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DC Council votes to fund the purchase of GDS!

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By lopsided 10-2-1 vote...

GDS Purchase is funded by DC Council!

Hi All!

You'll be very happy to know: The DC Council voted this afternoon by 10-2 (plus one recusal) in favor of funding the purchase of the GDS campus! Many, many thanks to CM Cheh and Chairman Mendelson for shepherding this project through a difficult budget process--and to the Ward 3-Wilson Feeder Education Network, which was instrumental in getting the word out quickly to parent leaders across the ward and feeder system! Big thanks as well to Councilmembers from across the city who supported the purchase!: At-large members Anita Bonds, Elissa Silverman, and Robert White, and Councilmembers Nadeau (1), Pinto (W2), Todd (4), Allen (6), and Gray (7).

And, special thanks to all of you, who responded to posts on the listserves and in my newsletter, with hundreds of emails that went to Councilmembers all night and all morning! Someone called me from the beach this morning to see if there was still time to send an email (Yes, there was!). Your very vivid personal stories of why this purchase was so badly needed were, I'm sure, part of why the vote ended up so lopsided in favor of the purchase. On behalf of all of our kids, thank you, thank you, thank you!

Next up: Time for an urgent deadline for fully modernizing every DCPS school in the city!

I also want to note: The schools in this area of the city are crowded, have been for a while, and relief is badly needed. This was truly a once-in-a-generation-opportunity for DC to purchase a needed, turnkey building in an area where it was desperately needed, at a substantially lower cost than building from scratch. It does not solve all of our overcrowding problems, but it makes a substantial dent. For all of these reasons, the Council was absolutely right to vote to make the purchase.

But, it is also true that in other wards there are many schools that have still not been fully modernized. The key statistic: Across the city (as of 2018), 65% of DCPS schools' square footage had been fully modernized; and 35% had not been. Once Eaton is completed, 0% of that unmodernized footage will be in Ward 3. In contrast, 3 out of the 5

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I hope that next year we can all advocate for a short, urgent timeline for getting every school finished!

It was really great working with everyone. Have a good night!

Ruth Wattenberg,
Ward 3 Member, DC State Board of Education

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