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DC Council considering amendment in morning to wipe out the purchase of the GDS school. Please write to Councilmembers!

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email Council tonight! **GDS purchase endangered**

In my Sunday email, I told you that the GDS Lower School campus had just gone back on the market and that Ward 3 Council Member Council Mary Cheh was working with Council Chairman Phil Mendelson to get DC to purchase it. The school would help to relieve the extreme overcrowding that exists across the Ward 3-Wilson feeder schools.

By Monday, ***I learned that the city--the Mayor and key Councilmembers--had actually put the purchase into the budget that was to be voted on yesterday (Tuesday)!*** It was amazing and gratifying to watch the city act so quickly and efficiently to take advantage of this once-in-a-generation opportunity to purchase a (nearly) ready-to-go school.

I have just learned that at tomorrow's final Council Budget meeting ***an amendment will be offered to eliminate the purchase*** by CM David Grosso.

Please email the rest of the Council, urging them to reject the amendment and move forward to purchase this badly needed school space at a good price. Their emails are below. (Mary Cheh is already working hard on this! I've included her name--and mine--as cc's.

Here are key points you can make in your email:

According to DC's official [Master Facilities Plan](#) and this [2019 report from DCPS](#), the overcrowding situation in W3/Wilson Feeder schools is severe, longstanding, and getting worse:

- Ten of 15 schools are already at 100% capacity or beyond!
- Every DC Public school in the Wilson HS feeder area is projected to be overcrowded within the next 5-7 years.
- Most of the elementary schools have already had to curtail their pre-k4 programs; none in Ward 3 offer pre-k3.
- Schools in the Wilson Feeder pattern will add around 3200 students by the 2027-28 school year! This school will make a big dent in addressing the overcrowding challenge these numbers represent.

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- The cost of purchasing this campus, with at least 575 seats, is \$48m. This is substantially less than the cost of building a new school, and there won't be the same kind of cost overruns that are so common when new schools get built.
- The schools in the Wilson Feeder Pattern educate students from all wards in the city – nearly 20% of all DCPS students.
- The vote is tomorrow morning. So, please email tonight. Thanks!!!

PMENDELSON@DCCOUNCIL.US

rwhite@dccouncil.us

abonds@dccouncil.us;

esilverman@dccouncil.us;

bnadeau@dccouncil.us;

bpinto@dccouncil.us;

btodd@dccouncil.us;

kmcduffie@dccouncil.us;

CAllen@DCCOUNCIL.US;

vgray@dccouncil.us;

twhite@dccouncil.us.

Cc: MCheh@DCCOUNCIL.US;

Cc: ruth4schools@yahoo.com

Thank you!

Ruth Wattenberg

Ward 3 Member, DC State Board of Education

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Kath@schools - 4129 Hanson St. NW - Washington, DC 20015 - USA