

August 9, 2024

Dear Nalle Elementary School Parents and Families,

I am writing to follow up on the commitment made by DC Public Schools (DCPS) to sharing updates and open lines of communication with families regarding the upcoming construction and modernization plan at Nalle.

To ensure continued productivity, on Tuesday, July 30, I, along with several members of the DCPS leadership team and Nalle administration, met with stakeholders from the Nalle and Ward 7 communities to discuss the school's modernization. Below, please find a summary of that meeting as well as a comprehensive update on where we are as we approach the start of School Year (SY) 2024-2025.

Swing Space Options

For last week's meeting, DCPS prepared a [PowerPoint presentation](#) to preview and discuss the modular campus project at Nalle Elementary School. Included within the presentation were multiple alternate swing space locations that have been explored by DCPS for the Nalle and Drew communities.

During modernization planning, DCPS considers several factors to ensure the equitable selection of safe, healthy swing spaces to support our modernization efforts across the District. Factors include availability and size of the swing site, enrollment of the school, and distance from the home school. Information about the explored swing spaces and features such as square footage, distance from Nalle, and limitations can be found on slides 8 to 29 of the [presentation deck](#). Please note that the presentation has been expanded since the meeting to include several additional locations proposed by members of the Nalle community to ensure we fully investigated all possible options. During that meeting, we requested that attendees share the NalleModernization@k12.dc.gov email address with their stakeholders for any further swing space suggestions.

At the time of this letter, our Facilities Planning and Design Team has not received any additional suggestions or viable options for swing spaces since last week's meeting. However, DCPS remains committed to due diligence, and we will continue to evaluate all locations submitted to NalleModernization@k12.dc.gov leading up to our next public meeting with the Nalle and Drew communities slated for September 9.

Modular Construction Mobilization

Following the public meeting in September, if no viable alternate swing space locations have been identified, DCPS and the Department of General Services (DGS) will continue to move forward with placing the modular campus on Nalle's field. Moving ahead with a September 19 site mobilization date ensures that the project can remain on schedule.

After September 19, the community will begin to see construction staging—fencing, equipment, and crews—and the field will become inaccessible for school or public use. If DGS needs to adjust the mobilization date for any reason, we will inform the community.

Green Space and Playground

Outdoor play is critical to child development. It promotes our students' curiosity and builds social skills with their peers. I want to acknowledge that we heard and agree with our parents, families, and students who have championed the need for additional green space for recreational play. We have

worked closely with our partners at DGS to ensure that Nalle's outdoor activities can transition to the alternate green/play space locations outlined in slides 33 through 44 in the [presentation deck](#). To ensure these spaces are available by September 19, DGS will move forward with pursuing options B, C, and D found on slides 36-41.

To prepare these green space options, minor construction is required to install fencing to ensure the safety of our students. We have committed to completing this work as quickly as possible and construction will be limited to these areas.

In addition, during swing space construction and Nalle's modernization, the playground closest to the existing building will remain accessible to the Nalle community. Next summer, the playground in the Nalle field will receive newer equipment and be used by both Nalle and Drew for SY25-26 and SY26-27. After SY28-29, Nalle's playground will be replaced with brand new equipment.

Continued Engagement

Several community members have asked why Nalle is not being prioritized to swing first at their location. Priority of modernizations is determined by the Planning Actively for Comprehensive Education (PACE) Facilities Amendment Act of 2016 (D.C. Official Code § 38-2803 (d)(3)). The PACE Act requires DCPS to rank their unmodernized facilities using objective data such as facility condition, demand, community need, and equity. To learn more about PACE and overview of how school modernizations will be prioritized for fiscal years 2024 and beyond, please visit this [link](#). I also encourage you to visit the [DCPS Facilities Modernizations & Major Additions page](#).

I want to acknowledge and reiterate to the broader community an apology for inadequate notification and engagement in advance of this upcoming project. As Nalle moves through the modernization process, DCPS' Facilities Planning and Design Team is committed to providing regular updates and touchpoints to the community. Monthly construction updates will be shared and posted to the [Nalle Elementary Swing Space Project Page](#). Additionally, during SY 24-25, that team is committed to having two public facing meetings with the community to share important updates.

Thank you for your advocacy, your ideas, and your continued engagement. If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback, please email NalleModernization@k12.dc.gov.

In partnership,



Lewis D. Ferebee
Chancellor, DC Public Schools