



## **Lafayette Elementary School**

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**Carrie Broquard, Principal**

### **Modernization Update and Response to Concerns July 12, 2015**

Recently, there has been much discussion around the status of the Lafayette modernization project, budget allocations, and building design. The SIT team, a recommending body comprised of parents, community representatives, teachers, and myself meet frequently with DGS and DCPS to stay apprised of the project, as well as give recommendations. Our most recent meeting, Thursday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, was to review some changes that were made in the building's design and answer questions regarding the overall budget of the project, systems for communication, and next steps moving forward. The information below is a summary of the information shared at the SIT Team meeting:

**Funding** – The original budget for the project was \$55 million. In February, 2015, an additional \$23 million was added to our project in the Mayor's budget. The overall budget for the project is \$78 million. This includes \$72 million for construction costs (building, trailers, etc) and \$6 million for "soft costs" (design fees, furniture, permits, IT, consultations, contingency budget, etc). The funding for the project has not been reduced.

**Communication** – In late June, DGS sent an email to the SIT team that outlined revisions that were made to the design of the new building. The lack of context surrounding the changes produced concern from SIT team members, resulting in a letter being written to Councilman Todd. DGS apologized for emailing the changes, acknowledging that there should have been a face-to-face

conversation about the need for the changes and the impact of the changes. DGS has committed to more timely communication (SIT meetings, email, etc). DGS also committed to meeting with the SIT Team monthly.

**Design Process/Changes to the Design** - DGS/DCPS/Architects shared with the SIT Team and me that the building design we reviewed in May was exceeding our maximum construction budget (\$72 million). The proposed changes were a recommendation to help the building design stay within our construction budget. The proposed changes essentially redistributed space – moving the music room next to the cafetorium, and the Early Childhood Art/Music/PE room next to the other Art room. There were also offices that were relocated into other “unassigned” spaces on the second floor. In rearranging the spaces, the following was the result:

- The Early Childhood Art/ Music/ PE Room becomes more centrally located and was reduced slightly to 1272 square feet. This space includes storage, classroom, sink, and toilet. Currently, we use a trailer for this classroom (750 square feet, no water, no toilet). Even with this reduction in size, we nearly double our current space.
- The square footage of the Art Suite was reduced to 2,062 square feet. Even with the reduction, the square footage exceeds the Ed Spec<sup>1</sup> of 1950 square feet.
- Moving the Music Room closer to the cafetorium makes the room more centrally located to all grade levels and close to the performance stage.
- LAP will continue to have space within the building, including a dedicated office space and shared space for before/after care. We continue to work together to identify ways to expand the capacity of the program to increase the number of families served.

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<sup>1</sup> “Ed Spec” – the SIT Team and DCPS created The Educational Specifications (“Ed Spec”) document jointly. This document defines all spaces (dimensions) that must be included in the new building. This document was jointly created during the 2013-2014 school year.

- We have retained all other flexible spaces – common areas for each grade level, math and ELA resource rooms, etc.

**Budget Concerns/Storm Water Retention/LEED Certification** – There continue to be discussions about the financial impact of the new storm water retention regulations. Our project must comply with the new regulations enacted in the District. The budgeted cost to address the storm water regulations is \$1 million. Thursday, we learned that DGS is working to secure a grant to include 21,000 square feet of green roof, which would address a large portion of the storm water management needs. Other options still being explored are bio retention basins and a cistern. The architecture team also explained that the difference between LEED Gold and LEED Silver status would result in nearly negligible cost savings. Therefore, our modernization will continue on course to obtain LEED Gold status.

As the Principal at Lafayette, I continue to work to represent the needs of many stakeholders – students, teachers, DCPS, parents, community, and generations of students to come. The SIT Team has continued to be a great asset to our students and community. Their advocacy and diligence to the design process is commendable and greatly appreciated. A special thank you to Councilman Todd and his Education staffer, Matt Santoro, who attended the entire SIT meeting Thursday and were eager to support the modernization efforts. Thank you also to all members of the architecture teams (Hartman-Cox and Grimm+Parker), SKANSKA, DCPS, Mayor Bowser’s office, DGS, and all members of the SIT team who attended Thursday’s meeting. I am confident that we all want the same thing – a safe, efficient, and outstanding educational environment for our children. Thank you as always for your patience and understanding while we work to continue to keep our project on budget and on schedule.

Sincerely,

Carrie Broquard, Principal  
Lafayette SIT Team Members