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**A Brief Analysis of the Department of Education's
Blueprint for District 2 Enrollment and Capacity
June 4, 2008**

As much as I am pleased that the Department of Education is acknowledging the dire overcrowding of our schools and sharing its proposals with parents and the Community Education Council, I believe there remain a number of concerns and unanswered questions. I have summarized some of those below. This is not an all-inclusive list, but I hope it will provide some framework for discussion.

- **We need additional information.** The blueprint provides only a district-wide projection for enrollment. An examination of housing starts and other data in neighborhoods with overcrowded schools is critical. Taking steps to mitigate overcrowding based on current trends will not be adequate if tomorrow's growth is even greater.
- **Are the enrollment figures accurate?** Some parents have suggested that their schools' projected enrollment figures for next year have already been surpassed. Additionally, previous DOE figures present a growth rate nearly double that of the one presented in the blueprint. Obviously, we need accurate information in order to judge these important proposals.
- **The DOE must find solutions that do not require busing students from overcrowded schools to other, "under-utilized" schools.** Such a practice will surely prove disruptive to the school environment, and is highly inequitable for parents.
- **Cluster spaces must be preserved or restored.** Art rooms, libraries, auditoriums and administrative offices should not be considered available for general-use classroom space. The DOE's plan should restore these rooms to their intended purpose, in existing or to-be-constructed schools. The result, of course, is that the DOE must then meet a greater need for seats than they have thus far projected.
- **Moving the G&T program out of an overcrowded school like P.S. 116 may help reduce overcrowding, but where will those students (and their future siblings) go?** The DOE is adding five new G&T programs beginning in 2008-2009. However, it is not clear what schools will receive these G&T students and their future siblings, and whether that increased student load will cause overcrowding at the receiving schools. Any plans involving the relocation of G&T programs cannot be properly evaluated without this information.
- **Rezoning will likely have to be explored.** This is especially true once several of the new schools currently planned are built. However, it will not suffice to simply move students between already filled school buildings. New sites need to be identified without delay.