

**Christian Herr**

**Statement at DCPCSB Public Hearing, re: Chavez Schools & Transparency Policy  
25 February, 2019**

My name is Christian Herr, and I am a science teacher at Chavez Prep. Both Chavez Prep and Capitol Hill serve populations made up entirely of students and families of color, and both have served the highest percentages of at-risk students of any charter school in their respective wards over the past three years. Both showed remarkable growth on the PMF last year despite its well-documented bias against these students. Instead of celebrating us, you are considering whether or not to close us down due to our enrollment numbers.

Chavez Prep's peak enrollment of 357 was the result of a lie told by our board. Many of our eighth-graders do not stay for our ninth-grade program, due to the fact that it is more difficult to find a high school as a tenth grader. The 357 number was during a year when our board told our eighth-graders that if they stayed for ninth grade, that they would be able to go to a new Chavez Prep high school in Ward 1 starting in tenth grade. Students turned down opportunities at schools like Banneker and School Without Walls to stay at Prep. However, this new high school never materialized, and our board is now using this inflated enrollment number to support the "entrepreneurial decision" it has made to close Chavez Prep in order to "monetize the asset."

Director Pearson showed courage on Friday the 15th, when he told City Council that "we don't think that was right," in discussing the way that this decision was made. It meant a lot to me to hear him say that, and I want to publicly thank him. Will your actions be as courageous as his words? The Chavez board did not even record minutes when they made this decision at a secret meeting. They have provided no evidence that they ever even considered firing Tensquare, which would free up more than enough money to make up for any enrollment shortfall and impact precisely zero student-facing services. They have refused our requests at the bargaining table for increased mental health supports to help our students through the trauma they created. They continue to show our school to potential tenants while students are still in the building. They gave our eighth graders barely one week to find a new school before the February 1st high-school deadline. They don't deserve to determine our future, and those who do need your help. On March 18th, you will show the city who you work for. You either work for those who breathe life into our schools, or you work for those who would see it taken away. Vote no. Thank you.

***Note: the attached document was what we received from an information request that our union filed at the bargaining table for any information regarding the board's decision to close Chavez Prep.***



**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES**

3701 Hayes Street NE  
Washington, DC 20019  
P (202) 547-3975  
F (202) 547-3449

**CAPITOL HILL CAMPUS**

709 12th Street SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
P (202) 547-3424  
F (202) 547-2507

**CHAVEZ PREP CAMPUS**

770 Kenyon Street NW  
Washington, DC 20010  
P (202) 723-3975  
F (202) 723-3976

**PARKSIDE CAMPUS**

3701 Hayes Street NE  
Washington, DC 20019  
P (202) 398-2230  
F (202) 398-1966

There are no meeting minutes regarding the closure of Chavez Prep Middle School, as all discussion took place during executive session of the Board of Trustees.