Better Buildings: Better Schools
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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*.

Master Education Plan Community Message Board

On Monday, February 27, 2006, DCPS Superintendent Clifford B. Janey released All Students Succeeding: A Master Education Plan for a System of Great Schools for DCPS. 21CSF has posted a link to this plan and a message board to encourage the public to comment on this important document. The Board of Education will be holding a hearing on the Master Education Plan on April 4. Your comments will help them make informed decisions. The message board can be found on our homepage at www.21csf.org.

City Council Approves the School Modernization Financing Act

On March 7, the City Council voted 13-0 to approve the School Modernization Financing Act (B16-250). The bill provides $100 million per year through the next decade starting with Fiscal Year 2007. The funding is from the first $100 million in sales tax revenue, which will be directed to the Public School Capital Improvement Fund. This funding is in addition to the annual capital budget for the school system of approximately $100 million per year. Over the course of 10 years, this will total $2 billion dollars. If the CFO does not certify sufficient funds from the sales tax, then the deed transfer and recordation taxes for commercial properties will be increased to cover any shortfall in the **$100 million annual guarantee** by the School Modernization Financing Act.

This bill also establishes a modernization **oversight advisory committee**. The advisory committee will monitor that capital funds are being properly used and that expenditures are aligned with the approved Facilities Master Plan.

Management reforms are also being created by requiring that DCPS deliver a facilities management organizational strategy by May 1, 2006. For a copy of the School Modernization Bill, visit: http://modernizations.org

Explore School Design and Construction Management Strategies

21CSF and PROP 100% are creating an ad hoc workgroup to develop recommendations on the facilities management organizational strategy for the DCPS capital program. For more information, please contact Jordan Spooner at 21CSF (202)745-3745 X16 or at info@21csf.org.

New Columbia Heights Education Campus Opens in Ward 1

The new Columbia Heights Education Campus at 3106 16th Street, NW, one block from the Columbia Heights Metro opened on February 21, 2006. The new facility for Bell Multicultural High School and Lincoln Middle School combines these two schools in a new single large campus building. Each school has different entrances, administration, and academic spaces. However, the auditorium, gymnasium, cafeteria, exterior athletic field space, and underground parking are shared by both schools. Plans call for the demolition of the 98,000 square foot Alexander Graham Bell Vocational High School, originally built as an elementary school in 1910. Congratulations to Bell principal Maria Tukeva and the Bell community, whose hard work and dedication brought this 325,000 square foot project to fruition.

Rebuilding Schools on the Gulf Coast

Recently, Emel Alexander a graduate student intern at the 21st Century School Fund, traveled to Gulfport, MS to attend The Mississippi Regional School Design Institute. The institute was hosted by the American Architectural Foundation as part of their Great Schools by Design initiative. The three day event was attended by school superintendents from communities along the Gulf Coast and national experts in school design and urban planning. The experts made presentations to school superintendents concerning best practices for rebuilding their public school systems following Hurricane Katrina.

Emel also visited public school sites along the Gulf Coast that were damaged by the storm. According to the Department of Education, 263 schools in Mississippi sustained damage and 40 schools were severely damaged or totally destroyed. The estimated cost of repairing Mississippi Public Schools is over 1 billion dollars. According to McGraw Hill data $1.8 billion in construction cost contracts has been spent on school construction from 1995 to 2004. To learn more about the American Architectural Foundation and the Great Schools by Design Initiative, visit: www.archfoundation.org. To view some of the schools damaged by Katrina, visit our website at: www.21csf.org/csf-home/NewOrleans/default.htm.