GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education

Public Roundtable
on
"Updates to the 2018 Master Facilities Plan"

Testimony of

Paul Kihn

Deputy Mayor for Education

Before the

Committee on Education

The Honorable David Grosso, Chairperson

&

Committee of the Whole

The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman

Council of the District of Columbia

John A. Wilson Building

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, D.C. 20004

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Good afternoon Chairman Mendelson, Chairperson Grosso, councilmembers, staff, and community members. I am the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) Paul Kihn, and I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

Nothing could be more important than planning for the public school system we want and need. We are fortunate to be in a time of population growth and a time of ongoing school improvements. To meet more of our residents' needs and to ensure equity, we need to ensure our planning decisions are informed by the kind of data and information provided in the MFP.

Therefore, I was disappointed that Council passed a disapproval of the "2018 DC Public Education Master Facilities Plan" (2018 MFP or MFP). The MFP is a tool to support an intentional planning process, a process that must be responsive and adaptive to meet the needs of students and education stakeholders. We are excited about the wealth of information that it provides and we are using the information regularly to inform our policy and planning decisions.

Fruitful education facilities planning does not occur in a vacuum. The foundation of our dual sector system is the ability to grow, evolve, and adapt to meet the needs of all of our public school students. Disapproving the MFP misses how we are using the MFP to base our policy decisions and address challenges and opportunities in specific instances.

More to the point, the 2018 MFP, submitted in February 2019, fulfills all of the applicable requirements of the "Planning Actively for Comprehensive Education Facilities Amendment Act of 2016", or the PACE Act. It is a forward-looking, comprehensive study that provides agencies, school leaders, stakeholders, and the community with the information needed to support current and future school facilities planning in Washington, D.C. Further, the 2018 MFP was developed utilizing robust stakeholder engagement through nine community engagement meetings with parents, teachers, residents, and community leaders throughout the city and a survey of over 500 public school parents to understand their priorities.

This first-of-its kind MFP is foundational and provides a suite of options and recommendations for District leaders, education stakeholders, and residents to use collectively to meet public school students' educational facility needs. Collaboration among sectors and among schools is

crucial for responding to the District's educational facility challenges and enhancing the quality of education to all public school students.

Although Council has chosen to disapprove the MFP because it does not meet its definition of a "plan", my office has and will continue to focus on implementing the Mayor's education vision through our approach to strong planning, which includes a focus on school program quality, family demand, size, location, and best use of facilities across both the DCPS and public charter sectors.

I would like to take this opportunity to now discuss how the extensive information in the MFP, which details facility utilization, facility condition assessments, facility modernization efforts, population forecasts, school-specific enrollment projections, and aspirational school enrollment plans, is critical to the District's education facilities planning.

The MFP was key to the development of the FY20-25 Capital Improvements Plan, or CIP, which committed over $1.1 billion of capital funding to modernize 23 DCPS school facilities over the next six years. The 10-year enrollment projections, which prior to the 2018 MFP were not available, informed the funding requests and future capacities of multiple schools in the CIP. The use of the MFP's 10-year enrollment projections in capital planning ensures that our newly modernized schools will better meet the educational needs of our growing public education sector for years to come.

Providing modern, safe, and effective places to learn is a crucial planning effort that does not end with the most current budget. This MFP provides the prioritization of the schools that will receive full modernizations over the coming years. The prioritization of modernizations has converted what was once a politically-motivated process that resulted in inequitable and asymmetric capital resource allocation into a transparent, data-driven roadmap for the District to follow in its future budgets.

The MFP is at the fore of our efforts to harness and employ data in our cross-sector planning efforts. MFP data was the base of the analysis my office provided to the DC Public Charter School Board to support their review of the 2019 public charter school applications, focusing on middle and high school facility capacities, forecasted population, and DCPS and public charter

school aspirational enrollment growth. My office, in collaboration with DCPS, is utilizing the foundational data in the MFP to determine the future programmatic uses of the three remaining DCPS vacant facilities. The MFP is also driving cooperative and strategic facility shared space planning. The utilization projections in the MFP show us which DCPS facilities are projected to be underutilized, providing us a pool of potential opportunities for shared use to meet additional educational and community needs.

My office is building upon the planning foundation of the MFP, having released EdScape, short for Education Landscape, which is a suite of online, interactive data visualization dashboards to support school planning. EdScape is intended to be a key source of information for both DCPS and the charter school sector in determining whether and where new programs or facility capacity may be needed, contributing to greater coherence across the sectors. EdScape contributes to the Mayor's goal of data transparency by providing this same information to the public and allowing for feedback and regular updates. I am excited to report that today we have incorporated OSSE's STAR rating data, which are ratings designed to help celebrate successes, focus discussions, identify areas for support, and inform strategic planning, into EdScape, providing a first-of-its-kind planning tool.

The MFP fulfills the requirements of the PACE Act, and I am excited to use its foundational and transformational data and recommendations to ensure that our educational facilities support our public school students, so that they are ready for school, ready to learn, and ready for a career. I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.