



Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1D

Resolution Opposing Changes to Bancroft Elementary School Boundaries

Introduced October 24, 2023

Whereas: The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education is conducting a Boundary and Student Assignment Study (the Study) this year to review DC Public School (DCPS) boundaries and feeder patterns;

Whereas: As part of the Study, one change under consideration for Bancroft Elementary School is to remove the north side of Harvard St NW, Hobart St NW, and the south side of Irving St NW from the school's in-bound area;

Whereas: This potential change reverses the expansion of the boundary that was implemented in 2014, going counter to the Study's guiding principle of "predictable and continuous access to schools;"

Whereas: The aforementioned streets are undeniably within the geographical area of Mt Pleasant, with the north side of Harvard St situated on a physical cliff, creating a natural southern boundary for neighborhood;

Whereas: DCPS cited this geography as a rationale for extending the boundaries of Bancroft Elementary in 2014, calling the extension an effort to better encompass the Mt Pleasant neighborhood into a single school;^[1]

Whereas: ANC 1D unanimously passed a resolution in May 2014 supporting the expansion of Bancroft's boundary to Harvard St, noting that the change would be consistent with the traditional boundaries of Mt Pleasant;^[2]

Whereas: Given the neighborhood boundaries generally recognized by the community, shifting Bancroft's boundaries would disrupt the cohesiveness of the Mt Pleasant community and neighborhood life, going counter to the Study's guiding principle of "a strong system of by-right neighborhood schools;"

Whereas: A shift in boundaries would impact a diverse set of families who live on Irving, Hobart, and Harvard streets (see attachment for letters from those impacted), a change in

Bancroft’s boundaries could undercut the Study’s principle of “racially and socio-economically diverse schools;”

Therefore, be it resolved that: ANC 1D opposes the redrawing of the boundary for Bancroft Elementary school and encourages Mayor Bowser, Deputy Mayor Kihn, and the Advisory Committee on Student Assignment to follow the guiding principles of the Boundary Assessment Study and maintain the cohesiveness of the Mt Pleasant community.

Be it further resolved that: The Commission designates Commissioner Omar Parbhoo, ANC 1D05, to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this resolution.

Be it further resolved that: In the event the designated representative Commissioner cannot carry out their representative duties for any reason, the Commission authorizes the Chair to designate another Commissioner to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this resolution.

Be it further resolved that: Consistent with DC Code, only actions of the full Commission voting in a properly noticed public meeting have standing and carry great weight. The actions, positions, and opinions of individual commissioners, insofar as they may be contradictory to or otherwise inconsistent with the expressed position of the full Commission in a properly adopted resolution or letter, have no standing and cannot be considered as in any way associated with the Commission.

ATTACHMENT: 28 letters from residents opposing redrawing of Bancroft Elementary boundaries

^[1] <https://dme.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dme/publication/attachments/Bancroft.pdf>

^[2]

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/574f2c54b6aa608304000a38/t/577295e2197aea7d35d10c41/1467127267242/School+attendance+zones_May+2014.pdf

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Certification: At a regularly scheduled and publicly noticed meeting held on October 24, 2023 Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1D considered the above resolution. With a quorum of 5 Commissioners present, the Commission voted with 5 yeas, 0 nos, and 0 abstentions to adopt the above resolution.

Hi Omar-

I just wanted to reach out regarding keeping the existing boundaries in place for Bancroft. While I'm personally interested given my address - Hobart St - I'm also interested because I feel it's important for our neighborhood.

As a single mom who is a person of color, I moved to Mt Pleasant specifically because I wanted my child to have access to a high quality public education where she would be surrounded by people of diverse backgrounds and be challenged by immersion in a new language. I looked at a number of houses on a number of streets, many of which were beyond my budget. Hobart St, which has homes that are smaller than neighboring streets, while still a stretch, was doable.

The sense of community on our street, which includes individuals from all different ethnic backgrounds, including a large number of native Spanish speakers, provides additional diversity to a neighborhood that is already a melting pot. I worry that cutting off our streets from Bancroft will in fact decrease the diversity at the school, while only having a marginal impact on the overall numbers of students at the school.

While in theory my 4 year old will attend Bancroft next year regardless of a change, given the timing, the idea of a boundary line being placed in the middle of our community is disheartening. Bancroft is geographically the closest school to my home and I believe our streets should stay inbounds for numerous reasons.

Brittany

October 10, 2023

Dear Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo, and members of the Boundary and Student Assignment Advisory Committee:

My name is Adriana Valencia, I'm an immigrant from Colombia and a resident of Hobart Street. My family and I have had the privilege of calling the Mt Pleasant community our home for the past two years. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed redrawing of boundaries for Bancroft Elementary. This proposal directly impacts both my family and our community at large.

My husband and I relocated from New York City to DC during the midst of the pandemic. Our hope was to find a more peaceful and nurturing environment to raise our son, who was born in 2020. We purposefully selected Mt Pleasant due to its rich diversity and the strong sense of community. As an immigrant, it is of paramount importance to me to provide my child with an environment that mirrors and embraces my own cultural and educational values. I want my son to witness and experience his Latin American heritage within the community he is a part of.

Our family has worked diligently to create a bicultural environment, with language as a central pillar. Consequently, access to a bilingual education is a critical factor in our decision to invest in this wonderful community. Losing access to Bancroft for my son's elementary education would deprive him and my family of this opportunity, compelling us to make challenging decisions in order to continue our pursuit of raising a bilingual child who remains closely connected to his Colombian roots.

In addition to our concerns about elementary school access, we are deeply troubled by the potential exclusion of Irving, Hobart, and Harvard residents through the proposed boundary changes. This exclusion, particularly for families with young children, would distance them from Bancroft - which is a vital center of our community. These streets are as integral to the Mt Pleasant community as any others, and the proposed changes would significantly impact the unity and integrity of a community that we all cherish.

Please listen to the voices of the families in our community before making decisions that will have a profoundly negative impact on households. We understand that challenges need to be addressed. We believe that alternative solutions can be found to address these issues without excluding our families from one of the central hubs in our beloved Mt Pleasant community.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and dedication to our community. We look forward to engaging in constructive dialogue to find solutions that benefit all residents of Mt Pleasant.

Sincerely,

Adriana Valencia
Hobart St

Dear Jennifer, Rebecca, and Brianne:

We are writing to you regarding the proposed DC boundary redistricting process.

Our family recently moved into the Bancroft ES district because of the value we place in DC public schools and the promotion of equitable education opportunities. We also sought out a good school in a diverse community. We believe strongly in the importance of keeping the existing Bancroft boundaries, with continued feeder programs into Alice Deal Middle and Jackson-Reed High School. These programs offer heightened educational programming and coursework critical to underserved and Hispanic households such as ours and our broader community of diverse families from varying socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Removing our community from the existing feeder network will lead to less diverse and lower educational opportunities throughout the city.

When considering the boundaries, please take these matters into account, as our families planned our lives and residence with the hope the boundaries and access should remain consistent. It is also unclear to us why Bancroft as the most diverse feeder is being removed when less diverse schools on the southern boarder of the feeder could be considered as well. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John and Jenna Casanova

[1822 Irving St NW](#)

October 10, 2023

Re: Strong Opposition to the Proposed Committee School Boundary Changes affecting Mt. Pleasant

Dear Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo, and members of the Boundary and Student Assignment Advisory Committee,

My family has lived in Mt. Pleasant on the stretch of Harvard Street between Mt. Pleasant Street and Adams Mill for the past four years. My wife and I moved here from our Chinatown condo to start a family and plant ourselves in one of the few truly functioning multicultural enclaves in D.C. Each of us lived in other cities prior to coming to D.C. in the mid-00's, and we were encouraged by the progress that was being made to protect the things that make inclusive communities like Mt. Pleasant great. Our daughter is now two, and we want to stay in our neighborhood to allow her to draw from and contribute to the community. I am a child of immigrants and I did not have the benefit of going to school with almost any children from fellow minority groups in small-town Pennsylvania, let alone get exposure to multicultural or multilingual programming. My wife and I feel strongly that our multiracial daughter will benefit from the experiences we didn't have – access to a diverse elementary school that is walkable from her home and reinforces a sense of community and stability in her formative years. We buy groceries in our neighborhood, eat at local businesses, attend the farmer's market and street fairs, and love the fact that we do not have to drive across town or out of the city to give our family access to cultural experiences. Our daughter has picked up Spanish words (despite neither my wife or me being from the Latinx community) and already enjoys the musical and cultural events featured at Lamont Plaza. We hope she will learn some Hindi and French from her parents and pass those cultural elements onto her friends in the neighborhood. A key reason for us to stay in our neighborhood and in this City is the access to schools like Bancroft Elementary, which is a bedrock and focal point of this community, and offers cultural and linguistic exchange opportunities that we feel are critical for the success of our diverse community.

We are writing to express our concern that one of the proposals for reducing crowding at Bancroft is to “narrow the boundary back to the pre-2013-2014 changes.” This change would exclude Irving, Hobart and Harvard Streets from Bancroft's boundary, and make my younger child in-bound for an elementary school completely outside of Mt. Pleasant. We ask you to maintain these streets as in-boundary to Bancroft Elementary School for the following reasons:

- The existing border reinforces the Committee's value of neighborhood education, by right – at every socioeconomic level, we have parents who have made financial sacrifices to move to our community to give their kids the education that Bancroft can afford.
- The existing border continues to ensure socioeconomic and cultural diversity within the Bancroft Community – speaking personally, we will strongly consider leaving the community if we are forced to commute across town for quality public or private education.
- Changing the border disrupts ties among children and families within our community, and diminishes the experiences of all of us in the community.

- Changing the border on a block by block or street by street basis in a community discounts the reliance that newcomers have placed on the existing plan and its role in creating an integral sense of community to the new neighborhood.

Keeping Irving, Hobart and Harvard in-bound for Bancroft Elementary will keep our neighborhood whole, assure predictability and continuity for families, and maintain strong educational options for low income and immigrant families who live on our streets. We ask you to keep our children in-bound for Bancroft Elementary.

Thank you,

/s/

Mahnu and Family, Harvard Street

October 7, 2023

Dear Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo, and members of the Boundary and Student Assignment Advisory Committee,

In 2013, my wife and I adopted the first of two boys (of different ethnicities than ours) and after spending almost a year looking for the right place to raise our growing family, we settled in the Mt. Pleasant Neighborhood on a house on Hobart St. We couldn't be happier with our choice to live here. Being strong supporters of public schools we wanted our children to attend a racially diverse community like our family now is, and we couldn't be happier with our experiences at Bancroft. We moved here to be able to raise our children in a strong, diverse, and multicultural community and that is what we have found with the students, parents and teachers. Bancroft Elementary has become the neighborhood school that is the bedrock and focal point of our community.

We are writing to express our concern that one of the proposals for reducing crowding at Bancroft is to "narrow the boundary back to the pre-2013-2014 changes." This change would exclude Irving, Hobart and Harvard Streets from Bancroft's boundary, and make my younger child in-bound for an elementary school completely outside of Mt. Pleasant. We ask you to maintain these streets as in-boundary to Bancroft Elementary School for the following reasons:

When we first moved to Mt. Pleasant we were not zoned for Bancroft, but rather the region to our south. After living here for 10 years, we are living proof that the new boundary line of Harvard being the southern end is the true dividing line. All of our activities, friends, and experiences are with the community going North. Not including Harvard, Hobart and Irving would negatively impact all the shared experiences we have with the rest of Mt. Pleasant and would be a shame or our young boys not to follow the footsteps of their classmates- and neighbors- as they progress to middle and high schools within DCPS.

Keeping Irving, Hobart and Harvard in-bound for Bancroft Elementary will keep our neighborhood whole, assure predictability and continuity for families, and maintain strong educational options for low income and immigrant families who live on our streets. We ask you to keep our children in-bound for Bancroft Elementary.

Thank you,

Paul (and Linnea) Hegarty, 1735 Hobart St, NW

To whom it may concern:

As a member of the Harvard Hill houses who will have children of color entering Bancroft in the coming years, it would be a terrible loss to have the vibrant and diverse community of Harvard, Hobart, and Irving cut out of our local neighborhood school. Mount Pleasant is a district neighborhood and you would be tearing apart our community to resolve a problem that can be simply and fairly addressed via other means. I urge you to reconsider.

Joe McReynolds
1755 Harvard St

October 11th, 2023

Dear Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo, and members of the Boundary & Student Assignment Advisory Committee,

I'm a DC native who moved back to the city with my family during the pandemic. Our household is Spanish bi-lingual and bi-cultural (my spouse is an immigrant from Colombia).

We chose to live in Mt. Pleasant for the vibrant community - but most of all so that our young son could attend Bancroft and be educated in Spanish.

All too often in the USA, Spanish is treated as a second-class language, to be spoken at home, but dismissed when it comes to holistic learning in an academic environment.

The curriculum, community and culture of Bancroft help to push back against this implicit and explicit bias. Our goal in moving to Mount Pleasant is that Bancroft be a cornerstone in the education of our child, both as a student and as a whole person.

We've heard there is a proposal to reduce crowding at Bancroft by "narrow[ing] the boundary back to the pre-2013-2014 changes" - which would exclude the children living on Irving, Hobart and Harvard Streets.

This saddens & scares us.

When looking into this further, it seems that this also directly contradicts one of the core tenets of DC public schools - '**predictable and continuous access to schools**'. Like 100s of other families, we moved to Mt. Pleasant expecting to attend the in-bound neighborhood DCPS school of Bancroft.

We ask you to reconsider this proposal for Bancroft Elementary.

Sincerely,

Michael Black, Hobart St

**Paula Lequerica-Sternberg
1759 Hobart St NW**

October 10, 2023

**Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo, and Members of the
Boundary and Student Assignment Advisory Committee,**

Subject: Advocacy for Maintaining In-Bound Status for Bancroft Elementary School
Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the Bancroft Boundary Proposal to exclude Hobart, Irving, and Harvard Streets, which I recently learned of. My husband and I moved to Mt. Pleasant about 4 years ago, drawn to the neighborhood's convenient location in DC, its diverse resident population, and its strong ties to DC's Latin American history and community. As a first generation American with Peruvian roots, this latter cultural aspect was a particularly important part of my decision to settle here. Our son was born in 2020 and we have been very intentional in making our home a bilingual Spanish/English environment for him to reinforce his cultural inheritance. We have been excited and looking forward to his entry to Bancroft's immersive Spanish kindergarten and bilingual elementary school to support this home environment that we have worked so hard to build and which takes a village to maintain. We believe we have found that village, and it is largely built around Bancroft.

In addition to the Spanish-language and proximity draw, we have built a beautiful community of neighbors and friends- many of them parents with other preschool and school-age children. These kids are my son's first and closest friends, and along with their parents we have shared the joys and pains of parenthood in anticipation of our children's shared future at Bancroft.

If we were no longer in-bound for Bancroft, we would have to seriously reconsider our living situation, which we love, as it could potentially make maintaining my son's Spanish fluency a significant challenge, both logistically, and financially. In addition, we would have far less enduring neighborhood and community cohesion, the latter which is one of our favorite parts of living on Hobart Street in Mt. Pleasant. Almost every family member and friend who visits us comments on how lucky we are to have such a strong neighborhood community, and how nice it will be for our son to go to school and come home with his friends in a couple of years. We truly hope he is able to do that.

Thank you,

Paula Lequerica-Sternberg

October 10, 2023

**Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo,
and Members of the Boundary and Student Assignment Advisory Committee,**

Subject: Advocacy for Maintaining In-Bound Status for Bancroft Elementary School
Dear Committee Members,

My name is Matthew Baker, residing with my family of three at 1759 Hobart St NW in Mt. Pleasant for the past 4 years. As a Latino-American family that speaks both English and Spanish, we chose this vibrant, multicultural community as our home with the aspiration of providing our children with an enriching environment, both culturally and educationally. Bancroft Elementary, with its robust and inclusive educational programs, has been the cornerstone of that vision.

Since their birth, I have been walking my child to Bancroft to play and meet other children, and I have met other neighbors doing the same. We have gathered organically at Bancroft, shared coffee, and discussed the challenges of raising children in anticipation of their future attendance at the school. We have picked our Christmas trees, jumped on moon-bouncers, and played soccer at our local gathering place.

I am writing to express our deep concern regarding the proposal to revert the in-bound boundaries of Bancroft Elementary to previous demarcations, which would exclude Irving, Hobart, and Harvard Streets. This change would disrupt the community for numerous families, including ours, by assigning our children to a school outside of Mt. Pleasant. We earnestly request that you maintain the current boundaries for the following reasons, aligned with the Committee's guiding principles:

A Strong System of By-Right Neighborhood Schools: Bancroft Elementary has been the neighborhood school that has unified Mt. Pleasant, providing a common ground where families from diverse backgrounds converge and build a cohesive community. Changing the boundaries disrupts this system and the communal harmony it fosters.

Equitable Access to High-Quality Schools: The exemplary Bilingual Program and varied feeder pattern options at Bancroft Elementary ensure that all children, regardless of their socioeconomic or racial background, have equitable access to high-quality education and future opportunities. This is particularly important to our bilingual family.

Predictable and Continuous Access to Schools: The proposed boundary change would create a disjointed educational pathway for my young and their friends already made, where friends (and siblings) will be forced to attend different schools, causing logistical and emotional challenges.

Racially and Socio-Economically Diverse Schools: Bancroft's current boundaries encompass a rich tapestry of racial and socio-economic backgrounds, contributing to its vibrant, diverse learning environment. Altering these boundaries risks diluting this diversity and the enriched learning experience it provides.

Preserving the in-bound status of Irving, Hobart, and Harvard Streets for Bancroft Elementary will ensure the continuity, predictability, and rich, diverse educational experience that our children and those of our neighbors have been privileged to enjoy. We implore you to consider

our plea and maintain the existing boundaries, safeguarding the educational and community integrity of Mt. Pleasant.

Thank you for considering our perspective. We trust that you will give due weight to our concerns and are available for further discussions to explore collaborative solutions that will benefit our children and the wider community.

Sincerely,

Matthew Baker

1759 Hobart St NW

Wednesday, October 4, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

We were surprised to learn that rezoning Bancroft Elementary School to exclude Hobart, Harvard, and the south side of Irving is being considered. This is our second letter on this topic because when we wrote the first letter, we didn't know this was also under consideration.

It's disappointing this would even be considered in our tight-knit community. When I (Nora) was growing up in Takoma Park, MD, a small portion of the city was in Prince George's County. I was divided from my friends who lived just blocks away and sent to different schools until 7th grade when the city was unified all into one county. Starting school in a new school district in 7th grade was very formative for me. Most of our closest neighbors with young kids moved out of the neighborhood once their kids started school. Some parents sent their kids to private school which also created distance between us. The consideration of rezoning Bancroft has really hit home for me (Nora) as I don't want my kids to go through the same thing I went through.

Our kids (4 and 1) currently attend Barbara Chambers because of how convenient it is, the fact that it's Spanish immersion like Bancroft, and because neighborhood kids across economic backgrounds attend. In our opinion, diversity and true integration are a critical part of the school experience. Our daughter will start at Bancroft next fall and our son will start in the fall of 2027. Even the slightest possibility that our son could not join our daughter at Bancroft would cause us a lot of stress and there are families across the neighborhood who would be in similar situations.

Aside from the threat of our children attending different schools – which is a major concern on its own – this potential change threatens the community bonds we've built and are continuing to build here in Mt. Pleasant. Harvard, Hobart and Irving Streets are geographically and culturally part of the Mt. Pleasant community with relationships built largely around the Bancroft school district. The proposed rezoning would fragment these connections, isolate families and children from their community ties and support networks, and erode a sense of stability and continuity that has been cultivated over years.

We are sympathetic to the challenges of providing equitable access to high quality education for families throughout the city. There are undoubtedly broader considerations that we are not privy to, and we understand that changes of this magnitude involve multiple layers of complexity and a range of perspectives. We note that the top priority in citywide town halls regarding school redistricting is "predictability and continuity" (as also recently passed as a resolution by our local ANC representative Omar Parbhoo). Therefore, we urge you to decline this option.

Thanks for your consideration.

Nora Toiv & Jack Eisen-Markowitz
1832 Irving St NW

October 11, 2023

Dear Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo, and members of the Boundary and Student Assignment Advisory Committee:

I am writing in regards to the school boundary, building facilities, and feeder studies. I have lived in Washington D.C. for more than 20 years. I have a long relationship with the Mount Pleasant neighborhood since I moved to D.C. in 2003. I regularly came to Mount Pleasant to work or volunteer in the Salvadoran and Colombian diaspora community and to support solidarity efforts with human rights activists in those countries and immigrant rights in D.C.

I officially moved into the Mount Pleasant neighborhood in 2022 because I **wanted to live and contribute to this multicultural community in which I have strong and longstanding ties.** My daughter started Kindergarten this fall at Bancroft. I feel an even stronger relationship to the community now that my family participates in the daily ritual of walking down our street- Mount Pleasant street- to attend Bancroft.

I want my daughter to have a bilingual and education in a school that offers a safe and effective academic learning environment in a DC public school. I do not think that the study thus far has identified a safe and effective academic environment as a value. **This value is important to my family.**

Rather than change the boundaries or feeding pattern of Bancroft, more attention needs to be given to addressing factors, such as disruptive behaviors, that take time away from teachers' ability to provide instruction to the majority of the students in the surrounding schools. This is especially true for middle and high schools.

All students in Ward 1 deserve access to a safe school and academic experience. This will contribute to a more equitable education system. *But changing the boundaries and feeding pattern at Bancroft will not address the barriers to learning that surrounding schools face.* It could instead take away safe and effective learning environments for current and students and future students at Bancroft.

It is clear that there is an over-capacity issue at Bancroft right now that needs to be addressed. *The proposal to revert to the 2013-14 boundary is not a long term solution and will limit equitable access to education for underserved residents in the neighborhood.* This includes the co-op buildings on Mount Pleasant Street and Irving streets where a number of Spanish-dominant immigrant families live. It will also fracture the community ties that families on the South-side of Irving Street and the families on Hobart and Harvard have to the neighborhood- including other students and families.

What can be done? I know the value of a Pre-K education- and I completely support the universal free PreK program that the district offers. It has made a difference for our family and many other families so that those funds can be used to meet basic needs of children and for parents and guardians to work. There is no way that my family could survive on one income and I know that this is even more so for families at or under the poverty line.

Sadly, Bancroft had to eliminate a preK3 class this year and a science classroom. To free space at Bancroft, maybe DC could find another avenue to provide PreK for families in Mount Pleasant??

Could the city open an annex that could offer bilingual or Spanish immersion PreK? Could the city fund

additional slots for children in other free PreK programs such as PKEEP currently offered at Barbara Chambers or CentroNia? Our daughter attended Barbara Chambers and she had a very good education that has set her up for Kindergarten. She learned letters and numbers, fine and gross motor skills, and social/ emotional skills. She also had a multicultural immersion as the only White student in her classes. She also completely understands Spanish. These community programs could be expanded in a way that advances their mission and a need in the community.

Regarding the feeder pattern discussions, if one of the goals of the study is to increase equitable education in DC, removing Bancroft from the Deal and Jackson-Reed will in fact do the opposite for those schools. Bancroft increases diversity- economic, racial, cultural- in Deal and Jackson-Reed. With the planned reconstruction of Deal and the new MacArthur high school capacity needs should be addressed.

I ask you to keep Harvard, Hobart an Irving streets in the Bancroft School boundary, to address facilities usage factors by opening an annex or additional spots in community free PreK programs, and to keep Bancroft in the current geographic feeding patterns. It is also important that the city turn attention to addressing the challenges in surrounding schools so that everyone in Ward 1 have equitable access to quality schools at every school in our Ward.

My family and I love being part of this community. I am glad to finally live in this neighborhood that I have had a two-decades long relationship with. I hope that my family and other families are able to maintain strong ties with the other residents, including families, in our neighborhood by remaining in the Bancroft School boundary.

Sincerely,

Chloe Noel
Harvard Street NW

October 11, 2023

Dear Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo, and members of the Boundary and Student Assignment Advisory Committee,

I understand there is a current proposal to alleviate overutilization and loss of pre-K3 class space at Bancroft Elementary School by removing Harvard, Hobart, and Irving streets from the school's boundary. I humbly and respectfully ask that you keep these streets in the Bancroft boundary and consider other options outlined below, which I believe may better address the aforementioned concerns and provide additional benefits for Mt. Pleasant and nearby areas.

Bancroft Helps Create Community

To me, DC has often felt like a tough, socially isolating place. After living in Columbia Heights and Lanier Heights, I feel like I have finally found a feeling of community in Mt. Pleasant. Getting to know other parents while walking my daughter to- and from Bancroft has helped foster friendships and, in turn, a sense of connection to a larger group of people, including some with whom I can barely converse (translated from Spanish: "Me Noel. Speak English and Dutch. Nice talk. See later!"). I think it is safe to say that our city government wants and promotes such community, and keeping Mt. Pleasant—all of Mt. Pleasant—together in the Bancroft boundary fosters community in at least one portion of our city.

Bancroft Has Bilingual Education

Knowing Spanish is helpful socially and employment-wise. Bilingual education is why my wife and I sent our daughter to pre-K at Barbara Chambers Children's Center and not to our then-inbound school, H.D. Cooke with its once-per-week Spanish instruction (which, I assume, is akin to learning ABCs by studying them one to a few hours, one day per week). Bancroft's bilingual education was a major motivating reason for our relocation to Mt. Pleasant, which I believe is also the case for many people who move to Mt. Pleasant.

Continuous and Predictable Access to Schools Promotes Community and Happiness

Parents often move to a neighborhood assuming they will attend the school for which their neighborhood is in boundary, and parents often plan and hope to stay in a neighborhood throughout their children's school years. My wife and I certainly feel like that. By contrast, changing school boundaries can disrupt stable residency, community connections, educational objectives, and other things. Such as sanity.

Better Options Exist

Addressing overutilization at Bancroft and expanding pre-K3 capacity in- and near Mt. Pleasant may be better achieved through alternatives that have additional, knock-on benefits:

- Converting vacant properties to pre-K facilities (yes, I am looking at you, 3228 Hiatt Pl. NW) helps convert blighted buildings from spaces that host crime to places that enable parents to work and thereby generate municipal tax revenues through income and spending.
- Underwriting, in part or whole, a community organization's (Barbara Chambers, perhaps) conversion of empty commercial space to a pre-K facility also helps generate tax proceeds.

I thank you for your kind consideration of these points and am available for further discussion (and I do make very good coffee).

Thanks and best regards,
William Noel
1613 Harvard Street NW #302
Washington, DC 20009
noelivey@gmail.com

October 10, 2023

Dear Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo, and members of the Boundary and Student Assignment Advisory Committee,

I am writing to register my strong opposition to the proposal to remove Irving, Hobart, and Harvard Streets from Bancroft Elementary's by-right boundary. My family moved to Hobart Street in 2015, the year after it was added back into the Bancroft zone.

Our older daughter, who was in fourth grade at the time, attended a charter school, as we felt it was too late for her to begin a dual-language program. There were a number of other kids her age on the block, but they all went to different schools, and there was little socializing among them.

We were thrilled to have our younger daughter begin first grade at Bancroft when it reopened post-renovation. She immediately made friends on Hobart Street and throughout Mount Pleasant. Through these relationships and our daily walks to school she has developed a much stronger connection to the neighborhood and community than her older sister.

I understand that there are overcrowding issues at Bancroft; we witnessed this firsthand. But I fail to comprehend how this demographic shift was not anticipated and accounted for in the design of the school's very recent addition.

The Committee lists "a strong system of by-right neighborhood schools" as one of its guiding principles. Irving, Hobart, and the north side of Harvard are very much a part of the neighborhood of Mount Pleasant; a steep cliff cuts us off from Lanier Heights and Adams Morgan to the south.

Our family has seen first-hand the difference that attending a neighborhood school can make, and we ask you to maintain these streets as in-boundary to Bancroft.

Thank you,
Liz Argetsinger
Hobart St, NW

October 11, 2023

Dear Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo, and members of the Boundary and Student Assignment Advisory Committee,

My husband Justin and I have lived on Hobart St in the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood for three years. We previously rented in Dupont since 2015. I am an attorney with the Department of Justice, and my husband is a Special Assistant to the President at the White House. Particularly for my husband, who has lived in DC 13 of the last 18 years, it has been a joy to watch the revitalization of the city over the past two decades. DC is home for us and we are committed to raising our family here. We have two daughters, 5 and 2. Our eldest is a kindergartener at Bancroft elementary school, and our second child will start Pre-K 3 in the fall of 2024 and kindergarten in the fall of 2026.

I wrote earlier to Ms. Comey to express my opposition to changing the feeder pattern as it relates to Bancroft and I am writing again to express my opposition to removing Hobart Street from Bancroft's geographic boundaries. When we purchased our home in 2019, high-quality schools as-of-right was the number one factor governing our property search. As I mentioned in my earlier letter regarding the feeder pattern, predictability should be of paramount importance in order for DCPS to maintain and increase family investment in schools, particularly in of-right neighborhood schools. If parents cannot rely on DCPS to maintain some predictability in boundary and feeder patterns, they will opt-out altogether.

While I understand that the city has committed to reevaluating school boundaries, feeder patterns, and other attendance and capacity issues every 10 years, its aim should be to achieve its goals in the manner that is least disruptive to families. In the case of Bancroft, reverting to the 2013-14 boundaries for Bancroft would be the most disruptive of possible solutions to overcrowding at Bancroft, particularly to families like my own where siblings will have different of-right elementary schools. Undoing a change that was made as recently as the last review sends a poor message to families regarding DCPS's foresight, organization, and planning abilities.

Furthermore, Harvard, Hobart, and Irving are naturally encompassed in the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood. The quality of Bancroft is undeniably tied to the sense of shared community amongst the families that attend it, and this southern section of Mt. Pleasant is part of that community.

Accordingly, I urge the city to adopt another less disruptive solution to capacity issues at Bancroft, such as eliminating Pre-K 3, which is already inaccessible to many neighborhood families given the limited spots, or building a separate early education building. The city owns a 5,000 square foot lot at 19th and Park Rd, currently a minimally developed park. While I very much value the neighborhood's green spaces, an early education annex would be more meaningful to the families of Mt. Pleasant than a park that is just two blocks north of another park, the recently developed 19th st park and Lamont and 19th.

Please keep the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood together at Bancroft.

Thank you,

Roshni Shikari
Hobart St NW

Omar,

Good morning. While most of our communication has been about proposed speed humps on Hobart, I wanted to reach out today about another matter - the current review of DCPS school boundaries. As you know, two such proposed changes for Bancroft could remove it from the feeder system for Jackson-Reed and, even more concerning, remove Harvard, Hobart and Irving streets from Bancroft all together.

I cannot stress my opposition to both of these proposed changes strenuously enough. I would hope that you will do everything in your power, including forming a coalition with the ANC members to oppose these proposals.

Changes to the boundaries for Bancroft itself: Loss of being in-bound to your neighborhood public school means kids and parents miss out on the hub of the neighborhood community. Neighborhood schools draw families into connection with each other, businesses, and community events. Dividing up a neighborhood tears at these intertwining threads. The Committee on Redistricting has also placed this as their third priority.

Harvard (not Irving) is the natural boundary of Mt. Pleasant. There is a geological boundary, really a cliff, between the North and South sides of Harvard, as indicated by the lack of through-streets. Sources identify this as the natural boundary of Mt. Pleasant include: DCPS' own argument to add Irving, Hobart, and Harvard to Bancroft back in 2014, ANC resolution in 2014 in favor of the expanded boundary, Census area 27.02 has a boundary at Harvard to name a few.

Changes to feeder system for Jackson-Reed: My wife and I, as well as many other families move to a neighborhood expecting to attend the in-bound neighborhood DCPS school, including in Mt. Pleasant. Families plan to stay in the neighborhood throughout those school years, and families count on "Consistency and Dependability" of their in-bound school. As you may have seen, "Consistency and dependability" was city-wide the top selection of attendees to the September Town Hall meeting on the boundary study. Diversity and Equity will not be improved. According to Census data, residents south of Irving are identical in make-up to the rest of Mt. Pleasant. Mt. Pleasant is divided up into three areas (27.02-27.04). The area including Irving, Hobart, and Harvard (27.02) has the same level of Spanish speakers as 27.04, and the same income level as 27.03. In each case, the third tract is either slightly higher or lower. And of course, it goes without saying that Census data shows a clear difference in income level between Mt. Pleasant and nearly all of the other areas that feed into Jackson Reed.

If you made it this far, thank you for reading!

Ben Husch
MtP resident since 2008

Hi Omar! I'm Matt Traldi, at 1753 Hobart St NW. Reaching out about the school boundary issue.

I'm strongly opposed to changing the school boundaries for Bancroft. My wife and I are expecting our first child next month. We moved to Mount Pleasant last year for lots of reasons, but one of them was having a good neighborhood elementary school. We also wanted our kid to attend a diverse school - as you know, not a common thing across the District. Bancroft is a success story.

Schools are fraught socioeconomically, of course. I think there's a strong progressive argument for busing, particularly in a city that has prevalent de facto segregation, like D.C. But D.C. isn't considering that. It's planning to stick with a neighborhood school structure, as far as I know. Mount Pleasant is clearly a single neighborhood, and Bancroft is our school. So frankly, the idea of changing the boundaries seems to be more motivated by problems the District government may be having providing public services - e.g. adequate school spaces at a neighborhood school for the population of that neighborhood - not based on anything that would be good for, or requested by, its citizens.

From time to time I've designed surveys as part of my job, and interpreting polling data and things like that is a regular feature of my work. I wanted to share an observation about the survey being conducted on the boundary issue. At no point does it ask how happy survey respondents are with the current boundaries, or their current school. Nor does it ask what we'd like D.C. schools to improve on. If the people designing the survey were principally concerned with whether residents want changes, or what those changes were, they would have asked that. If they were open to those changes being things that the D.C. government itself needs to do, versus how it allocates access to a critical public resource - those questions would have been asked as well. I completed the survey feeling that it indicates that the D.C. government isn't really thinking about what me or my neighbors (on our street or across the whole District) might want, and is not engaging in this issue from a perspective of serving the community. And thus that the survey would mainly be useful as a tool for people to organize - to complete it tactically to make a particular point. What a waste!

I know there's also discussion of shifting our feeder pattern in terms of middle and high school. I'm also opposed to that, for the same reason. I haven't heard of a single problem residents have raised that that solution would be designed to solve. It seems a little more ambiguous from a public policy perspective, since those schools are already outside a single neighborhood, but imagine the current pattern is overall a positive for school diversity, versus a negative, so I'm not sure what the reason for switching would be - unless it were, again, an issue of whether D.C. is prepared to invest adequately in the public services it provides.

Hope this is helpful input; I'm grateful for your work.

Thanks
Matt

October 11, 2023

Dear Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo, and members of the Boundary and Student Assignment Advisory Committee,

Our multi-national family lives on Hobart Street in Mt. Pleasant, and our daughter Nina attends Kindergarten at Bancroft. We planned for our 6-week old son Felix to attend as well. We were shocked to hear that Hobart Street might be excluded from the Bancroft boundary following the Boundary & Student Assignment Study, and strongly oppose this change. Aligning to the study's guiding principles to preserve our **diverse and inclusive** community's access to quality bi-lingual education, it's strong connective fibers with the **neighborhood school** at its center, and the **predictability and continuity** that families depend on in making life decisions impacting their children's education, we urge you to keep Irving, Hobart, and Harvard Streets in-bound to Bancroft.

Elitza is an immigrant from Bulgaria, whose family arrived in the US with no assets and very little English. She learned English in public schools, and with her parents' unrelenting focus on education earned a scholarship to afford college. She went on to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer and now works for a nonprofit improving global equity and inclusivity. Like many immigrants, she believes that our family's biggest investment is in our children's education. **The top priority is ensuring that our children have access to a rigorous bilingual curriculum, are part of a diverse and international student body, and that they form strong relationships within the community with opportunities to give back.**

Jamie rented in Mt. Pleasant 2006-2013, but could not afford to buy, so he bought what became the family's first home in Petworth. Jamie is a professor at Howard University and served 2 terms as Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner 4D04, leading efforts to fund a new elementary school playground, renovate the school soccer field, revitalize a community park, and support affordable housing. When our daughter reached school age, we saw no path to a quality bilingual education in Petworth, and we were unable to lottery into the charter school system. So we moved, first so our daughter could attend a strong neighborhood school, and second for a diverse and vibrant urban community, and finally because Jamie always dreamed of returning to Mt. Pleasant. Our daughter is now learning Spanish at Bancroft, joins other neighborhood kids on the walk to school and at the playground, and participates in a community of multi-national and multi-ethnic families who support each other. **We want to invest in our community public school, as we did in Petworth, and for our son to have the same opportunities and experiences our daughter is having. Removing our street from Bancroft's boundary will provide poorer education options to children on these streets and sever many of our ties to the neighborhood.**

We appreciate the challenge this study has undertaken and that choices have to be made to address overcrowding at Bancroft. **We ask the Deputy Mayor's office and Advisory Committee to consider the negative impacts of making this boundary change: 1) Impact on families:** Cleaving a tight-knit community with natural geographic borders, a unique identity, and a history of overcoming great odds to maintain its racial and socio-economic diversity; **2) Impact on neighborhood diversity:** The remaining Bancroft in-boundary area will inevitably become more expensive and less diverse as more young families squeeze into an ever smaller geographic area; **3) Impact on school enrollment:** The reduction in school enrollment will be short-lived as new families move within the new school boundaries. **We hope that more sustainable solutions will be adopted to meet neighborhood demand for neighborhood ECE programs and quality bi-lingual education: in the short-term, expanding DC-funded pre-K slots at private neighborhood CDCs; in the long-term, identifying a location to invest in a Bancroft ECE annex.**

Please keep our diverse neighborhood whole and consider a sustainable solution to Bancroft's overcrowding – do not change Bancroft's current boundary area.

Sincerely,

Elitza Barzakova Barden (elitza.b@gmail.com) & Luther "Jamie" Barden (jamiiebardenphd@gmail.com)

1748 Hobart Street NW

Dawn Lehker
South Side of Irving St NW

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing today to express my concern bordering on dismay about the proposal to change the Bancroft Elementary School boundary. I live on the South side of Irving Street and cannot state in strong enough terms how changing the boundary would irrevocably change the character and cohesiveness of the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood. Mt. Pleasant has very logical and natural boundaries. We gather and meet each other at the nearby playgrounds, restaurants, coffee shops, neighborhood festivals and at Bancroft Elementary School. The cohesiveness and sense of community derives from, in no small part, that our children go to school together. Changing the boundary to exclude these three streets would alienate us from our neighbors.

Even if my child might not actually be affected by the change, I feel I must speak up for my neighbors and for the neighborhood I've called home for more than 20 years. Many of my neighbors made a deliberate choice to move to the neighborhood for Bancroft. In addition to our children receiving a top-notch bilingual education at the school, the school is central to the community. I understand that in some sense the Mt. Pleasant community is a victim of its own success in that the school has grown more than anticipated because people have chosen to move to Mt. Pleasant for the schools and the sense of community found in Mt. Pleasant. I am here pleading that you take these very important and strong intangibles into account and find another solution. Breaking apart Mt. Pleasant in this manner is not the answer and would create an unnecessary rift in the community.

We are aware that Mt. Pleasant had this split before 2014, however, Mt. Pleasant is not the same neighborhood it was before 2014. This neighborhood is now filled with young families who want to send their children to an excellent bi-lingual school. Many of these families purchased their homes specifically for the excellent bi-lingual education provided by Bancroft.

It is not clear that even if my child was able to remain in Bancroft for elementary school that if the boundaries are changed he would be allowed to remain with his peers through middle and high school. I would also like to point out that changing that feeder pattern could really do damage to our children. Please do not underestimate how difficult the middle school years are in the best of circumstances. Forcing a child to go to a different school from most of the friends he or she has made during elementary school would make an already difficult transition even harder. Friends in this situation offer familiarity, comfort and support, which is invaluable as our children navigate their way into being teenagers.

In addition to asking for the Bancroft boundary to remain in place, I am also asking that the Deal and Jackson-Reed feeder pattern remain in place. Again, many of us moved to or remained in the neighborhood because of the feeder pattern. Mt. Pleasant is an incredibly diverse community. As a parent of a child whose ethnicity is different from our own, I believe it is an

important contribution to the middle and high school that is not as diverse. It is important for the middle and high school communities to have students from all types of backgrounds and walks of life. The Mt. Pleasant community contributes in a significant way to that diversity.

Respectfully,
Dawn Lehker

October 7, 2023

Dear Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo, and members of the Boundary and Student Assignment Advisory Committee,

My family just moved to Mt. Pleasant on Irving St in May before the birth of our first child in July of this year. We moved here to be able to raise our child in a strong, diverse, and multicultural community. The schools were a guiding factor in our decision. I went to one of the first public immersion programs in the country and it changed my life—I'm trying to give my son that same opportunity. We walk around our neighborhood, which Bancroft Elementary school is integral to, daily. We see our next door neighbor's son walk to school in the morning and look forward to walking our own son up 18th. Frankly, we moved here for the community and the immersion school. Bancroft, and its high school pipeline were a major factor in our choice of where to live. If that changes, we will probably stop investing blood, sweat, tears, money, and dreams into what was supposed to be our forever house and move out of the city. Cutting Irving and Hobart from Bancroft will destroy the cohesion of the area and our reasons for being here.

We are writing to express our concern that one of the proposals for reducing crowding at Bancroft is to “narrow the boundary back to the pre-2013-2014 changes.” This change would exclude Irving, Hobart and Harvard Streets from Bancroft's boundary, and make my younger child in-bound for an elementary school completely outside of Mt. Pleasant that isn't a language immersion program. We ask you to maintain these streets as in-boundary to Bancroft Elementary School for the following reasons:

- A strong system of by-right neighborhood schools that are safely walkable
- Equitable access to high quality public non-charter schools
- Predictable and continuous access to schools—we moved here for this pipeline
- Racially and socio-economically diverse schools and curriculum

Keeping Irving, Hobart and Harvard in-bound for Bancroft Elementary will keep our neighborhood whole, assure predictability and continuity for families, and maintain strong educational options for low income and immigrant families who live on our streets. We ask you to keep our children in-bound for Bancroft Elementary and maintain its high school pipeline.

Thank you,
Joanna Schwartz
Irving St NW

October 8, 2023

Dear Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo, and members of the Boundary and Student Assignment Advisory Committee,

I've lived in Mt. Pleasant on Harvard Street NW for two years. As my mother, a former teacher, modeled for me, I chose the school first and the home second. I moved to Mt. Pleasant specifically to give my future children access to a nurturing neighborhood school. It's important to me that they can walk to school, that the school challenges them, and that they have a community-centric education right where they live.

Bancroft is that school. Please keep Harvard Street in-bounds.

Harvard is the natural physical boundary of Mt. Pleasant, in regards to zoning, topography, architecture, and allegiance: those of us who live on Harvard are friendly and active members of the Mt. P community.

The proposal to "narrow the boundary back to the pre-2013-2014 changes" for Bancroft would exclude Irving, Hobart and Harvard Streets from Bancroft's boundary, and make my children commute to an elementary school completely outside of Mt. Pleasant. It will severely curtail opportunities for neighborhood bonding and introduce logistical hardships for those of us who otherwise happily do our buying, walking, socializing, and community building in Mt. Pleasant.

You have the power and the responsibility:

- To maintain **predictable, walkable local schools for Harvard Street's** smallest residents
- To ensure equitable access to this **high quality school that's valued by me and other minority parents** on the block
- To support **community continuity**- so our children will be seen, known, and supported by their neighbors as they grow
- To ensure future access to **Bancroft's bilingual language instruction for my Mexican-American family**

Keeping Irving, Hobart and Harvard in-bound for Bancroft Elementary will allow my family to remain fully integrated into the neighborhood. I ask you to keep Harvard in-bound for Bancroft Elementary.

Thank you,

Harvard St Neighbor

Dear Deputy Mayor for Education and Councilwoman Nadeau,

We understand that in the context of the current redistricting process, you are considering breaking up Mount Pleasant into two elementary schools and feeder patterns. We write to strongly urge you to maintain the neighborhood as one school community. The current boundary for Bancroft is an accurate reflection of the neighborhood, which is a tight knit community. Breaking a few blocks out of that community for purposes of school boundaries would be harmful to the relationships that develop organically across the proposed lines.

As parents whose elementary school children are enrolled in a charter school outside the neighborhood because of a specialized program that exists there, it remains important to us that our children join their neighborhood peers for middle and high school. We have maintained relationships with them through neighborhood activities, lessons, playdates, and little league with the aim of bringing them together in middle and high schools. We believe that maintaining a shared feeder pattern for the whole neighborhood is the right outcome and that if there are crowding challenges at Bancroft, the city should resolve them with solutions other than dividing the neighborhood.

One of the reasons we have remained in our home since our children were born is because we believe that the combination of schools that our children will attend will meet their needs for learning, diversity, and relationships with their local community. We are very concerned that those opportunities may not be available to them or to future children on our block in light of the proposed division of our neighborhood.

Many thanks in advance for your consideration.

Deena Fox and Andrew Birnbaum
1820 Irving St NW
Washington DC 20010

October 11 2023

Object: new Bancroft boundaries project

To whom this may concern:

My spouse and I have been living on Hobart street since June 2020. We believe the proposed boundary change, excluding a part of Mount pleasant from Bancroft, is highly problematic. We wish to express our strong opposition to it.

Using boundaries as an adjustment variable for a targeted enrollment level in a school is problematic in several ways.

First, families make location decisions, purchase a house, arguably the most important financial decision of a lifetime, with, as a key factor for their choice, the neighborhood school. Families come to Mount Pleasant for Bancroft. Even if already enrolled families, families with no kids, or sending kids elsewhere will not be directly affected, there is an expectation of continuity. We expect and want newcomers to go to Bancroft as well, if they wish. This is a key factor contributing to the neighborhood social fabric, the social link among its inhabitants, the happiness of kids having the chance to interact with their school friends in their neighborhood. The school creates neighborhood unity, provides a focal point around which social life is organized.

Second, boundaries as an adjustment variable defeats the very nature and purpose of a public school system. It reduces it to a cost that must be managed, with a corporate logic if needed be, only focusing on short term, easily quantifiable constraints. If Bancroft is crowded, it is because it provides extraordinary value with its great high quality bilingual program. If Bancroft lacks space, the response should be to invest, create new space, find new resources, to serve the citizens, not limit its access arbitrarily in a way that will harm the neighborhood as a whole. Though this harm is difficult to quantify, it is very real, and it would be a mistake to ignore it. In a similar logic, if a subway station faces management difficulties because it is overcrowded (for example Union station in rush hours), should the response be to limit access to the station, to reduce overcrowding? Improving a public service should not and cannot be achieved at the expense of some users.

Finally, if a variable as important as school boundaries is so volatile and so easily subject to arbitrary change, it will erode trust in DC government and make it very difficult to plan a family life in the district in the long run.

To conclude, Mount pleasant is a neighborhood with a strong identity and unity. Its natural border in the south is Harvard street. Changing the school boundaries amounts to cutoff the excluded streets from their own neighborhood. It would imply a clear net loss for the whole mt. Pleasant community. Therefore, we oppose this project. We hope it will be reconsidered, accounting for all real costs of such a change, not just immediate short-term savings.

Jerome Lahaye & Eleonora Cavagnero
Hobart street

Jack S. Conway
Harvard Street NW

October 10, 2023

I am writing to you as a proud third generation Washingtonian deeply concerned about our city, my neighborhood and most immediately the future of the public schools my children attend and how that relates to the long term health, stability and diversity of Mount Pleasant. As part of a broader city-wide discussion, changes to the existing Bancroft Elementary School feeder pattern are being entertained. Specifically, rezoning the boundaries of Bancroft to omit the areas South of Irving Street. **Any change to the Bancroft feeder pattern would have catastrophic consequences to my beloved neighborhood and significantly contribute to an exodus of young families from the city.**

I was born and raised in Mount Pleasant and have witnessed first-hand how our community has coalesced and grown around a public institution that has effectively bound our community together – Bancroft Elementary. Many Mount Pleasant families, mine included, have invested decades of our tax dollars and more importantly our energies furthering this community with the assumption that the city would in turn provide long term stability. Other families (and I speak here from my work as a real estate agent) have literally stretched all out financially to move to Mount Pleasant solely for the perceived benefits of the long established public school feeder pattern. I know I speak for many families in Mount Pleasant that I would **simply have to cut my losses and move my family to Maryland or Virginia**, walking away from a city that I love with all my heart.

It is important to recognize that any proposed changes to the Bancroft feeder pattern are happening at a time that is so clearly a monumental inflection point for the city. **With a shrinking tax base, an urban center in flux, rising theft, homelessness and spiking violent crime, changing the Bancroft feeder pattern would be nothing short of the final straw for many families in Mount Pleasant.**

As a proud Washingtonian I want to see my three kids grow up in this great city. Please do not change the Bancroft feeder pattern. Thank you.

Jack S. Conway

To whom it may concern,

For the past year, my family has had the pleasure of living in the Mount Pleasant area on the south side of Irving St NW. We have two sons, ages 5 and almost 2.

During the past year, our children have many friends in the neighborhood as we have gotten to know other families in the neighborhood. Because Irving Street directly connects to several north-south streets to the north (Adams Mill, 18th, 17th) all of these social connections and our daily lives (shopping, restaurants) are in Mount Pleasant. These connections deepened as our son began attending Bancroft Elementary this fall. These connections were important to him feeling comfortable as he started school.

We have little connection to the blocks south of Hobart as the street layout and geography create a divide. Changing our neighborhood schools would cut our younger son off from his natural neighbors and friends. Furthermore, any proposal that would send our younger son to a different school than his brother would be greatly detrimental to our lives as we struggle to get two children to schools in different directions and manage relationships with two school communities and sets of friends.

I implore you to strongly consider the importance of natural communities, neighborhood connections, and keeping siblings together as school boundary adjustments are considered.

Sincerely,

Scott Hartl
1844 Irving St NW

10/13/2023

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my concern about the proposal to move the Bancroft boundary line from Harvard St. to Irving St. My family moved on Harvard St. several years ago, and we have felt a strong connection with the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood.

Our son attended HD Cooke for PK3 and PK4, and now he is in kindergarten at Bancroft. The sense of community just during the walk to Bancroft has been amazing for our son. We walk with many of his classmates along 18th Street every morning. I love how he is learning to understand the geography of our neighborhood.

Our address is on Harvard Street is accessed primarily through the back alley in the direction of Hobart and Mt. Pleasant. This is because our front yard is a steep hill.

Last Friday night we projected a movie outside in our back yard for 12 kids that live on our alley, and a majority either attend or are the younger siblings of children attending Bancroft. This community is very important for our son. Also, notably, those younger siblings would possibly be excluded from also going to Bancroft, and certainly would not be able to follow the same feeder pattern together.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William Cohen, MD
Harvard St NW

October 13, 2023

Dear Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo, and members of the Boundary and Student Assignment Advisory Committee,

My family of five has lived in Mt. Pleasant on Irving St for 3 years. We moved here to raise our children in a diverse yet tight-knit community. For the children who live here and their parents, Bancroft Elementary is the neighborhood school that is the bedrock and focal point of this community. Every day when I walk my oldest to 3rd grade we connect with multiple other families along the way. When our friends and family have visited they are blown away by how it feels “like Sesame Street.” We live very far from family and the closeness and support of this community has been so meaningful - especially recently when our son was in the hospital. Neighborhood friends brought food, lent their expertise, and boosted our spirits. In the middle of this big city and all the exhausting demands, I believe this supportive community exists because we walk to school together, we bump into each other at the Farmer’s Market, the library, the playgrounds and cultural festivals.

We are writing to express our concern that one of the proposals for reducing crowding at Bancroft is to “narrow the boundary back to the pre-2013-2014 changes.” This change would exclude Irving, Hobart and Harvard Streets from Bancroft’s boundary, and make my younger children in-bound for an elementary school completely outside of Mt. Pleasant. We have been waiting for the day when we can walk all 3 kids to Bancroft. It means so much to our family to continue cultivating this community and for our kids to have the bilingual education we moved here for. All of our kids have gone to school in Spanish since the age of 2. To be candid, if the community and education we moved here for is taken away from our twins, we will strongly consider moving.

Keeping Irving, Hobart and Harvard in-bound for Bancroft Elementary will keep our neighborhood whole, assure predictability and continuity for families, and maintain strong educational options for low income and immigrant families who live on our streets. We ask you to keep our children in-bound for Bancroft Elementary.

Thank you,

Lisa and Chris Higgins
Irving St NW

Dear Deputy Mayor Kihn, Director Comey, Cm. Nadeau, ANC Parbhoo, and members of the Boundary and Student Assignment Advisory Committee,

My family of four has lived in Mt. Pleasant on Hobart Street for four years. We moved here to be able to raise our children in a strong, diverse, and multicultural community that reflects our own multicultural family. For us, Bancroft Elementary has been a foundational part of our experience in Mt. Pleasant. Since our eldest child started Kindergarten at Bancroft, our family has become much more immersed in our neighborhood. My daughter is able to walk to school with her friends and routinely see friends and adults that she knows and feels comfortable with around the neighborhood. These aspects have been extremely important for our child as she learns to navigate her neighborhood and city. They have also been important for us, as Bancroft serves an essential role in creating ties among the Mt. Pleasant community.

We are writing to express our concern that one of the proposals for reducing crowding at Bancroft is to “narrow the boundary back to the pre-2013-2014 changes.” This change would exclude Irving, Hobart, and Harvard Streets from Bancroft’s boundary, which could make my younger child inbound for an elementary school in a different neighborhood. That change would be extremely disruptive to us. If the plan is enacted as proposed, it could require us to transport each of our children to different schools in different neighborhoods, which would be logistically difficult to manage in light of work schedules, and virtually impossible if one of us was traveling, sick, or otherwise unavailable on a particular day. It would also pose unnecessary difficulties for us to manage two separate sets of relationships with teachers and administrators, as well as varying schedules and events, aftercare providers, and resources. In addition, the proposal would effectively cleave Mt. Pleasant in two, cutting off Irving, Hobart, and Harvard Streets from the rest of the neighborhood, which would disrupt and detrimentally affect these families’ relationship to the rest of Mt. Pleasant.

We urge you to keep Irving, Hobart and Harvard inbound for Bancroft Elementary, which will keep our neighborhood whole and assure predictability and continuity for families.

Thank you,

Chetan Patil and Caitlin McCusker
1743 Hobart Street, NW

Rajiv and Nancy Sonti
Hobart Street, NW 20009

To whom it may concern,

I hope this letter finds you well. My wife Nancy and I have lived on Hobart Street in Mt. Pleasant with our two children since last year. We previously rented in Columbia Heights since 2014. I'm a physician at Georgetown Hospital and Nancy is an Ecologist who works for the USDA Forest Service.

We were surprised to learn that re-zoning Bancroft Elementary School to exclude Hobart / Irving / Harvard is being considered. Our 5-year-old is in kindergarten at Bancroft and our 2-year-old attends preschool at Barbara Chambers Childrens Center in Columbia Heights. We recognize that there is a broader effort to consider changing the feeder patterns for middle and high schools, but we were not aware and alarmed that this change to Bancroft is on the table.

This change would be incredibly disruptive for multiple reasons. For one, if the plan was enacted as proposed and siblings were not exempt from the boundary change, we would have to shuttle our two children to different schools in opposite directions for the duration of their childhood. Multiple drop-offs and pick-ups would be nearly incompatible with most professional work schedules, particularly since DCPS does not provide transportation. Additionally, the children would have entirely different schooling experiences, a different set of teachers, administrators, available activities and resources that we would have to navigate. This would impact after-school care, extracurricular activities, and place an undue financial and time-related strain on families like ours who are committed to public education for our children.

Moreover, this change threatens community bonds that we have built within Mt. Pleasant. Harvard, Hobart and Irving Streets are geographically and culturally part of the Mt. Pleasant community with relationships built in large part through the school. The proposed rezoning would fragment these connections, isolating families and children from their familiar community ties and support networks, eroding the sense of stability and continuity that has been cultivated over years.

We are sympathetic to the challenges of providing equitable access to high quality education for families throughout the city. There are undoubtedly broader considerations that we are not privy to, and we understand that changes of this magnitude involve multiple layers of complexity and a range of perspectives. However, we feel that there has been a lack of sufficient parental and community input into this particular decision. We note that the top priority in citywide town halls regarding school redistricting is "predictability and continuity" (as also recently passed as a resolution by our local ANC representative Omar Parbhoo). Therefore, we urge you to reconsider the proposed changes and allow the voices of presently impacted families to help guide decision making. If this change is ultimately deemed necessary, we strongly believe there should be a much longer time horizon and lead-in period with sibling exemptions in order to allow for families to prepare adequately.

As you know, one of the primary considerations for purchasing a home for families with children is orchestrating their educational path. For us, there will become a point at which it is overly burdensome to navigate these disruptive changes and living within the District will no longer be feasible.

Sincerely,
Rajiv and Nancy Sonti