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Mission Hill parents ask city to delay vote on schools relocation proposal

Posted by Matt Rocheleau November 7, 2011 03:25 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Some parents of the Mission Hill K-8 School are asking city leaders to postpone next week's scheduled school committee vote on a proposal to shift a number of Boston schools into different buildings next year.

Two weeks ago, city schools superintendent Carol R. Johnson [announced a proposal](#) that includes moving the Mission Hill K-8 to the Agassiz building in Jamaica Plain, where it would expand enrollment slightly and also share space with a proposed new dual-language high school for 300 students called the Margarita Muniz Academy.

A community meeting for Mission Hill K-8 parents is scheduled for tonight from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the school's library on Alleghany Street.

Members of the school community have launched a letter-writing campaign addressed to the mayor, city councilors, the superintendent and the school committee, which is set to vote on the school facilities proposal on Nov. 15.

"Although there have been several visits to the proposed new site, there is still a lot we don't know about how this would impact our school community," the letter campaign reads in part. "Many parents and caregivers have been unable to attend the Agassiz walkthroughs and other meetings where details were discussed and opinions were shared."

"We feel as though this process is being extremely rushed, and that we need more time to look at the potential impact of this plan before it is pushed forward, in order to ensure the best final outcome for our children," the letter continues. "We implore you to delay the vote on this proposal until all families of the schools affected by the proposal are given suitable answers to our questions and concerns."

District 8 City Councilor Michael Ross, who represents the Fenway, West End, Mission Hill, Beacon Hill, and Back Bay, said at a City Council hearing last week he's concerned that the superintendent's recently proposal will leave his district with few elementary school seats.

A spokesman for the schools department said on Monday that the school committee still plans to vote on the facilities proposal on Nov. 15. He was not immediately aware of whether school officials had received letters from Mission Hill parents asking for the vote to be delayed.

Concerns expressed in the letter writing campaign include:

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- Does the Agassiz building provide sufficient daylight and fresh air for our students?
- Have all of the environmental concerns been addressed thoroughly at the building with recent repairs?
- Will the Agassiz building be able to sufficiently house both Mission Hill School and the Margarita Muniz academy, especially into the future, as the Muniz Academy grows to its full size (listed as 300 students by BPS, but noted as 400 students in the Margarita Muniz
- Academy Prospectus Submission to the state last October)? Can the building meet the needs of both schools as we move into the next 5, 10, 15 years, or will it prove to be too tight for both schools to share down the road?
- What will we lose in terms of community partnerships by leaving the Mission Hill neighborhood? How long will it take to rebuild new partnerships in our new location?
- How will this move to a different neighborhood and different school zone affect the makeup of our school community?
- How will the relocation of MHS out of Mission Hill affect the neighborhood, given that Mission Hill will then be left with only one elementary school choice?

The city's schools website explains the various pieces of the facilities proposal [here](#), and provides a Q&A specific to the Mission Hill K-8 plan, [here](#).

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