



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Chancellor

August 23, 2010

To all Parents and Guardians of DCPS Children,

Welcome to a new school year in DCPS! Together, after much work over the past three years, we have created a strong foundation for a system that can support you in ways that have not been possible until now. DCPS students are reaching higher levels of proficiency in both reading and math in both elementary and secondary schools. Black students, Hispanic students, and English Language Learners are performing at a higher level in 2010 than they were three years ago, and the percentage of DCPS students scoring advanced has nearly doubled.

We need your help to build on this progress, and many of you have reached out to ask more about how to get on the right foot with your child at the start of the school year. Here are a few things you can do this week that will count all year long.

- Add **Back to School Night** and **teacher conference days** to your calendar. Be sure you have the contact information for your child's teachers, administrators and support staff. Stay in close touch with them throughout the year about your child's progress, and seek their advice on how you can help at home to build your child's skills.
- Create a **routine and schedule for daily study/homework and nightly rest**. If your middle or high school children say they don't need you anymore for school, don't fall for it! You may be providing structure in different ways as your children become more independent, but they will need you every step of the way.
- **Talk with your child daily about what he or she is learning**. Ask probing questions that can't be answered with a "Yes," "No," or a "Fine."
- **Join the parent organization** at your school and attend the meetings whenever you can.
- See our **Back to School page on [dcps.dc.gov](http://dcps.dc.gov)**!
- Finally, sometimes your child will face a challenge you have no idea how to help him or her to overcome. We all find ourselves in this position at some point, so please **do not hesitate to come to us for help**. It is our job and desire to support you in the demanding work of educating your child.

Here are some things you can expect from us to stay connected to you this year:

- For the first time this year, **family engagement coordinators** will be detailed to 34 schools to support the school's ongoing efforts to engage families.
- **Parent Resource Centers** in Ward 1 (Tubman), 7 (Shadd) and 8 (M.C. Terrell) will be offering programs for parents to support children's academic achievement.
- Using your input on topics you want to discuss, we are scheduling Parent Chats, Living Room Meetings, and Community Forums that are relevant and helpful to parents. Stay up-to-date on **upcoming events and announcements** by signing up for Parent News on [dcps.dc.gov](http://dcps.dc.gov).

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- We will post important information and share DCPS stories on our website, **Facebook and Twitter** accounts.
  - We will add **text messaging** to our list of options for receiving important announcements such as weather and closing updates. (Though let's hope the snow will not put on a repeat performance from last year!)
  - If you ever feel stuck with a question or concern at the school level, our **Critical Response Team (CRT)** is here to help you. They will also regularly post answers to the current "Top 10 Questions" from parents and the community on [dcps.dc.gov](http://dcps.dc.gov), and they are available at **(202) 478-5738**.

Our goal is to engage with you in every way we can in helping your child to achieve his or her dreams. You have my support as you set high expectations with your child and support him or her to meet those expectations every day. As always, my line and email are open to you. Have a terrific school year!

Sincerely,



Michelle Rhee  
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