

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3A



RESOLUTION REGARDING EXPANDING CAPACITY FOR DCPS SCHOOLS IN WARD 3

ANC 3A boundaries include areas where residents are in-boundary for two DCPS high schools, Jackson-Reed and the new high school scheduled to open in August 2023 on MacArthur Boulevard; two DCPS middle schools, Hardy and Deal; and five elementary schools, Eaton, Hearst, Janney, Mann, and Stoddert.

School capacity has been a serious challenge in Ward 3 schools for many years:

- Jackson-Reed (formerly Wilson) High School has the largest enrollment of any DCPS high school, by a wide margin, at close to 2,000 students, and has been operating at more than its estimated permanent capacity for many years.
- Deal Middle School enrollment has also been significantly over capacity.
- Hardy Middle School enrollment increased by 60% in the past 5 years and is now above capacity.
- Several of the elementary schools serving the ANC 3A area have been over capacity, some of them by the highest percentage of any elementary schools in the District.
- Most elementary schools in the area do not have sufficient classroom space for pre-K 4 classes.
- No elementary schools in Ward 3 offer pre-K 3 classes because of capacity constraints.

The five DCPS elementary schools whose boundaries include portions of ANC 3A have all had beautiful renovations and modernizations since 2010, as part of the District's commitment to bring all DCPS schools up to contemporary requirements. Deal Middle School is getting a major expansion, to be open in 2024-25. Capacity challenges at Jackson-Reed spurred the District's purchase of the Georgetown Day School campus at MacArthur Boulevard and Q Street which is being renovated and expanded to accommodate the new DCPS high school.

Those projects not only have made the schools far more effective at delivering educational experiences that meet current physical and technological standards, but also have made the schools more attractive to many students and families. Some of the schools have continued to draw so many students that after expansion, their enrollment is soon at or above capacity. For example, through 2019 Stoddert remained the most over-capacity DCPS elementary school. Expanding DCPS capacity continues to be a significant need in this area.

The community and the District as a whole benefit from having strong public schools that continue to attract students from the local area and more distant parts of the District, by offering excellent teachers and staff, quality education materials, top quality facilities with adequate capacity to support the educational experience.

Whenever a large property has become available for redevelopment in Ward 3 in recent years, the site has been suggested for use as a possible location for DCPS schools, including the Wardman Park Marriott Hotel in Woodley Park, the Lord & Taylor store in Friendship Heights, and the Intelsat Building (most recently used as the Whittle School campus) at Van Ness Street and Connecticut Avenue.

DCPS has to work expeditiously to identify potential locations for new structures or entirely new schools and provide funding to meet the need for additional school capacity in our area. No other programs or responsibilities are more important to the District's future than education.

Our ward, including ANC 3A, has many residents who are not making high annual incomes and cannot afford private education, including elementary, middle and high school, as well as quality private pre-school and kindergarten for their children. Pre-K education is especially important because research has shown that the early years of education make a substantial contribution to children's readiness for school and their chance to succeed and thrive in elementary school and later educational experiences.

The Commission urges DCPS to review post-COVID enrollment data for schools in Ward 3 and re-evaluate projected enrollment to develop an updated estimate of needs for added capacity at all levels.

The Commission also recommends that DCPS prepare a stronger and clearer plan for accommodating future students in DCPS facilities in Ward 3, from Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4 through 12th grade, including additional classrooms and other facilities.

We encourage the Mayor and Council as well as DCPS to give priority to school expansion needs in the capital budget and explore potential options for acquiring and adding more space in the near and long term to meet student enrollment at all levels, including the Whittle School and other sites that may be available for acquisition to meet the needs for educating public school students.


Chair


Secretary

This resolution was approved by the Commission by a vote of 5-0 at a duly noticed public meeting on February 21, 2023, at which a quorum was present. By this vote, the Commission also authorizes the Chair or his designee to represent the Commission on this matter.