

# Woodley Park Community Association

## Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

### November 20, 2013, 7:30p.m.

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#### ATTENDEES

##### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

- Peter Brusoe, President
- Barbara Ioanes, Vice President
- Warren Gorlick, Treasurer
- Emily Wagner, Secretary
- Rob Meisnere, At-Large Executive Committee Member
- Bill Kummings, At-Large Executive Committee Member
- Sarah Taber, At-Large Executive Committee Member
- Stephanie Zobay, At-Large Executive Committee Member
- Gasper Martinez, At-Large Executive Committee Member

##### **ANC COMMISSIONERS:**

- Commissioner Lee Brian Reba
- Commissioner Jeff Kalie

##### **COUNCILMEMBER CHEH'S OFFICE:**

- Devin Barrington, Communications Director

##### **COMMUNITY MEMBERS:**

- John Goodman
- Armen Tashdianian

#### **1. WELCOME**

- a. Administrative Notes: To ensure consistency on our Executive Committee distribution list, Peter Brusoe is planning to organize a Google Group. We will continue to use multiple emails for all members who have more than one preferred method of contact.

#### **2. TREASURER'S REPORT - PRESENTED BY WARREN GORLICK**

- Warren shared that this is an interesting time of the year, given that WPCA tends to receive a lot of donations just before the end of December. Warren recommended that we might want to put something in the WPCA bimonthly e-newsletter to encourage members to send in contributions. Because our donations tend to be tied to membership year and renewal, John Goodman asked if this would complicate things for Armen; however, Armen reassured us that it is easy for him to add a year to a contributor's membership even if we

receive an “off-cycle” payment. John Goodman agreed to add the upcoming e-newsletter.

- At our January 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, we can expect a full report from Warren on end-of-year totals, as well as 2013 vs. 2012. In addition, Peter and Warren will work out a budget for 2014, and bring it to the next Executive Committee Meeting on January 8 for approval. Finally, the books will need to be audited at year-end. Emily has agreed to execute the review.
- An issue was raised about filing the “postcard” (online) for the IRS. Warren will check to verify if we are in compliance.

### **3. SECRETARY’S MINUTES**

- a. October Meeting Minutes – Approved. Peter will distribute the revised final draft after Thanksgiving.
- b. General Membership Meeting Minutes – Approved.
- c. November Membership Meeting Minutes – Approved.

### **4. COMMITTEES**

- a. Oyster School Committee: Rob, Warren, Barbara
  - i. Peter asked the Executive Committee if we want to submit testimony for David Cantina. The testimony would be due on 11/22. The board voted in the affirmative; however it was not a unanimous board. Warren was in dissention. Bill Kummings requested Warren to clarify the reasons behind his dissention and Warren gave further details and made copies of the LSAT report available for the Executive Committee’s reference. A copy of this report is attached to the minutes.
  - ii. Oyster School Committee to discuss a budget for this effort in the coming weeks.
- b. Tree Committee:
  - i. Tree Committee to keep working given the issue on Cleveland Ave.
  - ii. Bill Kummings asked two questions: Should we get involved in neighbor vs. neighbor negotiation? Should we undertake more beautification efforts? Decision made to address trees on Cleveland Ave., and then we’ll move forward after that issue is resolved.
  - iii. Sarah Taber encouraged interested parties to sign up as Tree Canopy Keepers. More information and registration can be found online at [ddot.dc.gov](http://ddot.dc.gov), [here](#).
- c. Neighborhood Watch:
  - i. Nour was absent from the meeting. We can expect an update from her at the January 8, 2014 meeting.
- d. Nominating Committee:
  - i. Barbara introduced Gasper Martinez, who expressed interest in serving on the board, and nominated Gasper for the open at-large position. Nomination was approved.

## **5. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Report on General Membership Meeting: Brief summary provided by Barbara. It was a small (but good) turnout. We covered bike registration and neighborhood crime, and elected, unanimously, the new members of the Executive Committee.
- b. Report on Special Meeting: Special Meeting was discussed earlier in the evening; please see Section 4.a.i.
- c. Report on Connecticut Ave. Safety Issue: The proposed location for the new stoplight would be too close to the light up the street, but signs have been added to warn cars about the pedestrian crossing. Issue now closed.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. American Red Cross Donation to the Philippines: Barbara proposed a \$200 donation. Warren estimated we have about \$27,000 left, and that \$200 was within our capabilities. Peter, however, expressed concerns about donating money outside of a General Membership Vote. Sarah suggested putting out a donation jar at the Christmas Party. Barbara expressed reservation about “staffing” the donation jar. Emily motioned, instead, to request that guests attending the WPCA Christmas Party bring a canned food donation for a local food bank, such as Central Union Kitchen, Martha’s Table, or Capital Area Food Bank. Rob seconded. Emily Wagner to research food bank options.
- b. Appointing New Committee Members
  - i. Budget Committee – Gasper joined Peter and Warren.
  - ii. Bylaws Committee – Not needed, as we last updated the Bylaws in the spring of 2012.
  - iii. Membership Committee – Barbara will chair; Bill Kummings, Armen will participate.
  - iv. Membership Levels – Peter removed from agenda
  - v. Public Works – Sarah & Stephanie co-chair; Zev to be invited to join.
  - vi. Mural and Beautification Project – Zev, Bill Kummings, & Marilyn Falik, the WPCA member who suggested via email to the WPCA board that a mural would be a nice idea and, perhaps, an effective way to stop graffiti.
- c. Discussion on Draft Ethics & Donation Policy: We do not currently have a donation or solicitation policy. Peter asked if we would like to draft a plan governing how we interact with local businesses. Executive Committee members agreed that, while a formal policy is not essential, we will not solicit donations unless the board approves ahead of time.
  - i. Lunches and Federation of DC Citizens Associations Holiday Luncheon Tickets: Armen will attend the luncheon at his own expense. Bill Kummings and Emily Wagner will attend as well, as representatives of the WPCA.
  - ii. Do we need a policy on sending representatives from our board to events when we are covering the cost of tickets? (This question remains unanswered.)

- d. Holiday Party: We expect to hear back from the Washington Marriott Wardman Park no later than December 1st. If the Wardman can't accommodate us, Peter is going to approach the Omni Shoreham. Special annotation: The holiday party is scheduled for 12/18 at the Wardman.
  - i. Barbara raised the issue about "party to-do list." Emily Wagner volunteered to design a flyer; John Goodman and Sarah Taber will coordinate distribution; decorations will need a \$100 budget.
- e. Dunkin Donuts:
  - i. Lee Bryan reported that DD does not have an occupancy permit yet, and that they have not submitted an application for zoning. Given these reasons, he stressed that the topic of conversation was very premature. Once DD is further along in the process, WPCA can begin to address signage—to ensure that the building is aesthetically pleasing—as well as other issues, including trash, increased foot traffic, and how the storefront fits into the overlay zone. Barbara reported that we are currently under 31%. Jeff suggested we voice concerns early so we can intervene early. Lee Brian assured us that, if this boils down to a zoning issue, the ANC will take action. Lee Brian will keep Peter informed on how the issue develops, and will report on this topic to the Executive Committee during our January 8, 2014 meeting.
- f. Holiday Decoration Contest – Committee decided not to host a contest. However, there was a motion to create a Facebook page. Emily will mock-up a few versions of the page and draft a set of rules to govern the page and WPCA's use of social media.
- g. Plans for 2014 – Tabled for January 8, 2014 discussion.
- h. Acorn – Tabled for January 8, 2014 discussion.
- i. Christmas Caroling – John Goodman to include an announcement in the WPCA bimonthly e-newsletter.
- j. Resolution Honoring St. Thomas Apostle on their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary – Tabled for January 8, 2014 discussion.
- k. Local Artist Reception – Tabled for January 8, 2014 discussion.

## 7. REPORTS FROM THE COMMUNITY

- a. ANC: Lee Brian reported that the ANC is planning to work on rat abatement on the 2700 block in the very near future. In addition, McDonald's is planning a renovation. Permitting was approved; now waiting on final approvals. Start date not yet determined.
- b. Jeff: Reported on the good work of the Tree Committee, and suggested we talk about ways to beautify our commercial strip in Woodley Park over the next few weeks. How can we support, encourage, and assist in the beautification of Woodley Park?
- c. Devin Barrington, Communications Director for Council Member Cheh (covering for his colleague Michelle) reported that the mayor has selected a vendor for the Cleaning Crew, who will be picking up trash and maintaining plant boxes in

Woodley Park. After the holidays, Cheh's office would like to have an event where we introduce them to communities they serve in the neighborhood. Barrington said he would look into an update about whether there was money in the budget for getting a new, free "super" trash can and how Woodley Park can apply for monies towards study our commercial corridor (similar to the study that was done in Cleveland Park).

- **MINUTES PREPARED BY:** EMILY WAGNER, SECRETARY, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
- **NEXT MEETING:** JANUARY 8, 2014, 7:30PM, STANFORD UNIVERSITY IN WASHINGTON, HOOVER ROOM, 2661 CONNECTICUT AVE, NW DC 20008



June 5, 2013

Kaya Henderson, Chancellor  
District of Columbia Public Schools  
1200 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

RE: Oyster-Adams School Boundaries

Dear Chancellor Henderson:

As DCPS launches its effort to review school boundaries across the city, the Oyster-Adams Local School Advisory Team (LSAT)<sup>1</sup> would like to share with you the results of an extensive effort we have undertaken to engage our school community on this issue.

For the last six months, the LSAT has worked to discover the range of Oyster-Adams' views about our school boundary. We have listened, learned and thought deeply about how coming changes can help us improve our program and resolve some important concerns we've identified. While the concerns are complex and multi-faceted, each is linked in some way to our school's current boundary configuration. They are:

- Language imbalances in the student population that challenge implementation of our dual-immersion model;
- Overcrowding that compromises the integrity of our special education inclusion program;
- Significant student turnover in the middle years;
- Inefficiencies and lost opportunities due to two-campus operations; and
- Inequities in community access to our program.

There is little doubt that Oyster-Adams has proven it can succeed despite these challenges. Yet if they are left unaddressed, we believe they will ultimately prevent us from sustaining and building on our progress. Conversely, if we can resolve these

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<sup>1</sup> The elected members of the LSAT are listed at the end of this memo. While the Oyster-Adams principal, assistant principals and PTA chairs are not elected members of the committee, they are active participants and were involved in all discussions leading to the development of this memo.

concerns, we will succeed on a far greater scale. The LSAT therefore sees the city's review of school boundaries as an opportunity to do more than just fiercely protect the status quo. We want to put our school on a solid path to a successful future.

Through our engagement process, members of our school community have come up with a wide variety of ideas for addressing these challenges. In addition, more than 90% of the Oyster-Adams faculty has endorsed a specific path. Finally, the LSAT itself has identified a set of programmatic imperatives, and several boundary-related options we believe will help achieve them. All of these ideas are detailed in this memo. We urge DCPS to examine these ideas, to think broadly with us, and to help the Oyster-Adams school truly maximize its potential.

## **Oyster-Adams' Boundary-Related Concerns**

Before exploring our specific boundary concerns we begin, with great pride, by recognizing that Oyster-Adams (the city's only ECC-8 bilingual immersion school) is a nationally renowned model of bilingual education (Freeman, 1995, 1996, 1998; Leung, 2005), and a high-performing, award-winning academic enterprise. Our school achieves its success with one of the most ethnically and socio-economically diverse student bodies in the city, serving families from every ward. Oyster-Adams is, indeed, a very special place.

While acknowledging these strengths, the LSAT has, as noted above, also identified a set of boundary-related issues that we fear will diminish our potential over the long-term. Each of these concerns is explored below.

### **Language Imbalance**

The Oyster-Adams dual-immersion instructional model requires that at all grade levels, half of our students be native Spanish speakers and half be native English speakers. The school believes this delicate balance serves as an important equalizer. It enables all students to learn from each other in their non-native language while they internalize a unique and more just perspective on majority/minority cultures than can be found in the outside world.

For more than a dozen years (through four principals, three schools superintendents and a shifting education governance structure in the city), concerns have been raised from multiple quarters about maintaining Oyster-Adams' specialized program, and its 50-50 language balance, in the context of a neighborhood-based, school-of-right admissions structure. As demographics in the neighborhood have changed, and the school itself has gone through significant transformations (namely the move to two campuses and the addition of a middle school), our difficulties in ensuring and maintaining the needed language balance have increased.

This school year, while we achieved a perfect 50-50 balance overall, the grade-level numbers tell a different story. In the early elementary grades, we have 60% English-40% Spanish splits. These splits are the inverse in the later years (see table below).

**Oyster-Adams Language Composition: SY 2012-13**

<b>Grade</b>	<b># per Grade</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
PK	39	18 (46%)	21 (54%)
Kinder	76	46 (61%)	30 (39%)
1st	73	41 (56%)	32 (44%)
2nd	74	40 (54%)	34 (46%)
3rd	69	41 (59%)	28 (41%)
4th	85	43 (51%)	42 (49%)
5th	63	33 (52%)	30 (48%)
6th	65	24 (37%)	41 (63%)
7th	73	28 (38%)	45 (62%)
8th	50	21 (42%)	29 (58%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>335 (50%)</b>	<b>332 (50%)</b>

The LSAT understands the principal causes of this language imbalance to be twofold:

- 1) School-of-right status belongs to a neighborhood that has grown to be almost exclusively English-dominant. In the entry grades (primarily kinder and 1<sup>st</sup>), English-dominant neighborhood children fill substantially more than 50% of the available seats. As a result, an even language balance can only be achieved by increasing total enrollment beyond what the school can physically manage and what is academically advisable. The school opts not to pursue such overcrowding, and as a result there is a 60% English-40% Spanish language imbalance in the early years.

Further, the disproportion is more acutely felt than the percentages indicate. We live in an English-language culture and many students who enter as Spanish-dominant are actually quite bilingual. If six out of every ten students in a classroom are English-dominant, and one, two (or more) of the remaining four students are fully bilingual, it becomes very easy to default into English, making the provision of true dual immersion instruction that much more difficult to achieve.

- 2) The language composition of the Oyster-Adams middle school is greatly affected by the city's policy that grants in-boundary families in PK-8 programs the right to also attend their designated feeder middle school. Most of the Oyster-Adams students who choose to leave for an alternate middle school are English-dominant students from within the boundary. Finding replacement English-dominant students who are



bilingual and bi-literate in Spanish at the middle school level is difficult indeed. These slots are therefore most often filled by Spanish-dominant students, resulting in the 60% Spanish-40% English language splits in the middle school years. Further, the Spanish literacy levels of these incoming students tend to be lower than the levels of students who started at Oyster-Adams in the earlier grades.

Ensuring a 50-50 language balance in *all* grades while maximizing the continuity of bilingual instruction throughout our full academic program are key goals we find to be at-risk in the current boundary configuration.

## **Overcrowding**

Like all schools in northwest DC, Oyster-Adams is operating beyond its physical capacity and has an extensive (900+) out-of-boundary waiting list. Unlike some schools in our area, however, neither of our physical plants allows for the use of demountables to relieve some of the pressure.

At a glance, our large out-of-boundary numbers (63% in SY 2012-13) suggest an easy fix to our overcrowding: stop enrolling out-of-boundary students! There are several reasons why this “fix” is neither realistic nor desirable for Oyster-Adams. First and foremost, as described above, our programmatic model requires the enrollment of Spanish speakers to match our English enrollment, and the great majority of these must come from outside the boundary.

Somewhat more complicated is the nature of our out-of-boundary English-speaking population. Except for the very rarest of circumstances, Oyster-Adams does not admit English-dominant, non-siblings off of the waiting list. As a result, our out-of-boundary English speakers are all either former in-boundary students whose families have moved outside of the boundary or their siblings. Oyster-Adams stands behind its sibling preference (although the school is currently turning away siblings as a result of enrollment pressures in the early years). Oyster-Adams also stands behind its practice of allowing long-standing school families to remain enrolled, even if they move outside the boundary. This practice supports continuity of community and academics, and helps sustain our diversity. While there must be more vigilant enforcement against families who “game the system” — by, for example, moving into the boundary only briefly to gain admission, or by renting an efficiency in-boundary while actually living elsewhere — these families do not comprise a substantial portion of our out-of-boundary English speakers. For all these reasons, a large-scale reduction in out-of-boundary admissions is not a solution to our overcrowding. It would mean separating families, substantially diminishing the diversity of the school and/or deepening our language imbalance.

### *How Overcrowding Affects Our Bilingual Special Education Inclusion Program*

In some ways, overcrowding affects Oyster-Adams much the way it affects other schools: many of our teachers and specialists “float” and share classroom space; they work with students in the hallways or in corners of the gymnasium or in someone’s office. Our principal has given up her office on one campus so it can be used for instruction and for service providers (such as occupational and speech therapists) who do not have permanent space to work with their students.

But beyond these routine effects of overcrowding, Oyster-Adams’ enrollment trends also have a negative impact on our ability to offer the city’s only bilingual inclusion program for students with developmental disabilities.

Oyster-Adams has fully embraced the District’s move to have local schools serve children with special needs. In 2008 we launched our Early Childhood Center (ECC) which is 100% special needs. Our first ECC class had six students; this school year it has 10. These children move into a PreK classroom that is 1/3 special needs and then must be able to advance up through our program with the necessary supports in place. Some of our special needs students require smaller classrooms to be successful; as a general proposition, high-functioning inclusion classrooms should be limited to a ratio of 1 special needs student to 3-4 typically developing students, with a class size no larger than 18-20. The relatively large size of our classes in PK, Kinder and 1st (ranging from 24-28) impedes the school’s ability to implement a suitable program and has in some instances resulted in students being transferred to a more restrictive environment in a different school. While Oyster-Adams is committed to the District’s inclusive model, we do not have adequate space to create classrooms that meet all of our students’ needs.

To date, Oyster-Adams has the only non-categorical early childhood center in Ward 3 and certainly the only one that is bilingual. It is a much-needed resource in the District for Spanish-dominant students with special needs. But without additional instructional space to accommodate the growth of this program into the upper grades, our ability to provide quality inclusion programming is severely compromised.

### **Achieving Continuity Through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

While changing schools in the middle years is a relatively commonplace phenomenon, the LSAT has focused attention over the last few years on the nature of this issue in *our* school, and the consequences it brings.

Although there are no exit data to document it, many in the community believe that departures during the formative years of the Oyster-Adams middle school (2007-2009) were largely due to the program’s fledgling status. Several years on, however, our middle school is quite robust. While there is room for improvement in all schools — and Oyster-Adams is certainly no exception — in recent years numerous objective measures (e.g., test scores, city-wide awards for students and teachers, high school admissions rates, etc.) demonstrate the high quality of our middle school. Yet Oyster-Adams

continues to lose between 15 and 25 rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders each year, or approximately 20-30% of the class.

Multiple factors potentially contribute to our attrition. Oyster-Adams' middle school is small, with more circumscribed extra-curricular opportunities, no accelerated math progression, mandatory instruction in Mandarin Chinese for those who have achieved satisfactory language acquisition in Spanish and English, and a focus on bilingualism above all. These characteristics may not align with the interests of all families.

Yet in order to be successful, our specialized program cannot withstand this rate of loss. Achieving bilingualism takes time and commitment; research confirms that full second language acquisition can take up to 10 years (Howard, 2002). When students leave the Oyster-Adams program before completing it, this accomplishment is jeopardized; when they join the program mid-stream (especially as late as 6<sup>th</sup> grade), they face a steep uphill climb that creates significant challenges for their teachers as well as peers. Since achieving bilingualism is the mission and primary goal of our school, maintaining continuity of our student body is particularly important to us.

While there are any number of reasons why an individual student might leave the program prematurely, what we know is that the great majority of those who leave are in-boundary students (the Oyster-Adams middle school is 18% in-boundary, compared to 60% in-boundary in kinder and 1<sup>st</sup> grade). We surmise from this that when it comes to middle school, most families who live within the current boundary are looking for something different from what Oyster-Adams offers; Alice Deal (their other school-of-right) is an alternative many choose. In addition, the data say to us that families who must "work" to attend Oyster-Adams – i.e., apply through an out-of-boundary lottery process and perhaps travel significant distances – tend to retain a longer-term commitment. Given the strong need for continuity in our specialized program, these trends must be acknowledged and reckoned with.

## **Split Operations**

Despite best efforts (and a lot of driving back and forth), the operation of an ECC-8 school across two buildings that are located nearly one and one half miles apart from each other has proven to be problematic for Oyster-Adams for several reasons:

- ***Impact on Management.*** The Oyster-Adams principal spends a good deal of time shuttling back and forth between two campuses. This effort increases the burdens of an already challenging job, complicating management on a daily basis. More important, the split responsibilities limit the principal's interaction with students and families (known to be a key factor in school success), as well as her ability to work closely with all staff members -- to be available for the unscheduled consultations, classroom visits, and "watercooler" discussions that make for high quality teacher-principal relationships. (The LSAT would like to note here that Sra. Liang-Aguirre is a deeply skilled, dedicated and truly outstanding principal. She manages these

challenges with success, but it is a substantial burden and a surefire way to burn out your best and brightest).

- ***Impact on school budget.*** As a dual language Educational Campus operating in two locations, Oyster-Adams' staffing needs fall outside the traditional DCPS budget formulas. We receive a full two-campus slate of custodians and custodial supervisors, but the system does not recognize our two-campus status for administrative purposes or for the staffing of our specials. For two schools (and both an elementary and a middle school program), we are only budgeted for 1 business manager, 1 administrative aide, 1.7 clerks and 1.8 assistant principals. Further we are staffed for specials as if we operate in a single building.

To function properly, each building requires a full administrative staff and each academic program requires its own full on-site management team. While the District has certainly worked to support our unique model, a budget that does not recognize our two-campus/two-program/two-language reality has left us no choice in recent years but to reconfigure our instructional model again and again. In addition, we must continually allocate teaching positions for administrative support and required specials and therefore sacrifice much-needed staffing for special education inclusion, guidance and classroom support.

- ***Impact on instruction and learning.*** Operating across two campuses significantly challenges the ability of staff to collaborate with each other across all grade levels. In particular, the elementary program is split down the middle (ECC-3<sup>rd</sup> grades in one building and 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades in another) making vertical planning and collaboration within the elementary school extremely difficult. Finally, one of the singular advantages of the PK-8 education model is the ability to build a cross-age community in which older students befriend, support, tutor and serve as role models for younger students. These opportunities are severely limited at Oyster-Adams. While teachers have successfully built some collaborations between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades and the middle school, we do not have this opportunity between PK-3<sup>rd</sup> grades and 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades.

### **Inequities in Community Access to Our Program**

The Adams campus of Oyster-Adams, housing half of our student body and staff, sits outside of our school boundary. This means that families who live next door or directly across the street from Adams are not permitted to attend the school, even though we are a neighborhood school and not a charter or city-wide program. To our knowledge, this scenario does not exist elsewhere within DCPS. The inherent unfairness of it has, understandably, seeded some anger and resentment towards Oyster-Adams in the surrounding neighborhood. This has, in turn, diminished community involvement and support, two key ingredients for school success. In 2006, when the then-School Board authorized the Oyster-Adams merger, it acknowledged that it was creating a problematic boundary anomaly and resolved that the issue should be addressed in the near future. It

has never been addressed and remains a thorn in the side of both the school and the surrounding community.

## **Engaging the Oyster-Adams School Community on These Concerns**

Having identified these concerns, in January the LSAT launched a multi-faceted engagement process with our school community on school boundary issues. Our goals were to listen to what we knew would be a wide variety of views on the subject, determine shared community values, and brainstorm a range of possible responses that we could share with DCPS. It should be noted that the LSAT made the affirmative decision to limit this engagement work to parents, teachers and staff of Oyster-Adams. This decision was not well-received by some prospective parents and non-school-affiliated residents of the surrounding communities who felt they had been unfairly shut out of the process.<sup>2</sup>

To accomplish our engagement goals, the LSAT led a series of efforts: school-wide meetings, faculty engagement, small working groups, and a school-wide survey. Each of these is described below.

### **School-Wide Meetings**

Over a four-month period, the LSAT convened four meetings on school boundary issues. The first, held on January 22, launched the discussion. More than 100 people attended this two-hour session, in which the above concerns and a range of factual information were shared. As part of the presentation, a short list of ideas was also offered as a way to begin stimulating thinking about the issues.

Working with school counselors and administrators, the LSAT then convened two meetings in Spanish on the boundary topic to more deliberately bring these members of our community into the conversation.

Finally, another school-wide meeting was held on April 30. This meeting was attended by approximately 65 people. Results to date of the LSAT's engagement work, as well as preliminary data from the school-wide survey, were presented.

### **Faculty Work on the Boundaries**

In January, the school administration dedicated a portion of its monthly faculty meeting to the boundary topic, following a discussion agenda similar to the one used at the first school-wide meeting. Faculty explored the issues openly and at length. A voluntary

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<sup>2</sup> On April 9, the principal and the parent co-chair of the LSAT presented information on the LSAT's school boundary work to a combined meeting of the Woodley Park, Kalorama and Adams Morgan Citizens' Associations.

subgroup of interested faculty later convened to draft a consensus statement which was then presented to staff in early May. Staff members were given the opportunity, on an individual basis, to sign the statement to signify their endorsement.

The Oyster-Adams faculty statement lays out a vision for our school that places the highest value on bilingualism and bi-literacy for all students; seeks a truly socio-economically, racially and ethnically diverse and inclusive community of learners; and maximizes opportunities for professional collaboration. The faculty statement identifies three core concerns that put this vision at risk:

- The separation of the school community across two campuses (in particular, the way the grade levels are divided);
- The increasing imbalances in language composition and the diminishment of the school's original target population; and
- The inability, within the current admissions structure, to establish a high-quality special education inclusion program.

In keeping with the values identified, the faculty statement endorses “a program in a single building with city-wide admissions controlled by the school” as the best path for resolving these concerns.

Almost all of Oyster-Adams' teachers and staff (89 out of a total of 95) were able to review the statement. Of these, the great majority (82 of the 89, or 92%) were in support of the statement and signed it. The full statement of the Oyster-Adams faculty can be found in Appendix A.

## **Working Groups**

At the end of the January 22 meeting, a voluntary “Working Group” was formed to dig more deeply into the complex issues facing our school and to brainstorm possible solutions. 34 people initially signed up to participate.<sup>3</sup> The Working Group met three times over the next six weeks with a total of about 50 people participating in these discussions.

The Working Group identified three core values for the school upon which all present could agree:

- A diverse student body (in language, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability, learning style, and needs)
- The use of a dual language immersion model
- A rigorous educational program that supports all learners

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<sup>3</sup> While the Working Group had representation from nearly every grade level and demographic group in the school, the majority of participants clustered into several categories: 59% lived in-boundary; 73% had a child at the Oyster campus; 74% came from English-dominant households.

The Working Group established four subgroups to facilitate more in-depth and focused discussions:

- The “Contraction” subgroup explored options for reducing or contracting aspects of the program and/or boundary. The group’s final recommendations included specific changes to boundary, feeder and admission rules that would reduce in-boundary admissions and thereby address crowding and language imbalances.
- The “Expansion” subgroup explored options for expanding the program, physical space, and/or boundary. The group’s final recommendations included building additions on both campuses to enable boundary expansions and a reorganization of grades, including moving an expanded middle school to a new location.
- The “Move” subgroup explored options for moving the program out of its current locations. The group’s final recommendations included gaining control over admissions to rectify the language imbalance and establishing the school as a city-wide magnet program in a new location.
- The “Optimize/Replicate” subgroup explored options for making changes to, and enhancing, the current Oyster-Adams program. The group recommended avoiding significant changes to the program, location, or admissions system and instead focusing on enforcing current admission and retention policies, and seeking replication opportunities.

In late February, the Working Group opted to create a “Super Committee” that would try to find consensus among these subgroups and develop a unified proposal. The Super Committee’s recommendations included expanding the physical space at Adams and reconfiguring grade assignments across buildings to allow for growth; expansion of the boundary in the Adams vicinity and reassignment of some addresses in the current boundary; and making specific changes to the lottery, admission, and retention procedures.<sup>4</sup> Brief summaries as well as the full reports of all the different Working Groups can be found in Appendix B.

### **School-Wide Survey**

To capture the views of as many members of the Oyster-Adams school community as possible, the LSAT developed a brief survey on boundary issues and disseminated it online and in paper from March 14 through April 23, 2013. The survey was developed by a group of parent volunteers, edited and revised by the LSAT, and reviewed by an external demographic and survey professional.

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<sup>4</sup> The Super-Committee’s recommendations were endorsed by the “Expansion” and “Optimize/Replicate” subgroups. The “Contraction” and “Move” subgroups did not endorse the Super-Committee’s recommendations.

### *Targeted Outreach to Spanish-Speaking Families*

The vast differences in the demography of the Oyster-Adams community made the development and use of a single survey instrument a challenging task. Reading and literacy levels in English and Spanish, cultural expectations and technological access vary enormously among our families. The LSAT recruited native-Spanish speaking parents to make phone calls and assist with survey completion for those parents whose literacy levels made independent completion of the survey difficult. In the end, 22% of survey respondents came from families in which the native language of the household's adults was identified as Spanish.

### *Survey Results*

A total of 391 people (including 48 teachers and administrators) took the LSAT survey. The respondents represented 31% of our total community; 28% of our parent body; and 58% of the faculty. The LSAT was pleased with the overall survey response rate. Among survey participants:

- 51% were in-boundary; 49% were out-of boundary
- 50% identified themselves as native English households; 22% identified as native Spanish households; 24% identified as native bilingual households; 4% identified as speaking another language in the home.
- 61% had children on the Oyster campus; 50% had children on the Adams campus.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, it should be noted that among survey participants, there was a relatively higher level of participation among in-boundary parents, parents of younger children (PK through 4<sup>th</sup> grades, primarily) and teachers, than among middle school parents (in particular, those of 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders). The direct impact of potential boundary changes on any group likely increased or decreased their motivation (relative to some other groups in the school) to be involved in the process.

The survey posed a series of questions related to specific aspects of the school's academic program, location and enrollment practices, and asked respondents to rate each in terms of its level of importance to them. Following are consolidated responses on some of these questions. They are listed in descending order based on the percent of all respondents who valued that aspect of the school. Not surprisingly, the greatest agreement can be found on general objectives that reflect the mission of the school (e.g., bilingualism and diversity), with agreement levels diminishing as specific programmatic features are tested.

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<sup>5</sup> Numbers exceed 100% because some families have children on both campuses.



1. A bilingual education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Important/Important: 97%</li> <li>• Not Important: 2%</li> </ul>	8. OA staying in its Woodley Park location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Important/Important: 72%</li> <li>• Not Important: 23%</li> </ul>
2. Having ethnic diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Important/Important: 96%</li> <li>• Not Important: 4%</li> </ul>	9. The Woodley Park neighborhood having a bilingual school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Important/Important: 71%</li> <li>• Not Important: 21%</li> </ul>
3. Having access to a bilingual middle school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Important/Important: 90%</li> <li>• Not Important: 8%</li> </ul>	10. OA staying in its Adams Morgan location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Important/Important: 67%</li> <li>• Not Important: 28%</li> </ul>
4. Having socioeconomic diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Important/Important: 89%</li> <li>• Not Important: 9%</li> </ul>	11. OA operating as a neighborhood school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Important/Important: 64%</li> <li>• Not Important: 32%</li> </ul>
5. Having OA use a 50-50 dual immersion model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Important/Important: 87%</li> <li>• Not Important: 12%</li> </ul>	12. Adams and its neighborhood being within the school's boundary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Important/Important: 64%</li> <li>• Not Important: 24%</li> </ul>
6. OA operating as a PK-8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Important/Important: 83%</li> <li>• Not Important: 16%</li> </ul>	13. OA operating in a single building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Important/Important: 51%</li> <li>• Not Important: 46%</li> </ul>
7. Keeping access to Wilson HS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Important/Important: 82%</li> <li>• Not Important: 12%</li> </ul>	14. Keeping neighborhood access to Deal MS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Important/Important: 49%</li> <li>• Not Important: 36%</li> </ul>

In addition to full sample responses on these and other questions, the LSAT was able to review differential responses by teachers and staff, by boundary status, home language, Ward, commute, and grade level. A full set of the data is available on request and is also posted on the Oyster-Adams website under the LSAT tab at <http://oysteradamsbilingual.org/lsat>.

## LSAT Statement on Promising Options<sup>6</sup>

The LSAT undertook this community engagement process both in reaction to notice that the District would be considering school boundaries, and also in active pursuit of opportunities to strengthen our program and resolve emerging issues. While our approach has not been one of “crisis response” we believe the concerns we have specified here will, over time, have a debilitating effect on the Oyster-Adams bilingual model, and that the time is ripe for action.

The LSAT believes that the successful future of Oyster-Adams is tied to these key programmatic imperatives:

- An even balance of Spanish-speakers and English-speakers at every grade level;
- Families who are committed to completing our program of bilingual education through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade;
- The ability to build and sustain a bilingual inclusion program that meets the field’s educational standards;
- Continuity for our school community, i.e., the opportunity for current students and their siblings to continue attending Oyster-Adams, and the retention of our outstanding faculty.

With these imperatives in mind, the LSAT sought to narrow its focus to ideas that would: control admissions and thereby secure our desired language balance; *and* would increase space for inclusion as well as other programming needs; *and* would increase the number of students who go through our program from beginning to end; *and* would support our staff and administration in collaborating and working more effectively.

We believe operating the Oyster-Adams program as a city-wide magnet in a single building is a very promising option for meeting all of these criteria. There are a number of ways this could be accomplished. For example:

1. Use the pending Adams renovation to significantly expand the building such that it could house a citywide magnet PK-8 dual immersion program of approximately 500 students.<sup>7</sup> In this scenario, the Oyster campus would return to its original function as a PK-5 bilingual neighborhood school, but with a non-50-50 immersion model. If 50% of the student body at Oyster does not have to be native Spanish-speaking, the admission of large numbers of out-of-boundary

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<sup>6</sup> While the parents and teachers serving on the LSAT have been elected by the Oyster-Adams community, the views we offer here should not be construed as representative of the community’s views. In fact, we do not believe there is a “majority community view” on these issues. Rather, as laid out in this memo, there is a wide diversity of opinion. That said, by facilitating and participating in all aspects of this community engagement process we believe we have a particularly strong vantage point from which to offer insights and suggest options. But these insights and suggestions are wholly our own.

<sup>7</sup> The Oyster-Adams community is fortunate to have a professional architect in the parent body who was willing to lend his expertise to the Working Group process. His floor-by-floor site plans and estimates for expansion work at Adams are in Appendix B.

students would no longer be necessary and the building should be able to accommodate the needs of the neighborhood without excessive crowding.

2. Relocate the Oyster-Adams PK-8 program, as a city-wide magnet, to another facility and, as described above, convert the Oyster campus into a neighborhood bilingual elementary school. The Adams building would be reprogrammed by DCPS. In such a scenario, the most critical consideration would be the location of the new PK-8 school. The developmental nature of our program means that retention of our current student body is critical. If a relocation meant, in effect, “starting from scratch” we would lose the years of investment that have already been made in the bilingualism of more than 670 students who currently attend Oyster-Adams. Further it would mean an eight or nine-year start-up process before a class of 8<sup>th</sup> graders could graduate from the program. Any relocation should therefore be in reasonable proximity to the current campuses and to the Latino communities that will, necessarily, populate half the school.

In any of the scenarios described above, the LSAT recognizes the primary importance of maintaining a feeder pattern for all students (regardless of their home boundary) into Wilson High School. We believe that any program serving families city-wide should ensure that equitable educational opportunities are available across that student body. Further, at a time when Wilson is both overcrowded and also looking to serve a broader population, Oyster-Adams offers a demographically and geographically diverse cohort of rising 9<sup>th</sup> graders – not to mention a group with a unique academic preparation for high school.

We hope you will agree that each of these ideas — and perhaps others not considered here — merits further exploration and discussion, in particular as the larger context of DCPS’s boundary activity is made known.

### **Gratitude to our School Community**

The engagement process described here could not have been undertaken without the significant commitment of many parents and teachers in our school community. The LSAT would especially like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of these individuals:

- *Engagement of Spanish-speaking families:* Maria Elena Nawar, Melissa Shaw, Susana Gonzalez, Kathy Vincent, Dinora Herrera, Marcelo Morichi, Magaly Gatti, Noemi Rodriguez, Esperanza Berrocal, Pablo Moglia.
- *Survey:* George Minnigh, Anamaría Gonzalez, Emily Mechner, Julie Baron
- *Working Groups:* Jackie Alvarado, Katie Bunker, Elizabeth Carrott Minnigh, Blessed Chuksorji-Keefe, Mary Farmer, Alvaro Fernandez, Joe Figini, John Funge, Carlos Garcia, Bernadette Gaskin, Magaly Gatti, Dave Goldberg, Wendy Hauenstein, David Hofmann, Sally Hunsberger, Molly Irwin, Laura Kleinmann,

- Emily Mechner, Robert Meisnere, Marcelo Morichi, John Morton, Robert Osley, Monique Osley, Jessica Poppele, John Rusciolelli, Henry Salazar Gallego, David Valdez, Kathy Vincent
- *Translation:* Julia Aymerich, Esperanza Román-Mendoza, Anamaría Gonzalez, Vivian Guerra, Ana Lopez, Maria Elena Nawar, Henry Sálazar Gallego.
  - *General Support:* Edith Shorts, Oyster-Adams Business Manager Extraordinaire!

Chancellor Henderson, we have written to you today to ensure that the voice of the Oyster-Adams community is part of your boundary deliberation process. We seek your support in strengthening and building our program, and in securing its robust performance and growth into the future. We thank you for your consideration and look forward to meeting with you to discuss in detail the contents of this memo.

Sincerely,

The Oyster-Adams LSAT: Kate Brown, Katie Bunger, Liz Fallace, Caroline Finn, Melissa Grant (teacher co-chair), Vivian Guerra, Wendy Jacobson (parent co-chair), Ana Lopez, Maria Elena Nawar, Carrie Roling, Kat Song, Esperanza Román-Mendoza, and Pam Ross.

cc: Deputy Mayor for Education Abigail Smith  
 Ward 3 Councilmember Mary Cheh  
 Ward 1 Councilmember Jim Graham  
 At-Large Councilmember and Chair, Committee on Education, David Catania  
 DCPS Chief of Schools John Davis  
 DCPS Instructional Superintendent for Cluster VI Stephen Zagami  
 ANC3C SMD01 Commissioner Lee Brian Reba  
 ANC3C SMD02 Commissioner Gwendolyn Bole  
 ANC3C SMD03 Commissioner Jeffrey Kaliel  
 ANC3C SMD08 Commissioner Catherine May, MD  
 ANC1C01 Commissioner Brian Hart  
 ANC 1C02 Commissioner Martis "Marty" Davis  
 ANC1C03 Commissioner Ted Guthrie  
 ANC1C04 Commissioner Gabriela Mossi  
 ANC1C05 Commissioner Elham Dehbozorgi  
 ANC1C06 Commissioner Billy Simpson  
 ANC1C07 Commissioner Wilson Reynolds  
 ANC1C08 Commissioner Jimmy Rock  
 ANC1D01 Commissioner Yasmin Romero-Latin  
 ANC1D02 Commissioner Adam Hoey  
 ANC1D03 Commissioner Jack McKay  
 ANC1D04 Commissioner Phil Greiner

ANC1D05 Commissioner China Terrell  
Woodley Park Community Association President Bill Menczner  
Kalorama Citizens' Association President Denis James  
21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Fund DC Program Director Nancy Huvendick

## Appendix A: Statement of the Oyster-Adams Faculty

As Oyster-Adams teachers we are passionately committed to our school and its unique educational program. In considering the many facets of our work here, we value two things above all: bilingualism and bi-literacy for all our students, and a socio-economically, racially and ethnically diverse and inclusive community of learners. These qualities have been the historic hallmark of this program and they are fundamental to the kind of student body we want to help mold. Put more simply, these values are what brought us to this school and what motivate us to come teach every day. At an operational level, our highest priority is the ability to collaborate with each other. Collaboration feeds us professionally and enables us to provide the highest-quality, most seamless education to our students.

As it stands today, this vision of Oyster-Adams feels at risk to us. We identify these core issues:

- **Our bilingual model and mission.** Over time, the nature of the Oyster-Adams community (particularly in the lower grades) has changed significantly. The population for which our bilingual program was created – low income, spanish speaking, and recent immigrants struggling to find a foothold in this country – has diminished. We experience this as a real loss to the school. Further, the resulting language imbalances erode our ability to provide excellent dual immersion instruction in the classroom. We see a shift in this trend in the middle school, when spaces open up in the lottery. However, integrating large numbers of students late in our program brings its own set of challenges. We believe a true bilingual education is built deliberately over at least seven years.
- **Our physical structure.** By working across two non-adjacent buildings we cannot consistently and effectively collaborate across our program. Our access to administrative support and guidance is fragmented and already-limited resources are stretched even thinner. Exacerbating this dilemma, the current grade breakdown between our two buildings (which separates the elementary program mid-stream, after 3rd grade) is not developmentally appropriate for our students. Finally, the cross-age, student-to-student enrichment that is a key advantage to a PK-8 program is lost to us.
- **Our inclusion program.** Without control over our admissions, we are unable to provide the bilingual inclusion program the city desires and expects of us. A sloppy replica of that idea is the result if we cannot limit the size of inclusion classrooms. The size of our classrooms beyond pre-kindergarten impedes the progress of special needs students and often results in their transfer to other programs. We must ensure that we can provide consistency of instruction and support as these students advance.

As DCPS works to resolve boundary concerns around the city, we urge you to address these issues – to commit to the strongest Oyster-Adams Bilingual School possible. Our belief is that a program in a single building with city-wide admissions controlled by the school is the path to get us there. In addition to reestablishing our vision for Oyster-Adams, it would add to the District’s slate of high-quality academic programs that are available to all residents.

## Appendix B: Reports of the Working Groups

This Appendix contains a series of Working Group reports:

1. Short summaries of the recommendations of the five Working Groups
2. Full report of the “Contraction” subgroup
3. Full report of the “Move” subgroup
4. Majority report of two of the three subgroups that participated in the Super Committee process (“Expansion” and “Optimize/Replicate”)
5. Dissenting report of the Super Committee minority

### 1. Working Group Short Summaries

#### Contraction Subgroup:

In a scenario where the school (a) does not relocate, (b) cannot expand sufficiently to relieve enrollment constraints, and (c) remains a neighborhood school with by-right enrollment, yet (d) seeks to maintain the 50-50 dual language instructional model:

Changes to boundary, feeder and admission rules could have the effect of reducing in-boundary admissions. The purpose of this would be to make more room for out-of-boundary admissions that target linguistic and socio-economic diversity critical to the school's mission.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Reduce attendance zone size
  - a. Reassign addresses North of Garfield and West of 29th St to Eaton
  - b. Reassign addresses on Connecticut Avenue North of Cathedral to Eaton
  - c. Reassign addresses in Ward 1 (East of Rock Creek) to Marie Reed
2. Change middle school rights
  - a. Exclude the O-A boundary area from Deal's boundary (to discourage in-boundary families who are not committed to the K-8 dual language program from enrolling in the earlier grades)
  - b. Give Marie-Reed's in-boundary dual-language graduates admission priority at O-A middle school
3. Enforce registration status
  - a. Make sure Spanish-dominant lottery entrants are really Spanish-dominant
  - b. Make sure new in-boundary registrants really live in boundary

**Pros and Cons:** *Pros:* We estimate that the proposed changes would reduce in-boundary enrollment sufficiently to give the school full control of language balance. *Cons:* The problem of Adams lying outside its own attendance zone would be greatly exacerbated. Large parts of the current in-boundary community would also be excluded from the school.

#### Expansion Subgroup:

O-A can best address all but one of the issues raised by the O-A community and DCPS by considering opportunities for expanding O-A's high performing program.

*Alternative 1:* Physical Expansion – Zoning would permit an expansion of both the current campuses. In each case, construction could be undertaken without temporary relocation of students and without reducing useable outdoor space.



- a. Oyster Campus – The two existing wings could be expanded to provide an additional 10,080 sf, including seven new classrooms/program space. Construction costs are estimated to be \$3 million.
- b. Adams Campus – A new wing could be added to provide an additional 18,000 sf, including eight new classrooms/labs, swimming pool or other sports facility, library and a multi-purpose room. Construction costs are estimated to be \$6-8 million.

*Alternative 2: Boundary Expansion Coupled with Reorganization*– To avoid over enrollment at O-A (which is currently almost at capacity), expansion of O-A boundaries can only be accomplished in conjunction with an expansion of the buildings (discussed above) or a reorganization. By reorganizing so that the middle school is a separate school, O-A can utilize its existing space to provide better language balance for students in PK-5, through a combination of increased Spanish-lottery admissions and strategic partnerships with neighboring bilingual schools to shift/expand boundaries or reallocate students through use of a cluster system. The middle school program can then be expanded as a separate 6-8 program fed from a broader constellation of PK-5 bilingual schools. The middle school program can also be expanded into a bilingual high school program.

### Move Subgroup:

Oyster-Adams has always strived to maintain a 50-50 language balance. Over the past ten years, however, the population of in-boundary English dominant students in the lower grades has increased dramatically, undermining that balance. From 2002 to 2012 in-boundary English dominant students in Kinder more than doubled from 21 to 45. Future increases in in-boundary English dominant families are likely – Oyster-Adams is in high demand. To maintain program integrity it is imperative that Oyster-Adams have control over the number of English and Spanish dominant students admitted.

Six years ago we tried to expand out of a similar crisis by acquiring Adams. Although it enabled development of a successful middle school, expansion was not a long-term solution to our built-in language balance problems and we are out of space again. Furthermore, any solution must address the inequity of having half our program in a neighborhood whose children have no right to attend. The current “super committee” plan has 75% of our student body attending an expanded Adams, compounding the injustice. It is a plan of the privileged concerned more about their property values than for the future of DC’s children.

We believe that moving the Oyster-Adams program to a new facility as a magnet school with full control over admissions is the only fair and sustainable solution. In this win-win scenario, DCPS gets a new city-wide educational resource and the Woodley community retains its heritage school.

### Optimize/Replicate Subgroup:

Oyster-Adams is not in crisis; it is a high-performing, nationally recognized model of excellence. O-A is DCPS’s only top-performing bilingual school and the only bilingual program in Ward 3; whereas, there are 13 public bilingual programs in other Wards. O-A is also one of the most diverse schools in DCPS thanks to its current feeder pattern of part-neighborhood, part-lottery admissions.

We believe that O-A’s success and stability should not be compromised by radical changes to its program, location, or admissions system. O-A can meet its enrollment challenges and contribute to broader DCPS goals through:

1. Optimization: O-A can better manage variables under the school's control, namely its admission and retention policies, relieving enrollment pressure and increasing the space available for truly Spanish-dominant students admitted via the lottery.
  - a. Approximately 15-25% of students are English-dominant out-boundary students, most of whom started in-boundary. It is clear that policies against "boundary hopping" are not being consistently enforced.
  - b. Approximately 10-15% of the students are "soft" Spanish speakers who are not truly Spanish-dominant, yet occupy Spanish-dominant slots.
  - c. Since Spanish is the minority language, the school could allocate a greater portion of PK spots to Spanish-dominant students.
2. Replication: O-A can actively support efforts to provide more quality bilingual education at other DCPS schools. Public and private resources are available to establish a process to mentor faculty and staff implementing O-A-like programs at new DCPS schools and to improve existing low-performing bilingual programs.

Super-Committee (combined Expansion and Optimize/Replication subgroups):

The O-A program requires admission of enough out-of-boundary Spanish-speakers to complement its predominantly English-speaking neighborhood. We want to ensure a diverse student body while preserving the school's 41-year-old neighborhood ties. Expanding the physical space at O-A will achieve this, while addressing DC's shortage of desirable early childhood, elementary and middle school seats. We propose a three-part strategy:

- 1) Build a significant addition to Adams (in conjunction with the planned renovation) to allow for another 200-250 students, for a total school enrollment of approximately 900-950. Concept drawings are attached hereto. Construction costs are estimated at \$12-15 million. Additional space could enable, for example:
  - a. Moving 3rd graders to Adams;
  - b. Allowing addition of at least one classroom per grade at Oyster and smaller inclusion classrooms; and
  - c. Expansion of the boundary in the Adams vicinity.
- 2) Maintain the O-A boundary with minor exceptions that have positive walkability effects:
  - a. Reassigning Adams Mill Rd addresses to Bancroft ES (closer in proximity and under-capacity); and
  - b. Reassigning Kennedy-Warren addresses to Eaton ES (Kennedy-Warren is isolated from other residential areas in the O-A boundary and closer to Eaton which has only 32% in-boundary enrollment).
- 3) Change OA lottery, admission, and retention procedures to:
  - a. Actively discourage fraudulent/temporary in-boundary registration with a uniform, enforced, widely-known policy; and
  - b. Protect the integrity of the Spanish-dominant lottery by prioritizing English-language learners and those living in predominantly Spanish-speaking homes.

## **2. Full Report of the "Contraction" Subgroup**

In a scenario where the school (a) does not relocate, (b) cannot expand sufficiently to relieve enrollment constraints, and (c) remains a neighborhood school with by-right enrollment, yet (d) seeks to maintain the 50-50 dual language instructional model:

The following changes to boundary, feeder and admission rules could have the effect of reducing in-boundary admissions. The purpose of trying to reduce in-boundary admissions would be to make more room for out-of-boundary admissions that target linguistic and socio-economic diversity critical to the school's mission.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Change boundaries (reduce attendance zone size)
  - a. Addresses North of Garfield and West of 29<sup>th</sup> St move to Eaton (except those South of Swiss Embassy and East of Maret school)
  - b. Addresses on Connecticut Avenue North of Cathedral move to Eaton
  - c. Addresses in Ward 1 (East of Rock Creek) move to Marie Reed
2. Change middle school rights
  - a. Exclude the O-A boundary area from Deal's boundary (to discourage in-boundary families who are not committed to the K-8 dual language program from enrolling in the earlier grades)
  - b. Give Marie-Reed in-boundary dual-language graduates admission priority at O-A middle school—these would include former ward 1 Oyster boundary students.
3. Enforce registration status
  - a. Make sure Spanish-dominant lottery entrants are really Spanish-dominant
  - b. Make sure new in-boundary registrants really live in boundary

#### **Pros and Cons:**

*Pro:* Based on our enrollment estimates, we believe that the proposed changes would reduce in-boundary enrollment sufficiently to give the school full control of language balance (now and for some years to come).

*Con:* Large parts of the current in-boundary community would be excluded from the school. Our community does not wish to divide itself in this way (no group has advocated for it). The problem of Adams lying outside its own attendance zone would be greatly exacerbated.

*Pro:* Historically, in-boundary retention has been less than out-of-boundary retention. Increasing the proportion of out-of-boundary students would therefore probably improve middle school retention.

*Con:* This could prove problematic, since there is not necessarily space for better middle school retention.

### **3. Full Report of the “Move” Subgroup:**

The advantages of moving the Oyster-Adams program to a new facility as a magnet program are as follows:

- Without the pressure of accepting in-boundary English dominant children, Oyster-Adams can maintain its 50/50 ratio of English dominant and Spanish dominant students in order to maximize language acquisition of both English and Spanish.
- Moving the Oyster-Adams program would allow DCPS to rectify the current inequity of Oyster-Adams having half of its program (Adams) in a neighborhood whose children have no right to attend Oyster-Adams.
- Oyster-Adams bilingual program could continue to provide a stellar bilingual education through 8th grade. Research shows that it takes up to 7 years for students to become

- fully bilingual. It is also important for the city to maintain its only bilingual middle school to help Spanish speaking students entering DCPS transition to an English dominant culture while having the ability to access grade appropriate curriculum.
- One building would allow current and future students to benefit from the academic, social and emotional advantages that a pre-k-8th grade program offers.
  - One building would allow the teachers and staff to work more effectively and collaboratively.
  - The Oyster building could revert back to a pre-k-5th grade elementary school and maintain its current boundaries. A move to shrink the current Oyster boundaries in order to address space issues at Oyster would put undue stress on other Ward 3 schools.
  - Oyster-Adams could move to an expanded Adams with a potential capacity of 800 students. Alternatively, Oyster-Adams could be moved to one of DCPS's vacant facilities giving the city an opportunity to re-purpose one of its vacant buildings.
  - The current highly successful inclusion model (16 students/ class) in the pre-K at Oyster could be expanded to the higher grades if the school had control over the number of students it could accept.
  - DCPS needs bilingual inclusion classrooms to service Spanish dominant children with special needs.
  - Current Oyster-Adams students would be able to continue at the new facility or stay at the existing Oyster building.
  - Moving to a new facility will allow Oyster-Adams to serve a more racially, culturally, and socio-economically diverse student body.
  - Currently only 18% of the students in the middle school at Adams are in-boundary. While student attrition can be expected in the transition from elementary to middle school, the establishment of the pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade program in one campus and exempted from the pressures of in-boundary enrollment, is more likely to attract applicants committed to a bilingual program in its entirety. A reduction of large student attrition from elementary to middle school is paramount to guarantee the survival not only of a successful middle school but also of the whole 50-50 pre-k to 8 program.
  - The move of the Oyster-Adams program to a new facility will provide the basis to advance in the creation of a bilingual pre-K to 12 program. Such a program will fill a large educational need in the city. Oyster-Adams, with its institutional and cultural heritage and successful track record of bilingual education, is uniquely qualified to pursue this goal.

#### **4. Majority Report of Two of the Three Subgroups (“Expansion” and “Optimize/Replicate”) that Participated in the Super Committee Process**

##### **BACKGROUND**

On January 17, 2013, the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) issued "Better Schools for All Students: DCPS' Consolidation and Reorganization Plan." In this reorganization plan, DCPS identified the following issues relevant to the Oyster-Adams Bilingual School (O-A) as important in re-examining boundaries:

1. Easing overcrowding in the NW DC schools;
2. Expanding and maintaining high quality programs, specifically language immersion options;
3. Advancing socio-economic, racial and cultural diversity in schools; and
4. Facilitating walkability to minimize transportation time and costs.

As the result of this reorganization plan and the announcement by Chancellor Henderson that boundaries would be reviewed, the O-A LSAT initiated a working group of approximately 55 volunteer parents, faculty/staff and community members to identify boundary-related concerns important to the O-A community.

This working group identified a common set of core values:

1. Dual language immersion, with a 50/50 language balance
2. Diversity in
  - a. language,
  - b. race/ethnicity and
  - c. socio-economics
3. Comprehensive and rigorous educational program that supports all learners, including:
  - a. special needs students,
  - b. students who need additional academic support and
  - c. students who need to be challenged with more advanced work or course offerings

This working group also identified the following list of concerns:

1. Preventing over enrollment at O-A, which is current at capacity;
2. Maintaining balance of Spanish-dominant and English dominant students;
3. Maintaining social economic and race/ethnicity diversity;
4. Having both campuses within the school boundary;
5. Maintaining the current location of the school;
6. Consolidating onto a single campus;
7. Minimizing disruption to students, staff and faculty;
8. Maintaining as many families as possible to keep our community intact; and
9. Expanding/accommodating the inclusion program.

The working group then identified four alternative methods for addressing those concerns: (i) *optimize and replicate*, (ii) *expand*, (iii) *contract* and (iv) *move*. The working group divided into four subcommittees to explore each of these four scenarios, and then these subcommittees presented their findings to the working group as a whole.

Through this process it became clear that the four scenarios were not mutually exclusive; rather important overlaps were identified. Accordingly, the working group decided to appoint a “super committee,” consisting of the leaders of each of the four subcommittees to further explore opportunities for a synergistic approach and identify common ground. The move subcommittee ultimately decided to withdraw from the super committee. The proposal of participating “super committee” members is set forth below.

An executive summary of each subcommittee’s presentation (other than the move subcommittee, which is being separately submitted) may be found in **Exhibits B** through **D** hereto. Also attached at **Exhibit E** is a matrix providing a summary comparison of how the included proposals address the stated concerns.

#### **MAJORITY PROPOSAL OF THE EXPANSION AND OPTIMIZE/REPLICATE SUBGROUPS**

##### ***The Problems We are Trying to Solve:***

O-A is a special school, with a unique program that is nationally recognized as a model of successful bilingual education. This program relies on the ability of the school to admit enough out-of-boundary students to complement its predominantly English-speaking neighborhood population with children from Spanish-speaking households.

But our very success and popularity have resulted in growth of in-boundary enrollments and reduced our ability to accept out of boundary students. The loss of that diversity threatens our

dual immersion program. Class sizes are already above acceptable levels and program spaces have been lost to classrooms in an effort to maintain a language-balanced student body.

The O-A community is united in its desire to preserve our school's unique and highly sought after program. We want to ensure that O-A has the flexibility to admit a diverse student body while preserving O-A's ties to the neighborhoods that have supported its program for 41 years. Expanding the physical space enough to do this would also help address the District's shortage of desirable seats in early childhood, elementary and middle school levels.

**Proposed Solution:**

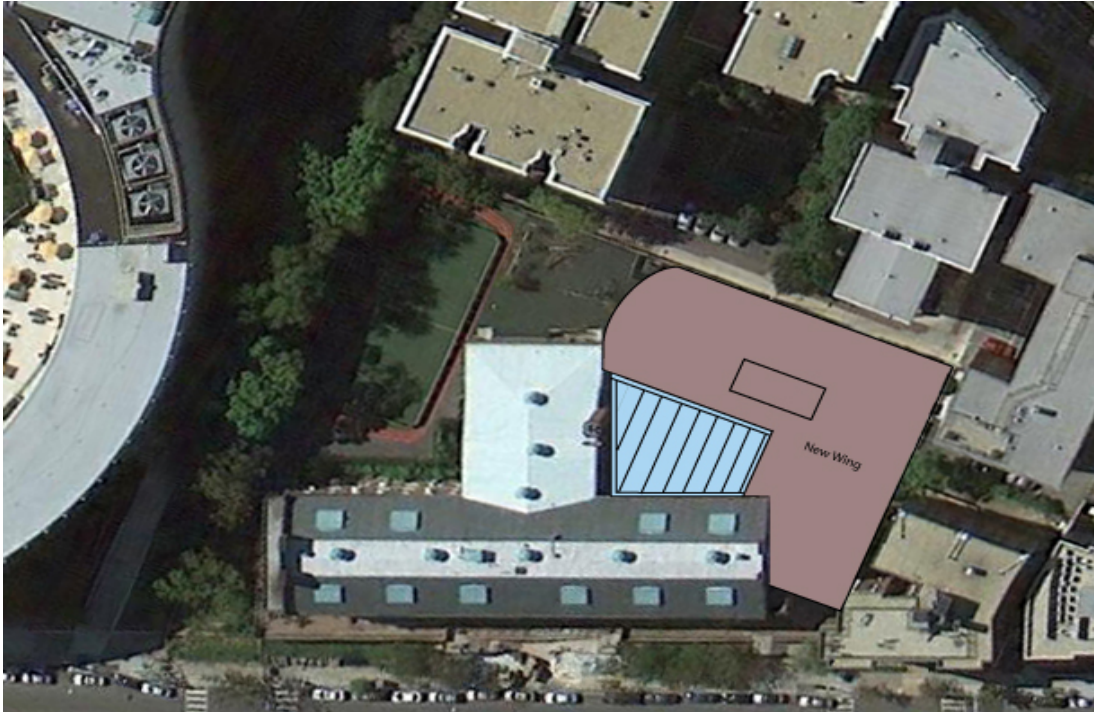
1. Build a significant addition to the Adams building in conjunction with the planned renovation of its instructional spaces.
  - a. Zoning would permit an addition with space for another 200 to 250 students, for a total of about 900 combined enrollment at the two campuses of O-A.
  - b. Concept drawings for this proposed addition are attached at **Exhibit A** hereto. Construction costs are estimated to be \$12-15 million.
  - c. The additional space at Adams would provide the capacity to absorb significantly more students, including future growth of in-boundary English speakers, without compromising O-A's ability to use the lottery to maintain the school's language balance.
    - i. At a minimum, the expansion of the Adams campus would provide sufficient space to absorb the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade from Oyster, thus creating space at the Oyster building to expand grades K through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. In this way, every grade could add at least one classroom (potentially including one class per grade with a smaller class size to facilitate the successful bilingual inclusion program).
    - ii. Other reconfigurations of classes and grades could also be utilized to permit expansion of the early childhood options, expansion of the boundary in the vicinity of Adams and/or expansion of enrollment of specific grades, depending on prevailing priorities.
2. Keep the O-A boundary intact, with minor exceptions that all have some positive effects on walkability:
  - a. Reassign Adams Mill Rd addresses in Mt. Pleasant to Bancroft ES, which is closer in proximity to these addresses. Bancroft is currently undercapacity.
  - b. Reassign the Kennedy-Warren Building (3131 Connecticut Avenue) to Eaton ES boundary area, since it is isolated from any other residential areas in the O-A boundary and is closer in proximity to Eaton ES. Eaton has only 32% in-boundary enrollment, so it should have sufficient room to absorb the building.
3. Change lottery, admission, and retention procedures to:
  - a. Actively discourage fraudulent and temporary in-boundary registration by having a uniform and enforced policy that is widely known.
  - b. Protect integrity of Spanish-dominant lottery by giving priorities to applicants who are English-language learners or live in predominantly Spanish-speaking homes.

**Pros and Cons:**

**Pros:** This proposal preserves the unique and highly successful O-A program in its entirety, addresses all of the concerns raised during the LSAT process other than consolidating to one building, and accomplishes all four of the relevant goals set out in the DCPS reorganization plan.

**Cons:** There are no significant cons to this approach. While the expansion plans for Adams would require a significant investment, the campus is already on DCPS's list for major renovations with millions planned to be spent to upgrade its facilities over the next few years. The opportunity to capitalize on that planned investment to ensure that it is used to expand capacity should not be missed.

**EXHIBIT A**  
**CONCEPT DRAWINGS FOR THIS PROPOSED ADDITION**<sup>8</sup>



**Aerial View**

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<sup>8</sup> Please note that specific designations assigned to rooms as contained in these concept drawings are merely illustrative. The actual designation for each room would depend upon prevailing priorities as determined by DCPS. Potential uses considered by the “super committee” are included in Paragraph 1.c. of its proposal.



**Ground Floor**



**First Floor**





**Second Floor**

## **EXHIBIT B**

### **OPTIMIZE AND REPLICATE SUBCOMMITTEE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Oyster-Adams Bilingual School (O-A) is not facing a crisis; it is a high-performing, nationally recognized model of excellence. Rated one of the best schools in DCPS, O-A is also one of the most diverse, and the only top-performing bilingual school in the system. Its diversity is rooted in the current feeder pattern of part-neighborhood, part-lottery, and its excellence builds on 41 years of human capital and community development. O-A offers the only bilingual program in Ward 3; whereas, 13 public bilingual programs exist in other Wards.

We believe that O-A can best implement its mission statement and contribute to broader DCPS goals by optimizing its successful program and actively facilitating the replication of its bilingual model.

1. **Optimize:** O-A can better manage variables under the school's control, namely its admission and retention policies, and thereby significantly expand enrollment of truly Spanish-dominant students via the lottery.
  - a. Approximately 15-25% of students are English-dominant out-boundary students, most of whom started in-boundary.
  - b. Approximately 10-15% of the students are "soft" Spanish speakers who are not truly Spanish-dominant, yet occupy Spanish-dominant slots.
  - c. Since Spanish is the minority language, the school could allocate a greater portion of PK spots to Spanish-dominant students.

Additionally, O-A should strengthen the retention of middle school students to reduce pressures on Deal Middle School, by better supporting teachers and expanding athletics and afterschool activities.

2. **Replicate:** O-A can serve as an inspirational model of excellence and provide active support to efforts to provide more quality bilingual education by drawing resources (e.g., district funding and private grants) to establish a process to mentor faculty and staff implementing the O-A model at empty DCPS sites and improving low-performing bilingual programs that already exist.

**Pros and Cons:**

*Pros:* This approach strengthens an already high-performing school, while ensuring the program maintains its 50/50 language balance for the foreseeable future with minimal disruption to students, faculty and staff.

*Cons:* Overtime there may be need to expand program space to address continued language balance pressures.

**EXHIBIT C**

**EXPANSION SUBCOMMITTEE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

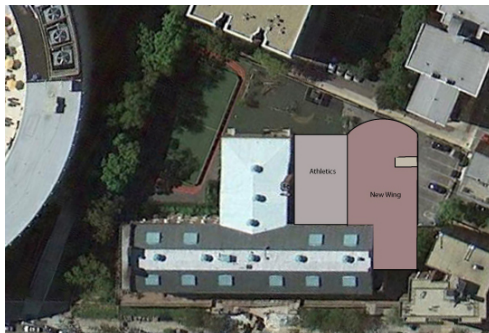
O-A can best address all but one of the issues raised by the O-A community and DCPS by considering opportunities for expanding O-A's high performing program.

***Alternative 1: Physical Expansion*** – Zoning would permit an expansion of both the current campuses. In each case, construction could be undertaken without temporary relocation of students and without reducing useable outdoor space.

- a. *Oyster Campus* – The two existing wings could be expanded to provide an additional 10,080 sf, including seven new classrooms/program space. Construction costs are estimated to be \$3 million.



- b. *Adams Campus* – A new wing could be added to provide an additional 18,000 sf, including eight new classrooms/labs, swimming pool or other sports facility, library and a multi-purpose room. Construction costs are estimated to be \$6-8 million.



***Alternative 2: Boundary Expansion Coupled with Reorganization***– To avoid over enrollment O-A (which is currently almost at capacity), expansion of O-A boundaries can only be

accomplished in conjunction with an expansion of the buildings (discussed above) or a reorganization. By reorganizing so that the middle school is a separate school, O-A can utilize its existing space to provide better language balance for students in PK-5, through a combination of increased Spanish-lottery admissions and strategic partnerships with neighboring bilingual schools to shift/expand boundaries or reallocate students through use of a cluster system. The middle school program can then be expanded as a separate 6-8 program fed from a broader constellation of PK-5 bilingual schools. The middle school program can also be expanded into a bilingual high school program.

**Pros and Cons:**

*Pros:* Providing more seats in this highly desirable program best satisfies the interests of the various stakeholders while protecting the integrity of the existing program.

*Cons:* There are no significant cons to either approach. However, both approaches would require a financial and time commitment on the part of DCPS.

**EXHIBIT D**

**MATRIX<sup>9</sup>**

	<i>Optimize &amp; Replicate</i>	<i>Expand</i>	<i>Contract</i>	<i>Super Committee</i>
Helping to ease overcrowding in the NW DC schools		X		X
Expanding and maintaining high quality programs, specifically language immersions options	X	X		X
Advancing socio-economic, racial and cultural diversity in schools	X	X	X	X
Facilitating walkability to minimize transportation time and costs	X	X	X	X
Preventing over enrollment at O-A	X	X	X	X
Maintaining balance of Spanish-dominant and English dominant students	X	X	X	X
Maintaining socio-economic and race/ethnic diversity	X	X	X	X
Having both campuses within the school boundary		X		X

<sup>9</sup> The optimize and expand groups have assessed the recommendations for purposes of this comparison matrix, and the assessment of each plan reflects only the views of those two groups.

Maintaining the current location of the school	X	X	X	X
Consolidating onto a single campus				
Minimizing disruption to students, staff and faculty	X	X	X	X
Maintaining as many family as possible to keep our community intact	X	X		X
Facilitating expansion of inclusion program	X	X	X	X

## 5. Dissenting Report of Super Committee Minority (Contraction Subgroup)

Oyster-Adams and its beloved dual-language program are facing a challenge. Enrollment trends and demographic projections point to a future in which sufficient out of boundary admissions to support a 50-50 language balance will not be maintained.

A substantial physical expansion of the Adams Campus, as proposed in the Supercommittee report, offers one possibility of escape from that problem. With greater overall capacity, and no expansion of the attendance zone, there would be plenty of room for out of boundary enrollment. However, this would put a greater fraction of the school's students at the Adams campus, without extending greater admission rights to that neighborhood, and the walkability of the school for most in-boundary students would worsen.

Alternative uses of a larger Adams building include other possibilities. A sufficiently larger Adams building could house a PK-8 integrated magnet dual language program. Or a two-campus school could have lower grades at both campuses, drawing from both neighborhoods, and combine them in upper grades. Or both buildings could house new programs, satisfying robust neighborhood demand, while the storied Dual-language program moved elsewhere.

The supercommittee majority emphasizes and prioritizes one particular use of the space, without acknowledging its drawbacks, nor its incompatibility with other uses. They propose a particular configuration of grades within an enlarged two-campus Oyster-Adams, without addressing the exclusion of Adams neighborhood residents.

The dissenting representative on the supercommittee endorses the Adams enlargement proposal while remaining agnostic on the boundary, admission, and class configuration questions. The former seems like a worthy project with great potential value for the neighborhood, city, and school district, and for the dual language program if it remains there. The latter issues do not offer much hope for easy consensus.

## *Notes*

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