

**Summary**  
**Key parents meeting with Chancellor Michelle Rhee**  
**Thurs. Feb. 19, 2009**

Attendees: *PTA Officers:* Paige Chabora, Pete Kaminskas, Christy Ross; *LRST Members:* Mike Bailey, Bill Bravman, Michael Kubzansky, Lauren Schramm; *Community Reps:* Melissa Mehring, Susan Messina, Margie Palm, Eve Zartman-Ball; Patti Sulser

Introduction

On the evening of February 19, 2009, DCPS Chancellor Michelle Rhee met with 12 Key School parents at the home of PTA Co-President Paige Chabora. The meeting was arranged and led by Melissa Mehring and was spurred by the concerns of Key parents about “Life After Key”—particularly Hardy Middle School. Chancellor Rhee had heard feedback from many parents and was eager to meet with a small group.

The following bullet points capture the most essential parts of the dialogue.

Main Points

- Chancellor Rhee is keenly aware of the struggles parents face when deciding to stay in DCPS for the middle school years, and whether to send their children to Hardy in particular. She said she has a strong sense that parents want to feel good about Hardy as an option.
- Chancellor Rhee has heard from other Hardy feeder schools; the Key community is not alone in their concerns. Chancellor Rhee is committed to keeping families in the DCPS, and is committed to working with the community to that end.
- Her vision for Hardy is that it be a unique school that serves a diverse population incredibly well. She notes we have a unique opportunity with Hardy because it is new and beautiful. Hardy has an excellent core group of teachers with a great deal of ability.
- She anticipates that within 3-4 years, Hardy will become a school in high demand, as changes are made.
- She is looking carefully at how they can continue to improve Hardy’s program. As part of that process, Chancellor Rhee wants feedback from parents about what they want in a middle school program. The LRST will be surveying all Key parents (pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade) very soon, so that information can be captured and forwarded to Ms. Rhee by the end of March (per her request).
- Chancellor Rhee recognizes that for current fifth grade parents, changes at Hardy may not come soon enough to make a decision to attend Hardy next year. She firmly stated her belief that Deal will have a challenge filling its building next year. Accordingly, any Key School student who seeks admittance through the out-of-boundary lottery will likely be accepted to attend Deal in the fall of 2009.
- She clarified that whereas in the past, Hardy required an application for all students, even in-boundary students, which recently changed. Key students do not need to apply to Hardy. It is still not 100% clear, however, whether in-boundary students will need to apply to the “arts intensive” program. Chancellor Rhee will deliver guidance on that as soon as she can and will extend the arts application deadline (currently March 13) until after she has announced her decision.
- Hardy has been a stellar arts school. Among the decisions to be made and announced in the coming weeks is whether or not Hardy will have a “dual-track program” (a regular academic track and a separate arts track) or whether all students will take part in the expanded arts curriculum that Hardy offers. All students, regardless of which option is chosen, will get the full complement of the conventional academic curriculum.
- Chancellor Rhee is confident that Hardy will move in a direction that will make people confident to stay in DCPS and she will communicate those details in May, via letter and community meetings.