

**May 4, 2016**

**Chairman Grosso's Education Budget Increases Modernization Dollars, Rejects Methodology of Mayor's Budget But Largely Sticks to Plan.**

**Some important changes for Ward 6 included in draft council proposal.**

---

This evening, Chairman Grosso released his proposal and report for the education portion of the FY17 budget, including modernization funding and priorities. The Education Committee will vote on the Chairman's proposal on Thursday May 5 from 2-4 pm in Room 500 of the Wilson Building.

CHPSPO leadership has quickly reviewed the proposal and accompanying report. We would like to provide you with a top-level summary based on the advocacy efforts from our community thus far. We did not include an analysis of the rankings or funding for specific schools as included in the mark.

**High Level Analysis**

This is a good first step in paving a more data-driven path for improved decision making on school building stabilizations and modernizations. And it is a good first step in addressing health and safety in schools by increasing funding for stabilization projects. The proposal reflects the hard work of Chairman Grosso and Council Member Allen and their staffs.

We are particularly pleased that the Chairman's proposal:

- Rejects the DCPS methodology and matrix for determining priorities for school modernization dollars. The Chairman's proposal:
  - Includes all schools in its evaluation.
  - Includes middle school priorities that had been downgraded by DCPS because they also served elementary grades.
  - Focuses more on building needs than on population.
- Includes additional funding for much-needed stabilization projects to improve health and safety in our school buildings. Additionally, the stabilization dollars provided are detailed out such that they will provide greater assurance to school communities about what is planned for their school.
- Adds \$10 million in additional funding on top of the Mayor's proposed budget by working with other committees of the Council to shift dollars in to the Education Budget. The Mayor had increased both the amount of money from last year and had focused more on middle schools, so the additional increase is notable. However, there still remains a significant gap in funding over the term of the CIP to enable all schools to be modernized.
- Calls for "greater discipline in managing scope and budget for projects".
- Indicates a commitment to legislate the process and matrix for establishing priorities for modernization funding in response to the closed process and somewhat flawed analysis conducted by DCPS.

However we know there is still much work to do in order to achieve our overall goals by:

- Providing enough funding to ensure all schools can be modernized over the next 6 years;

- Improving the accuracy, comprehensiveness and comparability of data collected on every school about the building conditions that can further improve the accuracy of ranking schools;
- Developing transparent, accessible annual reporting of building conditions;
- Codifying a data-based ranking system to improve predictability and transparency in the modernization planning process;
- Developing a stabilization plan process that ensures that every school identified for stabilization funds receives the promised stabilization on time and completed; and
- Creating legislative initiatives to get better value from modernization project expenditures and reduce the amount of waste and excess that has been a drain on scarce resources.

On a parallel track, the Transportation and Environment Committee has proposed the following policy recommendations for follow up legislative action:

- Establish a new systematic approach to lead testing in public schools.
- Pilot a design-build model that would seek to reduce over-spending in modernization projects.
- Conduct a safety and health school assessment in all schools.

### **Capital Changes from the Mayor's Proposal**

There were modest changes from the Mayor's proposed modernization plan. These funds were provided by a transfer from the Transportation and Environment Committee by Chairwoman Cheh to the Education Committee, working closely with Chairman Grosso and Councilmember Allen:

- Jefferson Academy moved up in the priorities list but remains with a 2021 completion date for modernization. Jefferson got \$1m to pay for a Science lab and electrical fixes transferred in from the Transportation and the Environment Committee.
- CHML moved up in the priorities list but is still not included in the modernization list/CIP. But CHML will receive \$4m in stabilization funds to pay for HVAC and ceiling repairs paid for by the transfer from the Transportation and the Environment Committee.

**We hope the Chairman's mark is the new floor for doing business on modernizations. And, we hope to work with the Chairman and the rest of the Council to try to continue to improve the budget, policy and process moving forward.**