



## THE LAB SCHOOL OF WASHINGTON – FACT SHEET

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### What is The Lab School?

- Located in the heart of the Palisades in Washington, D.C., The Lab School is a national leader in educating children with special learning needs.
- Founded in 1967, Lab has grown into one of the most influential special education schools in America, and our unique teaching methods for kids with learning differences has made Lab a magnet for educators and specialists.
- Lab's innovative, arts-infused curriculum is experiential and multi-sensory, helping young people to overcome difficulties with reading, spelling, writing, and math, while preparing them for a range of rewarding college and career choices.
- Over 90% of Lab's students continue their education at a college or university, whereas nationally, only 16% of public school students identified with learning disabilities attend 4-year colleges.

### Who Attends Lab?

- Lab has 357 students on two campuses in the Palisades. 80 children in grades 1-4 attend Lab's elementary program at 1550 Foxhall Road, and a half-mile away at 4759 Reservoir Road, Lab has 277 students in grades 5-12.
- Because Lab offers such a unique program, families have moved to the DC area from as far away as Australia so that their children can attend Lab.
- In 1975, Lab began its long-term partnership with the DC Public School system when it began providing the highest quality special education to children whose needs could not be met through DCPS. Approximately 120 of Lab's students are from DC; of those, 72 are funded by DCPS.
- While Lab is an independent, non-profit school, it offers incredible opportunities in education to children who might otherwise be lost in the public school system.

### Why Does Lab Need A New High School Building?

- Right now Lab has one academic building on the Reservoir campus, which is occupied by children ranging in age from 10-18. These kids share hallways, classrooms, bathrooms and common areas. It is simply not best practice—for any school, much less a school for learning disabled kids—to have this age range sharing the same spaces.
- Every single Ward 3 high school, public and private, has undergone a major renovation in roughly the past decade. Students, parents and educators expect that excellent high schools will have excellent facilities, equipped with the latest in technology, laboratory space, and learning environments. Lab kids deserve that level of excellence, and the Lab School Board is committed to providing it to them.
- Lab's space needs are also different than the typical school. Additional classroom space is necessary in order to accommodate nontraditional teaching methods, which in turn accommodate the different ways Lab's students learn.
- Building a separate space for the high school will also allow the kids in grades 5-8 to have their own, modernized space in the existing classroom building.
- Students at Lab have gone for too long in crowded, antiquated space. It's time to bring this campus into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and stop giving our kids the message that they don't deserve better.

**Will You Add More Students and Staff to the Campus?**

- This project is being designed to accommodate the students Lab has today. Lab needs to separate its middle and high school programs, and give its kids more room to move, learn, and grow.
- Lab does not plan to actively grow its student population, but it will respond to demand, as the needs arise.
- Lab will not increase its enrollment cap or its faculty and staff cap.

**Will the New High School Building Be or Appear to Be Enormous?**

- No. The design, scale and materials of the new building are consistent with that of all the other structures along Whitehaven Parkway.
- The new building is designed to take advantage of the significant grade changes that take place on our property, thereby having the least visual impact from the street.

**What Will Happen to Traffic and Parking?**

- Over the past three years, because of our efforts, traffic on campus (and in the neighborhood) and the demand for parking have decreased. Lab will continue to implement innovative traffic management solutions to continue the overall decline in cars in and around Lab.
- Between last school year and this year, the number of students using our shuttle buses to go to and from school rose from 80-100. Lab is continuing to improve and expand its bus program and is confident that the number of users will keep rising.
- The new plan calls for removing an area of parking and loading in the center of our campus that we feel endangers pedestrians, particularly students. Lab is planning to create an open green space in place of this hazardous parking area. To make sure that removing these twenty spaces does not have a negative impact on parking in the neighborhood, Lab is committed to the following:
  - Better lay out our main parking area to accommodate more parked vehicles
  - Mandate that 15 staff members utilize the rented spaces we have secured at CVS (presently only three staff members use the CVS spaces that are available.)
  - Undergo close monitoring, and if we fail to live up to our promises, we will go back to the BZA.

**Will Lab Reduce their Community Amenities?**

- No. Lab will still make the pool and gym available to the community on weekday mornings and on weekends.
- Lab will continue to offer free shuttle rides to the Tenley Metro every weekday morning during the school year.
- Lab will continue to open its monthly lecture series to the community for free.