



February 15, 2013

Councilmember David Catania
Chairperson, Committee on Education
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Room 404
Washington, DC 20004

Councilmember Catania –

At the regular meeting of the Committee on Education held on January 23, 2013, I presented the Final Consolidation and Reorganization Plan of 2013. During our discussion, the Committee requested that we share more information about our plans to ensure smooth transitions for the school communities impacted by the consolidations.

Our principal goal is to ensure the effective transition of all students, families, and school staff in both consolidating and receiving schools throughout the remainder of this school year, into SY13-14, and beyond.

There are four strands of work that we will undertake to support the fulfillment of the principal goal:

1. **We seek to minimize the loss of students through the transition – we want families to stay in DCPS.** We are mounting an aggressive recruitment strategy at each receiving school in coordination with the closing school leaders to retain and attract students and families. We will also strengthen our existing mechanisms to track enrollment and ensure we know where students ultimately enroll at the start of the school year.
2. **We will ensure students and families have comprehensive information about the receiving school and feel welcomed in their new school.** We will work cooperatively through our principals and parent leaders to prepare and share school information on a regular basis.
3. **We will create smooth transitions for impacted teachers, non-instructional staff and principals.** Our Central Office Staffing Team will continue to work cooperatively with the school-based representatives according to the guidelines outlined in our respective union and employment contracts.
4. **We will minimize interruption in the school's daily operations at closing schools.** Instruction doesn't stop and though elements of the transition process will begin prior to the end of the school year, we want the students, teachers, and school leaders to be able to focus on academics.

As I stated following the release of the final consolidation plan in January, we heard three principle themes resoundingly from the community: the expectation that all of our schools should offer students the same opportunity for robust programming; that our children are safe in school and as they travel to and from school; and that we use all of the resources effectively. With respect to the staffing and

budget for the upcoming school year, how we reinvest funds as a result of the consolidations will be reflected in our school budgets which will be included as part of the Mayor's submission to Council in March. However, we have a process in place to ensure the necessary equipment and supplies available to students at the closing school will be appropriately allocated at the receiving school.

We have attached a number of documents that detail the various elements of the plan of approach to achieve our goals. We submit to you:

1. A summary document that outlines the broad categories of work and the critical work paths
2. A multi-phased marketing and outreach plan to support the retention, recruitment and enrollment of students at the consolidating schools
3. An FAQ document for school-based staff that outlines the process and supports available during transition.

Some of the work we have identified is happening now, particularly as it relates to marketing and recruitment efforts. We are working on the engagement of a communications and graphics firm to help coordinate and implement the transition marketing plan over the next six months. We are also assessing and meeting with several of our many partners to identify and secure resources and in-kind contributions to support and incentivize schools and their recruitment and enrollment efforts.

Additionally, we have assigned central office staff to serve as Transition Coordinators who will work in close partnership with the designated school-based staff. These coordinators will facilitate general logistics and community-level engagement in and between the closing and receiving schools. The Transition Coordinators also serve as the school's single point of contact to ensure seamless communications between the central office and school-based staff.

These documents will also be posted to the DCPS website for the benefit of the public prior to our FY12 Performance Oversight Hearing.

As I've stated before, I was humbled, throughout the process of announcing and finalizing these consolidations, by the hard work and commitment that community members dedicated to their schools. I've been inspired by the vision for DCPS that we heard articulated from those communities and the Council. And finally, I am excited at the opportunity to harness that energy as we move forward together to build long-term stability and equity our schools.

Kind regards,



Kaya Henderson
Chancellor

Attachment