



Hillcrest Community Civic Association

"Working Together for a Better Community"

www.HillcrestDC.com

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October 13, 2016

To the respective members of the DCPS Chancellor Search Committee, Mayor Bowser, Deputy Mayor for Education Niles, and the Boyden Executive Search Firm:

As many of you know, the Hillcrest community located in Ward 7 is an educational and political hotspot—in recent years it has been home to two Mayors, city council members, countless educational leaders for local and federal entities, founders and principals of both traditional and charter public schools, teachers, employees, advocates, and parents.

More importantly, Ward 7 is home to the second highest number of school-aged children in the District and has some of the lowest performing schools—4 of which were actually closed recently. The Hillcrest community is and will continue to be an educational stakeholder and will fight for educational opportunity, equity, and school and system improvement.

The Education Committee of the Hillcrest Community Civic Association (HCCA) has monitored the DCPS Chancellor search closely and our representatives attended each of the three community meetings. On behalf of Hillcrest, we ask that you read and respond, in writing, to our position with regard to the search for a new DCPS chancellor and our priority issues facing education in Washington, DC. Below are our priorities for consideration in ranking order:

Hire a chancellor who is a visionary leader with demonstrable experience managing system-wide change.

We expect this new leader will have significant classroom and local leadership experience. The chosen candidate must also demonstrate the requisite expertise and skills to continue the reforms underway as well as identify and drive additional systemic change.

Ensure the new chancellor embraces the urgency around providing educational equity, quality, and opportunity for schools and their students East of the River.

In addition to providing high quality education, public schools are neutral, safe community hubs. DCPS must capitalize on this and ensure that all students—but especially vulnerable and disenfranchised populations—have their educational, psycho-social, emotional, and health needs addressed. Our students' needs must be matched by the system's resource allocation and our DCPS leadership must aggressively address the black-white achievement gap that continues to be pervasive in Washington, DC.

Build a leadership team that will re-configure DCPS to better serve DC ward by ward.

The District must build a leadership team—starting with the new Chancellor—that will transform the system to meet the needs of local schools based on Ward need, as identified by real-time data. The leadership must ensure that the system is dynamic and fluid enough to allow schools in neighborhoods to become community centers of education, cultural influence, and cohesion.

Assure that final chancellor candidates possess demonstrable experience in building a strong K-12 education pipeline, with a focus on addressing middle school gaps.

Significant investment has been made in early and elementary education and career and college readiness and access at the high school level. Now, we must drive significant investment in our middle grades to ensure a seamless k-12 pipeline. We want more high-quality options for students who would attend traditional public middle schools. The new chancellor must lead the creation of high quality middle school options that are equitably spread across the District of Columbia, including East of the River.

We look forward to your response and thank you for your dedication to all students in Washington, DC.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Hillcrest Community Civic Association,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanne Contardo". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Jeanne" and last name "Contardo" clearly legible.

Jeanne Contardo, Ph.D.
HCCA Education Committee Chair



The Honorable Mayor Muriel Elizabeth Bowser

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest
Washington, District of Columbia 20004

Friday, September 30, 2016

Mayor Muriel Elizabeth Bowser,

As you know, the District of Columbia Public School (DCPS) system is currently seeking a new Chancellor, a position extremely important to the heartbeat of our communities – our schools. Given the growing achieving gap between our students in Wards 7 and 8, it is of the most significant importance to our group of advocates that the next Chancellor have a clear understanding of a) the sense of urgency around focusing on our lowest performing schools b) working diligently to alleviate many of the boundaries preventing Ward 7 and 8 schools from succeed and c) employ Central Office staff who understand the diverse needs of Ward 7 and 8 schools and families and do everything in their power to ensure East of the River schools are progressing each and every day.

After several meetings and conversations, the East of the River Education Advocates have collectively agreed that in order to ensure Ward 7 and 8 schools are successful, we highly recommend naming **Mr. Rahman Branch**, former Principal of Ballou High School and current Director of African-American Affairs for the District of Columbia or **Dr. Mark King**, former Deputy Chief of School Operations and Programs for the District of Columbia Public School system. Both individuals have extensive experience teaching and leading within schools in addition to having the academic background needed to support and supplement their leadership experience.

The East of the River Education Advocates have identified the following priority **qualities, skills and experience** to be most important for the new Chancellor of DCPS. This individual should be able to successfully:

A Visionary
Persistent
Great Communicator

Effective Leader
Ability to Inspire Staff
Ability to Authentically Engage
the Public

School Turnaround Specialist
Special Education Experience
Students with Disabilities

Additionally, the new Chancellor should also prioritize:

- Increase Opportunities for all Students
- Decrease Truancy
- Improve School Culture and Safety
- Increase Parent and Community Engagement
- Increase Student Satisfaction
- Increase Graduation Rates
- Increase quality of special education services and focus on improvement of life outcomes for students with disabilities.



When Ward 7 and Ward 8 school begin to success, the entire District of Columbia School system will succeed. In order for DCPS to better serve its students in Wards 7 and 8, the new Chancellor must complete the following:

- Hire a competent, experienced Chancellor
- Hire teachers and school leaders of color that reflect the current student population. These individuals must be experienced and successful at turning around historically failing schools
- Hire teachers with experience working with special education and special needs students
- Incorporate a data-driven, Central Office employee base
- Require a community engagement strategy that is proven to work in cities with a visible socio-economic and racial divide
- Incorporate a social justice curriculum that reflects the true changes occurring within the District of Columbia
- Create a hiring systems that is transparent, inclusive and inviting to members of the school community (i.e. alumni, parents, community leaders, etc.)

Sincerely,

East of the River Education Advocates

Markus Batchelor, Ward 8
India Blocker, Ward 8
Sheila Bunn, Ward 8
Mark Calligan, Ward 8
Sheila Carson-Carr, Ward 7
Thea Dyson, Ward 8
Tina L. Fletcher, Ward 8
Sirraya Gant, Ward 8
Wendy Glenn, Ward 8
Mike Grier, Ward 8
Shakira Hemphill, Ward 8
Antawan Holmes, Ward 7
Iris Jacob, Ward 8
Ab Jordan, Ward 8
Shekita McBroom, Ward 8
Robin McKinney, Ward 8
Patricia Malloy, Ward 7
Jimell Sanders, Ward 7
David Smith, Ward 7
Trayon White, Ward 8
Jimmie Williams, Ward 7

Cc:

Deputy Mayor for Education Jennifer Niles
DC City Council Chairman Phil Mendelson
DC City Council Education Chair David Grosso
DC City Council Education Committee Members
DCPS Rising Leadership Council