

Testimony of Tiffany L. Brown, Parent & Chairperson of the Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan,
Local School Advisory Team (LSAT), to the Council of the District of Columbia,
Education Committee
July 11, 2016

Good Afternoon: Councilmember Grosso, Chair of the Committee on Education and other Councilmembers and Staff assembled, thank you for the opportunity to speak at this important council hearing concerning Comprehensive Education Facilities Amendment Act of 2016. I come before you today to speak on behalf of the Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan family as well as parents, teachers, and students around the District whose schools are in need of a modernization. As an 18-year veteran teacher in DCPS, I have seen time after time schools get pass over for modernization. Why you say, because there has not been a fair, clear process or procedure for doing so until you, Mr. Grosso put something in place. Even with that, more needs to be done so that the process is not flawed and schools in need are not passed over because of the Ward that school resides in. During my years in DCPS, I have personally observed the following: Birney, the first school I was assigned to was never modernized until a charter school purchased it; Garfield the second school where I work had only surface modernizations completed. I remember once during a rain storm, the water poured into the building because it was in such disrepair. The next school I had the pleasure of working at was Randle-Highland, that total modernization has never been completed. Next, there was Charles Young, not touched. Then there is Savoy, where I can honestly say has been total modernized, which had the help and financial backing of 21st Century School. My Current school, Noyes E.S. was fully modernized in the mid-2000s. All of these schools are neighborhood schools and serve the students primarily that live within their boundary.

Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan is unique where it serves students from all eight wards. Because of that, we are asking that our school like other citywide schools be fully accounted for, understood, and in fact recognized as part of the equity agenda as helping bring unique learning experiences to all wards. In the rankings matrix, we are concerned that there is no legislative language that recognizes the role of citywide schools. We know from experience that we cannot just let this be done by hope. The citywide schools are too often overlooked or misunderstood. We know that in the matrix you released earlier this spring, you had accounted for citywide schools. We would like to see that codified along with the rest of the matrix. Specifically, in the category of community need, we would like language included that would say that for the subcategories of “in-boundary school age children”, “percent change in projected number of children in neighborhood cluster” and total number of modernized square feet in a feeder pattern” citywide schools would not have a score in these categories and that fact will not count against them in the overall score. We would like to make sure that citywide schools are treated equitably throughout the bill in every place needed. As always the Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan, Parent Community thanks you for the opportunity to appear before this body and will continue to partner with you to enhance the lives of all students in the District of Columbia.