

August, 2009

Dear DCPS Teachers,

Your work makes all the difference in our students' lives. What you do in the classroom can give children positive opportunities to choose from in the future. Over the past two years, I have seen your passion for this important and difficult work, even in the face of the countless challenges that follow our students into school every day.

Many of you have developed the craft of teaching over decades, driven by a belief that all of your students can learn. You have persevered through the obstacles that would deter those with lesser determination. Others of you are new to this profession, taking each day as an opportunity to assess and improve.

Whatever your level of experience, you know how complicated and demanding teaching can be. Time and time again, in conversations I've had with DCPS teachers all across the city, I have heard a desire for clarity about what we, as a system, believe good instruction looks like and about the support it takes to achieve that vision. The Teaching and Learning Framework is a step toward providing this clarity on the way to our goals.

### The Teaching and Learning Framework

Over the past year, with your input through a variety of listening sessions and focus groups, we have developed the *DCPS Teaching and Learning Framework*, which outlines a structure for effective teaching. The Framework clearly shows what is expected of our teachers, and stresses that not all good teaching has to look the same. It is not about curricula, textbooks, or intervention programs. It's about the key skills, behaviors, and mindsets that effective teachers exhibit.

### Using the Framework This Year

Beginning this school year, this common Framework will be used to guide the development of DCPS teachers at all levels of skill and experience. Many of the processes in the Framework may be familiar to you; others may be new. For our veteran teachers, the Framework likely represents much of what you have been doing for years. But it may offer new insights, too. For beginning and mid-career teachers, the Framework will offer a blueprint for your learning.

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## Using Feedback to Support Teacher Professional Growth

Many of you have asked us to move away from “one-size-fits-all” workshops for professional development. As a result, professional development in DCPS this year is going to be very different than it has been in the past. It’s going to be differentiated, substantive, and relevant. More often than not, it’s going to happen in *your* classroom, not in an auditorium. And we’re going to have more time for professional development. We’ve worked closely with the Washington Teachers’ Union to add time into the school calendar to provide additional assistance.

Thank you for your dedication to and unwavering belief in your students, and for helping to turn their capabilities into achievement this year. As you do, my sincere hope is that the Teaching and Learning Framework will bring us one step closer to ensuring that all DCPS students have the skills and opportunities that match their enormous potential.

Sincerely,



Michelle Rhee