

S.H.A.P.P.E. Newsletter

Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals and Educators
A coalition of the District of Columbia Public Senior High Schools
Working together since February of 1998;

September

Volume 10, Issue 5; First Edition

Important Upcoming Dates:

October 10th- Columbus Day –no school

October 17th- Parent Conferences

October 28th – End of First Term, 12:15 dismissal

November 11th- Veterans Day-no school

November 14th- Report cards issued

Table of Contents:

Rory Pullens leaves Ellington.....	1
Hirshhorn Workshop.....	1
Cardozo Design Build.....	2
DC Hopes and Dreams Campaign.....	2
College Fair.....	2
Art Internship.....	3
Spy Museum.....	3
DCPEFR Commission.....	3
Movie and Ed Panel.....	4
SHAPPE 8-29-11 Meeting Notes.....	4
SHAPPE 9-7-11 Testimony.....	7

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<http://shappe.org> – the S.H.A.P.P.E. website

Rory Pullens, Principal of Ellington Heads to LA

According to Bill Turque of the Washington Post the Los Angeles Times [reported](#) Thursday that Rory Pullens will take over

the Ramon C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts on Nov. 1.

Mr. Pullens, 53, has headed Ellington since late 2006, when he came to D.C. from the Denver School of the Arts. He has drawn praise for the school's improved academics, staffing and high-end theatrical productions.

Ellington recently received a \$17.2 million endowment from the Eugene B. Casey Foundation to benefit the vocal and instrumental departments.

Free Workshops at Smithsonian

The workshops and clubs being offered at the Hirshhorn are called ARTLAB+ and treat teens as designers who explore art in the Hirshhorn and around D.C. before they create short films, photo series, animations, podcasts, and more. All programs are free and transportation assistance is available for DC students

This website details the programs and some pictures of past projects.

<http://artlabplus.si.edu/artlabplus/2011/08/calendar.html>

The staff is available to visiting local sites from September 14 – October 14, and again in January.

Please sign up on line before October 2 here<<http://artlabplus.si.edu/artlabplus/registration.html>>, or attend the open house on

October 1 from 12 – 5 pm. Families and friends are welcome, too.

Design Build Contract for Cardozo goes to GCS-Sigal LLC

The Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization (OPEFM) has awarded the design-build contract to GCS-SIGAL, LLC to fully modernize Cardozo High School, located at 12th and Clifton Streets in Northwest.

The full modernization of Cardozo consists of a complete upgrade of the building and its systems, to meet state-of-the-art technical and educational standards. The project will include the addition of a regulation-size gymnasium building for basketball, volleyball, and weightlifting activities, along with atrium spaces in the former courtyards to accommodate a cafeteria.

Originally built in 1916, Cardozo High School is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Construction on Cardozo High School will begin in December 2011, and is scheduled to be completed in August 2013. (info from press release)

DCPS Hopes and Dreams Campaign

DCPS has completed the first phase where they heard from almost 8,500 DCPS stakeholders, including students, staff, families, and community partners.

In October the next phase of the Hopes and Dreams Campaign and the DCPS strategic planning process will start

Locations and Times

Saturday, Oct. 1 at Patterson Elementary School from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. RSVP to <http://e2ma.net/go/7548125975/207315714/225314741/1351583/goto:http://dcps.dc.gov/DCPS/hopes>.

Wednesday Oct. 5 at Garrison Elementary School from 5 p.m.-8 p.m. RSVP to <http://e2ma.net/go/7548125975/207315714/225314742/1351583/goto:http://dcps.dc.gov/DCPS/hopes>)

While it is not necessary to RSVP to attend, it will them a better idea of how many people would like to participate.

College Fair for District Students

All middle and high school students in DC are invited to attend the 2011 DC College Fair on **Tuesday, October 18, 2011 at the Washington Convention Center**. Over 300 colleges and universities will be represented. Parents and families are also encouraged to attend.

[Download the flyer for the 2011 College Fair](#)

Hours: 9am-10am (middle school)
10am-1pm (high school) 6pm-8pm (high school and parents)

Registration

All 11th and 12th grade students need to [pre-register](#) for the fair before attending: Transportation will be provided for all DCPS students. (Bus transportation will be provided for some high schools. Metro accessible high schools and middle schools will receive fare cards to assist with group transportation.)

Sponsor is the [Office of the State Superintendent of Education](#)

Children's Art Studio – Fall Interns

The Children's Art Studio is looking for Fall Interns. They are a nonprofit organization founded on the belief that children reap tremendous emotional, intellectual, and developmental gains from making art, and that this opportunity should be made available to all. Small class size, thoughtful instruction and the inventive use of high quality, ecologically friendly, materials characterize the experience. Earn community service hours or credit, have a blast and make a difference!

*The Children's Art Studio is located on Wisconsin Avenue in Tenleytown, close to Metro

Interns are responsible for** assistant teaching, preparing the studio for projects and light clean up. This is an unpaid position.

www.childrensartstudio.org

*If interested please send resume and a reference to:
nicoleandrewsbrandes@gmail.com

Spy Museum

The museum is having our Educators Night Out Sunday. It is free for teachers and their 1st guest. Other guests get 50% off. It is from 10-6 on October 2. Here is the link,
<http://www.spymuseum.org/events/educator-open-house>

Members of the District of Columbia Public Education Finance Reform Commission Announced:

JenniferComey

Research Associate and Deputy Director of NeighborhoodInfo DC
The Urban Institute

JustinConstantino
Budget Counsel
Mayor's Budget Office

CelineFejeran
Program Analyst
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education

MaryFilardo
Executive Director
21st Century School Fund

TimotheaHoward
Director, Community Engagement and Learning
CentroNia

AllisonKokkoros
Chief Academic Officer
Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School

EdLazere
Executive Director
DC Fiscal Policy Institute

HosannaMahaley
State Superintendent of Education
Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)

LisaRaymond
Senior Education Advisor
DC City Council Committee of the Whole

LisaRuda
Chief of Staff
District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)

IrasemaSalcido
Founder and President
Cesar Chavez Public Charter School

JeremyWilliams
Interim Executive Director, Director of Business Oversight
DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB)

YesimYilmaz
Director of Fiscal and Legislative Analysis
Office of the Chief Financial Officer

Movie and Panel on School Reform on Oct. 22nd

The [U Street Neighborhood Association](#) invites you to attend the final screening of the 2011 [U Street Movie Series](#) with:

WAITING FOR "SUPERMAN"

To be followed by an engaging panel discussion about the education of our city's children -- a pressing community issue.

Doors open at 12:00 pm (12:15-2:00 pm screening; 2:15-3:30 pm panel conversation), networking reception at Duffy's to follow at 2106 Vermont Ave. NW.

<http://waitingforsupermanstreetdc.eventbrite.com/>

Moderated by: -Jackie Gran: Education policy expert, and neighborhood resident.

Confirmed panelists include:

- Jason Kamras: DCPS Chief of Human Capital, featured in the film, and neighborhood resident.
- Evelyn Boyd Simmons: ANC 2F Education Committee Chair, and parent of two Garrison Elementary students.
- Reuben Jacobson: Senior Associate for Research & Strategy for the Coalition for Community Schools, former DC Teaching Fellow, and DCPS parent.
- Patrick Mara: Ward 1 DC State Board of Education Representative.
- Robinette Breedlove: Principal, Meridian Charter School.
- Kerry Sylvia: Teacher, Cardozo High School.
- Ann McLeod: Garrison Elementary PTA President, and parent.

All proceeds from donations will go to **Hands On Greater DC Cares Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service** this January and directly benefit our neighborhood schools.

There is a suggested \$5 cash donation to Greater DC Cares at the door. If you or your business would like to sponsor the event, levels are: Teacher: \$50, Educator: \$100 or more, Administrator: \$250 or more, Principal: \$500 or more. There are benefits to each level. Please contact [Alice Speck](#) for details. Checks can be mailed to "U Street Neighborhood Association" PO Box 73784 Washington, DC 20056-3784.

SHAPPE Meeting of August 29th, 2011

Attending: Representatives from Ballou, CHEC, Ward 4, SWW, Luke Moore, Cardozo, Roosevelt, Capital Hill Cluster, Parent Power, and Wilson

Measures of Performance: Currently school, principal and teacher evaluations all use a measure of student performance as a large indicator of success. In each of these cases the DC CAS is the measure used. Our discussion explored concerns with the DC CAS as the single indicator as well as possible alternatives.

Concerns:

1. Fairness across all sectors
2. What population of students is being served by the school or teacher?
 - What is the rate of mobility – numbers of students entering and exiting class or school?
 - Is it a selected enrollment school where students are screened for motivation?

- What are the financial as well as other resources available to the school or teacher?
 - Are the financial and staff resources the same in every school?
 - What types of investments have historically been made to the school? Has this school been under-funded or had access to additional funding for years?
3. The DC CAS is given in 10th grade in the high schools. Students cannot advance to the 10th grade unless they have passed Algebra I and English 9 as well as attained four additional credits. This provision was partially put in place so that students in 10th grade would have a chance at passing the DC CAS. Many parents and students do not seem to fully realize that they must pass Algebra I to advance. The failure rate in Algebra I is quite high. What is the level of preparation that these students have as they enter the neighborhood high schools?
4. Overage students are to be moved to the high schools in order for there to be a more appropriate environment for them. With the severe penalties attached to the school and the teacher for students that are not performing academically, there is a little incentive for a middle or K-8 school to work hard with these students immediately prior to the move to high school. Neither high schools, nor middle schools or K-8 schools are granted additional resources to respond to the expanding needs of students who have repeatedly failed.
5. Tutoring funds allocated under NCLB are not necessarily aligned to the specific school program. The Office of Bilingual Education has especially noted this difficulty with regard to the English Language Learners and their families.

What do we value and want to invest in as citizens of this city and of this country?

- A network of neighborhood schools that students can get to and have a right to attend.
- Participation by the parents, students and community in the vision for these schools as well as the
- Continuity – many of our high schools retain enormous importance for their alumni who live in the city

The cost of closing versus investing has been very high

Example of value of continuity and cost of closings and constant choice versus investment; one parent noted her child had been at Bruce Monroe which had closed, she transferred to a charter school which then closed, the child is now at CHEC – but there has been emotional and academic cost to 3 different schools in 3 years for this child.

Possible Alternative Measures of Performance

1. Scholarship attainment
2. Graduation rate
3. Attendance rate
4. College or post secondary program acceptance rate
5. Local School Advisory Team participation
6. ACT or SAT scores- a test that counts for the students as well
7. Quality satisfaction surveys – Ron Ferguson instrument for students mentioned
8. Parent participation
9. Community partners

Additional Issues Discussed

Transportation challenges – Metro for one month remains at \$30.00 this presents a

hardship to many families. Other districts provide school buses at no additional charge or certainly not 30 dollars per month per family, DC should subsidize transportation to a greater extent. The cost has also gone up because transfers are no longer available for bus to bus trips for students; full fare for each bus is required.

Truancy – this cost is contributing to the high truancy rate in the high schools. There are substantial resources available once a student enters the juvenile justice system. When they are picked up for truancy, nothing seems to happen; intervention is needed at this point.

Suggestions for the Truancy Task force and for the Council which is considering a bill – the South Capital Street Memorial Act.

- Ensure that there is funding available for intervention
- Pilot programs before implementing them on a large scale
- Attend to prevention

Illinois Facilities Fund Study for the Office of the Deputy Mayor: DC has contracted with an outside firm to do a study of the schools identifying them by performance as measured by the DC CAS. The Chancellor has noted that she is open to this being a “game changer” Part of the purpose of the study is to help the District make decisions on closings for charter as well as DCPS schools.

This juncture was inevitable. There has been no planning function that coordinated the opening of additional schools with need. The theory has been that choice and the resulting competition would drive school reform. While there has not been a real assessment or study as to whether there are too many schools or not that is now the working assumption. In this context IFF will

probably do what they have done in other cities. The analysis is done to identify “performing seats”, the premise is that students should have access to a ‘performing school’ near where they live.

Recommendations in past studies by IFF include strategies: – to focus reform and development efforts on the highest need areas – increase access to vacant seats in “performing schools” and – to use existing buildings to attract high quality charter school operators.

The discussion went back to the values expressed which include continuity and investment, not simply closing low performing programs and replacing them.

The reforms so far in the high schools have focused on replacing staff and IMPACT. The results as measured by even the narrow benchmark of the DC CAS have been poor. While the high schools have benefited from a large capital investment, that has not yet been matched in the neighborhood high schools by an investment in program and the resources necessary to serve the students entering.

The group agreed to work on preparing a response to the Deputy Mayor and IFF after the release based on the values and measures we the citizens of DC would like to see reflected in our educational institutions.

The challenges our high schools are facing are enormous as reflected in the high failure rate in the 9th grade alone. In 6 of the neighborhood high schools between 36 and 42 percent of the school’s student are 9th graders. This figure reflects both incoming and repeating 9th graders. Some of the new principals would have had no power over these figures. Any reform or narrative on the high schools has to contain the investment of resources to date, the conditions, reforms

tried to date, an evaluation of those reforms, and suggested initiatives by that community.

Miriam Cutelis announced a meeting that will take place at the Shaw Library for parents and all others interested in examining the current reform strategy with an eye toward greater partnership with the parents and community and less focus on narrow measures.

Suggestions before next meeting:

- Letter from high schools to middle and K-8 schools
- Testimony at Middle Grades Hearing at the Council
- How many 9th graders are there, how many are repeaters?

	9th graders as percent of school population in 2010-2011
Anacostia	36%
Ballou	28%
Banneker	36%
Cardozo	37%
CHEC	32%
Coolidge	25%
Dunbar	39%
Eastern NA	n/a
Ellington	29%
IYP	14%
Luke Moore	18%
McKinley	25%
Phelps ACE	n/a
Roosevelt	40%
SWW	25%
Spingarn	42%
Washington	
Met	n/a
Wilson	26%
Woodson	39%
YSA	(79%) 31%

**Testimony to the Council Committee of the Whole
Hearing on Middle Grades
Cathy Reilly- Executive Director
Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals and Educators (S.H.A.P.P.E.)
September 7, 2011**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. The Senior High Alliance strongly supports an initiative to understand and strengthen the middle grades.

Overall Assessment of Measures of Success

In the effort to provide a rigorous education for all as measured by the DC CAS test scores and IMPACT for all staff including principals, the measure has become the goal. As a result, in many schools including the secondary schools, DCPS has not yet supported a climate of curiosity and creativity or allocated appropriately the resources to meet the challenge of providing the opportunity for a high quality education to the range of students served.

Thus the first element of the discussion on the middle grades has to look at the overall vision and how we as citizens define success. In discussions over the last 2 years (and before) members of S.H.A.P.P.E. have stated consistently that school, teacher and principal performance (success) as currently measured by the DC CAS is too narrow and thus unacceptable. We welcome the opportunity to revisit and expand the vision for quality in our children’s education.

Preparation for High School Algebra

Many students arrive at high school from the middle grades unprepared. They may have also arrived to 6th grade unprepared, or they might have had significant challenges during these years, this is not to cast blame.

One area that offers some insight into the struggles of our secondary students is the high failure rate in Algebra I. All students must take Algebra in 9th grade according to the DCMR. They also must pass Algebra to move on to the 10th grade. We need to understand how we can support the middle grades in ensuring that students have mastered pre-Algebra skills so they have a greater chance of success in Algebra and the more advanced math that is now required. We also need to understand what happens with the repeating 9th graders, what percentage of students master Algebra the second time, what are the barriers? How many students and parents even know how crucial this mastery is? Parents at a recent SHAPPE meeting were surprised to learn of this requirement and motivated to ensure that their children were on track.

Overage Students

All overage students now advance to middle or to high school so that they can be in an age appropriate environment. This ruling on the age appropriate environment was not accompanied by granting the secondary schools the necessary additional resources to meet the needs of these students who can be significantly behind academically.

Equitable Opportunity

1. Students arriving at each high school come from many different middle or K-8 schools. Those coming from a school like Deal have had opportunities to take a foreign language, Algebra in 8th grade, exposure to a rich array of after school activities including active sports teams and drama. Deal has a supportive parent body, fully enrolled feeder schools and broad boundaries. Students living within blocks of MacFarland and Roosevelt are actually in boundary for Deal since the

Hobson v Hansen decision requiring integration.

It is a complicated picture, the boundaries, school sizes and parent resources have created an inequity that is difficult to address. Inviting neighborhood families to become partners in the planning for the modernization of schools like MacFarland could support a return to investment in these civic institutions.

2. The K-8 schools were instituted to enable more elementary schools to stay open in the face of dropping enrollment. It is time for an evaluation of the programs available to these children and whether or not we need to look at other strategies to maintain a system of quality schools with equitable opportunities assessable to families without them having to incur transportation costs.
3. The city has invested heavily in the capital programs for a number of schools, these communities are thrilled and many of these schools are thriving. However, in the competitive environment that the city has set up, there are schools not yet modernized, who are now at a distinct disadvantage. DCPS and the DME have suggested they are looking at performance and enrollment as they look to possibly close schools. The criteria have got to be carefully considered to not adversely affect those that have done with far less over the last 10 years.
4. We can no longer choose between our younger children with robust early childhood programs and an expansion of the entitlement to 3 years and younger, and our adolescents. There has to be equity across this spectrum.

Conclusion

The Council has control over budget. Look at the resources allocated and the issues of equity, adequacy and fairness for all secondary students across operating and capital funds.

We strongly urge the Council to hold hearings and look at policy on any criteria to be used in making decisions pertaining to closing or opening both charter and DCPS schools.

We urge an expansion of this discussion at times when more working people can participate. We also urge you to understand the middle grades in the larger context of the whole system. The middle grades have been orphaned perhaps but they are not alone in that designation. This is difficult work, we need a respectful and on going process that looks at what is working and what isn't in full partnership with the school communities and with the larger citizenry.

