



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

“Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C.”

March 5, 2019

Mayor Muriel Bowser
Mayor
Government of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004
muriel.bowser@dc.gov

RE: Proposed Redevelopment of Shaw Middle School

Dear Mayor Bowser,

At its special meeting on February 21, 2019, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A (“ANC 2A” or “Commission”) considered the above-referenced matter. With eight of eight commissioners present, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission voted **(6-1-1)**, after a motion made by Commissioner Kennedy and seconded by Commissioner Harnett, to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, ANC 2A joined with other ANCs and community organizations in Ward 2 and elsewhere six years ago in order to advocate that Francis-Stevens Education Campus and Garrison Elementary School not be closed, as then-planned,

WHEREAS, as a result of that advocacy and robust parent engagement on school turnaround plans, the DC Public Schools (DCPS) removed both schools from the list of public schools that were planned to be shuttered – even as the second iteration of Shaw Middle School (at Garnet-Patterson) was consolidated into Cardozo High School as a middle-grade extension,

WHEREAS, the reconstituted School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens (SWWFS) has been enormously successful as a result of a turnaround plan that aligned the former PreK-3 to Grade 8 campus with School Without Walls High School – as measured by a doubling of student enrollment (to over the building’s capacity), increased test scores, and a waiting list of close to 700 students,

WHEREAS, Garrison Elementary School has been similarly successful in its turnaround,

WHEREAS, the robust enrollment growth and enhanced desirability of these two formerly under-enrolled schools demonstrates a strong degree of latent and actual demand among parents for quality neighborhood schools – particularly at the middle school level – in the center of the city,

WHEREAS, the closure of the old Shaw Junior High School and the conversion of Francis Junior High School into a campus that only partially serves the middle



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grades has left DCPS with considerably less capacity at that level in this area than existed prior to 2008,

WHEREAS, as a result, there will not be enough seats to meet future demand at the middle grades in the center city area, given rapid projected demographic growth among school age children in the boundary area, increased enrollment at projected feeder schools, and induced demand that a quality public school is sure to generate above-and-beyond existing projections,

WHEREAS, DCPS has previously committed to the community that the site of the former Shaw Junior High School would be made available for the construction of a future “Center City (Shaw) Middle School” when sufficient demand returned – and did not properly consult with the affected communities before presenting an alternative use,

WHEREAS, the proposal put forward to relocate Benjamin Banneker Academic High School to the former Shaw site is incompatible with the need to reserve space at the site for a new middle school to meet the demand and need previously referenced,

WHEREAS, no other equally suitable site exists for the creation of a new Shaw Middle School – when considering the location of elementary schools and neighborhoods that would feed into it, as well as the lack of success that poorly-planned Shaw substitutes at less convenient sites have already experienced,

WHEREAS, a major factor in the current enrollment pressures at SWWFS is the bulge of students entering the school at the sixth grade level from Ross and Thomson Elementary Schools, whose students have a right to matriculate there – a right which is being fully exercised as SWWFS has evolved into a viable middle school option for families – as part of a feeder pattern established precisely because there is no Shaw Middle School option,

WHEREAS, SWWFS is currently the only traditional middle school option in a large swath of the urban core – with Hardy Middle School in upper Georgetown, Cardozo Education Campus north of U Street, and Jefferson Middle School Academy in Southwest otherwise being the closest available options, and

WHEREAS, in the absence of a viable Shaw Middle School concept, it is a foregone conclusion that other elementary school communities such as Garrison, Seaton, and/or Cleveland will seek to join Ross and Thomson in attaining access to SWWFS as the only nearby, quality, neighborhood middle school option – either exacerbating the current enrollment pressures if such requests are granted or driving families to leave the public school system if not.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that – in recognition of the substantial negative spillover effects that the current DCPS proposal would visit upon the School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens and our community which relies on it –



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ANC 2A joins with our Ward 2 colleagues in ANC 2F as well as other communities in Wards 1, 5, and 6 to encourage responsible school capacity planning. Specifically, ANC 2A:

1. Considers the construction of a new middle school on the site of the former Shaw Junior High School to be the best and highest use of the site,
2. Urges DCPS to proceed with plans for construction of the new Center City Middle School, as promised in the 2014 Boundary Realignment Plan and in the years before by successive administrations,
3. Encourages DCPS to engage in vigorous, extensive, and sustained outreach efforts to communicate with all stakeholders and obtain feedback on proposals regarding the use and disposition of DCPS facilities in the neighborhoods in which they are located, as current efforts are inadequate and ineffective, and
4. Requests that DCPS and the Deputy Mayor for Education share the data and assumptions upon which they base their apparent determination that Logan Circle and neighboring DCPS schools definitively will never need a standalone middle school option in the area – given that similar projections were used to justify the closure of Francis-Stevens Education Campus – projections that were proven to be completely wrong.

Commissioners Patrick Kennedy (2A01@anc.dc.gov) and William Kennedy Smith (2A04@anc.dc.gov) are the Commission’s representatives in this matter.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

William Kennedy Smith, MD
Chairperson

CC: Paul Kihn, Deputy Mayor for Education
Lewis Ferebee, Acting Chancellor, DC Public Schools
John Fanning, Chair, ANC 2F
Alex Marriott, Chair, ANC 6E
Chairman Phil Mendelson, DC Council
Councilmember Anita Bonds, At-Large
Councilmember David Grosso, At-Large
Councilmember Elissa Silverman, At-Large



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Councilmember Robert White, At-Large
Councilmember Brianne Nadeau, Ward 1
Councilmember Jack Evans, Ward 2
Councilmember Mary Cheh, Ward 3
Councilmember Brandon Todd, Ward 4
Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie, Ward 5
Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6
Councilmember Vincent Gray, Ward 7
Councilmember Trayon White, Ward 8