

DCPS Graduation Policy and Regulations Public Feedback

Overview

From June 22 to July 22, 2018, DCPS collected public feedback on draft policies and regulations regarding attendance, student promotion, secondary grading, and graduation. In addition to online submissions, DCPS received public feedback at two community forums on July 19, 2018. Through the online review process and community forums, DCPS received 256 comments on policies and 37 comments on regulations. The public comments informed the policies, regulations, and implementation protocols that will go into effect in SY18-19. A full list of the public comments on the policies and regulations is included below.

Policy Comments

This looks clear and reasonable. One important things would be to link the communication of multiple absences through ASPEN or other software to take burden off school staff.

I agree that ASPEN should be able to do more. Teachers take attendance through ASPEN, yet it provides little in the way of functionality. There may be more that ASPEN can do but as a teacher at the elementary level it's of little use to us and we are not trained it any useful features it has. It would be great if parents could access their student's info through a parent portal, teachers could communicate with parents through ASPEN, and different information tracked in ASPEN could communicate with each other (report card information can be filled in using assessment data instead of having to manually put in formation that is already in ASPEN just in a different section, for example). Maybe some of this happens at that high school level, but certainly not at elementary.

I have concerns about labeling a student chronically absent for excused absences, specifically if the absences are health related. For example, if a student has severe and persistent asthma, he/she would be deemed chronically absent should they experience multiple flare ups during the school year. The label "chronically absent" has such a negative connotation for a health condition that could be unavoidable.

In addition, I find it problematic that a secondary student can accumulate 29 unexcused absences in a single course within a full school year and still receive a passing grade. This is entirely too many absences and I don't believe a secondary student who accumulates these many absences can remain academically successful in that course. I don't believe this particular policy will set DCPS graduates up to be successful in the post graduate world.

If a student is chronically ill or has a medical condition that would require them to miss many days of school, they would/should Apply for HIP programming through DCPS. In these instances, they work not be coded as conically absent.

I'm very glad you expanded college visits as an "excused absence" for all HS students, not just seniors - thanks! It still needs to clarify how academic activities such as National History Day participation get handled - there isn't a way for the parent to select academic activities as a reason for an excused absence.

It undermines the credibility of ANY policy when it's clear the schools can't keep accurate records. DCPS needs a better handle on the systems used to track attendance. We repeatedly had to track down attendance counselors to fix "unexcused absences" that were "excused". for a single day, I

received text, email and phone messages -- all for different classes including one that wasn't even on the schedule for that day (block scheduling).

I also believe the schools need a way to track the 80/20 rule while still giving the child credit for the classes they did attend. I understand wanting to make sure that kids are in seat enough of the day to count but missing one class while showing up for 3 and getting marked absent for the entire day gives a highly inaccurate picture of the child's actual attendance.

This is my thinking exactly! My children's high school does not keep accurate records of absences. I too have spent WAY too much time this past year tracking down attendance counselors to fix inaccurate "unexcused absences." At least a few of these happened during a two-day class field trip and during various excused absences for testing and school-sponsored extra-curricular events during the school day. I understand that the attendance counselors may be overwhelmed and doing their best. But if these absences are to be in a student's permanent record, they MUST be accurate. Parents are already working hard enough at raising families, jobs, etc. To ask them to receive and respond to several texts, phone calls AND emails a week is just too much (we have more than one student at our high school). There should be a written record of which days were marked unexcused and excused included with each report card to at least help in the time-consuming, frustrating process of correcting mistakes (which involves looking back at calendars, checking in with students' recollections, cross-referencing emailed excuse forms, etc.). Our principal said there is no way to fix the auto-notification system as it is a district-wide system and not specific to our school. The District needs to fix it as this is crazy! I have given up on this past year - I just do not have the time to wade through it all anymore...

Article IV, section G, Attendance, Grading, and Promotion: no student with 30 or more unexcused absences should be promoted. They have clearly not attended the class sufficiently to do the next level of work expected. They should be held back in all cases. No social promotion, no exceptions.

A single term is 45 days. For semester courses, students would have missed 1/3 of the course material. Students need to be required at least 80% of the course for promotion.

The policy does not hold kids/families accountable until they reach 30 absences for a particular course. In some cases that's a 3rd of the course (if it's a half year course) The threshold for an FA should be shorter (20 days) or the grade drop should be reinstated at 10 or 15 days. Without these measures, this policy will lead to a burden being placed on teachers and school staff to come up with creative ways and at times questionable ways to pass students who have missed entirely too much instruction.

I go both ways on this. My brother--in-law was a competitive skier in high school and missed 40 days senior year in tournaments. His dad got called into the office to discuss the "problem. " His dad asked what grades the child had, and the answer was "all A's." His dad's response was, "If my son can miss 40 days and still get A's in your school, then your school has the problem." Sometimes kids have opportunities that, while not school-sponsored, may be very motivating and educational. Sometimes teachers are lackluster and uninspiring, and the student learns as much or more out of school ...especially if the absences are for opportunities like travel or competitions. If a student can get the work ahead of time and/or make up within a specified window, I think that teaches the student how to manage time. On the other hand, as a teacher, I know how difficult it is when students miss. Your prearranged group activities don't work as planned; some students are behind in class discussions, etc. Then because the onus is on the teacher to get the students to pass, the teachers are giving up lunch/ after school/ before school/ emailing/ calling home trying to catch the kids up. Making retakes for kids who missed and failed and need a retake is very time consuming. Some kids completely collapse when they miss school. I would advocate for some way to have pre-arranged absences

OK'd with an agreement on what work would be made up/done in lieu of classwork. Maybe kids could watch Khan academy online and submit a reflection, do a google forms quiz, complete a packet, etc. if they know they'll be out and that way they aren't penalized for the absence. Or maybe they discuss a character in literature with their grandma/ grandpa and write a reflection on that. But there would have to be protection for the teacher and school if the student didn't follow through.

One area that is not addressed in this document is how students who transfer into DCPS from other states or other countries are treated. If a student arrives at a school in March of the school year, has no absences and gets passing grades in their classes do they get credit for a full year. I think that the transfer policy and how it interacts with and applies to attendance is necessary.

Thanks for flagging! We're a new DCPS family and have never heard of HIP programming.

I go both ways on this. My brother in law missed 40 days of his senior year in competitive skiing. His dad got called to the office to discuss the "problem." His dad asked what grades the student had, and was told, "all A's." His dad replied, "If my son can miss 40 days and get A's, it's your school that has the problem." Some experiences not on the list of excused absences can be incredibly meaningful and educational. Some families need to visit family other than on DCPS vacation. I would try to find a way for students to complete work either before or after the time - have agreed-upon body of work, so that they aren't penalized. But, as a teacher, I know that having kids absent makes for all kinds of headaches. Kids are at various levels of understanding, so unless you differentiate like crazy (which is time-consuming), some kids may be bored, and others confused. Your well-planned group activities fall apart if kids are absent with no warning. And with the burden on the teachers to get the students to pass, teachers spend a lot of time chasing students to make up work, making alternative activities/redo's, giving up lunch, calling home, etc. Some students cannot handle making up A while moving ahead with B and just fall apart if they miss too much school.

There should be concerns raised about tardiness. If a student misses a certain time period of class (more than 50%) then the student should be considered absent. It is not fair if a student does not attend class to consider them present for that class.

Also 30 days to have an automatic failure is an extreme amount of absence. There are only 45 days in a term and therefore if a student misses (unexcused absences) 20% of the days of the term (10 days) then the student should not pass the term.

There should also be some thought given to Out-of-Boundary students and chronic absence. If a student is Out-of-Boundary and not arriving to school on time or has chronic absence, then the student should be placed back at the in-boundary school.

I understand the need for minimum standards and consistency, but I fear a one-size-fits-all policy. DC is home to many international students, some of whom travel to their home country for long visits. Such a student could conceivably expend all their absences in one trip, even if they are in regular communication with their teachers and keeping up with their work

We have also had the experience of submitting notice of an excused absence to the attendance officer to cover the whole day (i.e. sick), only to have individual teachers mark the absence as unexcused. Once a day is marked an excused, it should override any individual class reporting.

If a student is late to a class and still attends during a certain portion a parent should not be getting a call that my student was absent. If a student is late to school due to a doctor's appointment yet still attends the majority of the school day I should not get a call telling me that my child is absent. There is a problem with the way teachers are marking the students for being in class and this needs to be addressed especially considering the fact that missing a class constitutes a full absence for that day which can in turn eventually result in a grade been lowered. Maybe the attendance should be taken

mid-point or closer to the end rather than the beginning of class or possibly a sign in sheet. We are professionals and if we call in to our supervisor to inform them that we will be an hour late we will not have to use a day of leave. School is preparation for the real world and surely marking a child absent for a full day when they are 7 minutes late to class is not a real-world scenario. This policy needs work because too many kids are affected and far too many teachers don't care.

Article IV, Section G, "Secondary students with ten (10) or more unexcused absences in any class during a single term shall receive an initial written notice that accumulating thirty (30) or more unexcused absences in any subject is awarded, unless an exception applies." This doesn't specify what the student is "awarded". This entire section of the policy is unclear.

Article IV, Section C Excused Absences

For college visits and religious celebrations the word "cumulative" is unnecessary if the meaning is that students can only be absent 3 or 5 days (respectively) across the entire school year. If the meaning is that students can only be absent that many days "consecutively" then that's the word that should be used. Additionally, is the doctor's note needed for five or more consecutive days or five or more cumulative days? What would keep a student from attending school one day a week and bringing in a note from mom claiming illness for the other four?

We need more communication for parents regarding PK3 and PK4 which affects the ISA numbers. However, in this age group, it is not mandatory for the student to be present at school every day. The student can't be referred to CFSA or have a court referral submitted. However, some parents do not see the need for the child to attend school every day. This impacts the school's attendance as a whole. Early Stages should work closely with the families and the schools, in partnership, to ensure that after a certain time period the student receives a home visit and the student is dropped and then refer to SPED if they are receiving SPED services.

G. Attendance, Grading, and Promotion, p. 5

The attendance policy does not take into account that some schools operate on a block schedule. Classes last up to 90 minutes. Missing fifteen 45-minute classes should be made equivalent to missing seven and half 90 minutes classes. The policy should take into account how classes are scheduled for in order to accurately maintain in-seat hour requirements.

H. Late Arrival, p. 6

This is related to the fact that tardies are not being adequately addressed. Students are marked tardy if they arrive during the last 5 minutes of class. Again, this does not ensure that in-seat your requirements are being met. In section I of p. 2, it is stated that a student must be present for 80 percent of the class period to be marked present. However, it is unclear how teachers and schools should report a student who is tardy and only attends 19 or less percent of class.

G. Attendance, Grading, and Promotion, p. 5

Finally FA grades should be given after 10 unexcused absences rather allowing student to miss up to 15. Missing 10 days in one term is excessive. DCPS can provide additional reasons and procedures for excusing legitimate absences in order to meet the diverse needs of students. However, there is no reason to allow to students to miss 10+ days in a term for no apparent reason.

There is no time built in for the dedicated time needed for a team to follow up with families around attendance. There needs to be sacred time given to this work so that the needs of students can be met to make sure they can access their learning at all grade levels. There should also be a clear understanding of modified programming for students who are not able to attend in person but are still committed to their own education. It is unfair to bucket students and fail them when we can support those who are putting fourth effort to do well. Students who are missing 20 to 30 plus days need to be aligned with services when they are not committed to school, but those who may be

<p>involved in extracurricular, have health concerns, are in crisis that is not on-going deserve to have the policy reflect their extreme situations especially when they are students who are succeeding otherwise.</p> <p>At the university level, those students are not failed, they are allowed to withdraw, modify, ,ake arrangements etc. DCPS needs to mirror that process.</p>
<p>IV B states:" A written note must be provided to the school by the student's parent or guardian within five (5) school days after the student's return to school in order for an absence to be excused.". Can this be via email? If so, please specify. My request is yes: It would be much easier for parents and students to allow this - much less likely to be forgotten if parents can send it off ASAP from their phone, work computer, etc.</p>
<p>Don't see how this language re: training in section V improves on current situation. Why not have relevant staff complete online training or similar so that everyone gets the same thing?</p> <p>"All DCPS employees are required to comply with the requirements set forth in this policy. In order to support its implementation, principals are expected to make all staff aware of required activities and timelines on an annual basis."</p>
<p>The document just references total days of absences. What are the numbers for semester-long block classes or single term-long block classes?</p>
<p>This was raised at a staff meeting with OSSE and DCPS representatives. The policy should make a distinction between full-year courses and semester-long courses. PE, Art, Music, Government, DC History, are all graduation requirements that are half-year courses. They should not follow the same 30 absences rule for failure.</p> <p>The DCPS and OSSE officials both agreed that this needs to be addressed, yet it is not in the new draft policy.</p>
<p>The reports are succinct yet thorough. I think 30 days of absences is extreme.</p>
<p>Strongly agree that there should be an email option for reporting absences, which would be faster for families and therefore more likely to be completed. Schools would often get them at the beginning of the day when parents realize the child is sick. Also, email doesn't rely on elementary school children to fish it out of the back pack and get it to the front office for transmission.</p> <p>The current system seems to imply that you need a doctor's note for an illness of any length. Often, kids don't need to go to a doctor for a simple cold, etc.,</p> <p>DCPS should consider not requiring a doctor's note for the occasional 2-hour absence for a dentist's appointment, etc. If not available already, DCPS should create an optional form that could be printed from the website that would make it easy for a doctor to sign (not required if the doctor already has a system).</p>
<p>Absences due to school sponsored activities, p 4. Should students be marked present if they are on an approved school activity? The students should have an excused absent because they are not present for class, they do not receive instruction and will miss course. If a student is absent because of a school activity they should follow the same makeup work procedure as any other student with an excused absence, not be marked present.</p>
<p>They can cut class 29 times in one semester and still receive credit? That seems absurd.</p>
<p>Please include an automated system to record days off for religious holidays with an auto-confirmation. Thank you.</p>
<p>Section IVC does not take into account the international diversity of District's population where extensive travel family obligations is a fact of life. I believe some consideration should be placed to</p>

give schools the option of excusing international travel depending on the circumstances.

There is also nothing written into the policy that would require written notices to be delivered in a different language if the parent prefers to receive formal notifications in their native language in order to better understand the notification and subsequent consequences.

Going to see family internationally is an expensive business, therefore it often does not make sense to go for just a few days, or to cram it in within Christmas break when flights are at their highest, so yes, I agree schools and parents should be able to collaborate on this to the extent possibly given the nature of our international diversity.

There should absolutely be consequences for tardiness for all students. Once a student racks up 5 tardies, the same letter as for 5 absences should be sent and CFSA/MPD should get involved. Some elementary students routinely show up at 10:30 and there is no consequence for the parents.

why not involve the school social workers first, rather than starting with threats of reporting right away?

I am a parent to 4 children including one who was a senior at Wilson this year. The truancy policy debacle that was implemented RETROACTIVELY partially through this school year, was harmful and was a reactionary move to a long standing DCPS problem. At my son's graduation there were several empty rows of seats which I assumed represented the dozens of seniors caught in this implementation of the rules and were not graduating.

This was my 6th year as a DCPS high school parent and while I understand the central office will say they were just enforcing a rule that was in the books, the reality was very stressful and harmful for many students. At the time, it seemed unfair and wrong and not well thought out to start enforcing a rule and have it in effect for the quarter before with no ability for families to submit proper documentation.

It also has never been discussed publicly that the central office absence notification process that had been in effect for my previous 5 years in DCPS, was not working for the first half of the year. This meant that parents did not get the notification and link to submit proper documentation for absences emailed to them, and as a result, it was not at all clear how to submit excused paperwork such a doctor appointments and college visits. Once parents got official notification of this policy that was being applied starting in September, in JANUARY, we were told it was too late to submit the documentation for those absences that occurred prior to 3 days before- thereby rendering them unexcused and penalties accrued.

This was a poorly planned, quickly executed, and very reactionary move that needs to be corrected for the students whose grades were lowered because of it, or worse, who did not graduate because of it.

If it is going to be enforced, it needed to be at the beginning of a year, with notification to families BEFORE it harmed students, and while making sure the infrastructure for the documentation and notification is in place from central office.

Section H: Late Arrival

I feel that there should be a stricter policy regarding tardiness. If a student consistently arrives 1hr late to school, they could be missing an entire instructional block every day (e.g. close reading) which is detrimental to the student's growth as well as the teacher's TAS score. For example, I had a student this year that arrived almost 30 minutes late every day. She missed the entire morning lesson and struggled to complete her independent writing, even with support. Reaching out to families would be more effective if teachers were supported by a strong policy on late arrival.

I would also like to see a section on early dismissal. I had a few students this year who were consistently picked up early, which is just as detrimental to student learning as consistent tardiness. Currently, it seems there are no consequences/definitions for this issue.

I am concerned by this statement: "No school may create a policy in which an accumulation of student tardies is made equivalent to a student absence."

A student is --literally-- absent from the class until he or she arrives. A student who consistently arrives 40 minutes into an 80-minute class misses half of the instructional time. Their attendance record should reflect this.

Tardies significantly erode classroom culture and limit the learning of ALL students, including those who arrive on time. DCPS should allow schools to build a policy that communicates that class time is valuable and on-time arrival is expected.

I agree. Consistent tardiness should be penalized, not rewarded.

Correct as the policy currently stands you can miss the entire first period (in a non-block 7 or 8 period day) except for the last five minutes and still be counted as present

The policy should be amended to state that "if a student is not in attendance for >66% of any class instructional period for an unexcused reason they will be marked with an unexcused absence for that class period." These classroom period absences should count towards triggering automatic actions when a student receives a certain amount of unexcused absences are.

I agree regarding late arrivals. The policy makes no distinction made between a student who shows up 5 minutes late for an 85-minute class and a student who shows up 80 minutes late. At some point the lateness should qualify as an absence. This needs to be made clear in the policy.

Also, there is no distinction

Notifications need to be automated in ASPEN. There is not enough time in our tour of duty to plan, grade, send certified mail and call home for absences. If all of this data is in ASPEN already, then ASPEN needs to be able to automate notifications. Also, ASPEN isn't always right. On multiple occasions the attendance counselor had different numbers than I did at the same time. Finally, teachers should not be expected to take attendance in the first 10 minutes of class. Parents are confused when they receive the robo call that their student is absent from call. However, all teachers are instructed to update attendance at the end of class, but another robo call isn't going out updating parents.

I am a high school teacher and I agree that ASPEN has the capability to do a lot more regarding notifications. Also, attendance in the first 10 minutes of class is not always possible and can cause problems like the ones mentioned above.

G. Attendance, Grading, and Promotion

What policies apply to students before they reach secondary school. As an elementary teacher I know there are some students who continually have 30 absences or more for many years before they reach secondary school (and some students who are very close to 30). Are there any policies to support students BEFORE they reach secondary? Absenteeism isn't just an issue at the secondary level and it's not effective to put the burden for addressing it on secondary administrations and teachers. These policies are clear as but are lacking in policies on how DCPS plans to support students (and the schools) when there are students with high numbers of absences. So, I have a few questions I believe are worth exploring as new policies are developed and implemented:

1. Is there a relationship between student attendance in primary vs. secondary grades? Did students

with chronic absences in secondary also have attendance problems earlier on? Where is there data on this?

2. If there is, how can we capture what the challenges are for each student that are preventing them from attending school?

3. How can that the information from 1 and 2 be captured and reported in ASPEN in a manner that can be used with effectively by administrations, teachers, and student support teams?

4. How can attendance interventions/actions previously attempted be captured - including the automatic letters home at the specified dates but also the additional interventions schools provide to support students with high absences?

A theme in these questions is how will DCPS support schools in continuous communication as students transition from elementary to middle to high school.

On another note, it would be great if DCPS got feedback on ASPEN from teachers to make it a more functional tool.

There should be a separate policy for schools with alternative programming. Students that have not been successful in traditional comprehensive schools can't possibly be expected to follow the same policy as those in traditional programs. If we promote alternative students based on competency, as opposed to absenteeism and truancy, there would be a much higher success rate.

Missing 20% of a school day can vary per school depending on the schedule. A student should not be marked absent for the entire day if they miss more than 20%. In high school, that could mean just one class.

Agree! It's all just too much noise the way the absence reporting is handled. Parents are tuning out the texts, emails, and robo-calls (including robo-calls on other issues, like from the Principal when they see the caller ID listed as the high school) - they are all just overwhelming. PLEASE FIX THIS SYSTEM!! Perhaps there can be an email that goes out once a week listing any absences for a student. If the "real time" reporting is done so parents can know in real time if their child is skipping school, IT NEEDS TO BE ACCURATE!! I have received these calls only to call my child and learn that they are actually sitting in class (I can hear the teacher in the background). If you don't want parents checking up on kids whose bottoms are in seats in class to disrupt student learning, FIND A WAY TO MAKE THIS ACCURATE. We have put several astronauts on the moon, I'm sure we can fix this. Thank you.

The policy should be different for elementary, middle and high school. At the elementary level there is less concern if a child misses more school.

An excused absence should also include inclement weather conditions that prevent a child with a documented medical condition from attending school on that day. Such as severe heat or freezing cold that makes it difficult for Asthmatics to breathe in those conditions.

I think more thought needs to go into this.

It's interesting from reading some of these comments that there is definitely a shift in perspective of what should be EXCUSED and what shouldn't be, expressed in dog whistler terms, as the demographics of DC changes.

Chronic truancy has been a long-standing problem for various reasons. It's sad that many believe a child should get excused for personal travel but not because they can't afford to wash their clothes, have to get younger siblings or their kids off to school because their parents can't afford to miss a day of work, due to bullying, what have you.

I was amazed and heartbroken when I used to sit in/facilitate focus groups on truancy about what these kids were going through. I am sure many who have commented have no idea. It's a reason some schools have childcare and washing machines.

I think like adults, kids should have mental health days. I also think that parents should schedule their kids travel during school breaks. Maybe the school schedule should be changed. Allow for later start times, for virtual classrooms, there are several options that could be explored if the aim is really at helping the child.

I mean if we flunk and fail them for not coming even though they have passing grades, what kind of future will we have because they are the ones who will be entrusted with it long before we are gone. I don't think we should pass anyone who isn't deserving. However, I know personally you don't necessarily have to be in the classroom every day to get the lesson. However, I also recognize there are various styles of learning and that we are doing a disservice to ourselves and to our future by not setting the bar high but also by not providing the tools (great teachers who care and aren't just trying to get their student loans paid), teachers who can teach to various learning styles and flexibility for our youth to surpass those standards.

Hopefully, you all will hold focus groups with the chronic truants and see what they feel they need to feel supported and what will get them to school. Newsflash: most people care. Most people do not want to be labeled dumb or want to feel stupid. Now the ones who do, well, we can only pray for them and keep it moving. But, the ones who want to succeed but have obstacles, we need to find a way to balance/level the field without continuously making them a statistic.

I largely agree. I don't think that having a strict policy is going to prevent truancy in those kids who are truant and don't do well in school. Their reasons for truancy are very different from the kids who are 5 minutes late to school in elementary school because the parent was juggling a million things. I guess what I am saying is that a one size fits all is not going to solve the more difficult problem at hand.

Requirements for "written justification to be submitted to the Chancellor" are unclear; how will a student know what may be justified?

I see no plan in this policy for what support a student is given in the event that they have failed prior to the end of the term or school year. I do not agree with the district's FA policy, but if it is to stay in place, there must be adequate support for those students to immediately begin an alternative learning method; it is ineffective for them to remain in a class that they have already failed.

I wish DCPS would consider adjusting the rule that missing 20% of the day constitutes a full absence. I try my best to schedule unavoidable medical appts during lunch hour or elective classes to minimize the amount of instructional time lost but found my son getting dinged for being absent when he really was there for key instructional time. Could the absences be tracked in Aspen by class so the school can see what classes kids are missing on a regular basis? And then parents could also log in to confirm that any absences marked by school administrators are correct? It would be nice to have this all in one system.

The attendance policy has gone in the wrong direction - while it is important to have exceptions for exceptional circumstances, generally, if a student misses school consistently, they should not pass a class - 15 absences for a quarter is too many! that is 1/3 of the 45 days in the quarter! I thought that students had to be there for 80%? to be on track for credit?

Also, where did the grade reduction for absences go? That was a good move to increase in-seat attendance! It was only a 1/3 of a grade but it helped our students come to school more consistently!

We should keep failure due to absence. The old policy was fine and should continue to be enforced. Otherwise, we teach showing up to school is not important. Additionally, tardies should be able to add up to absences. Currently if a student walks in with 5 minutes of a 50-minute block to go, they get the same attendance credit as someone who was 5 minutes late.

It would be nice to have some flexibility regarding excused absences and to tie excused absences to student performance. Specifically, students who are assessed at being at or above grade level should be able to coordinate excused absences for travel experiences. I travel a lot for work and occasionally

have the opportunity to bring my 1st and 2nd grade children along. They are excelling academically and won't miss much from a typical day at a DCPS elementary school when they could be visiting a museum or landmark throughout the country. I would prefer this to the one size fits all of the current policy. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

I believe that poor student attendance (including tardy arrivals) is one of DCPS's top educational obstacles. Part of this is due to systemic allowances for excessive absences and tardy arrivals. I am very grateful for this policy. Here are my suggestions:

- There should be clear communication of District Attendance Expectations which should include any amount over ten unexcused absences in a school year is unacceptable.
- Truancy officers should visit home for students who have high absenteeism.
- Student athletes should not be allowed to compete in a sports event on a day when they are partially absent or arrive tardy to school.
- Parents need to realize the importance of sending in the reason for absence slips with child. I notice many students do not come back to school with written absence excuse from parent/guardian in hand.
- What is the number of absences for a semester course? The policy only mentions a year-long course with the word "year" in FA policy.
- Late arrival expectation should be a district expectation, not a school stated expectation when student attendance is part of the school performance data.
- DCPS starting times are much later than other state's starting times. For example, in PA, many kindergarten students start times are earlier than DCPS high school student start times, and with the rural areas in PA, many of these young students are riding a 45-minute bus ride before the school start time. How can we improve student attendance in DCPS given free public transportation and later start times? How can we teach our students and parents/guardians about how the late school start times, student/family school choice based on location, and free transportation are all in their benefit to get to school on time?

E. page 4: Will a 3-day absence letter be sent home for 3 absences per CLASS or day DAY missed? Also, do they have to be consecutive? Can the notifications be electronic? We may not receive a letter in the mail until our students have already missed more days.

Section G page 5: Why 30 days? Why not less?

Section G page 5: What about demonstrating mastery? As a former teacher, I do not believe "make up packets" sufficiently teach the student the skills they missed. However, should there be something about an opportunity to demonstrate mastery to 80 or 90%?

I agree with this policy and DCPS should honor it as such, no exceptions.

Could this policy also cover teacher attendance? One of my child's teachers was absent the bulk of the past year. Several different substitute teachers fill in on an ad hoc basis--this was an AP class. Rumors have it there were 3 different reasons for the absence. Would be great to have more communication with parents on an issue that potentially affects their child's future.

This is a huge problem that DCPS has yet to provide a solution. Whether it is a teacher who has an extended illness or a teacher who is out on maternity/paternity leave, DCPS has no system in place to provide meaningful teacher coverage (other than basic substitute teachers).

This has a huge impact not just on the students in the class, but the entire school, especially when there are multiple teachers out. What has DCPS done to address this ongoing issue? It occurs throughout the year at many schools.

<p>The current policy does not take into account special considerations for students who participate at a high level in activities outside of DCPS. (Elite athletes, concert instrumentalists, other specialized or nationally recognized student activities). Those kids should not be penalized for participation those things especially when they maintain honor roll status.</p>
<p>Agree absolutely!!</p>
<p>I 100 percent agree with this comment regarding accurate records of absences etc. I understand attendance counselors may have the potential to be swamped, however I to have spent a lot of time trying to communicate with attendance counselors/teachers with regards to inaccurate "unexcused absences."</p>
<p>Agreed! And there should also be a user-friendly system for parents to use to dispute unexcused absences. At my son's high school, there seems to be no way to do this other than going in person to the attendance office. The attendance counselors are overstretched and, it seems, are not able to review and respond to emails from parents. When so much is on the line with regards to attendance, it is imperative that DCPS have an efficient, transparent, and responsive system for parents, students, and school administrators to use. Until they have that, perhaps we should not be holding students back.</p>
<p>An addition to C. page 3, Excused Absences: Serious illness of a family member.</p>
<p>If our out-of-town grandmother is at death's door, we're going there. If something grave happens to a parent or sibling, emotionally the better place for a student might be with their family.</p>
<p>30 days absence is extreme and far too high. It discredits the kids who are in class doing the work. Reduce the policy to 10% of classes missed for a failing grade.</p>
<p>Yes. You definitely have a truancy policy. You need to figure out non-punitive ways of dealing with this. Threats, admonishment and the condescending reminder that kids need to be in school to learn are useless. You need to understand the root of the problem. Do kids feel unsafe getting to/from school? (Find a safe way to get them to school!) Duo they need to help get siblings to school? (Make an exception for that kid and allow them 50 make up missed work). Have they suffered trauma and/or depression and can't get motivated to get to school? (See above) Your so-called social emotional learning initiative completely misses these points. My son lost his father in January and missed more than the allowable 4 days of school. Four days!!! We received a note threatening to haul us in to juvenile court! That's what every family needs when grieving the loss of a close loved one! And then a note we submitted from his doctor was rejected on the grounds that for his absences he wasn't PHYSICALLY in the doctor's office! Social emotional learning? And a note to the chancellor received no response. By the way. My son earned a 3.96 that advisory. And we just got his report card for this advisory. 4.09</p>
<p>I think it is terrible that DCPS will not make exceptions to its attendance policies for students like Avery Gagliano, the star pianist who was kicked out of Deal Middle School, despite being a straight-A student. You make exceptions for students who have been charged and must appear in court! Yet no exceptions for star students who are musicians of international acclaim. Shame on you, DCPS!!! Please rethink this.</p>
<p>I have significant concerns re: the attendance policy and the importance that DCPS is placing on attendance when the system for recording absences is piece meal and inaccurate. I have spent a significant amount of time this year trying to correct unexcused absences on my son's record when he was only away from school for a one-hour period for a doctor's appointment. The attendance staff are rude and unhelpful. It is irresponsible of DCPS to place such high stakes importance on attendance when we do not have an accurate attendance recording system. In addition, to evaluate our principals</p>

<p>and the chancellor on this measure, when we do not have an accurate system across ALL schools, is irresponsible.</p>
<p>"Secondary students with ten (10) or more unexcused absences in any class during a single term shall receive an initial written notice that accumulating thirty (30) or more unexcused absences in any subject is awarded, unless an exception applies." - ...awarded what? This statement doesn't make sense.</p>
<p>C. Excused Absences p. 3 - Here it says that College Visits (up to 3 days cumulative) does this include school and non-profit partner trips that are designated college visits (thus limiting how many a single student can attend on school time) or does it only include those arranged outside of an official school function? I am personally in favor of limiting a single student to missing 3 days for a field trip the school designates a "college trip." I have found that many students can miss 10+ days of school in a single year for these college trips and I do not think it helps them much to actually prepare for college by going on that many during school time.</p>
<p>D. Absences Due to School-Sponsored Activities (p.4)</p> <p>1. Athletics - DCPS needs to do a better job of scheduling games that minimize the amount of school a student misses. Games should be later in the day whenever possible so that students have time to change, warm up, travel, etc. without missing their courses up to several times per week.</p>
<p>I am a DCPS high school teacher and I agree completely! I had several students last year who missed at least half of the semester due to sports. They were being dismissed so early that they missed my class entirely at the end of the day. The games are usually on the same days of the week, so they always missed the same classes. Although I allowed them to make up the work without penalty, it was very difficult for them because their games were so frequent that they had limited time to do the makeup work.</p> <p>DCPS athletics needs to get their act together and more efficiently use the fields. They also need to get better buses that arrive on time and don't have to take multiple teams at once when their games are at different times. For example, why should the girls team have to miss class when their game is at 6pm? It is because the JV team is playing at 4pm and there is only one bus. Get vans or smaller buses and make multiple trips if necessary. It may seem more efficient to take all teams together, but why should 20 students miss out on their classes when their games are later in the evening?</p>
<p>G. Attendance, Grading, and Promotion p. 5</p> <p>Who is responsible for sending out the notices regarding 10, 15 and 30-day notices that an FA may happen?</p> <p>Is the 30 Absences still being designated by course? (i.e., a student may accrue 30 unexcused absences in 1st period, which also counts as 30 missed DAYS due to the 80/20 rule, but they may have attended 100% of their 2nd period course and did all the work - do they get to pass their 2nd period course despite officially having 30 absences?)</p> <p>While I am not a proponent of overly prescriptive automatic failures, since I want the students to have the opportunity to master the material and every student is different, what protections will be put in to place to minimize the incentives that adults have at a systemic level to simply push students through in order to increase promotion and graduation rates despite a student not mastering the material - especially when it is associated with high rates of absenteeism - excused and unexcused?</p>
<p>H. Late Arrival p. 6</p> <p>DCPS needs to set a more uniform tardy policy. It is very difficult for teachers to impose and enforce tardy policies and leads to a culture of lateness. There need to be clear systemic consequences for students who miss significant amounts of class. My student attendance improved significantly when</p>

DCPS started more fully enforcing the 10 days and I believe that a fair and fully enforced tardy policy would do the same.

Should not remove failure due to 10 absences.

Section IV, E, pgs. 4 and 5 - Does this policy apply to consecutive or intermittent absences? Will ASPEN be set up to trigger these steps/letters?

Section IV, F, pg. 5 - What supports will be given to schools who have out of boundary students with excessive absences? How can we hold schools accountable for this data without supports/systems to hold families accountable as well?

Section IV, H, pg. 6 - What supports will be given to schools who have chronically tardy students? Or for those students who are picked up early too often? For instance, we have students who are 30 min - 1 hour late every day and miss instruction? How are we holding those families accountable?

I am pleased to see on p. 3 that an Excused Absence includes "Religious event or celebration outside of a religious holiday (up to five cumulative days)." I am not aware if this is current policy, but this is important to allow students to attend religious celebrations of a family member, like a bat mitzvah.

This policy needs to included expectations around tardiness.

Re: Failure Due to Absences, part G:

When policy makers discuss absences they do it with 181 school days in mind; that is the length of a traditional school year. When teachers speak of absences, we address it in terms of the days a student misses in our class. Most high school classes meet an average of 22.5 times per advisory/quarter. Based on the current attendance policy, a student could accrue 9 unexcused, missing 40% of class time, and potentially still pass the advisory. Over the entire course, a student could miss 29 days unexcused, 32% of class time, and still pass. These figures do not include sick days, doctor's appointments, or other excused absences. Add in untold excused absences (which, to my knowledge, do not have a limit), and a student could miss 40-60% of the school year and still pass.

For the record, few teachers bother distinguishing between excused and unexcused. Administrators want to know when students are absent for legitimate medical, family, or legal reasons v when students cut class. As a teacher, most find the reason for an absence irrelevant. Do I care about the safety and wellbeing of my students? Yes, but students who are out of the classroom miss learning time. Students don't miss LESS because the absence was excused, and I do not care more/less about a student based on the type of absence. Once it is established that the absent student is safe and well, the focus is the missed instruction time and what it will take for the student to catch up.

Here are the real numbers based on a typical high school schedule & current attendance policy:

10. The number of days a student can miss a single class in a quarter/advisory before failing that quarter due to unexcused absences (FA), based on the current policy.

22.5. The number of class meetings in a quarter for the average high school student, where classes meet every other day.

40. The percent of class a DC student can miss and still pass any given quarter (missing 9/22.5 days), based on the current policy.

To put the 10 quarterly absences into perspective, Montgomery County allows 8 absences in a semester (two quarters). The math shows that students in DC can miss more than twice the days and

still pass. Incidentally, while MCPS does list excused and unexcused criteria, they do not distinguish between excused and unexcused in the total absence calculation; a missed class is missed instruction, regardless of the reason. Students can have 8 absences in a semester or 15 in the academic year before earning credit is jeopardized.

My very strong recommendation is that DCPS adopt a policy, where absences are treated like paid time off (PTO). Create a standard for allowable absences, regardless of reason, and do away with the excused/unexcused delineations. Allow students to make up work regardless of why they miss. Much research has been done on absenteeism. Chronically absent students, those who miss 10% of the school year, are at greater risk of falling behind and dropping out. Other research suggests an 80% attendance rate/20% absenteeism is the cut-off before learning is significantly impacted. Even if DCPS adopted the 20% absentee rate, a full credit class would allow just 18 missed classes, not 30. Students and families could use the time for whatever they need, but once they reach the limit, course credit is in jeopardy. Exceptional circumstances and allowances for additional time could be appealed. The reason this shift makes sense is that families know they have an absence bank to work with. More importantly, a cap on excused absences has, to my knowledge, not been addressed. Even if the current per-advisory policy were cut in half, limiting students to 5 absences in a 22.5 day grading period/quarter, they are still missing more than 20% of the class time.

So, when did 10 & 30 unexcused absences (and no cap on excused absences) become part of the equation in DCPS? I have to believe someone came up with that number believing that every class meets 45 times per advisory and 181 times over the course of the year. Even so, 10/45 (22%) and 30/181 (16.5%) are high absentee rates, given that those figures assume NO other absences for excused purposes such as illness or field trips. But remember, classes meet 22.5 times per advisory and 90 times in a year, meaning the policy makers have sanctioned 10/22.5 (40%) and 30/90 (33%) absentee rates. Are policy makers really that bad at math? Or do they believe students can miss 30+% of class time without significant impact to learning?

If the attendance thresholds were created in error, please adjust allowable absences to a more acceptable, research-based standard.

If a 67% annual attendance rate is acceptable, we don't have a problem with math. We have a problem with leadership, and it's a real crisis.

The main problem I have with the current absenteeism policy is my child being marked absent for the whole day when one teacher marks him absent for their class (i.e., he is marked present for the other 3 classes). This makes the potential problem appear much worse than it is, with threats of referring it to court. This process focuses on a perhaps small attendance problem, wasting time on that vs. a bigger problem of doing homework, paying attention while in class, etc.

The 80/20 rule should be revisited as this is cause for greater truancy concerns when disciplinary action can be made strictly with the school and managed as a behavior issue.

There have been issues at Wilson with students being marked absent even when they are on school-sponsored trips or activities. Systems for this record keeping should be improved.
Thanks.

III. Key Terms and Definitions

A· III.J: Clarification required: Period absences are combined to determine daily absences. Students must be absent for twenty (2) percent of the scheduled periods to be marked absent for the day. How do parents know when a student is pulled for related services? Include language about how parents

are notified or have access to dates and times when related services are provided.

IV. Required Activities

B. School Expectations: A written note must be provided to the school by the student's parent or guardian within five (5) school days should be changed to fifteen (15) school days.

C. Excused absences: Parents should also have opportunity to verify excused absences after absences are reported on progress report or report card i.e. update doctor's appointment documentation. When students receive e-mail about a student's absence, there should be a mechanism to reply directly with documentation of an excused absence. Parents must also be informed of dates and times of related service provision to ensure that class absence record is accurate. Related service log should be sent with IEP progress reports.

E. School-Based Attendance Interventions Related to Unexcused Absences:

Days 5, 10, and 15: This should include the notification requirements in the proposed regulations

F. Prohibited Actions Related to Absenteeism: The difference between the prohibition on expelling or removing a student for absenteeism vs. a school's requirement to remove a student after 20 or more full-school day consecutive unexcused absences needs to be clarified. Due process procedures need to be specified.

G. Attendance, Grading, and Promotion: The final bullet point states that Students accumulating thirty (30) or more unexcused absences within a school year shall only be promoted if a written justification is submitted by the principal to the Chancellor, or the student attends summer school and is reevaluated for promotion. Schools need to offer original credit summer school course work in order to appropriately implement this policy.

Consider removing or replacing "loved"

III Key Terms & Def, A. Absence, remove "or partial". Absence should be considered a full school in which a student is not physically present. For partial days, enforce "G" Attendance, Grading, and Promotion

Pg1, III, D Attendance Monitor, add to responsibilities, assist parents by validating absence with teacher and if there is a discrepancy the Attendance Monitor should resolve the discrepancy and follow up with parents. Currently, the Monitors do not assist parents with resolving discrepancies
Pg. 2 I. Present, remove "partial" and "for at least 80% of day. Once the student enters the building, he/she is present. For the schools that scan DC One Cards upon entering the building, shows the student is present and the information is easily captured. The remaining secondary schools should have those machines install for 2019-2020 school year

Pg. 3, excused absences- replace take students to work day with "metro delays"

Pg. 4 E. school-based interventions-- this is currently not happening consistently throughout DCPS. Need to fully implement for upcoming school year

Pg. 5, attendance, grading, and promotions - add an accrual of excused absence More importantly, what is the purpose of this policy because it does not benefit the student and it clearly goes against DCPS commitment

Pg. 6, late arrival--consistent boiler plate language for tardy and late arrival should be used DCPS WIDE

We need to better utilize resources, in that, positions are not needed to monitor attendance when there are procedures in places. We need to remember the purpose of DCPS as stated at the beginning of each policy

The 80/20 regulations for high school attendance should be revoked before the start of the coming school year. It contributes to truancy because if students see that they are late for first period, they will not bother to go to school at all because even if they attend almost all their classes, they will be marked absent for the entire day. DCPS can be more honest and more creative - - helping students

instead of penalizing students. After suspending the 80/20 rule, temporary measures should be put in place (80/60?) while a 6-month study group of parents, principals and teachers work out a more effective and efficient system - - minimal central office representation.

The 80/20 rule for attendance is counter-productive and should be revoked before the start of the school year and a temporary system put in place (80/60?). A working group should be appointed of parents, students, teachers and principals - - minimal central office representation. This group should be charged with making recommendations within 6 months. DCPS should be smarter, more creative and less punitive with these regulations.

The 80/20 rule for attendance (DCMR 2199) is counter-productive and should be revoked before the start of the school year and a temporary system put in place (80/60?). A working group should be appointed of parents, students, teachers and principals - - minimal central office representation. This group should be charged with making recommendations within 6 months. DCPS should be smarter, more creative and less punitive with these regulations.

DC Code Â§38-202(b)(c) establishes the justification for flexible school hours for students who reach 17 years of age and are gainfully employed. High school students work, particularly many ELL students hold down full-time employment as a matter of economic survival. I'm happy to see that flexible school hours are outlined here for this student population as a matter of equity. DCPS may wish to decrease the age, however, to 16 years old.

"Secondary students with ten (10) or more unexcused absences in any class during a single term shall receive an initial written notice that accumulating thirty (30) or more unexcused absences in any subject is awarded, unless an exception applies." Yes, communication is key.

"Schools are required to include a definition of tardy in their attendance policy and communicate that policy to families annually. School attendance policies must be implemented equitably and may not result in exclusionary practices. No school may create a policy in which an accumulation of student tardies is made equivalent to a student absence." I think that if DCPS outlines the literal number of days for failure per term and year, then DCPS ought to also outline the number of tardies. This way, there is consistency across the school district in terms of the quantifiable measures of tardiness and the implications thereby.

Something lacking in my review of this is grading categories (apologies if I missed it). Three grading categories are limiting in their ability to convey to students and families then different skills and content which are developed throughout the year. I would like to see greater freedom at school sites to alter these in ASPEN to facilitate more competency-based grading. This would make grades/assignments clearer and encourage horizontal and vertical alignment at school sites

Failure due to Absence:

I think DCPS Needs to strongly consider having policies based on grade level. For instance, 9 or more absences at the elementary school level Would likely be due to illness of the child, a family emergency, or unfortunately even an instance of parental neglect. However, at the high school level when students are usually responsible for getting themselves to school, often times when the student is absent for nine or more times within a quarter they are actively making a choice not to attend school. Elementary school students, middle school students, and high school students cannot be grouped into one policy. There should be three separate policies that fit the scenarios that address each unique family emergency, or unfortunately even an instance of parental neglect. However, at the high school level when students are usually responsible for getting themselves to school, many

times they themselves are making the choice to cut school. Elementary school students, middle school students, and high school students cannot be treated equally and there should be three separate policies that fit the scenarios that exist different stages of their education. The reason why I feel this is important is as we prepare high school students for the college/adult world, they have to be able to understand that attendance is important and flexibility in this policy builds habits that are simply not going to be sustainable life skills for their future. As a DCPS teacher at a high school, I had students who were aware of the grading policy that allowed them to essentially fail the last quarter and pass the class, so they simply did not attend school the last quarter. If the absences are unexcused and they have more than nine absences that are unexcused, that is simply unacceptable, and we have to be able to raise the bar for students and set a high standard. Lowering the bar and allowing them to make up work indefinitely just creates a burden for teachers who are already being overworked and overwhelmed with many of the current policies. Any student who would be adversely affected by a strong attendance policy is suffering other social, emotional, economic, familial circumstances that we as a community and district can support through the use of social workers, psychologist, family counselors, another community partners. We cannot solve societal issues by lowering expectations for students and expecting the absolute minimum from them and hopes of maximizing our graduation rate.

Tardies- I also would like to make a comment regarding the tardy policy. I understand that DCPS does not have a district wide policy regarding tardies. I am not really sure and have not really gotten a straight answer regarding how tardies are to be handled schoolwide. But I do find that this is another issue that we as a staff and faculty deal with. Students sometimes will come into class missing More than 90% of instruction and do not suffer any consequences, yet the burden of ensuring that the student learns the material that they missed is on the teacher. Sometimes the excuses that I hear is simply I did not wake up in time; this may be a reasonable excuse once a quarter but hearing this from a student almost a dozen times within a quarter is not acceptable. I want to make sure that my students are learning skills such as self-discipline, accountability, responsibility, these are skills are easily transferable beyond my classroom and will build them to be successful adults. If my school or the district cannot back me up and making sure that they learn these skills, I cannot implement a new rule, whether in my classroom or school wide. As it currently stands students If my school or the district cannot back me up and making sure that they learn these skills, I cannot implement a new rule, whether in my classroom or school wide. As it currently stands, students can arrive with five minutes left in the period and are still marked present. They do not suffer any consequences for this and I believe this is another instance where we lower the bar for students and communicate that it does not matter what time you are present, just show up. The district is to make it clear that they either support whatever policies the school decides to implement in regards to tardies or take it upon itself to implement a policy that should again be based on grade level.

Grading:

Another concern that I have as a teacher and Washington DC citizen and voter is the grading policy that is currently in place at the CPS. More specifically in regard to the policy that states the student only needs four credits in order to pass the class. Four instance a student can receive a be their first quarter and failed the second, third, fourth quarter and still be able to pass the class because they have received the necessary credits. There are many things that are deeply frustrating and disappointing about this policy. First, a student that has field three or 4/4 in a school year has not demonstrated mastery of this subject. Students at the high school level should be retained another year if they have not adequately demonstrated that they have games the comprehension and competency skills required for that great bubble. This is to be taken more seriously because as a first

time the CPS teacher, I was shocked to find seniors in my class who could not tell me that one out of four is 25%, this is an example of how students somehow failed mastery of mathematical concepts but was allowed to be promoted to the next grade level. It's heartbreaking to witness and if the goal of the district is to graduate some videographer students into the world then by all means keep this policy, but if you want to graduate students that have actually been held to a high standard and honestly did their best to receive in adequate education then this policy cannot exist because they are incompatible and mutually exclusive. I would be more than happy to go deeper into the points that I've stated above, while my connection to DCPS does not have a future as I've decided to continue on in my education, I am passionate about education reform and education policy, a career I have had for 5 years in two large cities, and I've given many of these things a great of thought and meditation and would be more than willing to share more of my Opinion.

What are the weights for homework for completion, classwork, projects, and tests? Is there an overall expectation? Is there a timeframe for making up missed work or is that completely at teacher's discretion? Are there final exams? Within how many days of an assignment are teachers expected to upload grades? A friend of mine's daughter at a DCPS MS had only a few grades by the last week of the quarter because the teacher hadn't graded anything. She didn't know what she did well on or what she would need to redo until it was too late.

Is DCPS going back to one grading/attendance system? Are the attendance requirements for 9-12 the same for comprehensive schools, opportunity academies, credit recovery programs, Twilight programs, etc. under this new policy? Since most of classes at the Opportunity Academies are competency based (using Summit), do the students automatically fail after 30 absences? This year, we were told that our students would not automatically fail after 30 absences if they demonstrated mastery on their Summit platform; however, Aspen still populated Fs for these students. How do the Opportunity Academies fit into this Grading Policy?

Teachers need the capability to write our own comments on progress reports and report cards instead of using the pre-written comments. This will help us to comply with this policy to explain why a student is failing and what the student can do to improve. Also, it looks like all of the guidance on grading categories, homework, and assessments has been removed. While I appreciate giving teachers back our autonomy, I do believe that some of these guidelines were useful to students and parents; and they helped provide more parity between courses that may be taught by different teachers at the same school.

Absolutely, DCPS needs to provide more comments and allow for personalized comments on progress reports and report cards. The comments now in the system are limited and often time to one extreme or the other--i.e. Does not do homework, Excellent Behavior, Poor Behavior, etc.

With cell phone addiction afflicting many students, there is not one comment about being on cell phones in class!

Along with more variety and nuanced comments, DCPS should also give teachers the ability to write their own comments.

While this says grades should be related to content mastery, this doesn't account for teachers who give points for effort/participation (vs. mastery). Why is this not addressed?

I'd like to see more about how extra credit can function too.

Finally, same concern as in prior section re: implementation of training being left to principals.

<p>Teachers need to be able to have the option of writing in specific comments to be as specific as possible about where the student is at.</p>
<p>There needs to be a standard for "make up work" deemed worth by a set standard across the district to determine if a student has shown mastery. What is the requirement for SST in supporting students with making up work for LE?</p>
<p>The grading system in Aspen seems to be purposefully inflating grades. It is my understanding that if a student earns a 93% it equates to an A which then translates to 100%. Additionally, if a student earns a 34% (F), it translates to a 63%. I'm worried we're devaluing grades in order to pass kids along whether or not they have gained mastery of the skills they need to be successful.</p>
<p>Support for Students with Absences, p. 5. Are teachers required to provide a student with the opportunity to makeup work if they have an unexcused absences (skipping)?</p>
<p>This is an important distinction that needs to be made. As with the last grading policy, it was unclear if students were afforded the same rights to make up work for excused and unexcused absences. As it reads now, a student who has unexcused absences are treated the same as ones with excused absences when it comes to making up work. As in any other part of life, there needs to be consequences for actions. We can be understanding and supportive in our grading policy and still hold students accountable.</p>
<p>ASPEN inflates grades. A 0% is calculated as a 63%. Creates a situation where a student needs a C in one term to pass the class for the year. If DCPS values mastery like the say they do, this policy needs to change. No way you only pass one term and can say you mastered that content.</p>
<p>This is the dirty little secret that DCPS keeps in their effort to increase the passing rate. Some students have figured this out and realize that they don't need to do much work in order to pass the class once they get that decent grade for one term.</p>
<p>DCPS should specify whether or not they accept transcripts from all schools and ensure grades are converted properly for each course already taken.</p>
<p>It is unclear how FA contributes to a student's overall GPA.</p>
<p>We should be able to add our own grading comments. Additionally, as others have noted, stop having ASPEN inflate grades to the highest of the grade bracket. My students with 20% in my class do vastly different quality work than my 60% students and should be treated as such.</p>
<p>I don't see a requirement that students pass a particular amount of quarters - like three of the four should be passing or three of five (with mid-term and finals) should be passing. I think this would be a good idea.</p>
<p>All of the comments about ASPEN and grade inflation are correct and, it should be noted, teachers challenged that from the beginning but were not heard.</p>
<p>B.3. Parent-Guardian/Teacher Conferences - Parent/guardian-teacher conferences must be held within two weeks of report card distribution for students who receive an F for the term. So the parents will be calling the school to set up this meeting, right? Because I have 140 students and I am not calling each parent to set-up a meeting for their failing kid...Additionally, WHY do we only have THREE PTC dates on the calendar? And, why only after the term has ended? Why don't you want to empower parents to help their students prior to a final grade - why not October? December and March? A PTC in May is ridiculous - what is the student going to change at that point!</p>
<p>I think the idea of "retention points" has a lot of research to back it up - for example, students who are not on grade level reading in grade three are held back, students lacking basic math skills at grade six, etc. I think giving students several years to achieve proficiency in their areas will help classes, teachers and students more than a grade-level approach.</p>

Section 2200.7 does not include the new FA (Failure due to Attendance) grade.

There should be a district expectation that every parent/guardian attend a minimum of one parent-teacher conference of the three PTCs scheduled during a school year. What could be an incentive for parents/guardians to attend?

If all District teachers were mandated to post assignments/assessments on DCPS Canvas, the 24/7 accessibility to assignments/assessments and 24/7 access to submit work would be a huge benefit for academic success. With the Canvas student app loaded on phones, DCPS homes would not need a computer and internet to submit work if they used their phones.

Teachers and administration should be able to see in Aspen what the student's final grade for the course will be given the DCPS algorithm in Aspen now calculates final grades.

Schools should be given a due date period to how quickly grades are posted when a student transfers from one DCPS school to another DCPS school. Right now, this time period is open-ended and if the previous school does not have their teachers enter grades in a timely manner, the students' grades at the new school and the reporting of those grades are halted.

All high schools should recognize the top ten academic GPA students at graduation. Presently, we are recognizing on the Valedictorian and Salutatorian.

Is it possible to have consequences for teachers that do not comply with reporting policy? Several of my child's high school teachers delayed grade reporting until end of term (or even after the term), when it was difficult -- or impossible -- to recover.

Systems and policies that report inaccurate data are useless and cause parents and students to "tune out." We have stopped even looking at the mid-term progress reports as they are so inaccurate. In our household, we recognize this chronic problem, so give our students some leeway when they tell us the "F" on their progress report is not accurate. But I worry that some students are being penalized at home for inaccurate progress reports. If the data you are reporting cannot be accurate, PLEASE FOR THE LOVE OF GOD DO NOT REPORT IT!! I can only assume that this happens because teachers do not have enough planning/grading time to keep accurate, up-to-date grade records. At our school, too, some teachers are still using the old grading system/software, instead of Aspen. After enough mistakes in this data, families, like ours, tune it out. The same is true for the attendance reporting robo-calls/texts/emails. They are often inaccurate (for example when a student is on a school-sponsored field trip) so we parents tend to ignore them as it's all just too much noise!

Schools should have one make up work policy. Eliminate confusing variations. The current language reads "Teachers must provide written communication to students at the beginning of the course regarding their make-up work policy." Replace "their" with "the" or "the school's".

Progress Reports p. 4

"The comments must state specifically why the student is struggling or failing and what they need to do to pass or improve their progress in the class." Currently teachers cannot do this. We should be able to type our comments in to the report and have them show up on the progress report that gets sent home. This level of personal communication on an official document will help increase the relevancy of the progress report and interaction with parents.

"Parent/guardian-teacher conferences must be held within two weeks of report card distribution for students who receive an F for the term. If a student has an F in multiple classes, teachers can hold a joint conference with the parent/guardian."

I agree that meeting with a parent in person is very beneficial. But this is not always possible. Many parents work long hours. Are there other options in lieu of a face-to-face meeting? I have text exchanges and emails that are documented ways of engaging in a full conversation with parents. Some are better with phone calls. What about for students who do not have access to a parent/guardian who is in a position or inclination to reach out? Does this mean that the school cannot fail the student? Does holding the official parent teacher conferences and inviting parents to come count as an attempt to meet parents regarding academic failure in a term? Also, the two-weeks stipulation is very difficult for schools with high rates of student failure. The fact is that some schools are dealing with students facing more challenges than others. What is going to be done to support those schools?

5. Supports for students with absences (p. 5) "Teachers should follow standard grading procedures when grading make-up work." What does standard grading procedures mean? Does it mean that if a teacher/school outlines a policy where a late assignment loses 1 letter grade per day (for unexcused absences) then that is "standard", or does it mean that there is no consequence for a student turning in late work due to an absence. Is there a difference between excused and unexcused absences? If there is not, what would stop a student from being absent the day a major project is due and then earning themselves a free extension?

2. Other Grade Appeals (p.7) "A parent/guardian or student have the right to seek to amend educational records believed to be inaccurate or misleading. An initial grade appeal shall be in writing and shall be directed to the school principal within ten (10) school days of receipt of the grade"

A stipulation should be made that the teacher is also contacted, it is unclear from the way the policy is written if a principal could override a students' grade without every talking to the teacher in question. While one might think that would be obvious, that is not always the case.

There is a lot of emphasis on parents being notified as soon as possible regarding the progress of their child. Yet, DCPS calendar does not schedule the first Parent Teacher Conference until November. Schools starts in August. Why are we waiting until November to give parents the opportunity to meet with teachers?

DCPS should bump up their P/T conferences so that they start earlier in the year and get rid of the one at the end of May. Why have a P/T conference with two weeks left of school?

IV. Required Activities

B. Reporting and Supporting Student Progress

2. Report Cards: The language currently states that Report cards shall be distributed no later than twelve (12) school days after the end of the term. This must be changed to include language stating that final report cards must be distributed by June 30th to ensure that students have opportunity to enroll in summer school if necessary.

Pg. 1, purpose- remove "loved". There is no love here.

Pig 3, 2200.7 - Grade Point Value - On Grade; remove and replace with Standard Point Value (A = 4; B = 3; C = 2; and D value will remain "1." Follow the same standard with Honors and AP...

Pg. 4. Progress Reports and Report Cards were extremely late 2017-2018 school year, thus not allowing the student time to improve before the report card is issued. If we expect the students to be responsible then the teachers, central office, etc. instead of increasing resources to monitor attendance, those resources should be realigned to get grades in on time, and progress and report cards delivered timely. This will benefit the students

<p>Pg. 5 C - failure due to absence; remove the entire section. Who does this? Implement current policies pertaining to intervention. This will benefit the students</p>
<p>"Teachers must also maintain written documentation of all efforts taken to communicate the plan with the student and parent/guardian." I recommend that this information should be noted electronically in the SIS (currently ASPEN). The paper trail for student support plans is imperfect.</p> <p>Support for students who are failing is critical. While we have to maintain high standards, the data makes it explicitly clear that many DCPS students have significant academic gaps and the disparities amongst White students and those of color are systemic.</p> <p>In my experience in talking with students, they want to be challenged. They also need/want support from caring adults upon whom they can rely. I think that we need to continue to empower teachers to be more creative in their classrooms and take pedagogical liberties to benefit students. We need to prioritize innovation and really preparing students for the 21st century, global workplace - even when it may not be in the DCPS curriculum or on pace with the scope and sequence.</p>
<p>This school has too much negativity in it that needs to pay close attention to the student's teacher's aides and staff in general they have a high rate of bullying etc. coming from teachers and kids a lot of ghetto and rude people that works here</p>
<p>Community service hours from r HS graduation is way too much. Paid work or paid work requirements would be way more beneficial to students and community service hrs. reduced.</p>
<p>I respectfully, but wholeheartedly, disagree with this comment. 100 hours over 4 years is quite attainable - it's slightly more than two hours per month, or easily completed in a few weeks over school breaks or summer vacation. HS is an opportunity to build character and a service mentality as well as academics and income-production. A key component of success, however, is the school being able to point students to community service opportunities.</p>
<p>I also disagree and think 100 hours of community service is a good expectation. Some schools require students to show "sustained commitment" to a cause which might address the concern about students not gaining skills. To me, it's more important to instill in students the message that we all need to give back. And some students find issues they are really passionate about.</p>
<p>I don't love the notion of PK students being retained. Lots of great research in the field pushes back against this idea.</p>
<p>If best practices are being utilized in this instance a child, these young can make progress and never ever become aware of that notion of held back. Extra time while young is the way to close the gap. Students in need do best when this happens in the earliest years.</p>
<p>PK students should never ever be retained, and Montessori programs really did work.</p>
<p>Students who do not demonstrate mastery (passing grade all four quarters, or three of the four) should be retained. Period.</p>
<p>Maybe Saturday school like they run up at Good Counsel in MD would help students get on track. MCPS requires 75 hours of community service for graduation. ... What's the reason for the difference?</p>
<p>How do you calculate passing for the year? If you get one F, one D, one F, one D, is that passing? What about C, F,F,F? Can a student pass one quarter and then goof off the rest of the year?</p>
<p>Have you seen some of these "community service" opportunities? The students gain no skills.</p>
<p>I disagree- community service hours exploit students and contribute nothing to learning. I would rather students get credit for paid internships or work-study programs.</p>
<p>I run an organization through which teens have the opportunity to tutor elementary school students. Some of our kids tutor for hundreds of hours and get no credit, because we pay a monthly stipend.</p>

<p>Working for free is a privilege, and it should not be expected of young people who may need to earn money or care for family members. Unless we're willing to include paid or family-based service, the requirement should be eliminated.</p>
<p>To be clear, I did not see age as a consideration in the promotion policy for grades K-8. Is this a change from the policy to promote 16-year-old middle schoolers to 9th grade? Also, I see in the policy that students should not be retained more than once while enrolled in DCPS. What if a student was considered for retention in multiple grades because of failures due to absences (more than 30 days)? I do think this policy is much clearer to follow especially for schools with students with special circumstances.</p>
<p>I think that the failure policy needs to more implement and the school community needs to get the students together to talk about the failure and truancy policies, so the students can have an understanding of what it means</p>
<p>More time in the earliest years i.e. PREK are the best time to support students who may need it. A child at this young age actually will be more successful because it is so early versus waiting until that child is in middle or high school or latter years of elementary! GREAT MOVE!</p>
<p>The process should be reviewed with students and families and shared widely so that it is not just a document somewhere but is part of what we know as it relates to promotion. DCPS needs to share the policy far and wide.</p>
<p>As Ivy League schools have reconsidered community service, so should DCPS. Many students have family commitments (ex. caring for younger siblings or grandparents) and cannot afford the time for the community service requirements. While some in the community have families that can afford to pay for them to build a church in Guatemala to get their hours in a few weeks, for others, these hours are a serious hindrance to graduation - not because these students are resistant to community service, but because they have far greater obstacles in their lives.</p>
<p>As with absence reporting and grade progress reporting, our high school has not kept accurate records of community service hours. My student has completed and turned in signed forms for over 50 hours, NONE of which show up on her report card. THIS IS MADDENING FOR BOTH STUDENTS AND PARENTS!! If it is to be a graduation requirement, AGAIN, SCHOOLS MUST MAINTAIN ACCURATE RECORDS!! Please excuse the all caps "shouting" - I'm just extremely frustrated by poor record-keeping on multiple fronts.</p>
<p>A student should not be able to pass only one term and pass for the year. That is not mastery</p>
<p>Student mastery in all content areas should warrant graduation as opposed to attendance for alternative schools.</p>
<p>30 absences are too much school to miss and then be promoted to the next grade.</p>
<p>I'll be interested to see how much DCPS follows up on PreK-8 promotion only being allowed if you receive proficient or advanced marks. In a lot of places this is not happening because you'd be retaining a large portion of the grade.</p>
<p>DCPS should consider offering make up hours or classes to children on Saturdays as supposed to evenings. Some days will be dark and isn't safe for young children. Also, include transportation on Saturday if the child already receives transportation.</p>
<p>Students who have not attained mastery in their core classes should be retained. No excuses. Otherwise, we are setting them up for long-term failure.</p>
<p>How many students fail to graduate strictly because they are missing their community service hours? If not many, then this is probably not enforced (I would not want the role of preventing an otherwise qualified student from graduating because he/she did not finish community service hours) or faked paperwork. Neither of which is good. Make it optional and motivated students will do it.</p>

There is an English requirement for every HS promotion but only one math requirement going from sophomore to junior status. DCPS needs to put more importance to STEM education given that most jobs available today are in STEM industries.

Also, many high schools in the nation are now requiring five math's for their students to be competitive for college acceptance. Since our graduation requirements still only require four math credits, we should be more supportive to and expectant for the completion of those four math requirements year to year.

Social promotion harms both the child in question and their peers around them. If a child is not successful in the 7th grade, but they are promoted to 8th because of any other reason besides mastery of the material, then they will struggle even more every year to follow.

So many our students, already volunteer with events and activities within their schools. I wish the volunteer spectrum was more broaden, it will help with the overall school climate.

A. General Criteria (p. 1) "To be promoted, students must pass all core subject areas." Does this mean if a student does not pass World History I they would still be considered a 9th grade student? How does this apply to students who come in to DCPS from out of state and may not have a second World History course, would they be considered a 10th grade student?

Given the 80-20 rule is a student not to be promoted if they officially have 30 unexcused absences but maybe they were just missing 1st period every day? This would mean they may have passed 6/8 courses that year but failed 2, does that mean they cannot advance to the next grade level? What if their courses they failed were electives?

I'm concerned about the lack of Guidance for Elementary Schools. If we want higher graduation rates at the high school level, then we need to be more diligent about making sure our youngest are leaving school with the proper skills. Research has proven that students who haven't learned to read by 3rd grade continue to fall behind during their school career. To that end (Section IV, B):

- Have you considered a promotion portfolio idea (like NYC)?
- Please give more guidance around what "proficient or advanced" means as it relates to the report card? Is a Level 2 proficient? Or should a level 2 trigger retention conversation?
- Please give more guidance around which DCPS assessments should be used for promotion decisions. For instance, how should we be using iReady, RI, TRC and DIBELS to make these decisions at a school level?

Leaving this important decision in the hands of individual schools means that expectations will vary across the district, causing the achievement gap to widen. It's already one of the largest in the country, according to NAEP.

Basing promotion on report card grades in elementary gives too much interpretation to the individual teacher. As it stands now, there are no assignments required in the report card grade and teachers give a general picture about what number a student should get. If each school is using specific assessments to measure growth for school goals, perhaps these could be used for promotion decisions?

Section D Retention. If students do not have a solid mastery of material, they need to be retained period. If they are passed along they are setup for failure in later grades. There should not be extra requirements to retain a student for a second time.

Sadly, other places have experimented and studied this idea of retaining kids who are not at mastery without a lot of success. See the reports from the University of Chicago Education Research Consortium about their experiment with 3rd and 8th grade retentions.

Retention for students should be a last resort. There is almost no research that shows even marginal gains for students who are retained unless the student is provided instruction in a different setting using different methodologies. Being taught the same material by the same people in the same way is an ineffective way to address a child's difficulty in grasping material.

That said, I am also concerned about Carnegie unit accrual for kids who change placements, sometimes multiple times in a school year. Currently, a student is only allowed to accrue Carnegie units if they complete .5 units, excluding work done over a quarter. Consequently, if a student with a significant psychosocial disorder attends one school at the start of the year, is then moved to a psychiatric treatment center, and then is moved back to a different placement, if none of those placements allowed the student to accrue a full semester (or full quarter) of work, DCPS currently has no way to calculate the student's grade or account for Carnegie units. Consequently, some of our most vulnerable students are being forced to repeat grades and classes in courses they have already taken. For kids who are detained in the juvenile law system, it's even worse, as they generally bounce between a number of long and short-term placements, some of which do not offer the classes they may need to move from grade to grade (or not offer the classes needed to graduate, in the case of older children who are in detention).

Yes. This was covered for several months by a recently-concluded Working Group of which DCPS was a part and one of the specific recommendations was a partial credit system. The young adults came and passionately talked about how defeated they felt when they worked hard in treatment facilities or in detention and then when they came out of it were told they had to repeat multiple grades by DCPS. DCPS SHOULD GET ON BOARD AND STOP BEING OBSTRUCTIONIST. IF PCSB doesn't want to do it, RISE ABOVE THEM DCPS. DCPS should figure out how to make those partial credits meaningful, rather than just say "we don't have a way for those kids to finish those classes." FIGURE OUT A WAY for these kids who really need a good education and to feel like they are getting recognized and making progress when they DO make efforts and get good grades. DC is behind other states which do provide partial credits, down to a week's worth, for just such vulnerable students. They are being moved around at no fault of their own and at DYRS or CFSA's or DBH's choice to do it in the middle of classes.

IV. Required Activities

F. Documentation of Retention and Promotion Decisions:

1. Notice of the underlying rationale for the decision to retain a student including a clear explanation of the DCMR promotion requirements the student failed to meet must also be sent to parents, not just maintained in student's file.
2. Notice of the underlying rationale for the decision to promote a student and/or a successful appeal of a retention decision including a clear explanation of the DCMR promotion requirements the student failed to meet must also be sent to parents, not just maintained in student's file.

H. Special Considerations:

Clarification: does eligible for promotions in this section mean the student actually gets promoted? Who gets the final say on this decision? Does the IEP team need to be consulted? Does this section only apply to students seeking an IEP certificate or is this also for diploma track students?

I am hopeful that the feedback received is really considered; and, that it is shared with OSSE. I was not aware DC is considered a state and I am having difficulty understanding how OSSE, pretty much, order mandates for DCPS, i.e., 80/20 attendance policy. Notwithstanding, there are too many

<p>Chiefs/teams and the students are suffering and you want to make it their fault. As requested earlier, pg. 1 - Purpose; remove "loved."</p>
<p>DCPS Student Promotion Policy, page 1, III Key Terms & Def "F" -- add "June of" afterand ending in; and, beforethe following year.</p>
<p>Per DC Code Â§ 38-781.02(c)(2), no student with 30 unexcused absences in a school year shall be promoted unless the principal submits a written explanation justifying the decision to the Chancellor before the promotion is made. I agree with this.</p>
<p>While promotion is important and critical to noting students' advancement, DCPS needs to explore other options to hold teachers and administrators accountable for promotion beyond the punitive implications through IMPACT yearly evaluations. By linking adults' evaluations to student performance, this inherently creates a culture of passing students who should actually fail as it pertains to the mastery of the content. Until the grading policies and ability to truly ascertain students' learning is more readily defined and clear for all stakeholders, I believe it would be prudent for DCPS to leave off this component from DCPS' employees IMPACT evaluations.</p>
<p>These policies seem clear and straight-forward.</p>
<p>DCPS Documents state 3 lab sciences but information regarding which science course qualify as a lab is difficult to find</p>
<p>I love the gender inclusive policy in re: student dress at graduation (3. Graduation Dress, p.4).</p>
<p>I am so glad that you are revising the attendance and grade drop policy that makes the kids grades drop after a late or tardy it was stupid and caused a lot of kids to fail unnecessarily which was out of their control.</p>
<p>Students and parents should be held accountable for the lack of instructional time.</p>
<p>There should be a graduation test or some sort of standard measure to determine that students have maintained the required information, at a minimum, to show mastery towards graduation to avoid FA. Grade drop is unnecessary because it is likely that the grade is already reflective of the students' absences in their performance--assuming quality instruction and meaningful work tied to outcomes</p>
<p>I don't think a course in DC History for a year should be mandated. I think modern world studies (not world history) or economics would be more relevant. Maybe 1 semester. What are the Lab Sciences? Can classes taken at a college in joint enrollment count towards graduation requirements?</p>
<p>There should be an exact date or schedule for the 9th grade graduation plan. If this is to be done correctly there need to be more counselors in order to complete this task</p>
<p>General Graduation Requirements (2203.3) - In the event a student completes one or more of the required classes in middle school, it should be explicitly stated this will fulfill the graduation requirements</p>
<p>If that is the case, the grade(s) should also be included in their high school GPA and on their transcript as to be fair to students taking the course(s) in high school.</p>
<p>On the valedictorian calculation, curious how classes taken at local colleges will be treated in that calc? Also, should be noted in the policy about GPA greater than 4.0 being possible given honors and AP uplifts.</p>
<p>These policies are very clear and would assist in schools who have very transient students and students who deal with real-life issues such as lack of childcare.</p>
<p>A check in should take place each year to check for meeting of goals towards graduation not just at the 12th grade 3rd advisory and it should be explicitly written</p>

<p>That has always been the practice I thought. There are parent teacher conferences held each quarter. I believe there is where you find out progress and statuses. However, if those conferences don't relay that there is potential for a child to stay back or that the child is staying back, that is shameful.</p>
<p>The language in Section B Graduation Planning 2203.2 should be expanded to explicitly state. "A check-in must occur every year prior to course selection to revise/update the graduation plan"</p>
<p>This document is really dense and not accessible to parents and community members who aren't strong readers.</p>
<p>I agree! I hope that at these community meetings they break down this information in a student and parent family way. It is very dense. It would also be helpful if there was a comparison document, showing the policy before and after so parents can see the similarities and differences.</p>
<p>Are you saying there are middle school classes that equate to high school classes in ward 1?</p>
<p>DCPS Attendance and Truancy Policy Section IV Required Activities: Letter J Tardies</p> <p>The wording does not specify the breakdown in time for students who attend core classes taught by Group 1 teachers. While schools can determine the amount of time that dictates a tardy, students who come to class with 5 minutes left has missed instruction. Attendance is a factor in teacher's impact of which IVA is a large percentage of the score in determining the effectiveness of a teacher with the influence of student's performance on PARCC. A request for 80% seat attendance for a period/session of core classes should be considered the minimum requirement.</p> <p>General Grad Req (2203.3)- students who complete required course in middle school, such as Geometry, does not have to take Geometry in High School However, those students are required to take the Alg. 2 PARCC assessment in HS. This area needs clarification as Alg 2 is a semester course of which students may take in fall but test in late spring, while Geometry is yearlong in HS. There is an equity issue</p>
<p>Really. So what about those who learn differently than the way that is being taught and find it more effective and efficient to self-teach or get help elsewhere?</p> <p>It is more in play than quality instructions. It's very interesting that most private schools don't have an attendance policy and a large majority of those students take "holiday" throughout the school year but nobody believes their grade is reflective of their absences.</p> <p>Similar to the fact that you don't have to physically be at work to do your work and do it well because if this was the case Telework and AWS wouldn't be so popular</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General Graduation Requirement, p2. At times it is difficult if a student transfers in to a school that does not offer a variety of foreign languages to graduate. For example, if a student transfers in as a Senior with a Chinese 1 but the DCPS school only offers Spanish, the student will need to complete 2 years of Spanish to graduate. 2. Class Fees and Gifts p.4: Will DCPS support schools with rental fees for graduation? If the fee is not included in the Senior Dues there are schools that will struggle to afford paying the fees required to rent facilities and/or pay for the stage and other materials necessary to stage a graduation.
<p>Section IV, General Requirements, Part C, page 3, Notification - I think that, considering the recently published data indicating that parents are willfully skirting the residency requirements established in the District, and enrolling students in DCPS who are not DC residents, I think it should be required that all DCPS public high schools should re-verify the residency status of students in the early spring or late winter of the year in which they are supposed to graduate, and be notified in the letters sent to the guardians that the residency status of all graduating seniors will need to be re-verified before a diploma will be provided to that student. If residency in DC cannot be documented by May of the graduation year, no diploma should be provided to that student who would otherwise have been eligible to graduate. Furthermore, if residency is not re-established and the student is found to be</p>

<p>residing in another jurisdiction, tuition for that year and all prior years that the student falsely represented that they lived in the district should be charged to the family.</p>
<p>I think definitely more than a lease, or an id card should be used. I think parents should also prove their kids live with them that they are the custodial parent.</p>
<p>An additional possible excused absence: serious illness of a family member. If our out-of-town grandma is on death's door, we are going to visit her. If something were to happen to a child's parent, emotionally the child might need to be with family and not in school.</p>
<p>I personally find the lack of ability to deal with grey area frustrating, but I don't know if there's a way for a policy to address that. You get the same truancy email and voicemail no matter the age of the child and the circumstances. For example, I made flight reservations to visit family leaving the day after school ended. Two days later (late April), the last day of school changed. Even though I explained the circumstances, it was still an unexcused absence with the robo call and auto-email about truancy.</p>
<p>I think you should be able to demonstrate world language proficiency in lieu of the classes required.</p>
<p>I don't think the policy should apply nearly as strictly to pre-K students. They are toddlers and they and families need more flexibility getting to school. That flexibility may be more valuable to children's health and wellbeing than their time at school. My son required more sleep than the school start time would allow, even going to bed right after supper. So, we unenrolled him from DCPS to attend a more flexible private school at great personal expense. Even now that he is enrolled in DCPS and a rising 1st grader, he is not getting enough sleep, and this is translating into behavioral problems.</p>
<p>For all other children, a certain number of days (e.g. 5) should be allotted for unexcused absences. This will allow children to occasionally miss school for reasons judged important by families, such as welcoming a new family member (sibling), or traveling overseas to visit relatives, or participating in an enriching life experience on an occasional basis. Classrooms are not the only place where children learn, and the current policy is too restrictive. It allows zero unexcused absences. It should allow some.</p>
<p>Your child not getting enough sleep is not a DCPS problem. It is a personal problem. Some kids are just not ready for school at age 3.</p>
<p>General Graduation Requirements (2203.3) - Computer Science should be a standalone Carnegie Unit and not part of the Math requirement. The current graduation requirements do not adequately prepare students for the 21st century workforce. Also, public input should be part of a rigorous city-wide approach to determine what courses count as CLCP, placing students in 2nd-4th level CTE courses to fulfill CLCP is a waste of the students & teachers time</p>
<p>Well maybe she lives in a neighborhood with underperforming schools and got into a decent school and rides public transportation from SE to NE and to be on-time has to leave house at 6 meaning getting up before 6... See where I am going. Some things aren't just personal problems; they are real life problems in this overly competitive cruel world.</p>
<p>Graduation Planning (2203.2) - Why wait until 9th grade to start graduation planning? This should start at 5th grade and tie in with pathways planning so students can select middle schools that offer the pathways they are interested in. In 8th grade the planning should focus on high schools that will best support the student in reaching their pathway</p>
<p>Technical Assistance, Monitoring, and Compliance - Any District employee breaching this policy is in violation of the District's Code of Conduct, automatic termination of employment should occur with first offense of this policy</p>
<p>There is no mention of a dying relative for excused absences or educational vacations.</p>

<p>There should be excused tardiness for students with special needs who do not use or receive OSSE transportation. My son who is on the spectrum of autism has sensory issues with clothing. Some days can take up to 1 hour to get him dress where he is comfortable.</p>
<p>This is something that the IEP team should be assessing and including a plan in the IEP or 504 Plan for. When absences are a result of the disability, and the school is doing nothing to help address (and I DON'T mean signing an Attendance Contract where the only ones agreeing to change anything are the student or the parent), that is disability discrimination.</p>
<p>I feel the proposed changes DCPS have made are great. However, I feel more emphasis should be made towards vocational educational incentives and community partnerships. This should be place on high priority being that so many of students need job readiness skills and financial support to take of basic needs. A child that is hungry, homeless and not properly clothed ... Is a child who will never develop into a successful student. Strengthening the spectrum of learning by placing more life skilled educational courses would spark student interest and increase enrollment. Not to mention, create community partnerships through corporate co-ops and future employment. This would be a " Game Changer" towards the campaign to increase school attendance and the graduation rate.</p>
<p>Well DC had these schools and then systematically closed them and opened them back up as STEM or magnet schools.</p>
<p>And then enrollment dropped. No child left behind really made it easy to leave kids behind. The root of the problem has to be fixed or all of these policy changes will just be temporary band aid fixes.</p>
<p>I would also like to see more "life skills" related classes and opportunities, although I don't think that this should be a graduation requirement.</p>
<p>G. Attendance, Grading, and Promotion Though I think this part of the policy is intended to keep children in school and "everyday counts," I think it is more harmful to students than helpful. I believe students shouldn't be penalized in their grade, I find this unfair and unhelpful to the student. If a student is absent more than 5 days unexcused in an advisory and they have a deserved A in the class, their grade shouldn't be dropped because they weren't at school, especially if they were still working hard. I think penalization in a different area may be appropriate but nothing so sensitive as someone's grade or GPA. I don't see how it is helpful for those who are truant absent because if they are and aren't doing good in school, what difference would a grade drop or a failure in the class do? I think this policy is aimed at the wrong people and will decrease the overall graduation rate of DCPS if not brought back to the drawing board.</p>
<p>I love the new attendance policy regarding grades. Way better for the students!</p>
<p>I do not think that student should be punished for missing school. Elementary thru middle there could have been an illness family issue or in my case the information was sent the school via fax and phone calls, but the absences were never excused. At some point there should be communication. With the parents regarding absences a makeup work I as a parent should not continuously call the school to ask for makeup work</p>
<p>Makeup work is not a solution to being absent from school. When the student is not in class, they are missing the teacher's lesson, discussion with other students, and other student's thoughts that all contribute to an understanding of the work. It is often times difficult to do the work correctly and with meaning after missing class. There are extenuating circumstances for sure, like family death and serious illness, and that should be considered an excused absence with a note, otherwise, yes, there should be consequences for missing a lot of school.</p>
<p>The entire policy is a good one. However, clarification as to which courses will meet the lab science and college level course requirements.</p>

Have we lost standards somewhere in this political wrangling? No high expectations are even mentioned. Have we not given away enough diplomas without substance?

I commend DCPS for reviewing its policies. DCPS serves a diverse set of families and its policies should be flexible to meet different needs. A one policy fits all, with no exceptions, serves neither students or families. There does not seem to be an appreciation, however, between absenteeism due to the students'/family obligations and absenteeism due to truancy. The 2 are not the same. Where an "unexcused" absence is accompanied by a parental note/explanation, there is a valid reason for the child to be absent. Many times, it is because the student is engaged in extracurricular activities, such as sports, music, competition or other event not affiliated with the school. I am sure DCPS appreciates the need for students to differentiate themselves for college purposes and that often involves activities that require the student to be absent from school. In such cases, there is almost always parental involvement/consent along with a note. I appreciate that family vacations may not qualify for an excused absence. That may be the topic for another discussion. In my opinion, as long as the student is achieving in school, occasional absences should not result in a penalty in their grades, no matter what the excuse is. If truancy (defined in my mind as absence without parental knowledge) is an issue, that needs to be addressed in a different manner. For those families who don't care or are without resources to manage truancy, penalizing the students by way of grade failure also strikes me as counterproductive.

Please continue to provide the school/principal with flexibility in defining "excused" absences. DCPS received negative publicity on this issue a few years back due to the system's inability to address its inflexible absenteeism policy. Keeping engaged parents/families in the DCPS will help and bring resources into the system as a whole for all of DCPS. I hope DCPS does not bring a hammer to solve issues where a hammer would be counterproductive.

Thank you for continuing to look at these issues.

Credit recovery is not mentioned, and competency based does not explain what it is. Such as

This would be very difficult to do. I find the enrollment process requirements already overly burdensome.

Not sure if policy requires student to take the same World Language for 2 credits or just 2 credits total; if the policy is for the same World Language, it should take into consideration accommodations for schools with staff retention challenges that prevent students from meeting that requirement.

The two requirements listed under Per 5-E DCMR 2201.6 need to be revised and enforced in the schools. There are students who are not proficient or advanced but are still being promoted at the elementary school level. Instead of saying "and achieve the goals of the student intervention learning plan" it should say "or achieve the goal's...". This plan should show at least a year's worth of growth for the student to be promoted on to the next grade. Also, the attendance policy needs to be made clear to parents especially of parents who have a history of a poor attendance at school. There should be an in-person meeting conducting with them, so they understand the seriousness of the situation and so schools can understand the cause of the chronic absences and support families in improving their status.

2207.2 The maximum amount of the class fee shall be uniformly established by the [Chancellor...Please ensure that this is applicable to EC/Middle schools. There seems to be a disparity in reference to "Graduation Fees". Why are students in middle schools and EC paying fees?

I think the graduation requirements fit within the spectrum of OSSE's requirements for classes, however, there is still a breakdown in "seat-hours" verses "proficiency". This speaks to the absences and tardies as well. Does a "Carnegie unit" mean that the students have proficiency or that they

<p>have sat through the instruction? If it means the latter, then the attendance requirement needs to be stricter and adhered to religiously. If it means the former, then each student (no matter the times they were absent) should be able to take a district-wide assessment which shows that they have proficiency in the subject, thus receiving the credit. If you are a student who takes longer to learn and needs more in-seat hours for help, then you should be there every day trying to pass that assessment. Other states do this - New York with the Regents, etc. This also ties in with the grading policy - if you are moving to a proficiency model, then grades should be proficiency-based, which might mean that your student is not able to pass onto the next grade because they have not attained proficiency. It should also mean that students are able to 'test out ' of classes and requirements.</p>
<p>There should be an option to take over 5 years to graduate for students who struggle at the beginning of their careers. This way there is also less temptation to pass any students along who have yet to earn their diploma.</p>
<p>Community Service Hours - These should be optional. Does a school really want to be a position not to graduate a kid who hasn't completed them? I don't think a kid who otherwise meets the graduation requirements would be prevented from graduating, so why make community service a requirement? I think no one wants to have to enforce this policy. Encourage kids to dedicate hours to optional community service projects.</p>
<p>I would like to see one credit of computer science required in the 3.5 electives allotment as well as half credit of personal finance. Both requests are to better prepare our students for their professional success in all industries as well as personal success with their pay/salary.</p>
<p>2204.1 Notification of Graduation Status pg. 3: Will students in all grade levels be receiving this notification? If this is only proposed for 12th graders, then notification in the 3rd quarter is too late for some students. However, if students/families are receiving this notification for 9th, 10th, and 11th as well, then that should be fair enough warning. Will these be made available on Aspen or Naviance or somewhere else electronic?</p>
<p>1. General Graduation Requirement, p2. At times it is difficult if a student transfers in to a school that does not offer a variety of foreign languages to graduate. For example, if a student transfers in as a Senior with a Chinese 1 but the DCPS school only offers Spanish, the student will need to complete 2 years of Spanish to graduate.</p>
<p>This seems a little extreme towards international families who must travel abroad! Make a 2week Christmas break then!</p>
<p>Please allow foreign families to travel abroad or make a way to give a longer Christmas break (as offered in the calendar survey)</p>
<p>DCPS needs to lower the unexcused absence number of days from 30 to 20 to receive a failing grade. This number is absurdly high, and parents need to be more responsible for getting their kids to school. There are plenty of exceptions and excused absence reasons and extenuating circumstances should be considered, but do you want to discredit the grades of the kids who go to school every single day and do the work by allowing those who don't to get the same grades?</p>
<p>Nothing came up</p>
<p>2203.3(f) - the definition of community service hours is important. It should not be required that these hours are served without pay. Not all students can afford to do this, and the organization I run (Reach Incorporated) enlists teens as tutors. Many of our teens complete hundreds of hours of paid service.</p>
<p>B. Graduation Planning p. 3.</p> <p>This is a good policy if students get the opportunity to meet 1-1 with their counselors, but it is one that can quickly become cumbersome. DCPS should keep the policy but need to do more to ensure</p>

that counselors are not being roped in to additional activities that go beyond their job description and take them away from this task. Comprehensive high schools that have high rates of churn (with students coming in and out all year) have many additional duties and will have to meet with students and create plans at a far higher rate than those with less churn. Those schools should have additional counselors and supports from DCPS to help us meet those needs. There should also be simple and efficient ways of creating and sharing those plans with students and families for documentation purposes.

I am concerned about the issue with how unexcused absences are captured, categorized, and addressed. Throughout the document, staff are required to respond in certain ways to a certain number of unexcused absences and a certain type of unexcused absences. However, the definition of absence is muddy, at best. That DCPS maintains the 80/20 rule is, on its face, a bar for many kids who struggle with school attendance to arrive at all. If students know that by missing first period, they are marked as absent for the full day (unexcused), there is no impetus to arrive at school at all - leaving vulnerable kids more disconnected and less able to engage with their education. However, that rule is contradicted by the intervention policies currently established in the draft where after "the equivalent" of 1, 3, 5, 10 etc. full days of absences, there should be communication home. So, does that mean that missing 20% is equivalent to missing 100% (as it is recorded similarly)? And, how does that description line up with the admonition against ruling that an accumulation of tardies is equivalent to an unexcused absence? Without a more streamlined definition of an unexcused absence (and I would argue that a full day is the only thing that should qualify as students who arrive even after the first class bring value to the school and derive educational benefit), DCPS will continue to face a hodge-podge of interpretations and implementation strategies.

I hope DCPS will consider the recommendations of the SBOE task force to reduce the community service hours to 50 so we can make sure we do a better job. Also, I hope you consider the recommendation to give students credit or advance them if they can show mastery of foreign language and or math as was recommended. These are the only two areas which are vertical in that students should move on. With language if they are fluent in a second language that should be acknowledged. Especially since there is very good instruction from programs that may not be in DCPS.

The change to gender neutral graduation dress code is welcome.

Quality over quantity is so important. I agree that we should lower the required hours and help make it a more meaningful requirement. At this point, there are many programs out there that use "double" community service hours to attract students. (i.e. 2 hours of service credited for 1 hour of work). There are also programs that give community service hours even though it is an enrichment activity for the student. Community service hours should be given when you are SERVING YOUR COMMUNITY.

Sections 2207.1 and 2201.4 regarding class fees. could possible conflict with one another. Which is it, can graduation-related costs be included in class fees or not? The two sections are unclear

It is time to eliminate the 80-20 rule. In this digital era, there's no reason a student can't be absent for 42% of a day. Or at least make record keeping based on the number of classes attended per day. If you miss one block class, but attend the rest of the day, you shouldn't be counted as being absent the whole day. It simply makes no sense. I know this developed in an attempt to reduce tardiness, but in practice it takes away an incentive for a student to come to school - if they've missed the first class, why bother coming in if you're already marked as absent for the whole day?

Thanks for taking feedback.

IV. Required Activities

Footnote 5 on page 2: Are there any exceptions to the community service requirement for incarcerated students? If community service opportunities are offered to incarcerated students, the policy should ensure that these service opportunities cannot take place during school hours or in place of summer school or credit recovery offerings.

2201.8: The language currently states that Students may complete the high school graduation requirements over a three, four, or five-year period. This language needs to be changed to include exception for students with IEPs who can receive services and work toward graduation until age 22.

I. Purpose, p 1- remove or replace "loved" with supported or something else; teachers are there to educate

IV Required Activities, pg. 3 B-Graduation Planning - who is responsible and what/who is LEA? Clarification is needed

Pg. 3 C- notification of graduation status, include how and who validates compliance

22204.1 outlines the communication sent to families regarding students' graduation status. The communication, however, needs to be more frequent and much earlier so that families may offer concentrated support for their students. Crafting letters signed by the principal to outline that students may be in jeopardy from sophomore and junior years is incredibly helpful. Communicating via letters, phone calls, and in-person communication represents that the school community is relentless in assuring students finish their high school careers successfully. This strategy also serves to empower families to step in and support students when they are off-track with the requirements (i.e. volunteer service hours, etc.). There must be increased collaboration between home and school.

2207.7 outlines the dress code for the graduation ceremony. I agree that the uniform should be general neutral. However, I disagree that we should allow students to participate in the ceremony without a cap and gown. I think one's high-school graduation is a milestone which requires a certain level of decorum and distinction. I would be very curious to know the thoughts of DCPS families and students about this addition and exemption. The pride I have seen in students' eyes with their caps and gowns is priceless.

There should be greater clarity on the retention policy in high school because it is currently based on credits.

It would be helpful to show what were the past policies/regulations and what are the new policies/regulations.

There should be clarity on being retained only once in your DCPS "career" coupled with the promotion policy at the high school level.

How will DCPS ensure parents get these policies in writing?

Who is on the student support team? Is it different than student attendance team?

Is there due process for students without an IEP (i.e. SST)?

The draft layout is too wordy, legal and confusing. This is not show it should appear in the parent handbook.

SST Meeting should tie more to the class and teachers should be held more responsible.

Teachers should attend SST meeting if student misses five days of a particular class and get sign-off from the AP.

Pg. 3, Section D- The principal report should also be sent to the parents as well, Section F1- this should be recorded in SIS (this information should also be sent to the principal); Section F2 this documentation should also be sent to the parent as well. All documentation that the principal.

recommending that this information is viewable in the Parent Portal - this documentation should also be sent out in a written form and sent out not just placed in Aspen/Parent portal for the parents
Teachers need to be held more accountable for class absences and parent communication.
This is too dense and hard to follow.
We need to create an expedited process for appeals because if a student's 30th day is on the last day of school, they no longer qualify for summer school.
There needs to be greater clarification on the 30-day absence policy. The documents need to be clear throughout the policy.
It is not consistent throughout the policy as to who the parent/student is appealing to (FA process).
Does the DC Council bill passed on graduation this year affect next year's policy?
There should be explicitness around what "documentations" are and these should all be given to the parents (similar to documentation on Page 3). This includes Benchmarks that always don't go to parents unless they request, or the teacher decides they want their parents to have it. More clarity on what parents get notified on and standardize it.
Add "all efforts should be made to resolve the issue with the teacher"
There should be clarify at the school level of what is an excused absence. For example, some parents think writing a note because their child slept late is excused.
Pg. 4/4 Every student "shall" attend summer school, this did not apply to all students. Attendee's client was not able to attend summer school because he acquired FA standing on his 30th day which was the last day of school after he was already scheduled for summer school. So, if we as DCPS say "shall" then every student should go.
Citing page 3 of graduation policy, is there a policy that ensures that the plan is implemented and tracked? So fresh start for 9th graders may be easier but for current grades, but how will it roll out?
SST for grading and attendance should be combined with the teacher included.
The first letter to parents should go out at five days so it does not coincide with contacting MPD and CFSA.
Citing page 2, letter D - What will be the implementation of kids enrolling in Alg 1 in 10th grade if previous failures cause them not to be eligible to take Alg 1; so, it will be punitive and affect graduation? Will summer school have seats for students to take the course and earn the credit that is required?
Pg. 4 Section H- The Principal should have to consult with the IEP team regarding decisions on retention, not just for EL learners, SPED students just as well.
Pg. 3 Section F- There should be a system that shows we know parents received the information, maybe a follow-up call from school staff or a partner organization especially for our families who may not know the ins and outs of our policies (immigrant families).
Benchmarks and Grade should reflect the same level of skill for example if the benchmark is on grade level, then the grade should be on grade level. You should not get a proficient grade if your benchmark is below.
Under truancy, under half day schedules, Principal should have discretion with our students who have special needs or complex medical needs who may need a half a day, there is no discretion for those special students.
When in class time missed, why is it referred to in % instead of missed classes, missed periods, etc.; It makes it confuse to understand what is allowable and what will be deferential, etc.
A teacher shared that there is so much confusion of who is the leader - is it the mayor, the chancellor, the principal - that none of the teachers know who to listen to and follow directives from, especially when the teachers are the ones who are working directly with the kids are potentially being set up to

be the 'bad guys' in the students' eyes when they have to fail them, etc. even though through the relationships built, the teachers knows why the student has been absent, is struggling, etc.
Every year there should be workshops presented to 9-12th graders about the "road to graduation" to know about the credits they're acquiring, just overall breakdown of how you are graduating students, so they know what it takes to graduate and solutions for how they could fix their schedules. This is reinforcement because guidance counselors aren't always checking in with high school students or the students don't have a great relationship with their counselors or the fidelity and consistency of work done by counselors across schools is not equal.
When will DCPS move away from the outdated Carnegie units?
Students are being penalized for being in school (swipe card at entry) but the student is being marked absent from class.
Tardy policy - Students who miss the majority of the class period will miss a significant amount of work, how will they make that up?
There should be clarity around retained students attending summer school. It says it is mandatory; it is not framed that way to families or students.
Will DCPS be providing more slots for summer school in future years? Budget implications? Curriculum implications?
Is there a policy on how quickly teachers grade students work and enter it in their grade book?
Teachers can just enter warm-up (low weighted) grades every two weeks and then add larger grades later - potentially setting students up for failure.
Progress reports need to be mandatory and timely
Will there still be standardized guidelines on percentages for weighting the grades?
Are teachers required to enter everything they ask the students to do within the marking period?
There should be a student-friendly version of the student handbook that all students receive.
There should be a cap on excused absences as well an unexcused absence.
The home and hospital program are terrible in DCPS. DC should look at Baltimore's model.
How will DCPS handle the logistics with students who enter the school in the middle of the term due to various factors (incarceration, chronic medical illnesses, etc.)?
How much training do teachers get on grading?
How much are they learning about competencies?
Do parent teacher conferences change if a child is failing?
There should be clarification on excused v. unexcused, specifically for the makeup work policies. The current policy is unclear and can be interpreted differently depending on the reader.
Will the current grading policy changes impact junior and senior's college application?
How are failure dues to absence being fixed? Are they eligible for credit recovery?
Comments on the appeals section - This could only be done to school's failure to address, what is the determination factors to initiate appeal? Regarding decision making, what must you show in order to decide or determine the appeal of a student's grade? The appeals panel could use their discretion
Comments on the appeals section - Please clarify the burden and will all the changes be available as part of the template for the appeal panel?
If students call elect to receive an L, is there an audit? Does an I turn into an audit?
How and when does the I to F to L to audit work and when does this happen? Will it be automated?
If a student comes in the 3rd term, can they make up the 1st and 2nd?
Can you clarify what is means to "feel loved" in the mission?

Regulation Comments

Half day schedules should be expanded to include caregiving for family members and should be set for children as young as 15.
2103.1 This requirement is over the top. Too much burden on admin to do this for unexcused absences - admin need the discretion to not take the required path when they know that there is not an underlying problem with attendance or performance.
I don't know if this plays into the attendance issues in DCPS, but High School student need to sleep in. Perhaps if school started at 9am, official attendance rates could improve - especially since attendance is taken in the morning. See the May 2017 Brookling article on late start high schools for a review of the research.
I agree wholeheartedly. The time attendance is taken should also be taken into consideration as students may already be in the building for first period and simply have a long way to travel to class.
I'm a high school student and couldn't disagree more. Getting to school by 8:45 is not a challenge for anyone I know, if adequate planning goes into morning schedules. Not to mention that DC is among the latest in the U.S. in starting times...
The policy is way too lenient. For instance, more than 30 absences (missing 1/6th of a class) should result in failure of the class. Either the class is way too easy and not challenging if the student can make up the work and still be promoted or the system sets up an expectation that attendance and basic discipline is not necessary. Written notification should begin at 5 unexcused absences. 10 unexcused absences are more than 5% of class time.
Appreciate your thoughts. Most HS students have classes that meet every other day. So, in a 45-day grading period the class will meet 22.5 times. Under the current policy, a student who misses 9 days Unexcused can still pass, even though they missed 40% of days. It's worse than most people realize. The fact that the new language weakens an already lame policy is baffling.
The legislation seems lenient in the sense that a student who is missing 10 days is missing a TON of instruction. There should be more action done earlier, on the part of the school, in the absenteeism process.
With respect to other comments, it would make sense to specify certain cases of absences and tardies that are acceptable and reasonable. To those who think the excused absences are too abundant, it seems the student is being given a choice. Should they seek to exploit the excused absences at the cost of other students who will, or may, need it, their grades will also reflect this. As there are rules in place for struggling students, their absences will surely become less frequent. This is giving flexibility to us students and giving us the benefit of the doubt that you adults trust us, at least to some extent. Should our cohorts decide to exploit it, repercussions will follow their decisions.
It seems that they are just getting the same warnings as they did before and the only addition this time is an appeals panel. It would behoove DCPS to figure out a way to support families with getting their kids to school when the 5, 10, and 15-day letters go out instead of just sending letters. Families know they are struggling to get their kid to school, they need support and help. What are we doing to change this pattern?
My best friend didn't get to walk across the stage this year and now must go to summer school solely because she had ten absences in a class. She went in at lunch to do work and made sure she was on track with her teacher. Her teacher and her both weren't informed until a week before graduation that she had failed the class so there was "nothing they could do." She'll take summer school and graduate in August. This all happened despite her already having taken the class (Algebra I) and

having her credits lost for it.

I know students have to own up to their own absences, and after a certain point they become unacceptable, but if a student can do all the coursework and get a good grade, then they should not be penalized for learning how to make the most out of their time.

If you really wanted to fix this, then make the work hard enough that your grade will reflect if you weren't there. It's almost like we should give students work that's worth their time and effort! >:(

Report Cards on ASPEN for dual language elementary schools need to reflect language of instruction in core subjects and specials. There also needs to be an added section for Spanish literacy instruction. An addendum is not enough to show parents student growth in Spanish because literacy may not be the only subject taught in Spanish. Also, parents do not see Spanish growth in any subject the snapshot page offered in the first page of the report card. We need to differentiate the report cards of dual language schools to reflect the instruction the student is receiving in each language taught.

2103.3 refers to another part of the DC code (§38781) for exceptions, and that part says that a principal may promote a failed student with a written justification. So, there are no actual prescribed exceptions.

One of the goals of this rewrite of the DC code should be to avoid placing undue hardship on students whose absences are beyond their control. We should not penalize students because an unstable home life makes it difficult for an otherwise good student to attend school.

An excused absence needs to be added for the serious illness of a family member. If our out-of-town grandma ends up on death's door, we're going to go see her. If a parent or sibling is in the hospital for something life-threatening, emotionally the best place for the student might be with the family member.

Unrelated, personally I find there is no flexibility for circumstances. Even if there is important context that you share with the school for an absence for a child in PK, you get the robo-call and the email about truism. I am not sure if a policy can address this or not.

(Section 2103 truancy) It doesn't appear that this section is addressing truancy on the elementary level. If it is saying to continue to use the same protocol of contacting parents, mailing out warning letters, SST meeting, CFSA, Collaborative and court referrals then we will continue to get the same results. The current policy is not working. The majority of the parents that children miss school for a non-legitimate reason have expressed that they don't care if CFSA is contacted, they decline to work with the collaborative (voluntary service) and they dismiss the SST meetings and warning letters. Yes, we the school make efforts to educate parents on the importance of attendance to their child's academic performance, however it is not enough. I believe we need stiffer mandates/penalties for parents especially those who children have a history (years) of truancy. Truancy court is back logged at least a year with cases and therefore isn't imminently effective. CFSA isn't effective, they do not consider truancy as educational neglect and the referrals the school makes are referred to an assessment unit. In most cases, once they complete their assessment the referral is closed shortly afterward. If the student accumulates an additional 10 absences the school must do another CFSA referral. It's a waste of time and resources and these young children still aren't attending school. I believe parents need to be held accountable especially on the elementary level. Instead of investing so much time and funds into incentives, parents need to face stiffer penalties.

This policy is far too lenient and seems more concerned with graduation/promotion numbers than student learning and well-being. I would like more clarity around the exception provided for in D.C. Official Code §§ 38-781.02 (c) or 38-781.05, which would allow students who missed 30 or more classes to be promoted if they met the exception. This is a separate document that I will have to review later. This must be spelled out clearly to teachers and families. I had many parents this year

who were unclear on how the appeal process was being enforced.

I also hope that DCPS Central Office will be providing a template for schools/teachers to use for written notification of unexcused absences. This is a heavy administrative lift that takes away significant time that should be used on planning and instruction.

2200.1 The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) marking or grading system shall be designed to report fairly and accurately student progress and student achievement.

2200.2 The Chancellor shall establish and implement all DCPS policies on marks (grades) and student progress reporting.

2200.7 At the Secondary level; sixth (6th) grade through twelfth (12th) grade; marks (grades) of A through F shall be assigned by the teacher to indicate the degree of achievement by a student of the content standards in each course. Results of the end of course exam will count for no more than 20% of the final grade. Marks (grades) shall be as follows:

A = 93 to 100, A- = 90 to 92; B+ = 87 to 89; B = 83 to 86; B- = 80 to 82; C+ = 79 to 77; C = 73 to 76; C- = 70 to 72;

D+ = 67 to 69;

D = 64 to 66; and F = 63 and below.

Since the Chancellor has the ability to set grading policy, let me make the following additions. Firstly, eliminate rounding up grades. If an A is a 90, anything less IS NOT AN A. Simple. 89.7 is a B+. Be proud of what you have earned. By rounding up the grades, students have come to understand that if they receive an A- in the first Advisory, they can still pass if they simply do NOTHING else with a D.

Secondly, we need to add in an A+ (say 97-100) and an A (94-96.99). The difference between a 93 and a 98 are lightyears apart. We do nothing for your students by making believe it is.

Re: C failure due to absence... most high school classes meet every other day, which means 22.5 days per quarter/Advisory. Allowing 10 UNEXCUSED absences was tantamount to malpractice. Under the old policy a student could have 9 Unexcused absences out of 22.5 days- 40% absent/60% present. It is a pathetically low standard and should be tightened- not eliminated. Of course, excused absences are a different story. Nevertheless, missing class is missing instruction, social and collaborative time. Students don't miss LESS b/c they were excused. Putting the teachers IMPACT rating on the line with students who miss 40+ percent of instruction is Machiavelli and probably contributes to churn. Students and teachers deserve better. The proposed changes to the attendance policy hurt both. Additionally, every teacher I know already allows additional opportunities for students to make up work and get back on track. The wording of the policy sends the message that students can come and go as they please b/c there will always be a second chance. Enough already. For a district that has been trying to tackle the achievement/ opportunity gap for decades, one would expect a higher standard for student attendance. Students do not have required end of year exams to pass & are not accountable for passing the PARCC, can we agree that students, many of whom are 2+ grade levels behind in reading/math should not have ANY UNEXCUSED absences?

Re: flexible start times. Staffing, budgets and master schedules have been set for SY 18-19. What does this look like?

Section 2103-The student truancy policy should reflect the repercussions of a student missing days of school. As it is currently written, the policy does not reflect all that a student misses in a day of school. The number of days for retention should be fewer. The policy also states unexcused absences. A lot of student's absences are regarded excused and it seems far too easy to have an absence excused. This neglects to address the issue of the many days of instruction that were lost, regardless of the absences being excused or unexcused. Tardiness is also not addressed in these

revisions. So many students miss an entire class period and for elementary schools it doesn't count towards truancy. Tardy students miss a lot of important instruction and there is no policy reinforcing this fact and backing up teachers when they tell parents that it is imperative their child be at school on time. Teachers can reach out to parents and explain the academic repercussions of tardiness but until there is a policy again deterring tardiness, it will be difficult to see change.

Section 2013, TRUANCY

2103.2: Additional categories of students should be permitted to have half-day schedules, i.e. a student with a disability who may be able to attend part of a day of school but cannot access a full day. Principals should be able to make case-by-case determinations of students who would benefit from half-day schedules.

2103.4: The language at the end of this section is confusing and instead should reflect the language used in 2103.6. In 2103.4, the language in any subject is awarded, unless an exception applies should be deleted and replaced with within a full school year shall receive a failing final grade in that course with a resulting loss of course credit.

2103.4-6: These sections should state that the written notices after 10, 15, and 30 unexcused absences should be delivered both by hand to the student and by certified mail to the student's home. There should be a system in place to ensure that a parent or adult student has received the notice. Notices should include information about impact on eligibility for credit recovery opportunities, particularly eligibility for summer school credit recovery. This distinction between original credit and credit recovery summer school classwork is not apparent or well known. Students should be aware of the type of summer school or credit program they are eligible for and should pursue.

2103.9: Upon receipt of an appeal, all relevant records should automatically be sent to parent or adult student (i.e. class-by-class attendance records, relevant related service provider logs, teacher logs, disciplinary records, parent communications, OSSE transportation records, report cards, SST notes, absentee protocols and intervention plans, written notices about absences and any documentation about receipt of these notices, etc.)

2103.9-2103.16: The language needs to include that the Appeals Panel must have the ability to obtain all necessary records (i.e. class-by-class attendance records, relevant related service provider logs, teacher logs, disciplinary records, parent communications, OSSE transportation records, report cards, SST notes, absentee protocols and intervention plans, written notices about absences and any documentation about receipt of these notices, etc.) and the ability to call witnesses.

2013.10: List of possible Appeals Panel members should include SST team members and social workers. For all students, a teacher who has educated that student should be a required member of the panel. If a student has an IEP, a special educator should be a required member of the panel. If a student receives SST services, a member of that team should be a required member of the panel.

2103.13: Specify that school should bear the burden of proving student's attendance. Remove the phrase upon request. Parents should be provided with records (i.e. class-by-class attendance records, relevant related service provider logs, teacher logs, disciplinary records, parent communications, OSSE transportation records, report cards, SST notes, absentee protocols and intervention plans, written notices about absences and any documentation about receipt of these notices, etc.). Parents

must also be able to compel witnesses.

2103.14: Eliminate the phrase however two (2) voting members can render a decision.

2103.16: Appeals Panel's conclusion should be a decision, not a recommendation.

2103.16-17: School days should be changed to calendars days because of challenges that summer and other school breaks pose. There should also be an expedited process upon notice of graduation status. There should be shorter turnarounds for decision during the 4th quarter to ensure that students may appeal in time to graduate or enroll in appropriate summer school classes.

2103.18-19: The appeal of the Appeal Panel's decision should not be a document review performed by the Chancellor's official grade appeal designee. Students should have the opportunity to appeal the Appeal Panel's decision in a hearing in front of an independent hearing office in the Student Hearing Office or the Office of Administrative Hearings.

Section 2200, REPORTING

2200.7: Clarification: Are FA and NM grades no longer grades that can be reported on student report cards? If a student does fail due to absence, this needs to be made apparent on a student's report card (not just receive an F without notice that the failure was due to absence). Student should be informed of numeric grade student averaged in a class for which the student has failed due to absence.

2200.9: Clarification required: does mid and end of advisory reporting refer to progress reports and report cards? If so, use the progress reports and report card language for clarity.

2200.9(d): Clarification required: when this section states by the close of the advisory, which advisory is it referring to? Additionally, other interventions should be added to this section. If a student has an IEP, an FBA should be completed to assess the student's absence-causing behavior.

2200.9(f): Regulation needs to address school's role in ensuring student attendance once student has arrived at the building. Parents cannot be held responsible for student absence when student is in the school's care (i.e. behavior like roaming the halls when a student is supposed to be in class).

2200.10: Report cards must be distributed sooner than 12 days after the end of the advisory.

2200.11: Clarification: how can any student who has not met the standards in a course or in a grade shall be notified no later than the last day of school in order to ensure timely enrollment in Summer School if report cards do not need to be distributed until up to 12 days after the end of the advisory? How will the students be informed if they need to register for summer school? Any sort of notice needs to be in writing and delivered to students and parents. Is there a different policy for fourth quarter?

General Feedback on Proposed and Emergency Rulemaking

What are the consequences for schools if they do not comply with the notices, timelines, appeals processes, or interventions required in this regulation?

2103.3 I don't know what the exceptions are, but I assume one would be if the child is passing the grade despite the high number of absences.

2200.9 Could there be a course of action if a child has failed to meet the standard for 2 years in a row?

2103.5 and 2103.6 Failure should be an indication of not grasping the material, not a failure to show up. Yes, these things are typically correlated. But don't fail kids on subject matters just for not showing up - there is something un-logical about it, fail them for not passing the test, not doing an in-class assignment, or not handing in decent homework. Natural consequences and all that. Maybe check with a behavioral psychologist about this whole approach for high school students and review the evidence of it effectiveness.

My child has a medical problem that sometimes I'm not taking her to the doctors. I can treat him at home. To only give ten days of unexcused absence is crazy. How about we move that to maybe 15. But not only that, with these 10 days you have kids coming to school sick as a dog because this 10 days of unexcused absence passing their germs to other kids. The nurse has the nerve to say he doesn't have a fever, but he threw up. You don't have to have a fever to be sick. We need to do better our kids are the future, but we treat them differently

Sick and medical are already excused.

I think medical sick days should always be excused if there is a doctor's note. I think that students who are absent over the 10-day limit should have to do Saturday or after school during that same quarter to make up for their unexcused absences (there should be a cap on makeup days as well).

They should have make up days for students with unexcused absences through twilight or Saturday school.

And who will pay the teachers for their extra-efforts and time?

Many schools already offer Saturday academies. Some teachers offer students opportunities at lunch and after school. Some funding was available for Saturday school, but it was not every Saturday.

Regardless of DCPS's rules and policies, it is very difficult to retain students even if they are reading or doing math below grade level. If the issue is that students are getting promoted to future grades and are not able to handle the work, there needs to be more support and guidelines from Central Office for retaining students, especially in elementary school when there is time to catch up.

Medical should be excused. maybe travel internationally to see family should also be excused if it's not in excess.

Intonational travel should be excused, see the number of foreign families within DCPS.

2200.1 The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) marking or grading system shall be designed to report fairly and accurately student progress and student achievement.

2200.2 The Chancellor shall establish and implement all DCPS policies on marks (grades) and student progress reporting.

2200.7 At the Secondary level; sixth (6th) grade through twelfth (12th) grade; marks (grades) of A through F shall be assigned by the teacher to indicate the degree of achievement by a student of the content standards in each course. Results of the end of course exam will count for no more than 20% of the final grade. Marks (grades) shall be as follows:

A = 93 to 100, A- = 90 to 92; B+ = 87 to 89; B = 83 to 86; B- = 80 to 82; C+ = 79 to 77; C = 73 to 76; C- = 70 to 72;

D+ = 67 to 69;

D = 64 to 66; and F = 63 and below.

Since the Chancellor has the ability to set grading policy, let me make the following additions. Firstly, eliminate rounding up grades. If an A is a 90, anything less IS NOT AN A. Simple. 89.7 is a B+. Be proud

of what you have earned. By rounding up the grades, students have come to understand that if they receive an A- in the first Advisory, they can still pass if they simply do NOTHING else with a D. Secondly, we need to add in an A+ (say 97-100) and an A (94-96.99). The difference between a 93 and a 98 are lightyears apart. We do nothing for your students by making believe it is.

DCPS needs to adopt an elementary grading policy to ensure consistency in how grades are assigned across all elementary schools.

I'm a teacher and kids

Kids need to be penalized for missing school. I know there are circumstances, but I am from the hood and we had to be in school to graduate. If this was a more affluent population absenteeism wouldn't be up for discussion. DCPS needs to keep the bar high. Penalize for unexcused absences.

2200.9-2200.11: Although this mention notifying parents of the risk of retention, the retention policy is not stated for elementary students. Summer school enrollment is mentioned but not said to be mandatory. I know that the district put out a new retention policy this May 2018 but I am unsure if that still holds and/or if that needs to be stated in this document. Although this might not be the document to explain this, policies for retention should be clearly stated and posted for parents, teachers and staff.

Section 2013, TRUANCY

2103.2: Additional categories of students should be permitted to have half-day schedules, i.e. a student with a disability who may be able to attend part of a day of school but cannot access a full day. Principals should be able to make case-by-case determinations of students who would benefit from half-day schedules.

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I support the comment that students and their families should have access to all their records and they should be provided. Also expanding the time students must hand in the note can be expanded to 15 days.