

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor Muriel Bowser  
**FROM:** Mary Filardo, Executive Director, 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Fund  
**DATE:** August 11, 2017  
**SUBJECT:** Data Disclosure in the 2018 Master Facilities Plan Process

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On December 21, 2016, you signed the “Planning Actively for Comprehensive Educational-Facilities Amendment Act” (PACE A21-0582) following unanimous Council approval. This Act provided important direction for the District in its educational facility master planning for the next ten years. However, a July 19<sup>th</sup> memorandum written to charter operators from the Deputy Mayor for Education appears to void the legislation’s essential requirement for comprehensive and open school-level public facilities and planning data in the development of the upcoming 2018 Master Facilities Plan.

The July 19<sup>th</sup> memo makes clear that charter operators do not need to provide the same comprehensive school-level facilities and planning data which is required of DCPS. It states that no charter LEA need provide enrollment planning information to the DME. IF they voluntarily provide their planning projections, **only a hired contractor will have access to this data.** It says the public, the Public Charter School Board, and the Deputy Mayor for Education, will ONLY have access to aggregated charter school planning information. The memo also states that DCPS and participating charter schools in District-owned buildings will have their facility condition assessments data made publicly available, but charter schools in non-District owned facilities, who are projected to have over 21,000 students this school year, will only share their condition assessments data with the contractor.

The ODME FAQ states that its intent is to “*provide comprehensive facilities information across both sectors... so that leadership in both sectors, policy makers, support organizations, and the community can better plan and make key decisions now and in the future.*” However, this cannot be accomplished without full disclosure and public access to individual charter facilities and planning data.

Without full disclosure and complete data on the facility condition, design, capacity and growth plans for charter, as well as DCPS schools, it is not possible to:

- efficiently plan for projected child population growth;
- equitably allocate its public education operating and capital budgets;
- exercise appropriate oversight of the District’s budget;
- develop appropriate DCPS and charter LEA educational facility plans; or
- engage communities in authentic neighborhood level planning.

In addition, parents cannot make fully informed school choices for their children without facility and planning information about each individual school option. PACE was motivated by these D.C. values.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Fund is proud to have been an active partner in the growth and development of DC's public-school infrastructure and proud of what our city has done to provide high quality public school facilities throughout the District. District of Columbia taxpayers have invested over \$3 billion in modernizing our antiquated DCPS schools since FY1997 and over \$1 billion in per pupil charter facility allowances since 1996. In FY2018 the District is obligated to spend over \$140 million for the per pupil charter facilities allowance—whether the students are in privately owned or public buildings.

The District has been a leader in two-sector urban education reform. Open government can be difficult, but it is essential to sustaining public trust and support for educationally inspiring and community supported school facilities for all children. We are happy to discuss these issues with you or your staff.

CC:

Jennifer Niles, Deputy Mayor for Education  
Darren Woodruff, Chair DC Public Charter School Board  
Scott Pearson, Executive Dir. DC Public Charter School Board  
Antwan Wilson, Chancellor DC Public Schools  
Traci L. Hughes, Director, DC Office of Open Government  
Kathleen Patterson, DC Auditor

DC Council:

Phil Mendelson, Chairman  
Brianna K. Nadeau, Ward 1  
Jack Evans, Ward 2  
Mary M. Cheh, Ward 3  
Brandon T. Todd, Ward 4  
Kenyan McDuffie, Ward 5  
Charles Allen, Ward 6  
Vincent C. Gray, Ward 7  
Trayon White, Sr., Ward 8  
Anita Bonds, At-Large  
David Grosso, At-Large  
Elissa Silverman, At-Large  
Robert C. White, Jr., At-Large

Community Stakeholders:

Coalition for DC Public Schools and Communities (C4DC)  
Ed Lazere, Executive Director, DC Fiscal Policy Institute  
Maura Marino, Chief Executive Officer Education Forward DC  
Irene Holtzman, Executive Director, FOCUS