



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

“Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C.”

April 24, 2017

Mr. Antwan Wilson
Chancellor
District of Columbia Public Schools
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Ms. Jennifer Niles
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Government of the District of Columbia
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Mr. Brian Kenner
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Government of the District of Columbia
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RE: Funding for the Re-Use of Stevens Elementary School at 1050 21st Street NW by the Ivymount School

Dear Chancellor Wilson, Deputy Mayor Niles, and Deputy Mayor Kenner,

At its regular meeting on April 19, 2017, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A (“ANC 2A” or “Commission”) considered the above-referenced matter. With seven of eight commissioners present, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission voted unanimously (7-0-0), after a motion made by Commissioner Harmon and seconded by Commissioner Zhurbinskiy, to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, ANC 2A is concerned that the moral and legal obligations to the Ivymount School, the selected educational user of the Stevens Elementary School building, are not being met by the DC Public Schools (DCPS), the Deputy Mayor for Education’s Office (DME), and the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development’s Office (DMPED) for the redevelopment of the school building, a property listed on the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places.

WHEREAS, ANC 2A, serving the Foggy Bottom and West End neighborhoods, is and has always been convinced of the historical importance of the Stevens School, viewing the school’s heritage as unique, given its establishment in 1868 and original purpose as the first school for the children of freed slaves in Washington, DC,

WHEREAS, the Stevens School, a National Historic Landmark, is a jewel in the community and has served as a vibrant school supporting the needs of District of Columbia students with excellent programs,



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WHEREAS, the Stevens School has served generations of African Americans and community members in Washington, DC, and includes among its notable graduates Charles Drew, Petey Greene, Jr., Roberta Flack, Amy Carter, Colby King, Rayford Logan, Robert Hooks, and Jonathan Ogden,

WHEREAS, from 2008 through 2011, ANC 2A, the community, and the parents of Stevens School students unsuccessfully fought the closure of this historic school that has been a jewel in DC’s African American, Foggy Bottom, and West End communities since 1868,

WHEREAS, ANC 2A, the community, and the parents of Stevens School students fought to retain this historic school for an educational usage that honored the memory of abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens when the school was shuttered for economic development,

WHEREAS, on November 29, 2011, DMPED, in conjunction with DME, solicited two requests for expressions of interest (RFEI) from private developers and educational users to (1) redevelop the land adjacent to the historic Stevens School and (2) rehabilitate the existing historic Stevens School building for an educational user,

WHEREAS, ANC 2A and DMPED coordinated an extensive public hearing process for the RFEIs with extensive public input in 2011 and 2012, and ANC 2A unanimously resolved, after extensive public input, that the Ivymount School was a top educational user candidate, supported by the community, in its resolution dated August 15, 2012,

WHEREAS, DMPED selected Akridge as the development finalist, and with the input of DME, DMPED selected the Ivymount School as the educational finalist, and on December 2, 2014, the DC Council passed the “Stevens School Disposition Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2014” (R20-0722) and the “Stevens School Surplus Declaration and Approval Resolution of 2014”(R20-0708),” which were signed by the Mayor, providing for the disposition of the Stevens School and the adjoining development parcel to Akridge and the Ivymount School,

WHEREAS, the previously-mentioned RFEIs and legislation contemplated a private-public partnership between the Ivymount School and DCPS, DME, and DMPED, wherein funding flowing from DCPS and DCPS’ Office of Special Education (OSE) to the Ivymount School would be forthcoming so that the Ivymount School could run a premier program modeled on their Model Asperger Program (MAP), serving 50 elementary-aged students with High Functioning Autism (HFA) from DCPS and DC charter schools,



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WHEREAS, OSE and the Ivymount School signed a letter of intent in September of 2013, memorializing this funding arrangement, whereby OSE would fund 50 students once the Ivymount School occupies the renovated Stevens School and 25 students prior to that point,

WHEREAS, DCPS signed a letter on February 3, 2015, stating “DCPS-OSI looks forward to continuing a public-private partnership with The Ivymount School...the growth of this successful collaboration between Ivymount and DCPS will provide significant added benefit to the students of our city. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Ivymount”,

WHEREAS, the Ivymount School relied on the previously-mentioned representations and contractual obligation by DMPED, DCPS, and DME, and

WHEREAS, it appears DCPS, DME, and DMPED have not committed to fully funding the 50 students once the Ivymount School occupies the renovated Stevens School and 25 students prior to that point, either because of lack of coordination or an attempt to renegotiate the terms or possibly an effort to secure another educational provider, thereby renegeing on their obligations to the Ivymount School.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that ANC 2A insists that the DC Public Schools and the Deputy Mayor for Education’s Office, with the support of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development’s Office, honor their original commitment to the Ivymount School, as adjusted for inflation and current operating costs, and commit to fully funding seats for 50 students once the Ivymount School occupies the renovated Stevens School and 25 students prior to that point, as the DC Public Schools and the DC Public Schools’ Office of Special Education agreed to in the past, and support the Ivymount School as the educational provider for the historic Stevens School development.

Commissioners Florence Harmon (2A06@anc.dc.gov) and Patrick Kennedy (2A01@anc.dc.gov) are the Commission’s representatives in this matter.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

Patrick Kennedy
Chairperson

CC: Councilmember Jack Evans, Ward 2



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Sherri Kimbel, Director of Constituent Services, Councilmember Jack Evans
Richard Livingstone, Mayor’s Office of Community Relations and Services
Anna Shapiro, Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development’s Office
David Toney, Vice President of Development, Akridge
Jan Wintrol, The Ivymount School
Chairman Phil Mendelson, DC Council
Councilmember David Grosso, At-Large
Councilmember Elissa Silverman, At-Large
Councilmember Robert White, At-Large
Councilmember Anita Bonds, At-Large
Councilmember Brianne Nadeau, Ward 1
Councilmember Mary Cheh, Ward 3
Councilmember Brandon Todd, Ward 4
Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie, Ward 5
Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6
Councilmember Vince Gray, Ward 7
Councilmember Trayon White, Ward 8