Good Morning, Chairman Re[redacted]nd members of the Board. I am Susan [redacted]oss, Head of the Jewish Primary Day School of the Nation□s Capital, known affectionately as JPDS. I was an Army wife for 20 years and in that time, in locations in Germany and across the United States, I helped start several schools, a day care and a teen center. Even after that, I helped start a preschool and another day school, but there is none about which I felt the passion that I do for JPDS. This is my 10th year here. I started with 29 students in Kindergarten, 1 & 2. I saw JPDS through its expansion from a K - 3 school to one that serves 7 grades, k - 6. I engineered JPDS' moves from occupying just 1 hallway of a large building, to 2 and then 3 and now 4 hallways. I oversaw the creation of a science lab and enlarged classrooms. In all that time & though all the change, JPDS has remained the same. Our mission has not changed nor has our dedication to our students. What has changed is our size; our community has grown considerably! JPDS is dedicated to furthering Jewish education and identity amongst its students. We believe in hands-on, developmental education in a small class size. We believe in the individual worth of each student and the importance of treating each other with respect. We are a proven entity with an excellent track record. Our graduates shine and bring us much pride, as does our current student body.

We are conscientious about every facet of the school day and we frequently revisit our plans and policies to secure student safety and security. Our arrival and dismissal procedures insure this. Whenever we cross a street, whether to our play space, the community library or fire station or downtown on a field trip, our teachers serve as crossing guards. We travel on the Metro frequently and our students and faculty are well aware of the necessity to be alert and secure! We utilize adequate staffing to maintain a safe environment no matter the situation, and if we are insecure about it - we change our plans! Our teachers are equipped with walkie-talkies so that they may call the office for assistance. Office personnel have been trained as to how to respond in an emergency, as well as for the everyday situations that arise with children.

Our program is a bilingual one of Hebrew and English. By the middle of 2nd grade, most of our students read Hebrew fluently. At the end of second grade, they study original Biblical text in Hebrew and in the third grade, they are introduced to another form of Hebrew, used by a great Biblical commentator of the 11th century. They are also taught modern Hebrew, read newspapers and stories, write poetry and keep journals - all in Hebrew; they are also conversant in modern Hebrew and conduct many classes and some lunches all in Hebrew. They study the land of Israel as a modern state, as well as the ancient land. They learn Jewish History, customs

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and ceremonies, as well as J[redacted]sh law and practices. Prayer occurs e[redacted]y day, led by students - all in Hebrew. They learn what prayers mean, and they practice until they can say them fluidly. They learn the origins of the Jewish holidays - of which there are many! - and they learn how these holidays are celebrated - around the world, and by different Jews. They make ceremonial objects to use at home, decorations, and food to enhance their celebrations and often have holiday parties. They learn about the Commandments, from giving money to those less fortunate, to visiting the sick, and feeding the poor. They collect warm clothing to help others, and at Chanukah forego presents and send them instead to patients at Children□s Hospital. Last year we collected and shipped toys and toiletries to Honduras. This past year, we gathered canned food to ship to Venezuela, and when the Embassy could take no more, we sent it to the DC Central Kitchen. On Christmas, many of our families go to the Salvation Army Harbor Lights Center, a drug rehabilitation center in DC to help prepare and serve meals and sing holiday songs. On the festival of Purim, coming up next week, our students visit nursing homes, or people confined to their homes, bringing gifts of food and their cheery demeanor, singing songs and telling stories to help spread the holiday feeling. Every week, they bring in tzedakh money, loosely translated as charity, to be sent to organizations, Jewish and non-Jewish, which help people all over the world.

Every month, when the Hebrew month changes, they are taught a new "midah," a positive value, such as respecting elders, taking care of the environment, truthfulness, patience, welcoming strangers, and they are taught how to practice these values. They also learn Jewish songs and even dances and on Fridays, the whole school gets together for an assembly which closes the week, but more importantly, prepares us all for the coming Sabbath.

All this can only occur in a Jewish day school program and all this happens in 40% of the school time each week. The other 60% is spent in General studies, where our students learn to read and write in English, do math, science, and social studies, write poetry, learn American History, world geography, explorers, ancient History, where the sign on the bulletin board says, Homer - it's not Simpson!; They have book reports and research papers, they learn to work on computers. They study about dinosaurs, as well as the Civil War; they learn about the constitution and Native Americans; they do a unit on Washington DC and study the architecture of our country□s capital, their home. They take field trips on the metro and know the ins and outs of the Smithsonian. We are fortunate to have speakers from various fields come to the school. In a few weeks, we'll be privileged to have Congressman John Lewis come to help us commemorate the

anniversary of the assassinat[redacted] of Martin Luther King, Jr.

We also take our students to plays and concerts at the Kennedy Center and Discovery Theater; they visit the capitol and the DC water purification plant. They even compare tap water & bottled water at science night - and DC tap water comes out the favorite! They have specialty classes in art, science, music, physical education, and library. They have recess on a small part of the parking lot, known as the cage, or on a small piece of fenced in land across the street, known as the slope. We celebrate the American holidays with flair - this year on Veteran□s Day, we had plebes, accompanied by their chaplain, from Annapolis as our guests, as well as veterans from World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam & the Gulf War. Each grade had a part and many in the audience were moved to tears by the beauty and the poignancy of this annual event. Many of our students are preparing for next week's Women□s History assembly and last month, we had an outstanding Black History assembly. These are yearly celebrations.

Twice a month we have a "hot lunch" program, with the food brought in already cooked. Our students eat these meals together. We plan to hold these events at Tifereth Israel, in the social hall. Once a month, this will be our birthday hot lunch, a wonderful JPDS tradition, at which we honor all the students who have birthdays that month. For this, our K - 3 students will cross 16th Street and we will develop a plan which will make safety its first consideration.
We have 3 whole school evening programs a year. In September, we host a Back To School Night, when parents come to meet their children's teachers and learn about their curriculum. In December, we host a school-wide family Chanukah party and in June we have an art and science night, when the students show off their work in these areas for their families.

Our three major daytime programs would be held at those times when parents could park on 16th Street. We understand neighborhood concerns about traffic, parking, and noise, and promise to keep them at the top of our plans. We will maintain an efficient operation, to benefit both our students and our neighbors. Our students will be taught through our actions - and theirs - how to be good neighbors. Outdoor playtime, lunch recess, will last from approximately 11:30 - 1:30 each day there's not inclement weather. Recess is ½ hour and will be limited to 32 students at a time, so that there will not be overcrowding of people or noise. Of course, all recesses will be staffed by an adequate number of teachers, as all JPDS activities are, and will continue to be. Our students are consistently monitored, as students this age need appropriate adult supervision at all times. Our in-class student teacher ratio is no more that 16 - 1, and often 8 - 1. We use

instructional assistants to help [redacted] carry out our curriculum and meet individual needs.

Our students are taught to be good Americans, as well as to understand their Jewish Heritage. What is so unique about JPDS is that we teach our children about Judaism in the broad sense, and that there is no one right way. I liken it to an orchestra - each instrument is important; each has a role - you may have a favorite and feel that this is the one for you - but your neighbor has his or her favorite - and that's the one for him or her. We don't have the right to criticize the choice or the sound. We expect each of our students to respect the choice others have made. No one is better. This carries over to other phases of our lives - we all learn differently and shine in various ways - some draw artistically, some sing melodiously, some read or write prolifically, other do math astronomically, some run speedily - success in any area doesn't make any of us better - and what's so wrong with being different? We respect each other because of who we are as an individual, inside... - not what we are. Success is not gained by belittling others or using them as stepping stones - success is gained by working together. Helping others only strengthens us.

And it all works - our students are wonderful people; they work hard, and love to have fun. They are kind and considerate - and very normal. We have the same issues faced by other schools and deal with them. There is no magic - but there is the idea that they are responsible for each other, that they must help each other and respect each other - that Jews and non-Jews are responsible for one another.

How does this all fit in to today? JPDS needs a home - 2 synagogues understand this responsibility - in Hebrew it says - kal yisraely arevim zeh bazeh- all Jews are responsible one for another. We are grateful to them for their openness and would like to be able to accept their hospitality. That also means that it would give us a chance to take our community into another community. Because that's what JPDS is - a community. A community of learners, a community of caring & skilled teachers, a community of parents. This is felt in so many ways: Newcomers to the school community, are made to feel welcome by veteran parents: when a parent is sick or a baby is born, others pitch in with everything from car pool responsibilities, to hot meals, When someone suffers the death of a loved one, our community is there - visiting the mourner, preparing food, assisting with prayer services. Many of our students are better able to lead these services than their parents - and often do!

JPDS has had a rough year; [redacted]eral times our hopes have been raised [redacted]out a home for the next few years - it has really been a roller coaster - but our community has stayed strong. The number of parent volunteers is greater than ever. Our registration for next year is solid. The caring of our parents is palpable; they want this school to work - for their children & for themselves; they are passionate about JPDS because they believe in its mission - they see that it works. They understand that sacrifices might have to be made, that different rules and regulations need to be followed so that we may continue - but they are willing. They want this school to endure and they will work diligently with me to see that it does.

We would like very much to be a part of Shepherd Park, albeit temporarily. I believe that we can make a contribution to this neighborhood. . I have already spoken to the principal of the Shepherd Elementary School and we discussed the possibility of sharing cultural and sporting events as well as school programs. I believe that our JPDS community will be a positive asset to the Shepherd Park community and anticipate that when we have our intergenerational art program, we will both benefit from this shared experience, and that when it's time for us to move on to our permanent home, we will both be a little sad; we will have made new friends, and Shepherd Park will have become an integral part of JPDS