



August 1, 2019

FROM: Hyde Park School LSDMC, PTO, and ILT

TO: Cincinnati Public Schools Board of Education Student Achievement Committee Members

Eve Bolton  
Ozie Davis III  
Mike Moroski

CC: Laura Mitchell, Superintendent, Cincinnati Public Schools  
Tianay Amat, Deputy Superintendent, Cincinnati Public Schools  
Susan Bunte, Assistant Superintendent, Cincinnati Public Schools  
Shauna Murphy, Assistant Superintendent, Cincinnati Public Schools

**RE: *Partnering to Resolve Hyde Park School Space and Facilities Issues***

Dear Student Achievement Committee Members:

Hyde Park School (HPS) is a thriving neighborhood school that has grown rapidly during the past few years. Following a successful two-year community campaign to reopen the neighborhood school, enrollment has grown from 130 students for the 2012-2013 school year to more than 530 students during the 2018-2019 school year, including the addition of a fourth kindergarten classroom. Our families are proud to have HPS as their neighborhood school, and families in these communities that previously considered private or parochial schools are now enrolling in a CPS neighborhood school.

While the district should be proud of the success of HPS, space constraints and outdated facilities have become significant barriers to sustaining the school's success. Built in 1902, the HPS building requires investment to maintain a healthy environment for learning and to accommodate the growing enrollment from the community. As a newly reopened school, HPS was not a part of the Facilities Master Plan that concluded in 2014, and the district and the HPS community have implemented short-term solutions and creative workarounds to address space and facilities issues. Despite these efforts, HPS has reached an inflection point in its ability to manage the space issues, and we need additional investment from CPS to support the health, safety, and success of our students.

**Overview of Impact of Space and Facilities Issues**

HPS is bursting at the seams and showing acute signs of an aging and overcrowded building. The combination of rapidly growing enrollment and a 117-year-old building with limited investment since the school reopened have created space and facilities issues that constitute health and safety risks for students, teachers, and staff and have a negative impact on instruction.

Classroom Space

The existing HPS building does not provide the bare minimum in instruction space needed for a school with greater than 500 students. For the past three years, CPS has leased the second floor of an Eagle Savings Bank located across the street from HPS at a cost of nearly \$50,000/year. For the 2019-2020 school year, three

classrooms of second graders will attend class in the Eagle Savings Bank building. The reliance on the Eagle Savings Bank building is an inefficient use of district resources and forces over 75 students – next year, seven- and eight-year-olds – to cross the busy intersection at Edwards Road/State Route 561 twice during the school day. Traversing between the Eagle Savings Bank building and the HPS building creates needless safety risks for students and wastes valuable instruction time –between 20-30 minutes daily. Further, the second floor is accessible only via stairs, which raises concerns about the school’s ability to be inclusive and serve children with physical disabilities. Locating classrooms for young children in a bank building also heightens legitimate parent concerns about safety during the school day.

Finally, as HPS brings its Vision 2020 Personalized Education Program to life for the 2019-2020 school year, the school’s ability to execute on this vision will be severely constrained by the crowded classrooms and lack of small group learning spaces – both in the building and in the bank classrooms. As part of the school’s engagement around Vision 2020, HPS parents were asked to identify the barriers that would prevent HPS from offering an effective personalized education program. 83% of respondents indicated space/building capacity – far and away the most frequent response. (For comparison, 40% of parents indicated that staffing ratios were a potential barrier, the second most frequent response.)

### Gymnasium and Cafeteria

The gymnasium and cafeteria are grossly insufficient for a school that serves more than 530 students both in terms of size and environment.

The gymnasium prevents the school from having a complete physical education program and fostering a strong community through school-wide or community events. The HPS gym is only 2633 square feet, much smaller than the gyms of schools in the district with the same or lower total enrollment capacity. In fact, based on sample data, in most cases the HPS gym is half the size of the gyms in these comparable buildings. (For example, Silverton’s enrollment capacity is 400, while its gym is 5818 square feet; Saylor Park’s enrollment capacity is 425, while its gym is 6462 square feet.) Gym class is held outside whenever possible because of the significant injury risk in having a classroom of children running around inside this small space. The size of the gym makes school-wide assemblies or public events impossible, inhibiting community-building and overall school culture. Events such as student concerts are held by individual grade level and, even then, there is not enough room to accommodate the attendees. Sports practices and games are held at off-site facilities – another roadblock to creating strong school-community relationships and a challenge for families that do not have access to reliable transportation. Concerns regarding mold and structural damage caused by water that leaked from the roof remain.

The cafeteria is also one of the smallest in the district. The space is dark and dingy and experienced dramatic flooding in 2016. HPS has met these challenges by being creative with meal schedules and painting the walls; however, the space remains too small for lunch and for the popular and crowded afterschool program. Moreover, the flooding led to a pervasive foul odor and possible mold damage, and continues to foster an unhealthy environment for children, teachers, and staff.

### Bathrooms

The plumbing at HPS is old and experiences persistent problems. Toilets are routinely clogged, overflowing, or not working. Classroom bathroom breaks require additional time because of non-working toilets, carving into valuable instructional time. Water leaks from the ceiling in many of the children’s bathrooms, as well as through the walls and floor of one of the adult restrooms. Some children fear using the bathrooms because of the state of facilities and holes in the walls and ceilings. Left unaddressed, these issues will increase the risk of more significant water-related problems in the future and continue to pose health and comfort issues for the children.

### Proposed Solution

We, the Hyde Park School LSDMC, ILT, and PTO, propose to partner with CPS to **advance plans to build an addition to the school that would include additional classroom and small group learning space, a regulation sized gym, an expanded cafeteria, and new bathrooms on the HPS property. This addition would address each of the issues above and would solidify the foundation of one of the district's recent success stories. It also aligns to the district strategic priority of growth through renovation and expansion of existing schools.** We understand that there have been previous conversations at the district about moving forward with an addition, and we want to partner with CPS to identify any and all internal and external funding sources that can support this addition.

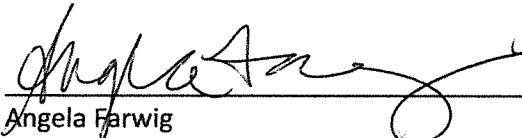
We are grateful that CPS responded to the community's voice by reopening the neighborhood school at HPS. The results of that decision have been overwhelmingly positive for the district, HPS families, and the local community. We are proud of our school's historical building, unique classroom spaces, wonderful teachers and staff, committed parents, and amazing students. Yet to continue our trajectory of success, we must act soon to address the significant space and facilities issues that pose health and safety risks to our children and negatively impact their learning experiences. We are committed to the success of our neighborhood school, and we know this committee is too. As the district embarks on its new strategic plan and seeks to grow, now is the time to invest in Hyde Park School.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to working with you to support the HPS community.

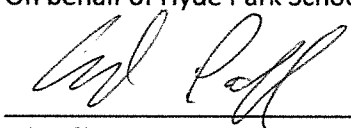
Sincerely,



Jason Wilcoxon  
On behalf of Hyde Park School LSDMC



Angela Farwig  
On behalf of Hyde Park School ILT



Ed Paff  
On behalf of Hyde Park School PTO