

TESTIMONY OF SCOTT WEISHAAR
Parent at Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan
Committee on Education
DME Oversight Hearing
February 15, 2017

Good morning/afternoon. I'm Scott Weishaar, parent of a first grader at Capitol Hill Montessori @ Logan and a Ward 6 resident.

I've testified before this committee several times about the issue of lead in our schools. Most recently, at an October joint hearing on the Childhood Lead Exposure Prevention Amendment Act of 2016, I provided examples of how the city's self-described "crisis of confidence" on the lead-in-schools issue had persisted, and I repeated our request for DGS and DCPS to "consult[] with...school faculty, parents, and students" to ensure transparent communication and ongoing accountability. Unfortunately, such consultation has not occurred and the crisis of confidence continues to persist. Consider the following:

- Contrary to public statements describing an actionable threshold of 1 ppb, DGS's FAQs on "Water Testing for Lead in DC Public Schools" still reference a DGS policy of taking action when water sources test above 15 ppb.
- DGS's testing, remediation, and filter replacement schedules have not been communicated and we have been unable to find this information on DGS or DCPS websites. Without these schedules, we are left to piece together disjointed results of tests and re-tests performed over time. For example:
 - 94 water sources at CHML were tested in April 2016, however only 13 were tested in August 2016 and only 18 more in December 2016. Why were so few sources tested in August and December? What's the plan for the remaining 63?
 - The DGS website lists January 2017 test results and February 2017 re-test results. Both reports list the same 18 water sources with the same December 23rd "Date Analyzed," the same "Record IDs," and the same 1st and 2nd draw "Sample IDs." Presumably just a duplicated report, right? Wrong. For the sink in classroom 111, one version lists 1 ppb and the next 1.5 ppb. Thankfully relatively low levels, but how can we have confidence the data are correct? What was the actual date of the retest? Why aren't the retest samples identified separately from the original test samples?
 - We've been told that the classroom 111 sink, which our 3–5 year olds use for their "practical life" lessons, including washing their snacks, requires replacement of the faucet or pipes. The scope and timing of this work are unclear, and the teacher in that classroom has had to alter her lessons or do away with the majority of lessons as they involve water.
- Still today, as was the case when I testified in October, we have no visibility of which water sources have been filtered and when, nor do we know when they are due for replacement. Can we trust that DGS is tracking that information accurately and following up as necessary?
- Parents have not been notified of lead testing unless results come back above the actionable limit. We believe school communities should be notified of every test. Clearly, one easy way to bring peace of mind is to share results that are less than the threshold.

Months ago, Deputy Mayor for Education Niles and DGS officials correctly observed that promises were broken and that trust had eroded. In order to restore trust, it is critically important that we achieve full transparency and proactive communication on every detail of the process—testing, filtering, re-testing, filter replacement, and so on.

We endeavor to come here with solutions, not just complaints. To that end, we again offer to make ourselves available to work with the Deputy Mayor and her team, as well as DGS and DCPS officials, to develop a transparent and comprehensive lead testing and remediation process. In addition, I would like to remind you of my October testimony in which we proposed five concrete modifications to the Childhood Lead Exposure Prevention Amendment Act, all of which focus on increasing transparency, restoring trust, and maintaining accountability. A copy of those proposed modifications is attached to my testimony.

Thank you again for your time and thoughtful consideration.