

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
BALTIMORE DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

COMPLETE STATEMENT

OF

COLONEL CHARLES J. FIALA, JR.

COMMANDER, BALTIMORE DISTRICT

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BEFORE THE

DC SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ON

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAM

MARCH 29, 2001

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I am Colonel Chuck Fiala, Commander and District Engineer of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Baltimore District. Thank you for inviting me to testify this morning on the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Capital Improvement Program. I will discuss the role of the Corps of Engineers in assisting DC Public Schools in executing this program, then give a brief overview of the program development and evolution. I will close by describing our current strategy to address future Capital Improvement and facility management needs.

In early 1998, faced with a critical facilities situation, the District of Columbia Public Schools came to the Corps for help. Next week marks the third anniversary of the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the DCPS and the Corps. The partnership created by that agreement to improve school facilities remains strong. We have provided engineering and technical support under three superintendents and three governing school boards. Throughout, our objectives and commitment have remained constant and have been supported by each new administration. We are pleased to support Dr. Vance's vision of bringing a new generation of schools to the nation's capital.

It is an immense and complex task to modernize nearly 150 schools while continuing operations and efficiently using resources. DCPS facility staff, working with us, has approached this in a three-step process:

The first step has been to address facility crises by making emergency repairs or replacements of failing major building systems. This effort has reduced fire code violations, reduced maintenance costs, and allowed on-time school openings for three straight years. Dozens of schools have received new roofs, new heating plants, asbestos abatement, and new air-conditioning systems.

The second step has focused on improving the learning environment and developing a sustainable program to address interior repairs that directly affect students and teachers in the classroom. Projects such as window replacements, interior painting, bathroom renovations, carpet and floor tile replacement, and lighting upgrades have been completed or are ongoing in every school.

The third step has consisted of providing a new generation of schools by replacing or modernizing school facilities. A comprehensive Long-range Master Facility Plan has been developed and approved to bring DCPS schools into the 21st century. This community based plan, developed under the previous Board of Education, has been approved and adopted by the present Board. Currently 12 modernization projects have been initiated, with ten more proposed to begin design phase next fiscal year. The first of these projects is under construction, with four more scheduled to be under construction by this summer.

In the fall of 1999, we received authority to contract on behalf of DCPS. Since then, well over \$200 million in school improvement contract awards have been made, over half of which have gone to small, disadvantaged businesses. This contract base has

enabled us to execute a fiscal year 2001 plan that is nearly three times larger than that of fiscal year 2000. Current budget execution rates are ahead of schedule.

Our contracts are carefully supervised and managed. We have a full-time staff to award and administer contracts and to provide quality assurance for all construction activities. We are also providing asbestos management services for DCPS. Working closely with the Environmental Protection Agency and the District of Columbia Department of Health, we have developed and implemented asbestos management plans in every school. Hundreds of health, safety and security projects have been executed, making schools safer for students, teachers and staff.

We also are helping DCPS to develop internal facility management capacity by recruiting and developing staff, by building contracting capabilities, and by implementing work management systems. These efforts are directed to ensure that the DCPS facility staff remains poised to open schools on time, to maintain new buildings and building systems, and to continue the implementation of the Long-range Master Facility Plan.

In closing, over the last few years, the Corps and DCPS working together have accomplished much:

- Roofs have been replaced in 31% of schools
- Heating and air conditioning repairs have been made in 51% of schools
- Temporary air conditioning has been installed in 50% of schools
- Underground storage tanks have been removed at 18% of schools
- Asbestos management plans are in place at 100% of schools
- Partial asbestos abatement on an emergency basis has been performed in 90% of schools
- Bathroom renovations are complete or underway in 54% of schools
- Window replacements are complete or underway in 14% of schools
- Interior repairs have been made in 75% of schools
- Security systems are being installed in 20% of schools
- Americans with Disabilities Act projects are done as requirements are identified – to date work has been completed in 12% of schools
- Complete modernization projects have begun in 8% of schools

The DCPS capital improvement program has grown substantially in recent years. Much has been accomplished. Much more needs to be done. With your support, I am confident that our DCPS partners and we will continue to make dramatic school improvements.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my remarks. I'm happy to respond to your questions.