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NOVEMBER 2, 2018

OUR SCHOOLS

CHANCELLOR SEARCH COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT REPORT

2018



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A LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

November 2, 2018

Dear DCPS Stakeholders,

Serving as the Chancellor for DC Public Schools (DCPS) is an unequalled opportunity for a visionary leader. A leader can take advantage of the many educational resources of the Nation's Capital to advance even greater attainment for DC students and teachers, families and communities throughout the District.

Great educational leadership starts with a deep commitment to ensuring excellence at all educational levels, in all school activities, throughout all 8 wards. This type of leadership requires a clear and compelling vision for the future of DCPS; a bold plan to fulfill the vision through measurable goals supported by sufficient resources to ensure their achievement; and the ability to motivate all participants to collaborate creatively and cooperatively in taking the actions necessary to implement the plan.

In June of 2018, Mayor Muriel Bowser appointed the Our Schools Leadership Committee (the Committee) to advise her on the factors she should consider in selecting the new Chancellor. The membership of this committee is diverse, representing all 8 wards, and includes parents, students, teachers, school leaders and educational leaders.

Over the summer and through the fall, we held a series of community engagement forums and focus groups across the District. This engagement process served as an opportunity to provide an overview of progress of DCPS to date, to emphasize areas of focus for the next Chancellor, and to hear from residents about their priorities for DCPS. The members of the Committee met five times, attended three community forums, attended five focus groups with students, teachers and principals, and conducted an online survey to review the issues at stake in the Chancellor selection process.

The report we present to you now highlights the priorities and diverse perspectives from hundreds of stakeholders who are intimately invested in not only the process that guides the selection of our next Chancellor, but also in the continued success of DCPS. You will see that the recommendations contained within reflect on the skill set, experience, and qualities of what an ideal Chancellor would display, and will serve as a guide as we continue our selection process and the overall progress of our students and schools.

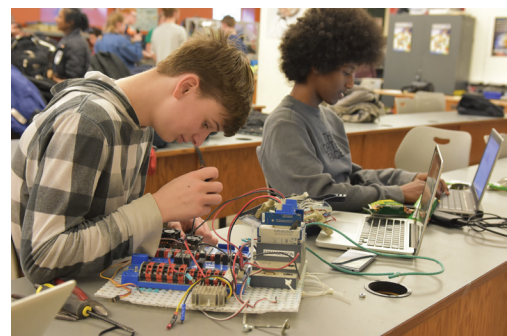
We thank Mayor Bowser for the opportunity to offer this report as guidance during the selection of the new DCPS Chancellor. The Committee hopes that the Mayor accepts the Committee's strong sense of urgency that the Chancellor will improve student outcomes for our students, families and our community.

Sincerely,

The Our Schools Leadership Committee

Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Co-Chair

Dr. Charlene Drew Jarvis
Co-Chair





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our community engagement process offers DC residents an important opportunity to inform the selection of a new Chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and impact the future of education reform in the city. By engaging in a process based in community feedback, we will create the best possible start for the new Chancellor and empower that person to build on DCPS's strengths while strategically addressing critical areas of growth.

The new Chancellor will be in place for the 2019-20 school year.

SELECTION PROCESS

The current process builds extensively on the recent Chancellor search process and strategic plan development. It serves to reinforce and supplement our strategies in different ways.

1. CITYWIDE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

On behalf of the Our Schools Leadership Committee, the Deputy Mayor for Education conducted three citywide community forums, hosted focus groups, and conducted an online survey. This community engagement report summarizes the input and feedback received through the forums and online surveys and informed the Our Schools Leadership Committee's recommendations to Mayor Muriel Bowser of factors to consider in the selection of the Chancellor. Additionally, the Our Schools Leadership Committee received letters from many wards, council members and other stakeholders; visit ourschools.dc.gov/page/engage for their input.

Three citywide community forums provided community members an opportunity to discuss:

- a) consideration factors when selecting the new Chancellor
- b) priorities on which the new Chancellor should focus
- c) the direction of DCPS

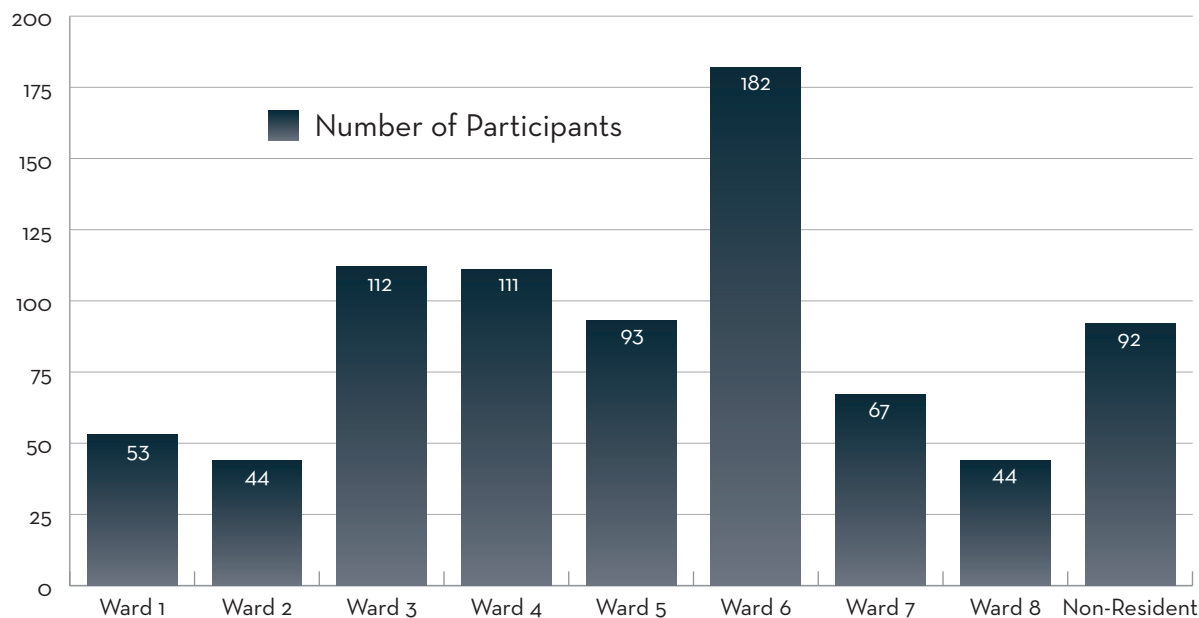
Participants received background information and participated in facilitated breakout discussions with fellow community members.

The three forums included:

- Cardozo Education Center | August 14, 2018
90 participants of 210 registered
- Savoy Elementary School | August 28, 2018
65 participants of 150 registered
- Brookland Middle School | September 11, 2018 | 50 participants of 130 registered

Several focus groups provided additional opportunity for key stakeholders to contribute. The focus groups included:

- Student Focus Group | September 18, 2018
20 students from across several wards



- Teacher Focus Group #1 | August 15, 2018
14 attendees from across several wards
- Teacher Focus Group #2 | August 15, 2018
20 attendees from across several wards including educators from Watkins, Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan, School Without Walls, Key, Woodson, Johnson, Jefferson
- Principal Focus Group | September 26
12 attendees of 16 registered

**“WE HAVE TO MAKE OUR
SCHOOLS LOVABLE...KIDS NEED
TO WANT TO BE HERE.”**

2. OUR SCHOOLS LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser appointed a panel of 17 individuals to provide her with recommendations about factors to consider when selecting the next Chancellor. Committee members have diverse backgrounds and experiences and are highly invested in the success of DCPS.

Committee members were asked to attend at least one of the citywide community forums and to consider community input before making recommendations to the Mayor.

3. CHANCELLOR HIRING PROCESS

The Our Schools Leadership Committee report is submitted to the Mayor for her use and consideration in hiring the next Chancellor.

METHODOLOGY OF ANALYSIS

The key takeaways in this report are the result of combined analysis of worksheets, facilitator notes, and online feedback. All worksheets were transcribed and read for themes and key takeaways. Responses that could be tallied were counted for frequency to allow participants' most chosen responses to emerge. Facilitator notes and open-answer responses were analyzed in two ways: tallying the frequency of themes being repeated throughout, as well as having staff read through responses to provide their respective takeaways.

Contributors to the process are referred to as “participants” or “community members” throughout the report. Declarative statements are used throughout the report (e.g., “The Chancellor should focus on...”). Such statements refer to analysis based on participant feedback and should not be considered objective assessments or representative of all community members.



“WE NEED A CHANCELLOR WHO UNDERSTANDS THE LANDSCAPE OF A GENTRIFYING CITY AND HOW TO FIGHT FOR OUR UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.”

RESULTS

The discussions and worksheets centered around 2 queries, organized by “activity,” for community members to consider:

Activity 1: DCPS Priorities: In what priority areas would you want a new Chancellor to focus?

Activity 2: Desired Qualities, Skills, and Experience: In order to accelerate DCPS’s progress on the priority areas you identified above, what qualities, skills, and experiences are most important for the new Chancellor to have?

Below are the key takeaways identified by community members who participated in the process. These takeaways are further analyzed in the pages that follow.

ACTIVITY 1: DCPS PRIORITIES

The priority areas the Chancellor should focus on include:

- Closing the opportunity (achievement) gap
- Recruiting great teachers and school leaders, and retaining them
- Increasing authentic parent and community engagement and communication
- Implementing stronger child-focused solutions
- Strengthening pathways to college and career readiness
- Setting clear goals and managing DCPS towards achieving those goals

ACTIVITY 2: DESIRED QUALITIES, SKILLS, AND EXPERIENCE

The new Chancellor should embody:

- Professionalism with an instructional background and experience in urban education
- Integrity beyond reproach and accountability to DCPS students, parents, and teachers
- An understanding of the unique District of Columbia education community and climate
- Inspirational leadership and resiliency



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OUR SCHOOLS LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRS

Sylvia Mathews Burwell

DCPS Parent, President of American University

Dr. Charlene Drew Jarvis

UDC Board of Trustees

OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Christopher Bergfalk

DCPS Parent, DCPS Teacher and
WTU Member

Anita Berger

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the Year

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Antwanye Ford

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Zion Matthews

DCPS Student

Terence Ngwa

DCPS Teacher and WTU Executive Director

Victor Reinoso

DCPS Parent, Founder of Hopscotch Ventures

Tatiana Robinson

DCPS Student



KEY TAKEAWAYS

The following key takeaways and analysis represent feedback collected from all three community meetings (via worksheet responses and facilitator notes), all four focus groups, and online survey responses.

ON WHAT PRIORITY AREAS SHOULD THE NEW CHANCELLOR FOCUS?

The priority areas the Chancellor should focus on include:

- Closing the opportunity (achievement) gap
- Recruiting great teachers and school leaders, and retaining them
- Increasing authentic parent and community engagement and communication
- Implementing stronger child-focused solutions
- Strengthening pathways to college and career readiness
- Setting clear goals and managing DCPS towards achieving those goals

Closing the opportunity (achievement) gap

- Closing the opportunity (achievement) gap will lead to improvements in many other priority areas (e.g., increasing graduation rates, college enrollment, career readiness, improvement in middle school and high school outcomes).
- Because the opportunity (achievement) gap mirrors racial and socio-economic disparities in the city, many believe that resources should be distributed equitably throughout the District according to need.
- Principals would like to see courageous conversation about what equity looks like throughout the District.
- Exploring how the business community can positively impact students especially in areas of unequal distribution of wealth in a gentrifying city.

“I WANT A CHANCELLOR WHO UNDERSTANDS SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND STEM EDUCATION, HAS EXPERIENCE WITH ACADEMICS, AND HOW OUR PROGRAMS CAN PREPARE GRADUATES FOR IN-DEMAND JOBS.”



- Many would like to see investment in schools, making technology a priority.
- Many believe more career and technology programs should be implemented inside schools.

Recruiting great teachers and school leaders, and retaining them

- There is a desire to give teachers and school leaders more autonomy over their schools and classrooms.
- Teachers would like to work in a supportive, respectful, and high functioning environment.
- Students would like teachers who are invested in seeing students succeed.

“WE NEED A CHANCELLOR WHO CAN REACH OUT TO ALL PARENTS, WHO IS WILLING TO GO OUT INTO ALL COMMUNITIES, ESPECIALLY THOSE COMMUNITIES THAT ARE UNDERSERVED.”

Increasing authentic parent and community engagement and communication

- Principals would like a Chancellor who supports parents experiencing social and economic barriers.
- Teachers would like a Chancellor who is visible in the community and is a visible part of the solutions for students’ success.
- Students would like a Chancellor who is accessible to them and who will listen to their concerns and needs. They would like someone who is present and actively involved.

- Parents and community members would like a partner who communicates with transparency.

Implementing stronger child-focused solutions

- Principals would like to close the trauma response gaps in classes to ensure a healthy learning environment for all students.
- Teachers would like training and support on how to advance and relate to students who may be facing the effects of trauma or other significant personal issues.
- Students would like a safe and confidential environment where they can communicate openly.
- Students would like more programs for career mobility such as college prep, technical courses, etc.



- Many would like to see more special education classes and wrap around/mental health/human rights services in all schools to identify and address the specific needs of each child.

Strengthening pathways to college and career readiness

- A successful candidate has a vision for or experience with developing programs to address workforce readiness beginning at the elementary level through High School (e.g., communication skills, critical thinking).
- A successful candidate has experience building educational programs designed to prepare students for career choices and planning.
- A successful candidate has experience with or a vision for creating partnerships with the business community to expose students to what will be expected of them in the workforce of tomorrow (e.g., classroom partnerships, internships).

Setting clear goals and managing DCPS towards achieving those goals

- DCPS priorities need to be embodied in a set of measurable goals and targets, with timetables for action on which the organization needs to focus collectively.
- DCPS should sustain focus on its progress against these goals through on-going and systematic use of data.

THE NEW CHANCELLOR SHOULD EMBODY:

- Deep expertise in ensuring equity in the education system
- Professionalism with an instructional background and experience in urban education
- Integrity beyond reproach and accountability to DCPS students, parents, and teachers
- An understanding of the unique District of Columbia education community and climate
- Inspirational leadership and resiliency
- Track record of successfully meeting the priorities identified in this report

**“STUDENTS WOULD LIKE
A CHANCELLOR WHO IS
ACCESSIBLE TO THEM
AND WILL LISTEN TO THEIR
CONCERNS AND NEEDS.”**



Deep expertise in ensuring equity in the education system

- The candidate must have deep knowledge of the issues that challenge educational equity including, but not limited to: school culture and climate; exclusionary school discipline; police presence and school-based arrests; implicit bias; and the need for awareness and training on social and emotional learning, trauma responsive practices, alternative discipline, and disability rights.

“I WANT SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS POLITICS, BUT WHO’S NOT A POLITICIAN.”

Professionalism with an instructional background and experience in urban education

- The successful candidate should have experience leading a large school district, classroom and school leadership experience, and a proven track record of bringing original ideas and solutions.
- The successful candidate should have a strong ability to set measurable goals and incorporate data into solutions-development.

Integrity beyond reproach and accountability to DCPS students, parents, and teachers

- The successful candidate will be community driven, honest, and transparent in efforts to work for and with the community for the betterment of students.

An understanding of the unique District of Columbia education community and climate

- Many in the community would like a politically astute Chancellor with strong DC ties and a deep understanding of the climate and culture throughout the District.
- The successful candidate will be able to navigate the complex political and inter-agency landscape in DC.



- The successful candidate will have a strong appreciation for operating in a vibrant system including charter schools and DCPS while remaining strongly focused on improving DCPS.

Inspirational leadership and resiliency

- Many in the community would like a leader who can inspire staff and students while building lasting relationships with parents and community members.

Track record of successfully meeting the priorities identified in this report

- The successful candidate should demonstrate a track record of success in achieving the Our Schools Leadership Committee stated priorities, including closing the opportunity (achievement) gap, retaining educators, increasing authentic engagement and implementing child-focused solutions.

QUESTIONS

In addition to the Our Schools Leadership Committee Chancellor Search Report, the committee compiled a list of questions for the Mayor to consider as part of her interviews with candidates. The list of questions can be found at ourschools.dc.gov/page/engage.

APPENDICES

For response analysis and individual participant responses from the community engagement effort, go to: <http://ourschools.dc.gov/page/engage>.



