

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3B
GLOVER PARK AND CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS



Resolution In Support of Operating the Fillmore Arts Center Beyond the Current School Year

Whereas, District of Columbia Public School (DCPS) officials have proposed to close the Fillmore Arts Center program starting with school year 2017-18;

Whereas, Fillmore Arts Center provides the only arts instruction available to students from five separate D.C. public schools, including Stoddert Elementary School which serves students in ANC 3B;

Whereas, Fillmore Arts Center provides the arts instruction mandated by the city to hundreds of DCPS students in facilities specifically designed and built by the city within the last decade at taxpayer expense for arts instruction;

Whereas, Stoddert Elementary School (along with most of the other schools served by Fillmore Arts Center) has no purpose-built arts instructional space and lacks the capacity to provide even a single dedicated classroom for arts instruction now, nor can it anticipate having that kind of space in the foreseeable future without significant additional capital investment that is not in the city's current plans;

Whereas, closing Fillmore means students at Stoddert Elementary School will be deprived of the ability to get a level of arts instruction comparable to that provided in other schools with purpose-built spaces and instead will be forced to accept a bare bones arts curriculum taught by a roving teacher forced to transport his or her materials in a push cart to various classrooms, including some housed outside in "temporary" trailers because the school is already short of space;

Whereas, D.C. Public Schools' proposal to close the Fillmore Arts Center would lead to an inequitable situation where Stoddert Elementary School (and other schools served by Fillmore Arts Center) will be among the very few schools in the city without dedicated space to provide arts instruction;

Whereas, the city's claim that it needs to close Fillmore to ensure funding equity for all schools is undermined by the fact that D.C. Public Schools routinely provides higher funding levels for a number of programs that benefit a limited number of students. Examples of inequitable funding levels include: investing over \$1,000 per square foot to renovate Duke Ellington School of the Arts while renovations to other facilities languish; providing six schools with extra funding for the Schoolwide Enrichment Model; providing extra funding to 25 schools for the Teacher Leader Innovation program; and providing extra funding to eight schools for the city's International Baccalaureate program, among other examples; Whereas, just as the additional, but not equitable, funding provided to many D.C. Public Schools supports presumably valid educational programs that offer significant benefits to students at those schools, the slightly higher per pupil cost of the Fillmore Arts Center provides educationally valid and academically significant benefits to the students of Stoddert and the other schools that participate in the Fillmore Arts program;

Whereas, much of the additional cost D.C. Public Schools spends on Fillmore Arts Center compared to arts instruction at other schools is related to the city's own mismanagement of student transportation to and from the facility. For example, until the current fiscal year, D.C. school officials chose to hire expensive charter buses to transport students to and from Fillmore instead of using city-owned school busses operated by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). This fiscal year D.C. school officials failed to notify OSSE that they had cancelled the charter bus contract and needed to use city-owned school buses so D.C. Public Schools is now paying to rent approximately 20 vans and drivers to handle transportation of students to and from Fillmore;

Whereas, instead of closing Fillmore Arts Center, the city would be well advised to seek to replicate the successful and award-winning model in many other parts of the city to provide all D.C. Public School students with similarly broad-ranging arts instruction, bringing equitable educational opportunities, substantial benefits to students in cultural awareness, creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork, as well as highly efficient use of teachers, materials and facilities;

Therefore, be it RESOLVED that ANC3B strenuously urges District of Columbia public school officials to continue funding and operating the Fillmore Arts Center after the current school year and seek ways to strengthen and maintain high quality arts instruction equitably to all DCPS students through similar programs in other parts of the city;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chairman or the Commissioner of ANC3B-05 or their designees are authorized to represent the Commission on this matter.

This Resolution was APPROVED by a vote of 5-0 at a duly noticed public meeting of ANC3B on Thursday, October 13, 2016, at which a quorum was present. (A quorum is 3 of the 5 sitting members.)



Jackie Blumenthal, Chairman



Ann Mladinov, Secretary