

COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES AND FAMILY SERVICES
PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT HEARING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF
GENERAL SERVICES

Monday, February 26, 2023, 9:30 a.m.

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Robert Henderson. I am here in my individual capacity as Ward 5 member of the State Board of Education, and I am not representing the views of the Board as a whole.

First, I would like to thank DGS Director Hunter and Michelle Loggins for establishing clear lines of communication to raise and inquire about facilities issues. Special thanks to Director Hunter for a quick response over a weekend last August to address a leak at a Ward 5 school.

I appreciate the agency's increasing attention to preventative maintenance, and I hope that approach will stem new additions to the list of outstanding issues. We still have a long way to go to clear the backlog of work orders, so of which date back to 2020. I ask for the Council's help in moving DGS to close the gap.

This year, I count 358 open work orders for DCPS's 13 active Ward 5 schools, which is actually an improvement from the 438 at this time last year.

This school year, Ward 5 constituents and school leaders have brought a range of facilities issues to my attention. I want to call your attention to testimony that you will hear from Micah Haskell-Hoehl about conditions at John Burroughs Elementary School, with particular concerns about flooding, and written testimony from Jaime Fearer about long-outstanding issues at Wheatley Education Campus and Joe Cole Recreation Center.

Other issues that have come to my attention recently include Wheatley's need for working lights in the parking lot where teachers arrive or leave in the dark at some points of the year, repairs to a frequently flooding bathroom, and reliable heating for a pre-K classroom.

Phelps and Noyes have ongoing HVAC problems. McKinley needs additional key fobs and repairs to the gym floor and bleachers.

As I have noted before, Ward 5 has several schools that received only partial modernizations and are not slated for full modernizations in the near future. Some of these schools have significant, often system-level needs that I hope can be addressed through small capital projects. It would be helpful if DGS could work with DCPS to help identify those areas where there have been recurring facilities issues that could be remedied through capital projects. From my observations over the last several years, HVAC upgrades at Langdon, McKinley, Noyes, and Phelps; roof replacements at Luke C. Moore, Noyes, and Wheatley; renovation of the cafeteria at Langdon; and renovation of the communications annex at McKinley would fall in this category. Small capital projects like these could shore up perpetually failing systems like the Frankenstein six-part HVAC system at Langdon.

It is important that we get this right because the quality of our school facilities send messages to our students about how much we value them and their educations. And in a system of school choice, we owe it to school leaders to ensure that facilities conditions, which are largely out of their control, are not an impediment to the work that they do to recruit and retain students.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My written testimony includes additional work details on outstanding work orders that are of highest priority to some Ward 5 schools.

Robert Henderson

Ward 5 Member, State Board of Education

Priority Work Orders:

Phelps ACE HS:

- 727699 (2022) 741523 (2023): Power washing needed in front of the building
- 752262: HVAC concerns throughout the building
- 767083 & 767082: Water Fountain replacements
- 769627: Health Suite sink