

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

May 21, 2019

Chairman Phil Mendelson  
Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Suite 504  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

On behalf of ANC3B, I would like to share some concerns we have regarding the city's utilization of existing educational facilities in our area and Mayor Bowser's proposed school budget for fiscal year 2020. We appreciate the Mayor's continued support for increasing investments in the city's public and public charter schools. In particular, we are eager to see her proposed capital investments in expanding capacity in our local schools. However, we are concerned that the Mayor's office is failing to effectively utilize existing city-owned educational facilities near our area and that the overly prescriptive approach her administration is taking with school funding is forcing unnecessary reductions to key enrichment programs at our local elementary school, Stoddert Elementary.

This Commission recently heard from representatives of the parent teacher organizations for our schools, our State Board of Education member, Ruth Wattenberg, and the Deputy Mayor for Education, Paul Kihn. After hearing their presentations, we are concerned that the Mayor's office is urging the Council to authorize a multi-year lease to allow the Lab School the use of the Old Hardy School that could last several decades into the future. While this Commission supports the Lab School in its mission to serve children with unique learning needs, we question the wisdom of entering into a long-term lease for the building at a time when our nearby traditional public schools, including Stoddert Elementary and Hardy Middle School, are severely overcrowded. At a minimum, the District should not enter into such a lease until city officials can demonstrate they have a more viable and cost-effective solution for addressing overcrowding at local schools.

We also urge city officials to identify a suitable alternative location for the Fillmore Arts Center. It is clear that Hardy Middle School will need access to the classrooms currently being used by Fillmore on the middle school campus. It is also clear that Stoddert Elementary School does not have space available to host an in-school arts program comparable in quality to what students receive at Fillmore. We urge city officials to consider taking advantage of the thousands of square feet available throughout the day at nearby Ellington School for the Arts. At any given moment in the school day, half of the

facility sits vacant depending on whether students are studying in the academic wing or in the arts wing. Given the significant space constraints at nearby schools, there must be a way to more fully utilize the available space at Ellington during the school day, including by accommodating Fillmore's current student population at the high school.

Finally, we are troubled that the prescriptive nature of the school system's budget will force Stoddert Elementary to reduce the amount of instruction and educational support it provides to students in the coming year and beyond, including in the vital subjects of math and science. Despite anticipated increases in student enrollment, the city is requiring Stoddert to increase its English Language Learning staffing at the expense of science and math instruction. We would prefer to see greater flexibility in the Mayor's education budget so the Principal and the school's LSAT can make staffing decisions that better meet the school's educational needs.

To be clear, there is no doubt that the quality of public and public charter education in this city is demonstrably better now than it has been for many years. The Mayor's office and our leaders within the Office of the State Superintendent of Education and D.C. Public Schools have made tremendous progress and should be commended. Our hope is that the Council will take the steps needed to ensure continued progress for our public schools. This includes ensuring adequate funding and flexibility for our schools and guaranteeing that the city is adequately using the resources and facilities available to meet students' needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Turmail", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Turmail  
Chairman

The Commission approved sending a letter to the Council on this matter by a vote of 3-0-1 at a duly noticed public meeting of the Commission on May 9, 2019, at which a quorum was present. (Three of the five members constitute a quorum.) The Commission also designated the Chairman to represent ANC3B on the subject.