



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING**  
**1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW**  
**WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004**

**David Grosso**  
Councilmember At-Large  
Chairperson, Committee on Education

**Committee Member**  
Health  
Human Services  
Judiciary and Public Safety

July 27, 2018

The Honorable Muriel Bowser  
Mayor of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Mayor Bowser:

As you engage in the process to nominate a new Chancellor for D.C. Public Schools (DCPS), I wanted to share with you some thoughts on characteristics I believe are important for the future leader of the school system and request a meeting to discuss how we can work together on this process. Serving on the Committee on Education for the past five and a half years, first as a member and now as chairperson, and working closely with the past two Chancellors on various initiatives has afforded me a unique perspective on the state of public education in D.C. and how that interplays with the role of Chancellor. Given this past school year's challenges, I believe this selection process provides a new opportunity to build trust with the community. It is important that we get this right.

Over the years we have seen DCPS transform from an underperforming school system to one that is nationally known for its growth and innovation and now to one that is mired in controversy. With that said, I have consistently heard across the community concerns about the public process and the composition of the search committee. I'd love to hear more details on your plans to engage the community in this process.

I know you will undoubtedly put forward a nominee whose resume shows depth and experience in public education, hopefully both in the classroom and as an administrator. However, neither titles nor the number of degrees held are as important to me as a candidate's past work demonstrating an abiding commitment to closing the achievement gap. DCPS has certainly made tremendous gains in terms of academic performance over the past few years; however, the achievement gap between minority students and their white peers persists and the overall academic success of DCPS hinges on whether these students are able to go further, faster.

Across the community town halls I have been holding this summer, students have discussed the need for more mental health supports in their schools. As you know, this has been a focus of the work of the Education Committee, and I appreciate your support in this effort. To that end, I would hope that the next Chancellor continues the commitment to social and emotional learning that Chancellor Wilson began. Students will be able to learn when they are in environments conducive to learning. This means environments where they feel loved and supported. A Chancellor committed to building our teaching force's ability to recognize trauma and act accordingly, along with providing resources that support trauma-informed instruction, will allow our students to truly meet their highest potential.

A willingness to engage in cross-sector collaboration is also important, especially as D.C.'s school-aged population continues to grow and students are mobile across LEAs. Students participating in my town halls have had experience in both traditional public and public charter schools and they have made no distinction between the two. While a DCPS Chancellor's first priority must be DCPS schools, there is value in learning and partnering with other LEAs. Through this learning, I believe we can have a strong, thriving, by-right system of schools across the city.

I am certain that you can find someone who embodies all of these characteristics and much more. I hope you will keep these thoughts in mind as you review resumes and speak with candidates. I am committed to a fair confirmation process and look forward to working with you over the next few months.

Sincerely,



David Grosso  
Councilmember, At-Large  
Chairperson, Committee on Education