



February 21, 2017

Frederick Hill, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment Members
441 4th Street NW Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: DCPS Letter in Support of the Ward 5 Short Term Family Housing Project at 1700 Rhode Island Avenue, NE

Dear Mr. Hill:

On February 11, 2016, Mayor Muriel Bowser unveiled an all 8 Ward strategy to end homelessness in Washington, DC. This plan includes closing and replacing DC General - a former hospital that has served as the District's largest family shelter for more than seven years - before the end of 2018. Part of the plan to close DC General is to provide alternative, safe and dignified places for families to stay. The District has been working to create Short-Term Family Housing (STFH) sites across the city. This letter voices support from DC Public Schools (DCPS) for these sites.

Homeless or displaced families may be exempt from certain residency verification requirements as provided in the McKinney Vento Act of 2001. These exemptions apply to all neighborhood schools. Families experiencing homelessness are entitled to remain in their school of origin or attend the in-boundary neighborhood school tied to the address of the STFH site. Families are also entitled to matriculate through their current or new feeder pattern as long as they are experiencing homelessness. Once families acquire permanent housing in DC, families can attend their in-boundary neighborhood school. If a student moves out-of-state and is no longer a DC resident or classified as homeless, they could elect to pay out-of-state tuition to attend public schools in DC.

DCPS strives to ensure students experiencing homelessness receive a great education, and works with students and families, schools, shelters, and community organizations to ensure to the fullest extent possible that their educational rights are protected. Each DCPS school has a homeless liaison that ensures additional resources are made available as needed, such as socio-emotional support, transportation assistance and referrals to other city services.

DCPS will carefully monitor enrollment of the in-boundary neighborhood schools tied to all of the STFH sites. For the Ward 5 site, those schools are Burroughs Elementary School, Brookland Middle School and Dunbar Senior High School. DCPS's overall approach to projecting enrollment is to analyze recent enrollment trends to make a prediction for the following school year. Analysis builds upon a 'cohort-survival ratio,' a commonly employed projection method for school districts. DCPS has well established strategies to alleviate the potential for over-crowding at schools, such as limiting lottery seats, reviewing out-of-boundary/sibling preference seats and revisiting school boundaries. DCPS is confident that the

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siting of the Ward 5 STFH will not have an adverse impact on any of the feeder schools or those schools' ability to serve the students there.

DCPS has and will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that every child, no matter their circumstance, receives a quality education. Moreover, DCPS will work with the District, the Department of Human Services and the Short-term Family Housing program operators with the families and school communities to ensure that all children receive a quality education as required by law.

DCPS is proud to be a key partner in Mayor Bowser's strategy to end homelessness by supporting families experiencing homelessness in promoting stability in their schooling so they receive the highest quality education possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carla D. Watson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Carla D. Watson, Esq.
Chief Operating Officer