

Capitol Hill Middle School Initiative

A Proposal To Improve Middle School Opportunities

April 2010



**CAPITOL HILL PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENT ORGANIZATION
(CHPSPO)**

Objective

- ❑ Work together with DC Public Schools to implement a comprehensive plan to improve middle school opportunities for all students on Capitol Hill, with a clear timeline for moving forward
- ❑ Outreach to community to provide information about middle school plans and to receive input and gain support from community members

Background

- ❑ Capitol Hill Public School Parent Organization (CHPSPO) began a Middle School Initiative in January 2009
- ❑ PTA representatives and interested parents from Brent, Capitol Hill Cluster School, Ludlow-Taylor, Maury, Miner, Payne, and Tyler, and Eliot-Hine are members of CHPSPO
- ❑ Conducted survey during Summer of 2009 to learn parent attitudes towards public middle school opportunities
- ❑ Requested by Council member Tommy Wells to accelerate efforts in December 2009
 - Meetings on December 15, January 11 and 19, February 8 and 23
 - PTA representatives held discussions about middle schools with their individual schools, and brought back recommendations
- ❑ Achieved consensus and developed proposal for presentation to Chancellor Rhee in March 2010
- ❑ Met with Chancellor Rhee on March 25, 2010 and received commitment from DCPS to work with CHPSPO on finalizing and implementing a middle school plan for Capitol Hill

Middle School Survey

- ❑ Captured attitudes from 125 respondents

- ❑ If parents had to choose today about middle school
 - almost one-in-three would choose charter (17%) or private/parochial schools (16%)
 - 23% would go out-of-boundary to a public middle school
 - 16% would remain in-boundary

- ❑ Parents are looking for
 - Strong academic program (90%)
 - Safe environment (69%)
 - Teachers with a reputation for excellence (56%)

- ❑ Relatively few credit their in-boundary local middle school with
 - Strong academic program (11%)
 - Safe environment (16%)
 - Teachers with a reputation for excellence (10%)

Middle School Initiative Goals

- ❑ Families with confidence in the public middle schools on Capitol Hill
- ❑ A continuation of special subject matter focus and teaching methods that are successfully implemented in elementary schools, e.g., museum magnet, Montessori, Spanish immersion, arts integration, world cultures, responsive classroom, special education
- ❑ A comprehensive plan to lift up the educational experience for all middle school students
- ❑ Continuity in school leadership: The current Capitol Hill elementary and middle schools principals are taking our schools in the right direction

Middle School Proposal for Capitol Hill

Three-tiered middle school model that includes **one large, one mid-sized** and a **couple of small middle school** options

Eliot-Hine Middle School

- Eliot-Hine (grows to be a **large** DCPS middle school)
- Begin an **International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IB-MYP)** program for all students at Eliot-Hine
- Ensure appropriate **high-level Spanish content/immersion classes** for students transitioning from Tyler's Spanish Immersion program
- Vertically integrate **city-wide Special Education** programs from Tyler and other schools currently feeding to Eliot-Hine
- **Phase-out co-located programs** at Eliot-Hine to accommodate expected increased student population, and allow school to grow to its 850 student capacity

Stuart Hobson Middle School

- Continues as a **medium-sized middle** school that is part of the Capitol Hill Cluster School
- **Formalize the school's Museum Magnet program** (a formal partnership with the Smithsonian ended about ten years ago); strengthen professional development for teachers in museum-based studies
- Renovate building (currently scheduled for 2011). In addition to the classroom renovations, **renovate the gymnasium (currently two small adjacent gyms into one multi-purpose gymnasium), and build a 2nd story on top of renovated gymnasium** that would allow expanded programming, e.g., art and music opportunities
- **Move 5th grade classes to Watkins**

Create Additional Pre-K through 8th Schools (small-sized middle schools)

Brent

- Expand through 8th grade to create a vertically integrated PK-8 curriculum
- Expand Brent's successful museum magnet program with the Smithsonian through the 8th grade, and begin an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IB-MYP)
- Brent's parents continue to explore possibilities for location of expanded grades

Miner

- Expand through 8th grade to create a vertically integrated PK-8 Reggio Emilia program
- Space may be located at the adjacent former Miner property which would need to be renovated

Expand Capitol Hill Cluster School's Montessori program

- ❑ **Expand Montessori through 8th grade**, and add additional classes at 3-year old through 4th
- ❑ High demand for Montessori education (389 applications for 26 openings this year warrants expansion of program)
- ❑ **Identify new location** for Capitol Hill Cluster School (Watkins campus) Montessori program

Cross-cutting Proposals

❑ **DC Youth Orchestra Program (DCYOP)**

- Recent agreement to locate DCYOP at Eastern Senior High School creates opportunities for instrumental music instruction, marching bands and orchestras at the middle schools on Capitol Hill
- Recommend DCYOP be co-located at Eliot-Hine

❑ **Schoolyard Greening**

- Schoolyard greening efforts at the middle schools lag far behind efforts at elementary schools on Capitol Hill. Greening efforts should be supported by DCPS, and make excellent opportunities for parents to be involved

❑ **Feeder Patterns**

- High school feeder patterns for Brent and Stuart Hobson will be changed to Eastern Senior High School
- Changing the Ludlow-Taylor feeder pattern back to Stuart Hobson should be considered

Next Steps

- Work with DCPS liaison, Claudia Lujan, to refine plans and develop an aggressive timeline for implementation
- Meet with community stakeholders to describe the Middle School proposal, obtain feedback, and gain support
- Develop a plan for monitoring implementation and ensuring fulfillment of commitment to improving Capitol Hill middle schools