

April 19, 2022

Dear Councilmember Lewis George,

Thank you for your continued support and advocacy for our schools in Ward 4. Our team has investigated the suggestions that you have offered as alternatives to swinging Truesdell to Garnet-Patterson. We appreciate the level of detail put into the proposals below, and have sought to address them through our responses (bolded and in italics) below:

1. Build a modular swing space complex in Ward 4: Given that Truesdell (FY24-25), Whittier (FY26-27), and LaSalle-Backus (FY28-29) are all in need of swing space in the near future, DCPS could construct an additional swing space facility for them and locate it in Ward 4. This would free up the Sharpe Health campus for Roosevelt STAY, allowing them to move there in FY25 after Dorothy Height ES is fully modernized. One potential location for this modular complex could be a portion of DPR space at the Takoma Recreation Center. While this space is frequently permitted out for use by area clubs, its location is convenient and would not require the purchase/lease of privately-owned property. DCPS built a modular complex for Coolidge HS on this block during its modernization a few years ago. DCPS has also built modular complexes for other schools undergoing modernizations when nearby options were unavailable or inappropriate (Eaton ES in Ward 3, SWS @ Goding in Ward 6) and we estimate the cost to be about \$5 million and could be used for all three schools.

For this scenario, DCPS will defer to our agency partner's position on the Takoma Recreation center fields set out below:

DPR's multi-purpose athletic fields at the Takoma Recreation Center are consistently some of the most utilized in our inventory by a wide range of users, including DPR programs, schools, and community-based organizations. In 2021, DPR issued 747 permits for the Takoma athletic fields, despite pandemic restrictions that limited activities for a part of the year. Demand for these fields grows even more. DPR has issued 472 permits for the Spring 2022 season alone. We expect to continue on this record pace for permit requests in Summer and Fall 2022. In addition, to support the high demand for regulation field space at this location, DPR recently worked with DGS to complete an \$850,000 capital improvement project in 2019 to install lights and replace the grass with new sod.

Please find below some additional information about the field's most frequent and historical users that would be adversely impacted by any changes to access or availability of this recreation space. Additionally, DPR has no alternative location to host these programs without causing significant displacement.



1. **DPR:** DPR utilizes the Takoma Athletic Fields for sports programming, such as youth soccer, and special events, such as the Senior Games. Some of these activities went on hiatus due to the pandemic but will return this year.
2. **Schools:** Many schools utilize the Takoma Athletic Fields to support their sports programming, including DC Public Schools Interscholastic Athletic Association, Capital City Public Charter School, Washington Latin Public Charter School, and the DC International School.
3. **Community-Based Organizations:** The Takoma Athletic Fields have historically served as a home for several local nonprofit organizations that enrich the lives of District youth through athletic programming and positive youth development opportunities:
 - a. **DC SCORES:** Creates neighborhood teams that give kids the confidence and skills to succeed on the playing field, in the classroom, and in life.
 - b. **Senators Satchel Page Little League:** Founded in 1996 with the intention to provide a safe, fun and competitive place for the youth of our area to play baseball and grow into young men and women with a strong sense of community.
 - c. **Capital City Little League:** Teaches baseball and softball to children and teens who reside and attend school within specific boundaries of Ward 3 and Ward 4.
 - d. **DCXI:** Soccer club structured to meet players where they are and then demanding that they reach their potential by orchestrating an environment where the desire to improve and grow is overwhelming. DCXI caters to a wide variety of players from different demographics and socio-economic backgrounds.
 - e. **DC Travel:** A collection of youth travel baseball clubs that include DC Dynasty, Win Within, Moose baseball programs, which collectively work to develop youth athletes on and off the field.
 - f. **Sports on the Hill (SOTH):** Volunteer youth sports organization offering soccer, baseball, softball, touch football, basketball, wrestling, lacrosse, and field hockey programs for District youth.
 - g. **Ward 5 Warriors:** Football program designed to empower our inner-city youth through mentoring and athletics.

Additionally, it should be noted that the modular complex that was provided for Coolidge HS during their modernization was in a different location (along 5th street and to the north of the Frank Williams Center) and serving a smaller student population of approximately 230 students. Coolidge also was able to retain access to the Frank Williams Center as well as other spaces in the building during their time in the modular complex. The location where the trailers were located is partially occupied by a DPR dog park, as well as the proposed location for an addition to Coolidge that is funded in FY23 to provide a dedicated cafeteria and kitchen. DCPS will continue to defer to DPR on any facilities and grounds that fall within their inventory.



2. Move STAY to Garnet-Patterson: Roosevelt STAY is a DCPS Opportunity Academy, serving a citywide population of students primarily aged 16-24 who rely on public transportation. The Garnet-Patterson site is ideal for their needs given its proximity to the Metro and accessible cross-town bus service. The facility may need some work in FY23, but ideally it could be available for STAY to move there (temporarily or permanently) ahead of FY24. This option could also incorporate Briya PCS, which currently has a short-term lease at Sharpe through FY24, moving to Garnet-Patterson. Their leadership has indicated to me that they would welcome inclusion in a co-located facility near public transit, accessible to their predominately Latinx population. This option would not require changing swing space plans for Whittier or LaSalle-Backus but would necessitate an alternative site for Truesdell ES' swing space for FY24-25. Here are some potential alternative swing locations for Truesdell that I would like your help in evaluating:
 - Truesdell & Dorothy Height co-locate at Sharpe ES in FY24: Dorothy Height ES is a citywide school which shares a block with its current swing space, the former Sharpe Health campus, which is about 80,000 gross square feet. Dorothy Height is already swinging at Sharpe this year (FY22) but construction work has not yet begun on their original facility. If we plan ahead, DCPS/DGS could ask the design-build team to prepare for a portion of Dorothy Heights students (ex: Pre-K) to return to the original facility in FY24 to make space for Truesdell to also use the Sharpe campus. If necessary, DCPS could also locate a few modular trailers for additional space as needed behind the building. This situation would only be in place for one schoolyear, as Dorothy Height ES will be able to fully utilize its new building in FY25.
 - i. ***DCPS is looking into how the former Sharpe Health pool space could be utilized in conjunction with a limited number of modular trailers to move selected grades (PK-K) from Truesdell ES to the Sharpe campus alongside the full Dorothy Height population for SY23-24, allowing the contractor to access a portion of the Truesdell site for construction, with the upper grades joining for SY24-25. In this scenario, the whole of Truesdell will move back to their fully modernized building for SY25-26. In partnership with DGS, DCPS explored accelerating a portion of the Dorothy Height building in time for SY23-24 to further support the co-location. Due to significant technical complexities of the historic structures and how the building systems are integrated into the existing buildings and new construction at Dorothy Height, this prevents us from ensuring that we can bring a portion of the building back online in time for SY23-24. In this scenario, we are exploring the use of Garnet-Patterson as the permanent home of Roosevelt STAY.***
 - Truesdell swings at the former Petworth ES site: Chief Contee said during his budget oversight hearing earlier this week that he recently consolidated MPD's northern regional command into the 4th District headquarters on Georgia Avenue, freeing up the former Petworth ES site at 801 Shepherd St NW as a potential



swing space location for Truesdell. The Petworth ES site is smaller than Truesdell's current facility, but could be augmented with modular trailers, as necessary, and may require some retrofitting to return to service as an elementary school. This option would allow Truesdell families to swing closer to home and provide access to green space at the Petworth Recreation Center located next door.

- i. DCPS has reached out to our colleagues at MPD to understand if there is any possibility for either exclusive use or colocation at the 801 Shepherd buildings. Per MPD, this space is and will be occupied by MPD and the Boys and Girls Club. It is not vacant and there are no plans to move anyone from 801 Shepherd St NW at this time. In the hearing, Chief Contee was referring to the substation at 750 Park Road that was relocated to the 4th District station on Georgia Avenue and the substation was backfilled. This shift has not affected MPD's use and occupancy of the 801 Shepherd facility. DCPS will continue to defer to MPD on any facilities that fall within their inventory.*
- Truesdell swings in a portion of the Bertie Backus MS site: UDC has a campus at the former Bertie Backus MS, located just over the border from Ward 4 at 5171 South Dakota Ave NE. This building is quite large (126,000 gsf) and could share space with Truesdell for two years (as DCPS did with Easton ES at the UDC Van Ness campus) either in the building or in the form of a modular complex. This location would allow families to stay closer to home, enjoy green space, and expand on Truesdell's outdoor education program with a partnership with UDC's College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences.
 - i. DCPS has reached out to UDC to assess whether the Bertie Backus site would be able to host Truesdell, either via colocation within the existing facility or as a site for a trailer complex. UDC has informed us that at this time, neither option is feasible as they UDC is currently using the full facility for their Community College program, and UDC is currently in the beginning stages of a capital project at that location which will require portions of the site to be taken offline beginning in FY24. DCPS will continue to defer to UDC on any facilities that fall within their inventory.*
- Truesdell swings at TBD purchased/leased space: DGS recently released a Request for Space (RFS) to lease additional space for Lafayette ES, budgeting approximately \$600,000 in operating funds annually. There are limited spaces appropriate for a full elementary school located close to Truesdell, but this could take the form of an existing facility or field space large enough to construct a modular complex. Last year I wrote to Chancellor Ferebee; to ask him to evaluate two potential sites in Ward 4, and ask that again, we engage with a broker and seriously evaluate potential sites.



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- i. DCPS is in constant communication with our broker who is actively searching for properties that align with DCPS' needs for expansion, both in terms of permanent facilities as well as swing space. At this time, there are no available properties either for sale or lease that would support a full elementary school or modular trailer complex.*

As always, we look forward to working collaboratively with you to support our students and families in Ward 4. We are continuing to explore all potential options and will provide further updates.

Sincerely,

Lewis Ferebee, Ed.D.
Chancellor, DC Public Schools