

**DC Council Hearing on DCPS School Closings**  
**November 19, 2012**  
**Testimony by Evelyn Boyd Simmons**  
**Chair, ANC2F Education Committee**

Mr. Chairman and Councilmembers,

My name is Evelyn Boyd Simmons. I chair the ANC2F Education Committee which covers the Logan Circle area. For the past 3 years, I have worked virtually full time on a volunteer basis to improve our schools. I currently serve as the Ward 2 Rep on the Head Start Parent Policy Council. I am also a certified partnership broker and a certified parent leadership trainer. As a DCPS parent of two, a homeowner, taxpayer and 15 year Logan Circle area resident, I strongly oppose the closure of Garrison Elementary

I urge this council to take a hard look at DCPS schools and their importance to our neighborhoods. As elected officials, you understand the importance of staying ahead of demographic shifts and neighborhood dynamics. I fear that DCPS, sadly, has become de-coupled from communities. They do not seem to view schools as part of something larger than the buildings that house them.

DCPS should look at the actual number of children who live around Garrison today and the REASONS for the current enrollment levels. I believe there exists today an addressable market sufficient to fill that building. We will have to work together to develop an actual strategy, plan, and management approach to help our schools succeed. DCPS has done so with other communities. It will result in a high achieving, diverse school that will make us all proud.

Feeder systems are extremely important. Parent leaders met for a total of 210 hours to develop recommendations to improve our schools. This work was undertaken with

the Chancellor's knowledge and blessing and it did not cost DCPS a dime. I have attached a page from our report that shows our thoughts on the keys to a successful feeder pattern.

So we are shocked by the proposal to close Garrison and Francis-Stevens and other aspects that impact Shaw, Seaton, Marie Reed, Raymond, and Cardozo - decisions that tend to negate our work. Leadership changes made just this year at Seaton, Garrison, Shaw and Cardozo are all the more reason to give these schools time to fulfill their promise. The instability alone is enough to cause parents to join the exodus from DCPS.

The unique value DCPS offers is guaranteed admission and a deep neighborhood connection. We need a committed partner in DCPS. This school community has done everything right. Why would every school community striving to make headway not look at what is happening to Garrison right now and conclude it's not worth the effort?

Getting school reform to the next level is not rocket science. It's much, much harder - it's Social Science. I sincerely hope DCPS will reconsider its proposal and work with Garrison and others to strengthen our schools and develop stable and viable feeder patterns that give all our students access to a quality education.