

Bancroft Elementary School Modernization DCPS Response to community questions and comments January 28, 2016

Responses from DCPS to each of the questions can be found under each question in *italics*. There are some questions that need additional coordination or follow up. The comments/questions listed below were collected via e-mail and a community survey that was published after the community meeting on January 12th, 2016.

“How it will affect school activities? Quality of learning? Where would children play? How is it going to affect performance of children?”

- *DCPS chose the Sharpe Health site as a potential swing-space in large part because it fully accommodates the academic program that currently exists at Bancroft. In addition, there is a dedicated play-space on site that the children at Bancroft will be able to use. As a result, we anticipate that all school activities will continue at Sharpe Health, and do not feel that the location will compromise quality of learning or performance of the children.*

“It seems like a more realistic option to move to the Sharpe Health site, due to the chaos of co-locating an active school with a major construction site. My concerns at this point center on commuting to school; we walk to school now and are enrolled in aftercare as well. So while we may continue to walk the extra distance, I'd like to know in more detail what the busing options are, and whether there is an accommodation for aftercare students. Lastly, as a neighbor to Bancroft I know well how much the playground/soccer field is used by the community currently. I'm concerned about where the neighborhood kids/families will go instead.”

- *We will provide transportation to Bancroft for the academic day. We are developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs and aftercare programs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*
- *The entire site at Bancroft, including the fields, will not be accessible the community.*

“I am a parent and a neighbor, one of the reasons we choose Bancroft is because we walk three blocks to school every day. I am a very concerned about having to put my kids in a bus every day and the chaos that will generate in front of a school under construction. I am also concerned about the conditions of the swing space proposed. Are we sure that the building is not in worse conditions than what we currently have? Otherwise, I would prefer to stay in-site (I have seen portables elsewhere and they are nice!)”

- *If Sharpe Health is chosen, we will work in close coordination with the community on a bussing plan that allows the students to load and unload safely. To address your second concern, we are confident that Sharpe Health's building condition is similar to that of Bancroft. We will work with the SIT and the school to find an appropriate place for pick-up so that kids can safely wait for a bus.*

"Traffic at the Sharpe location - There are multiple schools in just one block. I have heard that the traffic / congestion is already bad there (especially for drop off / pick up at Powell). Adding another 450 students on that block (some on buses / some in cars) will likely make the traffic / congestion much worse - causing backups for all vehicles (including those who have no relation to the schools)."

- *We will work with our team and DDOT to find the best way to navigate drop-off and pick-up. If needed we will conduct transportation studies to find the best solution.*

"Bus Transportation - Will there be buses for children who do and do not attend after care? Will there be shelter at the bus stop in Mt Pleasant? (depending on traffic, children and their caregivers may be waiting for a long time in poor weather - rain, cold, strong winds etc.)"

- *Thank you for pointing that out. If Sharpe Health is chosen, we will work closely with the DCPS operations team to ensure the drop-off and pick-up is as orderly as possible. Our goal is to ensure students can get to and from school. DCPS is continuing to evaluate the before and aftercare needs at Bancroft and will be working closely with the school and families to better understand the need. We will certainly look into creating a bus shelter for people to use while waiting for the bus in the morning and afternoon.*

"Moving to Sharpe may upset a few vocal locals but it makes the most sense for the kids. Noise, construction and terrible drop off and pick ups are not conducive to a great learning. Plus kids need an awesome play space and staying at B won't provide that."

- *Thank you for your input.*

"I'd like to know more about the bus proposal to take children to the school from Mt. Pleasant. Additionally, I'd like to know if there is a proposal to bus children back to Mt. Pleasant after school, and if so when? My child is currently in aftercare until I pick him up around 4:45. Will the bus back be only at school dismissal, or will there be a few options?"

- *Thank you for your input. We are developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*

"We really like being so close to school, and we have built our commutes around walking our kids to and from school. Given everything in the presentation, we think moving to Sharpe makes sense, although it would be inconvenient. Bussing the kids would make a big difference, especially if a bussing solution for aftercare could be identified. Thanks for all your hard work identifying multiple options!"

- *Thank you for your input. We are developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*

"I'm a prospective PK3 parent in the neighborhood, so I don't have enough experience to have fully-fledged concerns. I do wonder, however, how transportation works for after care. Thank you."

- *Thank you for your input. We are developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*

“We are an out of boundary family who often relies on public transportation and there is no good option for public transportation from our home in Ward 5 to Sharpe (though we do support relocating to Sharpe for the construction because of the distance from the noise and machinery and the access to outdoor space).”

- *Thank you for your input. We are developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*

“Logistics of transportation to and from school (including after care) for kids in pre-K 3 and 4.”

- *Thank you for your input. We are developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*

“Keep everyone at Bancroft, do not use a swing space.”

- *Thank you for your input.*

“My vote is for kids to move to a temporary school location during the Bancroft rebuild. The location that has been proposed has an onsite playground the kids can use. Also, and more importantly, the kids will not be going to school on a construction site which can pose health and safety hazards. I hope the powers that be chose sending the kids to an off-construction site location. I think having buses available to transport the kids to and from Mt. Pleasant is also important. I hope that option is feasible as well.”

- *Thank you for your input. We are currently developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*

“I am concerned that if the school leaves the neighborhood many middle and upper-income parents from Mt. Pleasant will choose a different school. That will not help improve Bancroft, as the bi-lingual model relies on diversity to succeed. If we do go to Sharpe it is critical that bus service be provided back to the neighborhood at 3:30 and also at 6pm, as many parents do not drive and will rely on a bus service. It is also critical that our school have more security, being so close to a high school, etc. Right now we only have one security guard and constantly battle to keep older kids out of our play areas. Finally, upgrading at Sharpe should be comprehensive, to make it bright and appealing.”

- *Thank you for your input. We are developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*

“Safety: If kids are to stay on campus during renovations, I am concerned about construction waste (e.g. asbestos) in the air for the kids and our neighbors, including us who live a block away.”

- *As part of the construction project, the general contractors are required by law to ensure that any hazardous materials (such as asbestos) are properly and thoroughly abated.*

“I have a strong preference for the off-site location at Sharpe. I am concerned that being located right next to active construction/renovation will negatively impact the kids' academic progress, in a clearly avoidable way. I also thing the lack of good options for outdoor play at the current site will negatively

impact academic progress in the kids... close-by appropriate outdoor play space is an important outlet for kids' energies. The Sharpe campus has everything needed to foster a good education environment for the kids. Despite the extra travel, I think student academic success should be the primary factor in the decision, and therefore I have a strong preference for the Sharpe campus."

- *Thank you for your input.*

"My only concern with staying at Bancroft is the plan, or lack thereof, of how to ensure children have adequate time and space for recess. My concerns with moving are myriad: logistics and transit, adjusting to a new space, impact on a community used to a lot of walkability..."

- *Thank you for your input.*
- *We are currently working to provide details around transportation to and from the Sharpe Health campus. We are developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*
- *Principal Mola can answer your questions about the plan for adjusting the school community to a new space.*
- *At the last community meeting, we presented the options that currently exist for play space in the immediate area around Bancroft. You can find the slides from that presentation here: <http://dgs.dc.gov/page/bancroft-elementary-school-proj>*

"I feel the learning environment will be compromised with the ongoing construction. I've spoken with teachers who also feel the construction would be a major deterrent to instructional time. Also, the unknown environmental factors are a major concern. I am strongly opposed to staying onsite during the construction."

- *Thank you for your input.*

"We would absolutely need a bus to take us to a new campus; it will be harder to attend after school events if the school isn't in walking distance; it will be sad not to have a playground to access in the neighborhood."

- *Thank you for your input. We are developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*

"I am both a Bancroft parent and community member. I'm worried that staying on site will leave the children without places to play and will undermine learning. I'm worried moving offsite will create stressful commutes and decrease community engagement."

- *Thank you for expressing your concerns.*

"Primary concern is that DGS and DCPS do not have a firm grip on the scope of renovations necessary to make Sharpe ready and safe for occupancy by Bancroft students by August and has minimal contingency funding to support any large system replacements. Want a guarantee that no matter what happens with Sharpe, the funding currently available for Bancroft renovations won't be affected. Secondary concern is that interim transportation solutions should include all Bancroft families. Third concern is that if we stay in space, how to ensure safety of students while in trailers, away from main building and with several, unattended points of interest in conjunction with a large number of unveiled personnel coming and going from construction site."

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- *Early estimates from DGS indicate that they should be able to manage the upgrades at Sharpe Health within the budget without affecting the modernization budget.*
 - *Our transportation plans will be built around the needs of the entire school community. We are developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*
 - *If the students remain on site, all construction workers will be required to remain inside of the job site that will be fenced. A fence will also be created to ensure that the school is safe and that visitors cannot wander onto the campus without first signing in and having their identity verified.*

"I worried moving offsite will make commuting stressful and decrease community involvement. I'm worried staying onsite will undermine the health of the kids and the learning environment."

- *Thank for your concerns.*

"I worry that it will be inconvenient for parents to pick up students from aftercare if they do not have a car. Right now, we can pick up children at any time between 3:15 and 6pm. I am uncertain how that will work for those without a car. One possibility that I can suggest is that each student have a transportation time (perhaps on the hour) that they are assigned each day by their parents."

- *Thank you for your input.*

"I have 2 children at Bancroft, and have been at the school for 6 years. I have lived in the neighborhood for almost 25 years, and have a deep commitment to furthering a cohesive, but diverse, community at our local school in the neighborhood I love. Choice is wonderful, but my family has chosen community for our children in this frantic time of public school in our city. Modernization has been on the plate at Bancroft as long as I can remember. Back in the summer of 2013, we were told it would start in 2014 and be completed this year. Every scenario since then has involved the student body staying in place. When I first heard of the Sharpe swing space this fall, I felt like a promise that had been made to us was being broken. I also realized that my 3rd grader would spend the last two of her eight years at a Bancroft under construction... or possibly being bused to a different neighborhood.

Over the last two months, I've listened to the reasoning for the potential move. I fully appreciate the concern about lack of outdoor play space, as a parent who would love to see longer recess. Though there is more play space near Sharpe, I'm concerned about the logistics of sharing it with the other schools. I'm concerned about the safety of using the areas outside of the very small dedicated playground attached to the Sharpe building. I wish it was simpler to make use of our wonderful swath of National Park directly behind Bancroft for outdoor play were the school body to stay on site.

I am also worried about transportation. Traffic is already horrible around 16th & Arkansas from 7-9am. The promise of a dedicated bus for Bancroft families is crucial, but the logistics of transporting 300 students from Mt. Pleasant to Sharpe in the morning seems daunting. Will the return bus run at 3:30 and at 6pm?

The one concern that has me truly divided is the concern I've heard from teachers about disruption to teaching due to construction noise and commotion. I can see how easily a whole class could be derailed by that.

I feel lately that we are finally achieving a momentum in the goal of a unified community, and fear that the off-site swing space scenario endangers that. Though only 50% of our students are in-boundary, many more are walking distance. A great deal of community-building is the direct result of geography: Our main fundraisers are neighborhood dependent. Many, many families depend on each other for

shared, walking-home childcare. Many families do not own cars, or have one that is used primarily by a commuting parent. Many families are simply uncomfortable venturing out of their community. The logistics of attending after-school meetings and events is much more difficult when you are not in walking distance.

I'll close this long essay by emphasizing how much I love our school community.... our teachers who work so hard and so well together... and our Principal Mr. Mola and Vice Principal Ms. Martinez who are both educational rockstars. We are all very fortunate."

- *We are currently developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*
- *We are working on clarifying the details of sharing play space. While the forest space in Rock Creek Park is beautiful, our position is that it is not a suitable play space for children.*
- *Thank you for your input. In addition to our updates about transportation logistics, we hope that Principal Mola will be providing updates on his plan to maintain the school community at Sharpe Health if that is what is decided.*

"A bus to the Sharpe location is crucial. Please work out details and share with the community. We chose Bancroft because it is our neighborhood school, and the potential move is a real shock."

- *We are currently developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*

"Understand buses will be arranged for morning and afternoon but will there be one for after care kids?"

- *We are currently developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*

"1) How will the logistics of transporting younger children who will require additional supervision on busses (preschool thru k)? 2) How to ensure security of children if we remain at the site, and in the middle of a construction zone."

- *Each bus will have an adult on the bus to ensure the safety of the children on board.*
- *If the students remain on site, all construction workers will be required to remain inside of the job site that will be fenced. A fence will also be created to ensure that the school is safe and that visitors cannot wander onto the campus without first signing in and having their identity verified.*

"Recommend that preschool stay on Bancroft campus. Older classes to alternative site. Also that the empty space at 19th and Lamont be turned into playground (dps just issued survey about this)"

- *Thank you for your input. We will look into your suggestion.*

"Please look into the option of closing off 18th street, next to the playground, as a site to put trailers."

- *Thank you for your input. We believe we have presented the most viable options for Bancroft.*

“I am concerned about the Bancroft community and how being offsite affects our community events - programming nights, tree sale etc.”

- *Thank you for your input. We recognize the importance of these events to the school community. DCPS is working with Principal Mola on ways to preserve Bancroft’s school community events if the school is re-located to Sharpe Health.*

“Please consider closing 18th street, next to the playground, to use for trailers.”

- *Thank you for your input. We believe we have presented the most viable option for Bancroft.*

“The fact that we have a viable alternative in Sharpe should make this a no-brainer! I've toured Sharpe and think that it would provide a seamless transition (transportation issues aside) and would meet all the needs of the teaching and learning communities.”

- *Thank you for your input.*

“The bus is crucial to the potential Sharpe relocation-- please communicate the details about pick-up, drop-off times, locations, and protocol.”

- *We are currently developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*

“I strongly support the move to a temporary space. I have concerns about the learning environment and health of teachers and kids on site during the construction. Also, the lack of play space is a major concern. If we can move to another site still within reasonable proximity and provide a good and safe environment for everyone, then I support that.”

- *Thank you for your input.*

“Will buses have different stops around the neighborhood to ease logistics and avoid chaos in front of the school (with multiple buses, construction trucks, cars, and buses -in addition to normal neighborhood traffic)? Will kids be offered the option to run in a bus immediately after school ends AND at the end of after-care? How will security during drop-off be handled if kids have to run in a bus?”

- *We are currently developing a survey to better understand the transportation needs of the Bancroft community. Once we have the results from that survey, we will work with Principal Mola and the DCPS operations team on a transportation plan that we can share with the community.*

“Will there be transportation back to Mt. Pleasant for students in after-care?”

Our goal is to ensure students can get to and from school. DCPS is continuing to evaluate the before and aftercare needs at Bancroft are and will be working closely with the school and families to better understand the need.

“Es mejor que se mover a la nueva escuela por mayor seguridad para los niños.”

- *Gracias por su opinion.*

“Soy una mamá de Bancroft y me gustaría saber si con la remodelación existe la probabilidad de que aumenten los grados, y yo si quiero que mover a otro edificio durante la remodelación.”

- *Gracias por su aporte. En este momento, no sabemos si la modernización aumentará las calificaciones.*

“Yo quiero que haga transporte para que recojan a mi hijo.”

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- *Actualmente estamos desarrollando un estudio para comprender mejor las necesidades de transporte de la comunidad Bancroft. Cuando que tengamos los resultados de esa encuesta, vamos a trabajar con el director Mola y el equipo de operaciones DCPS en un plan de transporte que podemos compartir con la comunidad.*

“Es el transporte gratuito?”

- *Cualquier transportaiton proporcionada por DCPS es gratuito.*