburbs hoping that we can find something
8 better.

9 I want to keep my kids here in the
10 D.C. Public School system and that depends upon
11 whether or not DCPS will deliver on what they
12 promise. So thank you very much.

13 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
14 much. I thank all of you for coming here this
15 evening. If you haven't already done so, provide
16 copies of your testimony either to our clerk or
17 email them to our Executive Director, John-Paul
18 Hayworth. With that, I invite you to stick
19 around and listen to our dialogue with the Deputy
20 Mayor for Education on facilities, if you are
21 able.

22 We are fortunate to be joined this

1 evening by Deputy Mayor for Education, Ms. Jennie
2 Niles.

3 Deputy Mayor, if you would like to
4 come to the table, we'll -- I'll keep talking
5 while you get situated.

6 Effective teachers and able school
7 leadership are two important pillars to student
8 success. The third pillar, facilities, is just
9 as vital to student success. Without classrooms
10 that are safe, appropriate, and modern, education
11 will suffer. In the District, many of our school
12 facilities are decades old. We have spent
13 millions of dollars to modernize and repair
14 public schools. We have also allocated further
15 millions to ensure that charter schools have
16 appropriate space for their students.

17 Unfortunately, the process for
18 selecting which schools receive support and which
19 went without was not always done fairly, nor
20 equitably. The current administration and the
21 Council have made equitable school modernization
22 a priority and I want to applaud them for that

1 work.

2 I want to also urge them to continue
3 to ensure that every dollar of our school
4 modernization budget is spent in an approach that
5 will address immediate health and safety issues
6 at our schools and provide the best facilities in
7 the shortest time possible.

8 Our students deserve to be in
9 classrooms that they can be proud of. So do our
10 teachers and other school staff for that matter.

11 Deputy Mayor Niles, please begin when
12 you're ready.

13 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Good evening,
14 everybody. It's nice to be here. I think this
15 is the first time I've been here in this role
16 rather than in being a school leader. And
17 President Jacobson, would you like me to talk
18 about lead or should we just stick to
19 modernization?

20 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I think a brief
21 comment or discussion on lead would be great.
22 You sent us a wonderful letter that is now on the

1 State Board of Education website, but if you want
2 to spend a couple of minutes on that and then
3 move into facilities, that would be terrific.

4 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Great. Why don't
5 I do that. So thank you for including me tonight
6 and thank all of the folks who testified earlier.
7 When I took this new job, this wasn't exactly
8 what I thought I might be spending all of my time
9 doing, but of course, it's squarely within the
10 responsibilities of the Deputy Mayor for
11 Education. So I am here willingly, not just here
12 willingly, but in the job willingly and taking on
13 the responsibility for both of these things
14 willingly.

15 In terms of what's happened with our
16 water sampling, the way that I would describe it
17 is that we have had a crisis of communication and
18 a crisis of confidence. Thankfully, we have not
19 have a health crisis. And so while it is not
20 acceptable that the water sampling results were
21 not shared with parents in a timely way at our
22 schools, I am relieved that the blood screening

1 that's happened recently, along with the
2 additional sampling, which I can talk more about
3 in a minute, has not shown that we have an
4 increase or even a dramatic number of students
5 with elevated blood levels.

6 Let me be clear. Lead for students is
7 not safe and it is by no means something that I
8 am trying to push off, but I have been in
9 conversations daily with our Director of Health,
10 our Department of Health, as well as DOEE and
11 they have repeatedly reminded me that we do not
12 have a health crisis. We do, however, have a
13 crisis about communication, timely communication
14 to parents and a crisis of confidence that this
15 is not the only item that is bringing on this
16 crisis of confidence.

17 So to date, we have had actually
18 nearly 13,000 water samples taken out of 109 of
19 116 DCPS buildings. We have 57 schools where we
20 already have the results back and we have seen
21 that we have 29 schools that have actionable
22 levels of non-drinking water sources and 21

1 schools that have drinking sources. Every
2 drinking source that we have found an actionable
3 level, we will remediate with a filter and
4 retest. And in the mean time that water source
5 is turned off.

6 The process itself, and the Board had
7 shared with me a number of questions about this,
8 rather than go through those questions in detail,
9 you'll be happy to know that we expect tomorrow
10 to post an FAQ series of answers to the questions
11 that you all posed, as well as questions that
12 other school communities have posed. There is
13 one currently there, but we're refreshing it and
14 so we expect that to be on the website tomorrow.
15 So I think that that will answer lots of the
16 technical questions, although you're certainly
17 welcome to ask me and you'll see how much my
18 expertise in water testing has grown.

19 One of the things that the -- the
20 critical element that was not happening before
21 was that DGC was performing the water testing.
22 DOEE was supervising the water testing, but DCPS

1 was not getting the results. And it's actually
2 DCPS that we want to be responsible for
3 communicating with school communities. And so in
4 this recent round of testing, every set of
5 results we've gotten has gone directly to DCPS.
6 DCPS has been sending out one of three letters.
7 One letter is all of the samples came back and
8 these are all of the drinkable water sources in
9 each of our DCPS school buildings.

10 If there were no actionable letters,
11 there's a letter that goes home and says we got
12 all of the results, no actionable levels.

13 There's another letter that says we did find
14 actionable levels. It tells you where and says
15 that it's going to be remediated. And then
16 there's a third letter for after we go back and
17 retest that we will send out to say and here's
18 the retest results.

19 Each school will get also detailed
20 information about all of their water sources and
21 what those tests are. Those are going to be
22 posted on a weekly basis, so if you were to go to

1 the DGS website right now, you'll see there are
2 about 12 schools listed and as we get results in,
3 we're posting them, not just for the school
4 community, but also for the public at large.

5 We also have carried out blood
6 screenings and we've done that because -- not
7 because we had a health crisis, though it is
8 confirmed that we haven't, but because we did not
9 communicate clearly with parents in a timely way.
10 And we do not want parents to be worried about
11 the health of their students in our buildings.
12 Nothing is more important than the health of our
13 students, and so we wanted to do this to make
14 sure that students could answer the question if
15 they had any question about the lead results for
16 their student.

17 Excuse me, I'm just looking at my
18 notes for a minute. Great. We have done over
19 300 blood screenings and we have not found any
20 levels above the CDC level that's attributable to
21 the water in schools. That is good news. We
22 also will be having three -- excuse me, four

1 city-wide blood screening opportunities in
2 partnership with DOEE in the next month and DCPS
3 families are going to get a letter about that.
4 DOEE is going to publicize it as well as I shared
5 it with the email with you.

6 One of them will be a truck touch and
7 so we know that that's a particularly good place
8 for little people to both touch trucks and
9 perhaps get their fingers touched by a small
10 sampling needle which I know is not the best
11 combo in the world, but certainly -- one of the
12 things I should mention and while I'm not a
13 doctor, I've certainly now heard quite a bit
14 about lead and we know that lead is most
15 detrimental to students in their earliest years,
16 so the first and second years of life. And we
17 have mandatory lead testing until age six.

18 One's body digests -- digest isn't the
19 right word, sorry. What's the medical term I
20 kept hearing? Anyway, responds to lead in
21 different ways and adults are not nearly as
22 susceptible as children are. That is not to say

1 that we can have actionable levels of lead
2 happening in any of our drinkable water sources
3 in our schools.

4 We will also be testing -- we've just
5 begun testing on all of our DPR sites and they
6 will be done before our first camps begin June
7 19th.

8 Why don't I stop for a minute and see
9 if there are questions about lead and then I can
10 move over to modernization. Would that make the
11 most sense?

12 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I prefer to do
13 all of your testimony and then do rounds of
14 questions in order that board members appeared.
15 Is that okay with you?

16 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Sure.

17 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Wonderful.
18 Proceed with the remainder of your testimony.

19 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Great. School
20 modernization. This has definitely been one of
21 the most complex subjects in taking on this role
22 and it's also one of the most important because

1 making sure that our kids have safe, healthy, and
2 actually exciting buildings that engender the
3 learning that we want all kids to experience is
4 critical.

5 There are a number of things, while
6 many folks have been frustrated with various
7 aspects of the Capital Improvement Plan, I want
8 to point out a couple of the things that we put
9 forward in this Capital Improvement Plan which
10 are improvements and will help us move towards, I
11 think, getting to where we need to go.

12 The first is that in past Capital
13 Improvement Plans, there were not sufficient
14 funds to modernize the buildings that were listed
15 in the Capital Improvement Plans. This Capital
16 Improvement Plan has done two things. One is
17 moved away from having phased approaches to
18 modernizing buildings to a full modernization
19 approach. The reason we want to do this is
20 because it's more cost effective and it is more
21 time effective.

22 The second thing we wanted to do was

1 make sure we had the proper amount of money, the
2 appropriate amount of money in the budget when
3 the school was listed as a modernization. So for
4 those schools that are in the CIP, you'll notice
5 that some of them have doubled in size. Their
6 budgets have doubled in size and with really
7 dramatic increases. And that was to make sure
8 that we could actually do the full modernizations
9 of those buildings.

10 We also -- although I certainly heard
11 it criticized before, we built the sequencing of
12 what buildings based on objective criteria and it
13 was based on Councilmember Grosso's work from
14 last year. Perhaps not everybody would agree on
15 exactly what criteria, but it was objective and
16 it was transparent. And that was another
17 component that was really vital.

18 Also, I think, I should have probably
19 started with this in the beginning. The Mayor
20 added \$220 millions in FY '17 and '18 to be able
21 to do these full modernizations. And when we
22 started this process before she had decided to do

1 that, everything looked dramatically bleaker.

2 I'm pleased to say that 98 out of our
3 112 schools will be modernized by the time that
4 the CIP ends. We also will have finished all of
5 the DCPS stand alone middle schools and all of
6 the DCPS comprehensive and application high
7 schools.

8 There's no way -- I want to make sure
9 that I also say every single building that has
10 not been modernized needs to be modernized. I
11 have gotten to visit all of the school buildings
12 and that is clear and it's clear to the Mayor as
13 well. So I think that I will stop there so that
14 you all can ask me questions about the
15 modernization process.

16 I just want to flag one thing which is
17 I am prepared to talk about the process and the
18 overall CIP. I'm not in a position most likely
19 to answer questions about specific buildings,
20 although I can take notes and see if I can get
21 back to you. But unfortunately, my head does not
22 remember all of the specifics about all of the

1 buildings.

2 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you so
3 much, Deputy Mayor. We really appreciate you
4 being here this evening.

5 Board members, we're going to go in
6 the order in which you arrived. We're going to
7 start with Ms. Jolly from Ward 8 and then move to
8 Mr. Weedon from Ward 6, followed by Ms.
9 Wattenberg. Let's do a six-minute round if
10 that's okay with you and we'll start with Ms.
11 Jolly.

12 MS. JOLLY: How is your office
13 planning to involve parents in the communities
14 where schools are actually at -- the people who
15 actually use the buildings in the modernization
16 planning?

17 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: So one of the
18 other things that we did that I should have
19 mentioned in making a change from previous years
20 to this year is we have made it clear that DCPS
21 is the final decision maker about -- rather than
22 DGS -- in terms of modernizing buildings. So

1 this is an important thing for a number of
2 reasons. When schools have been modernized,
3 there have been lots of questions about why have
4 there been cost overruns? Why have there been
5 program decisions this way? Why have there been
6 program decisions that way?

7 When I arrived, one of the things that
8 seemed clear to me was that because there was no
9 single point accountability around this, that
10 there was lots of confusion, so we have clarified
11 that accountability and it is with DCPS, so DGS
12 is in the service of DCPS.

13 So that then goes to the notion of our
14 CIP process which is when community and school
15 leadership works together. The CIP process, this
16 year we're transitioning, so that all CIP
17 processes will be led by DCPS, not by DGS. And
18 DGS certainly made valiant efforts to try and
19 lead those processes, but I certainly have been
20 in a number of conversations where people have
21 reported getting different information from DGS
22 and DCPS. So this way we're also streamlining

1 the communication around it.

2 So the CIP process has been re-
3 envisioned and there has been new staffing at
4 DCPS to be able to lead that. I think we still
5 have a handful of CIP teams that are run by DGS,
6 rather than DCPS in this transition year, but
7 going forward, we will have all of the CIP
8 processes run by DCPS, so community engagement in
9 the CIP process.

10 I probably need to -- I've seen -- I'm
11 trying to conjure in my head as I'm talking, the
12 diagram that describes the different meetings
13 we've set out so that the CIP process -- and this
14 is actually on the DCPS website, the various
15 different meetings and their purpose for each one
16 relative to engaging the community. I can get
17 back to you with further -- that's not my area of
18 expertise, but I can certainly -- we can both
19 look at the website and see what other questions
20 you may have about it.

21 MS. JOLLY: Thank you, Deputy Mayor
22 Niles.

1 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Mr. Weedon, and
2 then Ms. Wattenberg.

3 MR. WEEDON: First, I'd just like to
4 say thank you. Thank you for joining us. Thank
5 you for all the work you're doing in both these
6 issues. It's just critically important.

7 I've heard from probably a majority of
8 the schools in Ward 6, some with high lead tests,
9 others without. But across the ward, there's a
10 lot of concern. And I think your statement about
11 this not being a health crisis, but being a
12 communications, and probably more importantly,
13 being a public competence crisis is 100 percent
14 accurate.

15 And I think that builds off of many of
16 the questions that families have around the CIP
17 process and school modernizations and broken
18 promises there.

19 A quick follow up to my colleague from
20 Ward 8, CIP meetings are public, correct?

21 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: I think so. I'm
22 embarrassed to say the CIP process is not -- I

1 did not remember to study that before I came.

2 Although I have known it once.

3 MR. WEEDON: I have heard multiple
4 things. I am a member of the Eliot-Hine CIP, so
5 I'm involved there. I've been at the Maury CIP.
6 I've been kicked out of multiple CIP meetings
7 which, of course, I refused to leave because as
8 Ward 6 went through the process last year, walk-
9 ins we received information that they were public
10 and that under open meetings they were supposed
11 to be.

12 But I think there's still a little bit
13 of confusion within the staff and within the
14 broader community whether or not they are. I
15 certainly treat them as such and I believe that
16 they should be. So if we can find a clear answer
17 to that.

18 And as importantly as communicating it
19 to the public, ensuring that the staff leading
20 those meetings are aware and they do a better job
21 of communicating it to school communities and to
22 the public would be very helpful.

1 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Great.

2 MR. WEEDON: Around lead, DGS has
3 posted lead testing results for a handful of
4 students tested between April 30th and May 4th.
5 Miner's test from April 29th are not among the
6 tests that have been published. Is there any
7 reason for that and when can we expect Miner's
8 results to be published?

9 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: I can -- in the
10 midst of this I'll have -- so Shane Wells from my
11 office has just joined me. So half my brain, so
12 yes, they are open. Sorry, CIP team meetings are
13 open. Shane just helped me confirm that.

14 MR. WEEDON: Thank you.

15 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: We will look to
16 see when Miner's results are due in. We will
17 check before I say it's going to be this week,
18 but I am 99 percent sure.

19 MR. WEEDON: But just to remind you,
20 Miner was one of the schools that was originally
21 identified, so timely communication there is very
22 important.

1 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Yes, I agree.

2 MR. WEEDON: Just in the last few days
3 and this was brought to me by a parent, in
4 results that were released just this last week,
5 schools including Walker-Jones in Ward 6 and
6 Wheatley have major violations. At least three
7 at Walker-Jones and this is the May 11th report,
8 labeled as fountains with readings of 168, 89,
9 and 29.

10 Can you walk us through what's been
11 done with that community and the broader
12 community to make sure that people are aware of
13 these results and the maintenance that's going on
14 there?

15 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Sure. Let me
16 just go back to Miner for just a minute. So not
17 only do we need to get -- we'll confirm that
18 we're going to have those results this week, but
19 I'm also meeting, I'm going out to the Miner
20 community next week to meet with the parents
21 there.

22 In terms of -- sorry, you were

1 mentioning Walker-Jones?

2 MR. WEEDON: Walker-Jones.

3 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: So for every
4 school, once we receive the results from -- once
5 DGS receives the results from the testing
6 company, we immediately send that to DCPS. DCPS
7 reviews it and sends out a letter, one of those
8 three that I mentioned. If it's the one that
9 says there's an actionable result, it actually
10 lists where the actionable result is in the
11 building and that's sent to every parent in the
12 school. And so they know then.

13 What happens on the DGS side is that
14 they immediately make sure that the water source
15 is off. They remediate it which for drinking
16 sources is a filter and then they retest it
17 before it's opened again.

18 MR. WEEDON: And what's the time line
19 for that water source to be shut off?

20 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Immediate.

21 MR. WEEDON: Is that 24 hours? Is
22 that immediate when it comes back?

1 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Yes, within 24
2 hours, if not sooner.

3 MR. WEEDON: And that's for -- well,
4 I've got two questions. One, how do we determine
5 what's a drinking source? I noticed at Walker-
6 Jones there was also some outdoor spigots that
7 were not labeled as drinking sources. I can tell
8 you that my children have picked up the hose and
9 drank out of the outdoor spigots at multiple
10 schools. Why is that not labeled as a possible
11 drinking source?

12 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Sure, so drinking
13 sources always include water fountains, sinks,
14 kitchen sinks and where students are.

15 The outdoor sources are particularly
16 difficult to -- we will tag them to say that they
17 are not for drinking, figuring out how to
18 remediate them is -- it's not -- we're figuring
19 out how to do that quickly.

20 The other sources we are shutting off
21 showers as we figure out how to remediate
22 showers. For boiler room and for other areas of

1 the building where we don't expect students to be
2 -- excuse me, where students are never expected
3 to be, we are -- those are not getting a filter.

4 Let me talk for a minute about the way
5 that -- so each source has two different water
6 samples taken from it, a first one and then after
7 a minute of the water going through a second one.
8 Most, the vast majority, even the actionable
9 water readings that we have found have been in
10 the first sample and actually do not have an
11 actionable level in the second sample because
12 flushing the water source is one of the ways to
13 rid it of lead because one of the reasons that
14 lead is in the water is because water has been
15 sitting there and it's been leaching out from
16 some part of the pipe right there.

17 So to answer your question, the
18 outdoor hose bibs, we are figuring out what to
19 do. We need to label them to make sure that
20 folks and kids know that that's not for drinking
21 source and there will just have to be some pre-
22 planning about how to make sure that we have any

1 of the potable water sources from any of the
2 sinks, any of the kitchen sinks, any of the water
3 fountains for kids.

4 And then those outdoor bibs, often
5 after it's run through, it has a level below
6 actionable, but I know that we want to make sure
7 that we don't have kids ingesting it even if it's
8 soon to be not actionable.

9 MR. WEEDON: Right. I'm over time,
10 but we'll come back. I think we're doing
11 multiple rounds.

12 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: If the Deputy
13 Mayor has time, I'd love to do a second round, a
14 shorter second round.

15 MR. WEEDON: Thank you.

16 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Let's go to Ms.
17 Wattenberg, and then Ms. Lord.

18 MS. WATTENBERG: Hi. And thanks again
19 for coming, taking the time to do this. So I
20 have a question. So there's more money coming in
21 thanks to the Mayor's budget to support a larger
22 capital budget which is terrific.

1 One general question is you guys have
2 a protocol that's made a list of schools and
3 their order and the Council has a protocol and a
4 list and I can tell you most people that I'm in
5 touch with find that the Council protocols and
6 the order ended up being more related to reality
7 that they face and I'm curious about how you see
8 the difference between the two, why they are and
9 whether there's some possibility for them to be
10 better consolidated.

11 Somewhat related to that is in the new
12 proposal where you go to full modernizations
13 instead of the interim phases, what happens to
14 schools that have had a full modernization or
15 maybe aren't due for a full modernization, but
16 have a substantial set of repair issues that are
17 beyond their regular maintenance budget? Roofs
18 and so on. How does that fit into the time line?

19 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Sure. So the
20 last part of your question is what we describe as
21 what's needed in the stabilization budget. And
22 so there's a modernization budget. And then

1 there's a line that allows for roofs and other
2 significant HVAC systems that wouldn't be
3 expected to come out of the school's budget
4 itself. Those are anticipated and scheduled with
5 DGS so that -- and so many of those things, for
6 instance, the windows at Logan are in the
7 stabilization budget and are already budgeted for
8 to happen in FY '17.

9 Forgive me, the first question you
10 asked was about the two different sets of
11 criteria?

12 MS. WATTENBERG: Yes, yes.

13 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: I think I
14 anticipate that going forward, we will be able to
15 have a set of criteria that we are in full
16 agreement about. The criteria that the
17 administration put forward was as thoughtful as
18 we wanted to make it as good as we could make.
19 Councilmember Grosso added some other pieces and
20 nuances and there's some value to that as well.

21 And so I think that going forward, I
22 think that we can keep -- we have worked well

1 together, the administration and the Education
2 Committee and so I anticipate that we'll be able
3 to keep improving that as we go forward and we're
4 getting better and better at this, I hope.

5 MS. WATTENBERG: Do I have time for
6 one comment? And then I probably won't need a
7 second round. This is really just a comment
8 which is when I look at the school that's most on
9 my mind, there's just a constant issue with the
10 budget estimates that get put forward not being
11 realistic which -- and it happens over and over
12 again causing a great deal of cost in terms of
13 having to go back and get new drawings and
14 enormous, enormous exhaustion and cynicism on the
15 part of the CIP committees and the communities.

16 I don't know a lot about construction.
17 I don't understand why this is so chronic and it
18 seems to be -- and I just wonder as you go
19 forward, you have this new protocol with DCPS
20 leading and so on. Is that something that you
21 have some optimism that you can crack that nut
22 and get that fixed?

1 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: So I think there
2 are two issues. One is that we are reevaluating
3 the educational specs which is the generic
4 program that we would have for elementary, middle
5 school, high school. And we want to be using
6 that as a rule of thumb so that's another piece
7 of what will make us more efficient going forward
8 and also making sure that the educational program
9 decisions are driving the building design and
10 cost.

11 The second thing is is that so while
12 I had in my prior life I had the good fortune to
13 rebuild or build three buildings and when it's
14 designed, when it's priced, I had never
15 experienced and I've never met anybody that
16 didn't experience the price being more than they
17 had planned. I had never experienced this with
18 somebody doing a house remodeling or any kind of
19 construction.

20 And so one of the things we definitely
21 by having ed. specs by also using the most up-to-
22 date numbers. As you may know, one of the ways

1 that you estimate the amount -- so for our
2 buildings that are in '17-'18 that have been
3 planned, the numbers of how much that costs are
4 quite good because we have a very detailed
5 design. Even in the out years, we have a
6 formula, but it's not designed yet, and so we
7 have tried to do our best and this would be
8 industry practice to say this is how much per
9 square foot we anticipate it being and so this is
10 how much it's going to cost.

11 There will never be a time where it's
12 perfect, but we should absolutely be getting
13 better and better at having both the estimate and
14 understand that accuracy and then making it clear
15 whether that's what the budget line is, whether
16 that's accurate or not, relative to this process.
17 So I do think that we're going to improve in that
18 area.

19 MS. WATTENBERG: Thanks.

20 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Ms. Lord and then
21 Mr. Contreras.

22 MS. LORD: Thank you so much and thank

1 you so much for being here. There are probably
2 no two more contentious issues of concern in
3 every community I have been to for a number of
4 years. And I can't help but reflecting on our
5 science students being here tonight and thinking
6 they're the ones who are really going to solve
7 these problems with their science and engineering
8 skills, facilities, lead in the water.

9 So the bigger picture is what can we
10 do to lay a better foundation. And my first
11 question having suffered through the lead in the
12 water crisis the first go round when they turned
13 the taps off during the Valentine Day dance and
14 didn't turn them on again until the kids had left
15 school is -- will every water source in every
16 school be tested? And is there going to be a
17 sort of -- are we going to make this part of the
18 routine?

19 You mentioned making schools that are
20 healthy, safe and actually exciting to be in.
21 The safety sort of things like we're lurching
22 from oh wow, they tested high for lead and then

1 there's no process for not just communicating
2 with the parents, but for actually addressing it
3 in real time. So if there is sort of a big
4 picture plan, that would be great to know.

5 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Yes, absolutely.

6 In fact, thank you for asking that because I had
7 not -- so a couple of things. One is that we
8 test annually for lead in D.C. and we have in the
9 past and while we have done a terrible job of
10 communicating it, we were doing those tests and
11 seeing the results and making sure we were taking
12 action.

13 Going forward though, we are going to
14 do a much better job in that we have instituted a
15 bar coding system so that every drinkable water
16 source and these are the sources that are where
17 kids are, so this includes the science lab sink.
18 This includes the sinks in the classrooms. This
19 includes all the drinking fountains, now have a
20 bar code on them. And so part of this sampling
21 process is there's a whole tagging system that
22 goes on and then there's the sample, so you can

1 match the sample to the bar code. And we will be
2 able to do that year over year. And so we'll be
3 able to see that same water source and be really
4 clear that it's that same water source and what
5 was its level last year versus this year. And we
6 didn't have the ability to do that in the past.

7 We also will need to have -- we will
8 put in place a robust system to make sure that we
9 are changing the filters because the filters are
10 a permanent solution to having actual lead
11 levels, but we need to change the filters or else
12 that's not a permanent solution. And so once we
13 get through this blitz of DCPS and DPR buildings
14 this summer, we will be able to step back and say
15 is the level of 15 parts per billion where we
16 need it to be?

17 What's going to be our process to make
18 sure -- right now we certainly have it scheduled,
19 but how can we do this in a proactive way? How
20 are we going to make sure that the communication
21 protocols that we're using now we're always using
22 so that DGS gets that information right to DCPS

1 and DCPS can share it with families.

2 So I think that there will also be the
3 opportunity or let me say it this way. I will
4 shape the opportunity so that we can get input
5 from the community this summer about the longer
6 term lead protocols and solutions.

7 MS. LORD: And what about the charter
8 schools? Is this just the D.C. Public Schools?

9 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: So the charter
10 schools, PCSB actually hired a series of firms to
11 make sure that all of the charter schools had
12 given this information about their water results.
13 And so they, too, have been testing and if they
14 find actionable results quickly we're meeting
15 them as well.

16 We're not seeing, as with DCPS, we're
17 not seeing a health crisis. We're not seeing an
18 aberrant number of actionable water sources, but
19 it has been important to make sure that all of
20 the schools have had this done. This is sort of
21 our baseline. And now from here, we can make
22 sure that we're doing it annually.

1 MS. LORD: And who is actually doing
2 the testing. Are we sending our water samples to
3 Virginia Tech's Marc Edwards' water quality lab
4 the way Flint, Michigan and the way we did in
5 2007?

6 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: I'd have to
7 check. I actually don't know the names of the
8 labs. I think that we're working with two or
9 three. We're working with two. And perhaps not
10 surprisingly, the volume that we're doing with
11 13,000 samples in 4 weeks and we're not even done
12 yet. And given Flint and given some other places
13 that are doing this, we needed to make sure that
14 the folks who we're working with were ready for
15 us and that are doing it as quickly as they can.

16 MS. LORD: So eventually, we may get
17 to the point where every parent can go to a
18 website and see what the water quality was, how
19 it's improved, what the remediation was. We
20 would be able to have that sort of transparency?

21 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: And right now if
22 you go to the DGS website, you can see the 12 or

1 15 schools that we already have the results up
2 for and that has the transparency there. We will
3 need to, if there are any actionable sources, we
4 will also need to update even those documents
5 after the retesting is done so that's
6 illustrated. But right now, parents can have
7 that information for those schools.

8 MS. LORD: I'll save my facilities
9 questions for round two. Thank you.

10 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
11 Lord. We'll go with Mr. Contreras and then Ms.
12 Anderson.

13 MR. CONTRERAS: Thank you. I have a
14 few questions about the on-site blood testing at
15 schools for students. So it says here that DGS
16 found actionable levels of lead in 29 schools for
17 drinking water and then in 21 schools for non-
18 drinking water sources. But it says that on-site
19 blood testing is only happening at 14 schools
20 that had actionable results. What's the
21 disparity there? Why are a number of schools
22 like they have actionable results, but they're

1 not being provided with on-site testing?

2 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Sure. So we are
3 providing on-site testing to schools that we did
4 not give timely results to the parents for. And
5 so when a school -- if a school were to have
6 actionable results, it is not typical that we
7 then go and have all of the students screened.
8 That's not usual for a number of different
9 reasons, one of which is that over the last
10 number of years, DOE has not found any case of
11 elevated blood levels in a student to be linked
12 to water in school. And it's actually the amount
13 of water that you would need to drink to have an
14 elevated level from water is very, very high and
15 typically it would be a source that is the only
16 source a child would get.

17 And from a school's -- when a student
18 is in school, it is virtually impossible that
19 they would only drink from one source at the
20 school. They would have it at home. They would
21 have it in different places.

22 So we wanted to -- because we had not

1 communicated with those families in a timely way,
2 and the results were older, we wanted to make
3 sure that those parents had a quick way to -- if
4 they so chose, to have a blood screening done.
5 And so we offered it to any of the 14 schools
6 that we had not done that communication with and
7 we've had three -- and we have two more on deck.
8 And the other schools did not ask for the on-site
9 screening.

10 And what we are also doing is
11 providing four days for city wide for any parent
12 in any school to get a free blood screening. The
13 typical way, going forward, what we will do is
14 we'll get annual screening -- excuse me. We'll
15 get the water sampling results. We'll
16 immediately send that out to families. If a
17 family has a concern about their individual
18 child, then they will actually go to their
19 pediatrician or go directly to their primary care
20 physician.

21 We will have for zero through six year
22 olds, I think that DOE often has had

1 opportunities for city wide, but it will be the
2 typical way of doing it once we tell parents in a
3 timely way, have them go if they would like to,
4 to their primary care physician.

5 MR. CONTRERAS: So once we get results
6 for beyond the 57 schools that currently have
7 results up to the 116 total, will the option for
8 schools to take advantage of on-site testing be
9 made available to additional ones that are found
10 to have actionable levels that were previously
11 alerted?

12 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Yes. So we are
13 offering the on site only to the 14 schools where
14 we did not communicate with parents in a timely
15 way. That's why we're doing the on site.

16 Because of the actionable levels, we do not worry
17 that there's a health crisis because we don't
18 have any evidence that there's a health crisis.

19 But we are providing the city wide so that any
20 parent of a student who goes to a school that has
21 an actionable level, even if we're giving them
22 that communication this spring right away, they

1 have the opportunity to have a blood screening.

2 MR. CONTRERAS: Okay, so beyond the 57
3 that we currently have results for, if other ones
4 were found to have actionable levels of lead that
5 hadn't been previously reported to the school and
6 to the parents, there wouldn't be any I guess
7 funding provided for on-site testing?

8 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Thankfully, it's
9 not a funding issue at all. We have found the
10 funds. Thankfully, that's not a barrier at all.
11 It's really when we communicate in a timely way
12 with parents, the way that parents then follow up
13 if they have concerns about their individual
14 child is with their primary care physician.

15 The reason that we are not asking
16 parents to only do that right now is because we
17 have a crisis of confidence. We didn't do the
18 right thing in terms of the communication and so
19 to build parents' confidence and to make sure
20 that they are not worried, we want to make sure
21 that schools that didn't know that, even though
22 some of our schools -- anyway, so that they -- if

1 we didn't communicate well, they have an easy way
2 to do the on-site screening.

3 But going forward for the blitz of
4 schools that we just did, because we are
5 communicating with them within 48 hours of
6 getting the results back, if not 24 hours, we are
7 not going to be providing on-site testing, excuse
8 me, on-site screening for students if a school
9 has actionable levels. But we are providing four
10 city-wide opportunities for any of those families
11 to go and get free screening.

12 MR. CONTRERAS: And where can families
13 find information about when and where those
14 screenings are?

15 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Sure. So there's
16 a letter going home I think this week to every
17 DCPS parent about the blood screening and the
18 city-wide efforts. DOEE is also going to be
19 advertising and publicizing those four events.

20 I think I have it in front of me. I
21 can even list it for you right now. So Saturday,
22 May 21st from 9 to 1 at UDC East Capitol Urban

1 Farm. Saturday, June 4th at the truck touch.
2 Saturday, June 11th from 10 to 4 in Michigan
3 Park. And Saturday, June 25th from 11 to 3, the
4 Raymond Rec Center. This is in the email that I
5 shared with the State Board of Ed members. So if
6 you need a copy, we definitely -- I hope that if
7 you -- please let me know if you didn't get it,
8 just to make sure that you did.

9 Excuse me, the letter to all families
10 went out today to all of the -- about the blood
11 screening from DCPS to all DCPS families.

12 MR. CONTRERAS: Thank you.

13 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: And thank you for
14 that letter. It is on our website and folks can
15 find at sboe.dc.gov as well.

16 We'll go now to Ms. Anderson from Ward
17 4 and then Ms. Wilson Phelan from Ward 1.

18 MS. ANDERSON: Good evening, and thank
19 you for coming tonight. We really appreciate
20 your coming and speaking to the Board about these
21 matters.

22 I'd like to move to school

1 modernization issues, but in much of my thinking
2 about school modernization and about --
3 particularly in the District of Columbia, I rely
4 a lot on data that's been compiled by a number of
5 research institutes and think tanks, and others
6 who among them the 21st Century Schools fund
7 which published many of its other reports, a
8 review of the literature on the impact of school
9 facilities on student and teacher performance and
10 student and teacher satisfaction and a lot of
11 different aspects.

12 But in 2010, it published a report on
13 research on the impact of school facilities on
14 students and teachers and it was a summary of
15 studies published since 2000, the beginning of
16 the 21st century.

17 And it found, among many things, that
18 in schools with poor facilities, students
19 attended less days on average and therefore had
20 lower grades in ELA and math standardization
21 tests. Attendance was found to be a full
22 mediator for grades and grades in the English

1 Language Arts and a partial mediator for grades
2 in math. It also found from a review of --
3 comprehensive review of the literature that
4 there's a significant relationship between
5 building condition and test scores, significant
6 relationships between principal satisfaction,
7 student satisfaction, teacher satisfaction, just
8 a number of other factors.

9 And I noted that in the budget
10 recommendations that were approved recently, the
11 percentage of students that was considered at
12 risk as defined -- and this is from the budget
13 recommendations from DCPS, the percent of
14 students considered at risk as defined by the
15 Fair Funding Act of 2014 is no longer a bonus
16 category and has been moved to the community
17 category.

18 I'm wondering, what was the rationale
19 for moving that out of that category -- at least
20 basically kind of devaluating the criteria for
21 student, overall student achievement at a school
22 as a factor for -- devaluating that as a factor in

1 determining the -- I guess the ranking of a
2 school within the modernization list, the
3 priority list. That concerns me because at the
4 same time we are looking to focus and as the
5 State Board of Education we tend to focus -- we
6 look to focus on the lowest performing schools
7 and try and look at what we can do to turn those
8 schools around when really that seems kind of
9 counter intuitive that that consideration is not
10 being taken -- given as much weight as some other
11 factors in making a determination about whether
12 certain schools, perhaps some of the lowest
13 performing schools are not higher up on the list
14 of schools that are prioritized for
15 modernization.

16 Can you explain? Do you have any
17 ideas why that rationale -- can you give me some
18 justification for that rationale?

19 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: It sounds like
20 the percentage changed from the administration's
21 set of criteria in sequencing to the Council's.
22 Unfortunately, I don't think I can describe the

1 Council's and it went from -- so I am in
2 agreement that the percentage of at risk and
3 special ed and ELL students is hugely important.
4 So the administration had weighted that much
5 greater than it ended up being in the Council's,
6 but I think that as we look to go forward with
7 the right set of criteria and I would describe it
8 as tweaking at this point rather than
9 fundamentally changing in any way, so I think
10 that you would be an advocate for tweaking that
11 component, if I'm hearing you correctly, going
12 forward that that category have a higher
13 weighting than it currently has.

14 MS. ANDERSON: Less tweaking, more
15 twisting. I mean I'm a little more urgent and
16 strident about it, I think, in terms of how that
17 needs to be adjusted.

18 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Thanks for that
19 feedback. The only other thing actually I wanted
20 to mention is -- two things. One is that I was
21 happy that we could work with the 21st Century
22 Funds on their data because they're doing really

1 important work so that we can look at
2 modernization.

3 The other thing, too, is that our
4 office created a set of maps that show the CIP,
5 the current one that we're going -- the CIP for
6 '17 through '22, as well as what modernizations
7 have happened for every school, for every DCPS
8 school. So if you go to the
9 mayor.dc.gov/fairshot under maps, you'll see that
10 we have every single building, DCPS building, and
11 what modernization it's had to date as well as
12 some other key information about it. And the
13 CIP, as the Mayor put forward, it actually has
14 not -- when the budget is finally passed, if
15 there are any adjustments, we'll make them then,
16 at that time.

17 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
18 Anderson. Ms. Wilson Phelan, and then Mr.
19 Jones.

20 MS. WILSON PHELAN: Thank you and I
21 echo my colleagues in our appreciation for you
22 coming tonight.

1 I think I want first speak to the fact
2 that the one school where lead was found in Ward
3 1, the principal acted immediately and I think
4 actually has assuaged many of the concerns of
5 parents, so I just want to shout out her at Marie
6 Reed in terms of really addressing the situation
7 head on, and telling our parents what she is
8 doing about that and can be a model for how we
9 communicate in the future.

10 In talking about modernization, I know
11 that the administration had heard lots and lots
12 from Garrison and given that it resides in Ward
13 2, I'm going to leave that to my Ward 2 colleague
14 to talk about. But any broader topic that does
15 include the universe of Garrison where many Ward
16 1 residents go, I'd love to hear your thoughts on
17 the value, the role of public input in the
18 process of prioritization. Of course, every
19 parent is going to advocate for his or her school
20 to be modernized. And I recognize that that puts
21 decision makers in a tricky position in terms of
22 weighing public opinion.

1 At the same time, there have been a
2 series of promises made, promises broken, as it
3 relates to Garrison Elementary where I've seen in
4 other schools in Ward 1 that hasn't been the case
5 actually, where there has been pretty decent
6 follow through and when things have had to
7 change, there's been clear communication to the
8 families. And I think that's been really
9 critical for helping families understand why
10 decisions are made that are made. And I'd just
11 love to hear any thoughts that you have about how
12 the public should weigh in on this process in an
13 effective way where they can feel that their
14 voices are heard.

15 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: So I think in
16 many ways I'm sort of a systemic thinker, so the
17 first piece is that we have criteria that is
18 objective and transparent and then we follow
19 that, so that's the first most important thing.
20 And the extent that we hadn't done that in the
21 past in a way that was transparent with the
22 community, that that's a huge step forward.

1 Then I think the next question is how
2 do we communicate once it's in the CIP and that
3 it's from criteria and that it's been transparent
4 about the specific project itself. And I think
5 that that's where DCPS rethinking its CIP
6 process, making sure and shifting it so that
7 they're the accountable party for communication
8 as well as decision is going to be key.

9 We certainly still have a far way to
10 go. It would be great to know if folks have felt
11 -- some school communities have reported to me
12 that they have felt an improvement because of
13 those two things. And I anticipate that we will
14 only get better and better at that. So I think
15 that having -- starting out with the right of
16 transparent criteria, CIP, the right amount of
17 money and then a clear process for the CIP, those
18 are the structural pieces that we need in place
19 and now we need to practice and now we need to
20 use those repeatedly.

21 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Mr. Jones and
22 then I'll go.

1 MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. President.
2 Deputy Mayor, I have a comment and also hopefully
3 a suggestion. My comments are I know that you
4 have one of the toughest jobs in this city. I've
5 worked with many of the agencies and still do in
6 my private life that you have to deal with. I
7 also recall years ago when we couldn't get doors
8 put up on schools on time.

9 So I want to commend you because I see
10 it every day. You guys are doing a yeoman's job.
11 You all are doing work light years ahead of what
12 has happened before, so I have to commend you on
13 the work that you guys are doing.

14 But I want to ask you a question or --
15 not a question, but what I'd like to see in line
16 with my colleague's question from Ward 4,
17 ideally, what I'd like to see and I know all
18 across the city and every state and city deals
19 with this issue, allocation of resources. I'd
20 like to see more of it in the wards who are in
21 desperate need and all too often, it is the
22 political will of folks who have the will and the

1 influence and affluence to get things done that
2 get things done. And their schools are getting
3 modernized and I know you guys are trying to get
4 them done in Ward 7 and Ward 8. And then Ward 3
5 needs something and Ward 2 needs something, but
6 the individuals in Ward 2 and Ward 3 may have the
7 political influence. And I respect that. I
8 understand that.

9 But then there are some times those
10 that have must give up and must make a hard
11 decision and say we have to go without if it
12 takes a couple of years. And I know that's a
13 hard decision to make and put more of those
14 resources where they're needed. The gaps, not
15 only in education, are broadening. And I don't
16 live in 7 and 8. And I've been told over and
17 over, Mark, when you talk like that, you sound
18 like a socialist. I'm not even close to that.

19 We've got to do something different in
20 this city. And I just think we've got to think
21 bigger than that and those of us in wards where
22 we don't have the great need at this moment,

1 we've got to sacrifice. And I'd like to see the
2 administration make some hard decisions sometimes
3 and say look, the schools in Ward 7 need more.
4 The schools in Ward 8 need more. They need
5 modernization. They need better teachers. They
6 need everything. But we're talking about
7 modernization. That's what I'd like to see.

8 And I applaud you on having the -- I
9 don't know if it was your decision to have DCPS
10 be the point for modernization because I've seen
11 the process over and over, back and forth. And
12 DGS did a good job, but they're construction and
13 real estate people. And they attempted to
14 prioritize it based on education, but it's kind
15 of tough if that's not your field. I know that
16 because one of my companies we do construction.
17 And you do the best you can do, but you don't
18 have the data and the research whether it's
19 quantitative or qualitative to make a decision
20 that will benefit the citizens.

21 So ultimately, I would just like to
22 see the administration make hard decisions and

1 say look, we need to put more of our resources, a
2 greater amount in Ward 7, Ward 8, where it's
3 needed. And I know some of us in other wards may
4 not be happy about it.

5 And then we need to spread it out
6 because we all want our schools done today.
7 That's the reality, but we also know that that
8 cannot happen. One of the other citizens
9 testified and I appreciate their testimony about
10 the rainy day fund, but I worked in the
11 administration when we developed the rainy day
12 fund and I know the restrictions on it. So it's
13 not that easy. It's not like you can just go and
14 tap the rainy day fund and get money.

15 So I know you've got a tough task. I
16 understand it. I commend you. Kept up the good
17 work. But I'd like to see you spend -- the
18 administration focus more on the areas that are
19 in need.

20 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Thank you for the
21 commendation. I would say that I am pleased by
22 the progress, but I would also want to really

1 echo we are very far from where we need to get to
2 be. So we have much more progress yet to go,
3 certainly on modernization, let alone student
4 achievement.

5 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: After my
6 questioning, we'll start back at Ms. Jolly. I
7 don't think everyone will have a second round,
8 but we'll do a briefer, four-minute round for
9 follow-up questions. Please be brief if you can,
10 board members.

11 I've got about two hours' worth of
12 questions here. I'm going to compress as much as
13 I can into the six minutes I have, so if you can
14 be brief in your responses, I'd appreciate it.

15 I want to thank you, yet again for
16 joining us this evening and for the relationship
17 you've built with this Board. It's light years
18 beyond what we've seen in past administrations
19 and I echo Mr. Jones, you're are to be commended
20 for it. Thank you for your support for FY '17
21 budget and for your monthly leadership meetings
22 that you have with our vice president, myself,

1 and Mr. Hayworth. They're very much appreciated
2 so that we can coordinate on district-wide
3 education related initiatives.

4 So all of my colleagues have hit on
5 the communications piece. And State Board
6 members field a myriad of calls and emails about
7 facilities in their ward and district wide and it
8 continues -- communication continues to be a
9 challenge for DCPS and DGS. Communications start
10 late. Community expectations are not set early
11 on and it's frequently unclear who is in charge.

12 In particular, we have Ellington
13 School for the Arts in my ward which serves the
14 whole city and a lot of Virginia and Maryland
15 residents as well. It's over \$100 million over
16 budget. That school -- that application-only
17 school, that elite, application-only school
18 getting funded at that level means that
19 neighborhood schools suffer. There's just not
20 funding for everything.

21 So who is responsible when DGS does
22 not meet a budget or deadlines and what are the

1 consequences for DCPS and DGS leadership who do
2 not meet their obligations to our students and
3 our communities?

4 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: So we first need
5 to make sure that we actually have a budget that
6 matches what the design is. And so going
7 forward, that's what we have done. We've made
8 sure.

9 I don't know -- I have not studied all
10 about -- I certainly know the broad strokes about
11 Ellington and some of the specifics, but if it is
12 like what I understand, many of the past
13 projects, only a small fraction of the amount
14 that it was actually going to cost was ever put
15 in the budget knowing that it was going to have
16 to be come up with at some other time. So first,
17 we just need to get the budget number in the
18 right ball park so that it begins to be accurate.

19 The second piece is making sure that
20 we have a single point of decision making is
21 going to be critical because where is the
22 accountability in any of the decisions for any

1 projects going forward. That I see as being --
2 so it will be DCPS that is accountable.

3 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Is that Dr.
4 Beers? Is that the chancellor? Is that you?

5 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: That's the
6 chancellor and that's me. And so that combined
7 with having revised ed. specs so that we are
8 actually using the guidance from ed. specs, what
9 I have understood happens -- has happened in
10 different schools is that many additional
11 programmatic things are added on and so while
12 that can be a wonderful thing, it has allowed
13 some projects to get bigger and bigger and part
14 of the reason, the way I understand it is that by
15 not having one single point of accountability, it
16 grew without somebody saying no and without
17 somebody saying this is what really needs to be.

18 So that, to me, is the value of
19 streamlining and making clear who is accountable
20 for the decisions relative to the building. And
21 then DGS, needless to say, needs to perform
22 within the parameters that DCPS has put out and

1 needs to follow best practice.

2 Construction is not a mystery --

3 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Right, this
4 should be rather routine. We've been doing it
5 for decades. Other districts do it and they do
6 it very well. We've got a problem here in the
7 city and we need to fix that problem. I'm glad
8 you're working on it and we want to do whatever
9 we can to support that work so that it's
10 completed and so that folks are held accountable
11 and that our students aren't suffering.

12 DCPS last developed an education
13 master plan in 2006 and the capital commitment in
14 2012 sort of had an outline of an education
15 master plan, but the city has changed
16 dramatically in the last 15 years with the growth
17 of the charter sector, in particular.

18 So would you be willing to undertake
19 an initiative to develop a public dialogue aimed
20 at a detailed education plan for all of the
21 District's public schools?

22 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: So the recent --

1 so I now chair a cross sector collaboration task
2 force which your vice president sits on. And one
3 of the five goals of that cross sector task
4 force, the sectors being DCPS and public charter
5 schools is looking particularly at facilities.
6 And it's looking at the coordination of opening
7 and closing and locating of buildings.

8 It is not a small hurdle for us or a
9 small challenge for us to tackle, but the cross
10 sector task force with it those five goals and in
11 it specifically that facilities goal is going to
12 provide us some guidance going forward about how
13 our two sectors can work together towards a plan.

14 I think that there also is the master
15 facilities plan which has a number of different
16 components. It's very explicit about DCPS and
17 city buildings and it is not -- and then it has
18 some things about charter schools as well. So
19 when we update that annually, that will be
20 undertaken again in FY '18.

21 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: I would encourage
22 you to work on more than just guidance and

1 actually develop a long-term plan and I know that
2 this Board would be eager to work with our
3 communities and our constituents to make that a
4 successful effort with the administration.

5 For FY '17, the administration
6 allocated an additional \$100 million for
7 modernization of D.C. Public Schools, DCPS
8 facilities and modernization, but did not provide
9 equitable funding to increase per pupil
10 facilities allowance for charter schools. Can
11 you explain the administration's position and
12 rationale and when will the charters be treated
13 more equitably?

14 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: So one of my
15 chief goals is around equity across the sectors.
16 And so I'm working in a number of different ways
17 on that.

18 As you may know, one of the big ways
19 that our two sectors experience inequity is that
20 the way we pay schools is different and so I can
21 come back at another time to describe further the
22 LEA payment system that we will be putting in

1 place that will pay our LEAs the same way based
2 on an actual number of students and based on
3 multiple counts in one year so that if students
4 leave an LEA or our students come to an LEA, the
5 LEA either loses some money or gains some money.
6 And that's to incent making sure that our LEAs
7 are taking the spots that they have, filling the
8 spots that they have.

9 In terms of the -- we have \$78 million
10 -- \$76, sorry, of additional funds towards public
11 education in the city. \$46 million of that went
12 to charter schools or will go to charter schools.
13 The most important component of looking at the
14 cost of schools going forward is the foundation
15 amount and we were able to increase the
16 foundation about by 2 percent in addition to
17 anticipating the growth in both sectors.

18 The charter school facilities per
19 pupil by statute is actually \$3100 for FY '17.
20 We actually are above that amount for FY '17.
21 What we did do is last year we increased the
22 foundation amount through the Council and then we

1 also gave them one-time grants to offset the fact
2 that there wasn't a 2 percent increase on the
3 overall foundation amount.

4 So part of the challenge is that we
5 actually increase the facilities per pupil before
6 we were statutorily required last year. And so
7 this year, it still is above the statutory
8 requirement and so -- but why it didn't increase
9 from last year to this year is that we've, one,
10 wanted to make sure that schools had enough money
11 and that is the 2 percent on the foundation
12 amount. And then we have many different
13 priorities in the city and from solving
14 homelessness and making it rare, a rare event to
15 we wanted to make sure that we are tackling data
16 systems at OSSE.

17 We wanted to make sure we have a
18 number of different priorities across the city
19 and so we did our best to reflect in a budget
20 year, well, it seems like we should have lots and
21 lots of funds with the tax triggers and other
22 things. We actually only increased the size of

1 our budget from FY '16 to FY '17 by 3 percent as
2 a government. It's the lowest percentage
3 increase we've had in the last six years of any
4 administration. And so because we were living
5 within those constraints, unfortunately, we
6 couldn't give everything to everybody, but it
7 certainly is important for our schools to have
8 the money that they need. And I was pleased that
9 we were able to have \$46 million of the \$78 go
10 towards charters in the city.

11 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, and
12 we'll looking forward to working with you and the
13 administration to find other perhaps creative
14 ways to continue to assist to make sure that we
15 bring equity across the system.

16 We'll go now again if folks have
17 another short four-minute round to Ms. Jolly
18 first and then Mr. Weedon. None from Ms. Jolly,
19 so Mr. Weedon and then Ms. Wattenberg.

20 MR. WEEDON: Thank you. One more
21 quick point on lead. Any level of lead in our
22 water is unacceptable. We need filters installed

1 if there is a test of below 15 parts per billion
2 and we need to ensure that all of our water is
3 safe. And I know that's not where the
4 environmental assessment EPA guidelines are, but
5 that will truly restore confidence from our
6 parents that we're being proactive and that we're
7 putting the health of our students first.

8 On school modernizations, I agree the
9 goal must be safe, healthy, and adequate learning
10 environments for all. And I also agree that we
11 need to focus more on the areas of the city that
12 need it the most. I'd love to see a data-driven
13 environmental assessment of our schools. We
14 don't have that. The rankings that we're looking
15 at, building condition and educational
16 effectiveness are not, at least to my knowledge,
17 based on any clear, transparent data. And
18 further, we need to increase the weight that we
19 give to that column in the CIP.

20 I'd also like to counter a little bit,
21 I congratulate and acknowledge the Mayor added
22 \$220 million in FY '17 into the CIP, the Capital

1 Improvement Plan. But if I have my numbers right
2 and I get these from Councilmember Allen's
3 office, in the FY '16 capital budget, also under
4 Mayor Bowser, the capital budget was reduced by
5 \$330 million over five years. Ward 6 alone lost
6 \$125 million in the FY '16 CIP.

7 So yes, we put some money back. We're
8 not where we were just one year ago. And that's
9 what's pushing many of these renovations out
10 further.

11 You talked about three improvements
12 and I'll get to a question here in a moment.
13 Sufficient funds in the plans. Clear process for
14 the CIP, and clear prioritization for the Capital
15 Improvement Plan that's clear and transparent.

16 We've heard from our friends here
17 today, Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan about the
18 problems there. Utilization rates at Watkins are
19 not accurate because enrollment and building
20 capacity numbers I don't believe are accurate.

21 At Maury Elementary, the Capital
22 Improvement Plan talks about it being a full

1 modernization. We're not touching the common
2 spaces in the proposal that's currently before
3 the CIP. It's not a full modernization. And in
4 fact, at Maury, the amount put forward is
5 essentially to replace four portable classrooms
6 with six permanent classrooms. That's inadequate
7 for the school two years from now, let alone in
8 three years when that will actually open.

9 We can talk a lot about the objective
10 and transparent criteria, but those objective and
11 transparent criteria were not developed with
12 adequate community input. And I just would like
13 to hear your thoughts on how the community was
14 involved in that process and what you heard from
15 the community as you developed these four areas
16 of demand, equity, student demand, neighborhood
17 population, building condition, and educational
18 effectiveness and what you heard from the public
19 around how you weighted these criteria.

20 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Sure. Let me
21 respond in a couple of ways. I'm not sure I have
22 all of the information. Let me actually just

1 start with the CIP '16 versus '17.

2 One of the things that the
3 administration has to work within the budget, the
4 debt cap. And so when you look at '16, the '16
5 through '21 versus the '17 through '22, the
6 decrease was actually not because it was
7 literally decreased. It was actually the debt
8 cap wouldn't allow as much funding for schools in
9 that. And one of the things that we have is this
10 sort of choke hold, if you will, on an FY '19
11 where we have a particularly low amount of money
12 that we can use which is one of the reasons that
13 it's sort of making it difficult to make all of
14 the projects happen because we can't start them
15 in '18. We have to start them in '19 because of
16 this. So one is just the structure of the debt
17 cap and the maximum that we have dictates quite a
18 lot. And it changes from year to year so every
19 time we get a new out year, it changes the
20 amount.

21 You had asked about the full
22 modernization. So the full modernizations are

1 going forward. And I'm trying to look quickly to
2 see -- Mr. Weedon, do you mind just restating the
3 question that you had again?

4 MR. WEEDON: Well, really what I want
5 to get at and I'm happy to sit offline and talk
6 about the different schools, but I think there's
7 a lot of questions about the data that's been
8 used, where that data comes from, is it accurate
9 and how these four categories and the subcategory
10 weights were developed.

11 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Great. Thank you
12 for reminding me. So Maury, the full
13 modernization is going forward. Maury is in the
14 middle, so it is actually not getting a full
15 modernization. So I would not characterize it as
16 a full modernization.

17 MR. WEEDON: That's how the CIP
18 characterizes it though. If you look at the
19 line. Is it full, partial? It's listed as a full
20 modernization.

21 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Let me go back
22 and check.

1 MR. WEEDON: Maybe that's an error in
2 the data and again, that gets back to the point
3 of is the data and how we're characterizing it,
4 is it accurate.

5 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: And you can share
6 with me which document you're looking at so I can
7 make sure.

8 In terms of how we determined -- so
9 DCPS did a series of -- gained community input on
10 the CIP criteria and the weightings. I will need
11 to get back to you, the process that they used.
12 It took place last fall and I don't,
13 unfortunately remember off the top of my head how
14 the different components that they put into it.

15 MR. WEEDON: So I can say I did not
16 receive or hear anything about that and I'm
17 seeing Ward 6 family members shake their heads
18 in the audience here. There was not a robust
19 process around that.

20 And I'm going to push a little bit
21 more on the Maury renovation. One, my children
22 attend. They'll be graduating and moving on to

1 Eliot-Hine. The renovation there is not going to
2 impact me, but I am really concerned there that
3 we're wasting resources.

4 Currently in the budget, my
5 understanding is any unspent '16 money, the FY
6 '17 allocation, there's about \$16, \$18 million
7 there for Maury. And the proposal on the table
8 is DCPS has shared two or four drawings with the
9 community. The other two have not been shared
10 and I'd ask your help in getting those documents
11 to the Maury community and the CIP process there.

12 And the rationale that they haven't
13 been shared has been we can't fulfill the
14 promises in them. And I don't think anybody
15 wants those promises fulfilled. They want to
16 know what the concepts were so that they can take
17 the best from those to inform what we're actually
18 trying to do.

19 Essentially, the plan, as it is
20 written, and I have a copy of the CIP proposal
21 right here in front of me, is to replace four
22 modular classrooms with six permanent classrooms

1 and do some other work to make that happen.

2 This year at Maury, only four of our
3 4th graders won a ticket in the lottery and will
4 be leaving, so we'll have close to 40 5th graders
5 returning, the second year in a row that we'll
6 have two 5th grade classes which is fabulous.
7 Except we don't have a classroom for that second
8 5th grade next year. That's one classroom.

9 The year after, we expect our 2nd
10 grade to become 3rd grade and retained. We'll
11 need a third 3rd grade classroom that year.
12 That's two classrooms.

13 In this year's early ed. program or
14 pre-K-3 students, we have 70 in-boundary
15 families. Only about 30 of them are getting in.
16 There's 40 more. If any of those students show
17 up in two years when the modernization is slated
18 to open, that's another classroom.

19 We're doing the math here. We're
20 building two new classrooms. We need one more,
21 two more, three more and that's a conservative
22 estimate. The funding in the plan is not

1 adequate. And this gets back to the data driven
2 approach. I've been saying this for two years,
3 that the enrollment estimates for Maury with the
4 expanded boundaries are not accurate. DCPS has
5 not engaged the community. And I could go
6 through the same exercise around Jefferson,
7 Eliot-Hine, and Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan
8 and others. And we need the community involved
9 in this process.

10 And you talked about the reformed CIP
11 process. The CIP needs to meet and talk about
12 what the needs are of the full community before
13 we come up with these dollar amounts. Yes, a
14 certain amount of renovations should be driven
15 based on the ed. specs, but as we look at Eliot-
16 Hine and the \$85 million that's proposed there,
17 that renovates the whole school. Well, the
18 school proposed enrollment is only 480 students.
19 The school right now has the capacity for 800.
20 So we need to make sure that the community is
21 involved in the planning before we come up with
22 these numbers and that the numbers make sense for

1 the community not just the school.

2 MS. WILSON PHELAN: I'm just going to
3 say one thing and I won't talk later because this
4 is the same situation in Ward 1 where you see the
5 demand for DCPS schools growing.

6 My understanding from an informal
7 conversation with DCPS is that the planning
8 numbers didn't actually take into account what
9 the wait lists are saying about demand for DCPS
10 schools until Dr. Beers took over, but all of the
11 modernizations were already en route and the
12 plans for them were en route and schools that are
13 being modernized in Ward 1. And so my worry is
14 that we'll have this incredible demand for
15 neighborhood schools which we deeply want. And
16 continue to push out families who want to attend.

17 Now I know by right, a kindergartner
18 may get to go, but for example, Bancroft had a
19 fair wait list for in-boundary for pre-school/3
20 and 4. And when that was mentioned to Dr. Beers,
21 that was the first he had heard of it.

22 So I know that is making changes to

1 incorporate the information now, but my worry is
2 are we building these buildings that won't meet
3 the needs of the communities and even four or
4 five years from now we'll end up with trailers
5 again when we just went through this incredible
6 modernization with lots of money and beautiful
7 building space.

8 So I think actually 6 and 1 are in
9 similar situations there, so I just wanted to
10 emphasize that and you might have insight into
11 how the planning process has been adjusted since
12 that leadership change has taken over.

13 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: So I can go back
14 and look more at Maury. As I mentioned coming
15 here tonight, unfortunately the specifics of
16 every school is not at my fingertips as has been
17 illustrated already, I think. And so we can go
18 back and better understand --

19 MR. WEEDON: And I appreciate that,
20 but again, I would ask for as these numbers are
21 being developed or before they're finalized in
22 the FY '17 budget, that we engage each of the

1 communities and ask the question does this plan
2 on the surface, we're not going to all be happy
3 with the timing of it, but does this plan make
4 sense for the community.

5 And there are a number of communities
6 in Ward 6 that I would say will answer that
7 question no. Some will probably say there's more
8 money here than we probably need. Others will --
9 and they'll gladly spend it, don't get me wrong.
10 Others will say no, what we're proposing does not
11 meet the needs of our immediate in-boundary
12 neighborhood. And if that's the goal to have
13 neighborhood schools, we have to make sure that
14 we're planning long term and not wasting
15 resources.

16 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: I agree.

17 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Did you want a
18 moment to respond?

19 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: I agree.

20 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you. Ms.
21 Wattenberg and then Ms. Lord.

22 MS. WATTENBERG: Just to add one more

1 fact to the fact story here. My kids were in
2 DCPS in three different schools. Every single
3 school got renovated that they were going through
4 which I'm very happy for and every single one of
5 them was substantially over capacity on the day
6 that the school was fixed, on the day that the
7 school reopened. So it's just more evidence that
8 this issue of how do we account for the
9 population really needs to be looked at.

10 The only thing I want to say is as you
11 do your job in the many ways that you do it, I
12 think this issue of community input and the level
13 of respect that's given to the opinions, the
14 ideas, the facts, the realities that people in
15 the communities can put on the table, it's a huge
16 issue in operations.

17 I mean we saw it most recently in the
18 budget hearings around the schools that were told
19 that they're going to have adopt a particular
20 kind of professional development program that may
21 or may not have taken account of their particular
22 needs and priorities and the way it would impact

1 other programs in the schools.

2 Sometimes programs will be put in
3 schools with DCPS funds and that's fine to try
4 them out. And then the school will be told well
5 now you're going to have this program and you
6 have to pay for it and the school has to take
7 money from other programs and so on and so on.

8 We had an issue recently with the Park
9 Test where kids were being told to take the test
10 even though there seemed to be rules that would
11 suggest they shouldn't be taking the test and we
12 couldn't clarify, we could never get clarity for
13 the families about who should take them.

14 So I'm just saying as you think about
15 this community input issue and the community
16 responsiveness issue, I hope you think about it
17 as well on the operation side and create some
18 easier ways for everybody to have input so that
19 better decisions get made. That's really the
20 point. And when parents have these issues say
21 around Park, there's a way to get answers back
22 that reflect the seriousness of the issue.

1 MS. LORD: Is there a response? I'm
2 the second in command because I'm the oldest
3 serving or longest serving. Is that it?

4 Well, we have a bit of a dilemma since
5 obviously the next one would be questioning. So
6 I will take the opportunity first to thank you
7 for the support for this Board. It really helps
8 us do our job if we have sufficient resources to
9 do it, particularly for our ombudsman and student
10 advocate.

11 I also want to put you on the spot
12 just a little bit because as a school leader, you
13 have been through a number of school renovations
14 and brand new schools yourself. And I'd like to
15 kind of tap the accountability issue that I've
16 heard and ask you what lessons you learned that
17 we could possibly apply to the broader school
18 modernization issue?

19 And then to kind of rant just a little
20 bit, my local school, School Without Walls at
21 Francis-Stevens, we had a parent here tonight,
22 Mr. Hendricks. It's bait and switch, it's

1 promise, but there's been -- the most
2 disappointing thing is this was a school that was
3 slated for closure because it was under enrolled.
4 It is now thriving. It has doubled in size.
5 There are students in kindergarten who are
6 learning Latin. It's everything we want it to
7 be. And so when they've developed a program that
8 would teach students to cook the produce. They
9 would have celebrity chefs come in and learn
10 actually how to cook the produce that they're
11 growing in the garden and live healthy, all the
12 things we want. They worked with FoodPrints.
13 They had a curriculum. They had a partner all
14 set up and the cafeteria needed modernization. A
15 cafeteria. We're not talking about a big thing.
16 And yet, it didn't come. It didn't happen. And
17 then it had to be sped up and then all the money
18 got eaten away in overtime.

19 And it's just like there are brand new
20 high schools that have been built by charter
21 schools for \$50 million, a third of what
22 Ellington is going to cost. Now granted it's

1 apples to apples, but we're just not getting much
2 bang for our buck.

3 So between your experience as someone
4 who has created two extremely exciting learning
5 environments and this sort of lack of programming
6 input before the stuff gets started, what can we
7 take away to make sure that we have not just
8 transparency, not just community input, but some
9 true bang for our buck? Thank you.

10 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Sure. So I think
11 just in terms of what I had learned in coming to
12 this, I talked about them a little bit or a lot
13 already. The single point of accountability,
14 that was one of the first things that was clear
15 to me was vital to the success of the projects
16 that I had worked with. And then when we saw it
17 both on the decision making for program as well
18 as communication, that seemed like a really clear
19 step forward.

20 The second is the ed. specs and so
21 having a clear understanding of program and then
22 modifying it, rather than through starting with a

1 blank slate and just adding on. So those are key
2 things that from my experience doing facilities
3 coming to this.

4 In terms of -- you'd also asked,
5 sorry, the last part you had just -- I should be
6 taking notes.

7 MS. LORD: It's basically how do we
8 get out of the sort of mode of promises and
9 getting more bang for our buck.

10 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: So one of the
11 other things that we need to do and that we are
12 going to do a better job and have been doing a
13 better job at DGS is planning. And so we
14 probably should not have promised to get that
15 kitchen done because we did not actually have all
16 of the different pieces figured out and it wasn't
17 -- while we certainly have many organizations
18 that can do construction on a dime.

19 DGS is actually doing huge volumes of
20 construction. And so adding an additional piece
21 outside of the typical planning process and
22 estimating that it would take far shorter a

1 period of time and was far less complex than it
2 actually was. So the cafeteria, if my memory
3 serves me was one piece of it, but it actually
4 was the special cooking -- I don't know if we
5 would call it a training room, that was another
6 piece of it.

7 So DGS under Admiral Weaver is also
8 working much better at being able to say yes,
9 this is what we can do. This is how long it's
10 going to take. This is how much it costs in a
11 way that I think is different than in the years
12 past. I think that we actually create a market
13 for construction in the city because of the
14 volume that we're doing around modernization that
15 is unusual. Not many cities -- we create a
16 crunch because we actually are so flat out, doing
17 so many modernizations across the city.

18 So we have to be really thoughtful
19 about making sure, even if it's adding something
20 that's seemingly small, how does it fit into the
21 bigger picture and then be really clear with the
22 community about what's possible. And so I think

1 that -- and not have the expectations not be met.
2 So working really hard to make sure that that's
3 clear.

4 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
5 Lord. We'll go with Mr. Contreras, and then Ms.
6 Anderson.

7 MR. CONTRERAS: Thank you. I was
8 wondering what the public process is for
9 developing that spec and then what role students
10 can have in that process and families in general?

11 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: That's great.
12 I'll need to get back to you on that. It's not
13 something that I -- anyway, I don't remember off
14 the top of my head and we'll get back to you on
15 both of those questions.

16 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr.
17 Contreras, are you finished? Wonderful.

18 Ms. Anderson.

19 MS. ANDERSON: I'm going to go a
20 little ward specific here, but a lot is said
21 within the CIP narrative about the need to
22 eliminate or reduce the impact of politics in the

1 modernization decision-making process, but many
2 of the people in my ward from what I hear from
3 people in my ward is that particularly with
4 regards to Coolidge High School that there seems
5 to be a lot of politics at play that keep moving
6 that time line for renovating that school,
7 modernizing that school further and further back
8 from what it was when the first -- some of the
9 first modernization plans were put forth that
10 Coolidge was very high on the list of
11 modernization.

12 On the one hand I think it's a little
13 bit disingenuous that there's a need to talk
14 about reducing politics as a measure, but how do
15 you address folks who feel that politics is being
16 played by the cyclical kind of maneuvering that
17 kind of keeps pushing Coolidge further and
18 further down and changing the budget for the
19 school modernization to the point where I now
20 believe that school is slated for modernization
21 in 2022 which that means -- there's some politics
22 at play.

1 Is there anything that can be done to
2 address that and perhaps take into consideration
3 that politics has basically been one of the main
4 things it seems that keeps moving that school
5 further and further down the list?

6 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: So --

7 MS. ANDERSON: What kind of politics
8 are we trying to eliminate here?

9 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: So forgive me.
10 I don't think that I said we were trying to
11 eliminate politics. That's not the way I've
12 experienced this.

13 MS. ANDERSON: I'm just looking at the
14 narrative for the budget.

15 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: I'm not
16 disagreeing. So one of the things about Coolidge
17 that is hard is that (a) we know we have a
18 priority of completing our high schools, so we
19 need to make sure that Coolidge and Banneker and
20 then Washington Met also get renovated.

21 The hard thing about Coolidge, too, is
22 that it's a very large amount of money and so one

1 of the challenges is that I describe in FY '19 we
2 dropped to nearly only \$100 million available for
3 renovation for modernization instead of the \$3
4 and \$4 million that we have had every year. And
5 so thinking about how to renovate Coolidge in a
6 way that is in continuous years in a three or
7 four year period, combine that with the
8 restrictions on the way that the debt cap works,
9 that's actually what I've experienced being the
10 challenge for Coolidge in the budget that I've
11 seen.

12 I can't speak to the past,
13 unfortunately, that's not -- I don't have a lot
14 of knowledge about what has happened to Coolidge
15 until this point, but one of the priorities was -
16 - and right now it's not Coolidge will be
17 completed in 2020 and 2022. It will be started
18 in '17. It will be started in '17 and completed
19 in '19, probably -- this is why I'm not -- I can
20 get back to you on exactly when it was -- my
21 experience of the challenge has been the amount
22 of money that it takes to renovate our high

1 schools is often two and three times more than
2 renovating an elementary school. And so that's
3 part of the pieces. It's this big giant puzzle
4 of putting together how much money we have, where
5 the priorities are and we really need to get it
6 all done.

7 MS. ANDERSON: I think another concern
8 is the longer that renovation and modernization
9 is deferred, the worse the conditions become in a
10 school. So you're not going to see any savings
11 by deferring that renovation further and further
12 down the line because the school continues to
13 deteriorate the physical facility.

14 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Just to be -- we
15 are starting in an FY '17 and let me just see if
16 -- where it tells me when it's going to finish --
17 and if it's finishing in '19 or in '20.

18 Great. It's going to be finished in
19 '19, both from what the Mayor put in and from
20 what Council put in.

21 MS. ANDERSON: What year?

22 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: '19. So we're

1 doing it starting next year.

2 MS. ANDERSON: Thank you.

3 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
4 Anderson. Mr. Jones and then I will conclude.
5 Thank you, Mr. Jones.

6 Then I will conclude. I do have a
7 couple of really brief questions, but I don't
8 want to forget to thank you yet again for
9 spending so much time and for being so generous
10 with your time. If board members have additional
11 questions or questions that are specific to their
12 wards, could we compile written questions by
13 let's say close of business Friday, colleagues,
14 for your office to respond to? Wonderful. Thank
15 you.

16 I think my colleague, Ms. Wilson
17 Phelan, also touched on Garrison. As you know,
18 Garrison is receiving a partial modernization.
19 Is it my understanding from your testimony that
20 Garrison and Maury are sort of in that same boat
21 where they're in the middle and neither will
22 receive a full modernization?

1 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Yes, and you want
2 to have other friends -- Hyde-Addison and Bruce-
3 Monroe are also in that category.

4 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you.
5 Thank you for clarifying that. I do see that the
6 field work is finally being completed and that
7 the field for Garrison should be -- I just
8 received an email from the CIP coordinator today
9 that the field should be operational by August
10 and usable by students and community members and
11 we appreciate that very much.

12 The very first thing you said was
13 that the health of our students is the most
14 important thing. We're going into a discussion
15 which also includes score report cards. And you
16 know how much I love health and one of my big
17 pushes is more health data for families to make
18 informed choices. Things like maybe the lead
19 water testing from the different schools to make
20 sure that that is transparent at the school that
21 the child goes to rather than a DGS website that
22 a family might not know about. Does that make

1 sense to you to have all of that data in one
2 place about a school, rather than having families
3 have to hunt and peck?

4 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Well, thankfully,
5 I think that we've figured out how there's a link
6 so there's no hunting and pecking. I think we
7 can confirm, but you can go to the DCPS website.
8 You can go to the City Administrator's website.
9 You can go to the DME's website and you can go to
10 DGS and the link automatically takes you to the
11 same place. And it's housed at DGS, so I don't
12 think that thankfully there should be a challenge
13 if a parent goes on line to find those results.

14 I think the key is -- and it wasn't
15 happening before is that DCPS needed to know the
16 results, so that DCPS could be communicating with
17 those families and so that they're communicating
18 directly and then making it very easy for parents
19 to find out. And so I think that's absolutely
20 critical.

21 To me, I don't actually think it
22 matters where it lives if there's a quick link

1 that takes you to that same place because I don't
2 want parents to hunt and peck. I don't want them
3 to -- so as long as it's simple and clear and you
4 certainly can go to the DCPS website and find out
5 exactly how to get there. And some may not know
6 that they're tapping and going to the DGS website
7 as opposed to another page on the DCPS website.

8 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Terrific. Thank
9 you. And my colleague, my smartest colleague,
10 Brian Contreras, has already alluded to this.
11 DCPS is revising ed. specs and you've talked
12 about that as well. We certainly want to get
13 that student voice, but DCPS' community action
14 team has reached out to some of the education
15 networks to ask them to help with focus groups to
16 get that conversation started, so that it really
17 is a true community conversation on what these
18 new ed. specs will look like.

19 Is that moving forward? Is that
20 delayed? What is the status of that? I think I
21 received an email from Elias Hoffman who is the
22 Ward 2-3 CAT coordinator maybe 2 or 3 weeks ago

1 and we would love for that process, once it's all
2 finalized to move forward so that we can
3 participate in helping make sure that these
4 reflect the equity and the needs of the
5 communities.

6 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: So I can confirm
7 that we're in the middle of the community piece
8 for the ed. specs and that they are going to
9 various ed. councils in the wards. And so I can
10 see if I can get you more detailed information,
11 but echoing that and just getting back
12 confirmation of that.

13 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Terrific. Then
14 I will follow up with him. He hadn't responded
15 to my email and I thought maybe you had him
16 waiting until this meeting. So I will follow up
17 directly with him. Thank you.

18 MR. WEEDON: Could you just make sure
19 that all the wards are involved in that process.
20 I know our community would love to be a part as
21 well.

22 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: What I can do is

1 --

2 MR. WEEDON: And we've heard nothing,
3 so --

4 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Yes, let me find
5 out what the process is and share that. I don't
6 know DCPS' plan, but we will connect with them
7 and let you all know.

8 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Deputy
9 Mayor. Board members, please have any additional
10 follow-up questions compiled by close of business
11 Friday and we will get those over to Shane, if
12 that's appropriate and I apologize. I've got
13 quite a few from various schools as others do as
14 well. With that, thank you. You have our
15 appreciation for spending so much time with us
16 this evening.

17 DEPUTY MAYOR NILES: Great. Happy to
18 be here.

19 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: And with that, do
20 board members have any special announcements
21 before we adjourn?

22 Ms. Wattenberg, Ms. Lord?

1 MS. WATTENBERG: Hi. I just want to
2 announce to our audience, to our public audience
3 that on Wednesday, June 1st at 6:30 at McKinley
4 High School, there's going to be a session called
5 Why Knowledge Matters, the Need for a Rich
6 Curriculum from the Earliest Years. The featured
7 speaker is Daniel Willingham who is a cognitive
8 scientist which is a fancy name of talking about
9 the scientists who understand the new brain
10 science and how our brains learn. And he's going
11 to be talking about what the emerging science in
12 this field says about the importance of
13 understanding history, science and the arts, in
14 order to read, understand, and think critically.
15 And this is, of course, extremely important to
16 understand as we consider our literacy policies
17 so that we don't go too narrow in our curriculum.
18 So I encourage everybody to come Wednesday, June
19 1st, 6:30 p.m. McKinley High School. It's co-
20 sponsored by the State Board, by SHAPE
21 (phonetic), by the Deputy Mayor's Office, by the
22 Charter Board, by DCPS, D.C. Immersion, and I

1 hope I'm not missing anybody. Thank you.

2 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
3 Wattenberg. Ms. Lord?

4 MS. LORD: Thank you very much. I
5 want to thank everybody for this spirited
6 discussion on a wide ranging amount of issues and
7 it brings home just how important science,
8 technology, engineering, and math is to solving
9 the world's problems locally and globally.
10 Surprisingly, many of our jobs in the city are
11 related to science, technology, engineering and
12 mathematics. Even as we celebrated tonight's
13 outstanding science scholars, I hope everybody
14 will join me in celebrating our youngest
15 scientists and engineers. The city-wide
16 elementary STEM fair is June 4th at Takoma
17 Education Campus.

18 I've signed up to be a judge. I'm not
19 sure whether I will actually be chosen, but it's
20 a great way to see the future brainiacs at work
21 and to really support them and to show them that
22 what they're doing as science fair projects know

1 that they count, they have value. they're valid
2 learning experiences and I don't think we can say
3 that enough. So thank you very much and I hope
4 to see you June 4, Takoma Elementary Education
5 Campus.

6 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Thank you, Ms.
7 Lord. Any final thoughts? If not, I would
8 entertain a motion to adjourn.

9 MS. WATTENBERG: So moved.

10 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Moved by Ms.
11 Wattenberg. Is there a second?

12 MS. WILSON PHELAN: Second.

13 PRESIDENT JACOBSON: Second by Ms.
14 Wilson Phelan. All in favor, say aye.

15 (Chorus of ayes.)

16 And we stand adjourned.

17 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
18 went off the record at 8:18 p.m.)
19
20
21
22

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In the matter of: Public Meeting

Before: DC State Board of Education

Date: 05-18-16

Place: Washington, DC

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