



February 10, 2012

Dear School-Within-School and Peabody Communities,

My staff and I heard from many of you over the last several weeks regarding the proposal to move School-Within-School (SWS) for the 2012-13 school year. There was not an overwhelming consensus in any one direction, but many different perspectives on the risks and benefits of moving the program next school year. I appreciated the opportunity to understand the nuances of many of the issues raised.

After careful consideration, we have made the final decision to move the SWS program to the Logan Annex temporarily (no more than 2 years). Our decision to move forward with the expansion supports the following goals:

- Increase the number of quality seats in Ward 6. Over the last couple of years, DCPS has heavily engaged Ward 6. What resonated most in all of those conversations is the need to increase the number of quality seats and quality programs in the ward. This is an opportunity to do that.
- Support the growth and progress of two successful DCPS programs (SWS and Peabody). SWS and Peabody have demonstrated a strong track record of quality teaching and learning. This will allow both programs to reach a larger numbers of students. We are also committed to the development of SWS beyond the early childhood program, and look forward to engaging in these conversations over the next few weeks.
- Respond to demand, as demonstrated through long waitlists for both programs.
- More equitable funding across schools. Currently, SWS represents a funding challenge due to its maximum student enrollment of 84 students and its limited grade configuration. Expanding the program will help off-set the high cost of operating the smaller SWS program and introduce a more sustainable model for the long term. Additionally, when we specially fund programs with unique educational offerings, as SWS has with its Reggio Emilia program, we want to ensure that we are maximizing the number of families who may access the program.

While I cannot begin to answer all of your questions in this letter, I have attached an FAQ document that I hope will answer many of them. However, there were several issues that parents repeatedly raised, and I would like to address these below:

Process is too rushed. Many of you requested that we delay this decision for one more year, in order to further engage parents and the community. As many of you know, the idea to move/expand SWS is not a new idea. This was first presented to DCPS a couple of years ago, and most recently during last year's budget cycle. As we enter the FY13 budget process, we are seeking to ensure greater equity and funding across our schools. Additionally, the opportunity to offer more quality seats is compelling and would benefit both Ward 6 and District families.

Moving SWS will destabilize the Capitol Hill Cluster. We recognize this move will mean a lot of change for Peabody, but please rest assured that we are committed to supporting you through this process. As a result of this move, the number of in and out-of-boundary seats will inevitably increase. We strongly

believe that this will lead to a robust school community in which we are able to extend the Cluster's quality teaching and learning to a broader range of students. Many of you have expressed concern that that moving SWS will leave the Cluster less diverse; however, we have noted an increasing diversity among all of our schools and are confident that this will continue within the Cluster schools. Peabody, in essence, is a neighborhood school; we believe that the high caliber of teaching and the strength of the school community will continue to draw neighborhood residents.

What are the long-term relocation plans? Due to the changing inventory of our school buildings, we are unable to commit to a long-term site for the SWS community at this time. Van Ness is under consideration due to its building capacity and location. However, there is a possibility that our inventory of buildings will change over the next couple of years. We do not want to commit to a site now, when we do not yet know the full universe of options. School-Within-School will not remain in the Logan Annex for more than two years.

Lastly, I have the utmost confidence in the ability for SWS to grow into a full school and we are committed to supporting you in this process. My hope is that this decision to expand both programs will be supported by both the SWS and Peabody communities. I know that these types of changes by nature will not please everyone. However, that does not change our belief that we are on the right course here, and that our decision-making is guided by a real motivation to ensure increased access and long term viability to our best programs.

Sincerely,



Kaya Henderson
Chancellor