

May 17, 2016

For Public Release

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**STATEMENT BY THE CAPITOL HILL MONTESSORI AT LOGAN SCHOOL PARENT TEACHER STUDENT
ORGANIZATION ON THE DC COUNCIL FY17 BUDGET
MAY 17, 2016**

The Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan Parent Teacher Student Organization (CHML PTSO) has been advocating for emergency building needs and a full modernization for CHML, as well as for a budget that ensures every school is modernized over the next 6 years. We believe the Council's FY17 budget is a good first step in paving a more accurate and data-driven path for improved decision making on school building stabilizations and modernizations and a good first step in addressing health and safety in schools by increasing funding for stabilization projects and recommending new policies to improve building health and safety citywide. But there is still more work to increase investments to modernize all schools.

CHML to Receive Much-Needed Emergency Stabilization Support

The CHML PTSO greatly appreciates the leadership of Chairperson Cheh for transferring \$4 million to the Committee on Education for an HVAC system and ceiling repairs for CHML. As many parents and students testified, the lack of any HVAC system in our school leaves temperatures hovering at 78-80 degrees all year with no ventilation. This much-needed support will help provide a key stabilization for our school. We greatly appreciate the leadership of Chairman Grosso for maintaining that funding directive in the Committee on Education's budget, and for Councilman Allen's vocal and active support.

Education Committee Budget Includes Policy that Will Help Improve Modernization Prioritization

We applaud Chairman Grosso's budget that rejected the Mayor's metrics for ranking school modernization in favor of much improved ones. The Committee on Education's improved metrics for ranking schools:

- Include all schools in its evaluation (including CHML);
- Count all schools that have children in the middle grades for a middle school priority; and
- Focus more on facility needs than on population statistics, Ward or neighborhood preference.

When the new metrics are applied, CHML (which was not on the Mayor's ranking list at all) ranks fourth greatest in need of modernization when compared to all DCPS schools. The CHML PTSO community applauds this ranking as one that legitimizes what we already knew – our building is in need of serious repair and modernization. However, the Council budget does not change the Mayor's proposed "CIP" which means that CHML still has a long way to go to secure funding for a modernization soon.

CHML Applauds Recommendations to Increase Public Engagement and Health and Safety in Schools

Both the Committee on Education and the Council on Transportation and the Environment took significant steps towards addressing areas of need in policy recommendations.

The Committee on Education, under the leadership of Chairman Grosso, recommended DCPS (1) Explore more inclusive ways to garner feedback and input from students during the budget process; and (2) Establish a strategic communications protocol for alerting school communities on environmental safety matters in DCPS facilities.

The Committee on Transportation and Environment, under the leadership of Chairperson Cheh, recommended DGS (1) Establish a new systematic approach to lead testing in all public schools; (2) pilot a design-build model for school modernization projects; and (3) Conduct an annual Safe and Healthy School Assessment that would result in a comprehensive report card.

We think all of these policy recommendations will be a major step forward in addressing major issues in the safety, health and modernization needs of our school buildings.

For more information on CHML PTSO activities as well as parent, student and teacher testimony on issues of lead in schools and modernization go to <http://capitolhillmontessorischool.org/modernize-chml-all-schools/>.

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Background: The Mayor's FY17 Proposed Budget Failed CHML and Many Schools

The Mayor's FY17 budget fails to meet the goal to modernize all schools. The Mayor's current budget proposal clearly responds to the need to focus on modernization as a priority, particularly middle schools. This was a message sent loudly and clearly last year by the Committee on Education and by the school community. However, the plan as proposed did not invest in our schools with a clear vision for why we are investing, how we plan to achieve that vision with efficient and effective spending, and what we plan to achieve through those investments. And it left too many schools in need with no plan for a modernization.

Specifically, CHML was completely left behind. The Mayor's proposed budget punted our modernization from 2014 to 2017 to 2019 – and now indefinitely. The Mayor's proposed budget was built without any data about CHML. At the Committee on Transportation and the Environment Hearing on Oversight of the Department of General Services, Director Weaver testified upon questioning that in fact, CHML's facilities had never been assessed by DGS. The Mayor's budget could not have been an objective, data-driven process if there was no data for CHML

In addition, the Mayor's metrics to rank schools are faulty and inconsistent. For example, our middle school did not receive a priority like other middle schools. But in deciding our capacity rating, it appears our trailer's square footage that houses the middle school *was* counted for purposes of determining building utilization, which means that they *do* know that we are a middle school. The metrics are built on neighborhood and Ward metrics which have little meaning for citywide schools and a system where children travel all over the city to attend a school of their choice. Finally, the Mayor's metrics made building conditions – arguably the most important criteria in deciding how to prioritize building modernizations – less than 10% weight.

We believe that the Mayor's budget is misguided and underfunded and we strongly support DC Council's efforts to develop an accurate and data-driven approach that includes all schools.