



Better Buildings: Better Schools Issue 29 (July 2005)

Monthly news on DC Public School facilities from the 21st Century School Fund (21CSF), a Washington DC based, nonprofit - **working to build the public will and capacity to improve urban public school facilities**. To subscribe/unsubscribe, please email: newsletter@21csf.org.

DCPS Beautification Day!! Saturday, August 27th

DCPS is hosting the first annual parent and community organized city-wide Ready Schools Beautification Day on Saturday, August 27th, from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. This is a neighborhood work bee to sweep, weed, paint, and generally clean up the grounds of the schools right before students return. Some schools will also have flowers to plant and mulch for the trees.

Despite recent increases in the maintenance budget, DCPS has been sorely under-funded in grounds keeping for years, and a huge amount of catch-up work remains to be done. While the mayor added \$6 million in supplemental funds for a "Ready Schools" initiative this summer, those dollars are largely being spent inside the buildings. Volunteers can help make up for the past grounds keeping shortfall by helping out on August 27th.

If you are interested in participating as an individual or part of a group, or simply just want more information, then please call or e-mail one of the coordinators listed here.

District 1 Coordinators (Ward 1 and Ward 2):

- Nancy Huvendick, 21st Century Schools Fund, nhuvendick@21csf.org; 202-745-3745 x15
- Jordan Spooner, 21st Century School Fund, jspooner@21csf.org; 202-745-3745 x16

District 2 Coordinators (Ward 3 and Ward 4):

- Janet Myers, Ward 4 Council on Education, gammatwins@yahoo.com; (202) 726-0658
- Hugh Allen, DCPTA, hughandjulie@starpower.net; (202) 244-8311

District 3 Coordinators (Ward 5 and Ward 6):

- Marc Borbely, ANC Commissioner (6A) and FixOurSchools.net; borbely@FixOurSchools.net; (202) 544-2447

District 4 Coordinators (Ward 7 and Ward 8):

- Jackie Pinkney-Hackett, Msjudgejackie@aol.com; (202) 398-3845 (h), (202) 492-9541 (c)

Volunteers will be asked to wear work gloves and a hat, and bring drinking water and snacks. Some tools will be available, but please bring the following if you can: brooms, dust pans, pruners, pruning saws, etc.

Beautification Day should be an enjoyable time to help out, meet your neighbors and the local school administration, and get a sense of what your neighborhood school needs.

We hope to see you there!

DCPS FY06 Budget Update

On July 6th, 2005 the City Council approved the FY06 D.C. budget (the "Budget Support Act", which includes the school system's \$807 operating and \$147 capital budgets. The mayor signed it and the entire city budget went to Congress for review and approval. On July 22, 2005, the Senate DC Appropriations Committee approved the budget and also added \$13 million for DCPS "to strengthen leadership and instructional excellence and increase student achievement...in accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act".

Included within the nearly-approved Budget Support Act is the "School Modernization Act of 2005", originally introduced by Linda Cropp as a separate bill. This legislation will dedicate \$12 million from the city's General Fund and is expected to create \$150 million in capital funds with priority projects to: (a) locate new out-of-District special education programs or create additional capacity for special education within DCPS facilities; (b) create additional capacity for vocational programs within DCPS facilities; (c) co-locate charter schools within DCPS facilities; or (d) develop mixed-use facilities in collaboration with DC Public Libraries, the Department of Parks & Recreation, or other DC agencies.

Two other pieces of Council legislation concerning school facilities funding are in process, and will be considered by the Council's Committee on Education, Libraries, & Recreation in the fall: (1) the "Schools Modernization Trust Fund Establishment Act of 2005", introduced by Kathy Patterson and Jack Evans; and (2) the "School Modernization Financing Act of 2005", introduced by Adrian Fenty, Vincent Gray, and Kwame Brown.

The "Schools Modernization Trust Fund Establishment Act of 2005" would set up a special city fund to support public-private and public-public development partnerships to speed school construction projects. The fund would be fed by any taxes and fees designated by law; revenue from development partnerships authorized by the Act; and any federal funds that may be used for the purposes of the Act. A five-member Board of Directors would be established to manage and administer the Fund, with the same priorities given as the Cropp "School Modernization Act of 2005" above. A hearing on this bill was held by the Education, Libraries, & Recreation Committee on February 9th.

The "School Modernization Financing Act of 2005" would: (a) provide \$1 billion in additional bond-generated funds beginning in FY07 for facilities improvements, to be repaid with up to \$60 million from lottery proceeds each year; (b) require the Board of Education to adopt a Multi-Year Facility Plan to guide the expenditure of the funds; and (c) require the DC Auditor to report to the public on annual progress of the Facility Plan. On July 7th, a hearing on this bill was jointly held and Committee on Education, Libraries, & Recreation, and many members of the public (including 21CSF) testified. (For copies of our testimony, see our website at www.21csf.org) The bill was sent out of the Finance & Revenue Committee on the 14th for review by the Education, Libraries, & Recreation Committee.

A hearing was held by the Committee on Education, Libraries, & Recreation on June 23rd on the Multi-Year Budget for the District of Columbia Public Schools Act of 2005, introduced by Kathy Patterson. This bill would declare the sense of the Council that the US Congress should amend the DC Home Rule Act to permit the Mayor and Council to adopt a three-year budget for the school system, rather than annual budgets, to facilitate long-term school reform efforts based on stable funding.

First Day of School 2005 – Reminder

Changes to the academic calendar for 2005-2006 require students to return from summer vacation a full week **before** Labor Day. The first day of school for DCPS students is Monday, August 29, 2005. Please mark your calendars!