

QUEST Budget Comments, March 2015

QUEST (Quality Education for Every Student) believes the BPS proposal to close four schools and one alternative education program is an inequitable and harmful solution to budgetary shortfalls. The proposed school closures are contrary to the BPS strategic vision to “make effective and equitable all available resources” and to “strengthen student, family, and community investment to enable student success.” The school closure proposal also directly contradicts BPS's position, stated in the Capital Facilities Plan (FY2014-18) that “our plan must...enhance predictability and minimize academic disruptions through fewer transitions.”

We ask Mayor Walsh and BPS to halt these closures and provide additional stop gap funds necessary to keep these schools open next year.

QUEST asks BPS to halt the school closures because:

- The closings place undue hardship on groups of students who need continuity, interrupting their education with yet another transition, and moving high risk students.
- The school closing plan, coming so late, is unfair to students and their families who will have to research and find a new school so late in the year, and who will be denied equitable access to a new quality school.
- There has been no transparency or community process about how these schools were chosen for closure, and how closed school buildings will be used in the future.
- The closures change the middle school feeder system and assignment plan for the future. More immediately, prioritizing displaced students in the assignment algorithm (though rightfully offering them more alternatives) changes the assignment design with no analysis or public input.
- Closing the schools will cause unanticipated ripple effects for other schools. Past experiences at, for example, Young Achievers, shows that merging school cultures and schools can be a difficult process.

In addition to halting these closures, QUEST asks the BSC to **place a moratorium on school closings** until:

- BPS has conducted an equity impact analysis as described in the Capital Facility Master Plan Update of October 2013: "The Office of Equity, in conjunction with the Office of Strategic Planning, will create an Equity Impact Analysis to analyze impact on diversity and equitable access. The Equity Impact Analysis will be able to be used for all future major initiatives." This analysis should include community input and be shared publicly in a timely manner.
- The ten year facilities plan and its financial implications are complete and made public, including information outlining the process by which the City and BPS sell and rent property (requested at BSC on 10/28/13).

- BPS shares the financial plan for its capital plan and inform the public about its capital plan challenges and options.
- A process is in place to engage parents, teachers, and students of the BPS and our community partners in any future plans for school closures, mergers or grade reconfiguration.