

Dear DCPS Community,

This week, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) released a report analyzing the ways that DCPS implemented graduation policies and procedures for the Ballou Class of 2017. The report determined that DCPS did not follow established policies related to attendance, grading, and community service requirements, resulting in students who graduated without having met the District's graduation criteria. Through the details of this report and others that have been released since December 2017, we know that DCPS fell short of its commitment to the young people we serve, and broke the trust that our students, families, educators, and community stakeholders have in our district. **We have been and continue to be committed to making the changes needed to ensure that every student is prepared for college, career, and life, and to supporting our students and families throughout this process.**

When DCPS became aware of the ways that we were not holding all students to our standards, we worked quickly to address these challenges. As a result, **DCPS has already implemented nearly all of the recommendations in the OIG report.** Any recommendations not implemented are the result of a policy change or system shift at DCPS that make the recommendation no longer applicable. DCPS first focused on training schools on policies and ensuring all 2018 graduates received their diplomas in accordance with all code, regulation, and policy. At the same time, DCPS [engaged a broad group of stakeholders](#) – including many of you – to create updated policies that were supportive, inclusive, and equitable. New policies for attendance, secondary grading, credit recovery, promotion, and graduation went into effect this school year and were shared in our [Pre-K to Graduation Policy Guide for Families](#). As a result of these steps, **we are setting clear expectations about the standards of excellence our students must meet as well as what supports DCPS will provide along the way** for the Class of 2019 and beyond.

We continue to keep students at the center of our work by providing our students the resources and supports they need on the path to graduation. I am proud that we have taken a number of steps this year to support our secondary students including:

- Releasing the [Student Guide to Graduation, College, and Career](#), a personalized guide for all 9th through 11th grade students to let them know where they are on the path to graduation, what college and career opportunities are aligned with their goals, and actions steps they can take for success;
- Partnering with District agencies to host **resource fairs at every comprehensive high school**;
- **Redesigning our [credit recovery program](#)** to introduce a mastery-based approach that allows students to progress at their own pace; and
- Ensuring students have the support they need **through individual scheduling meetings and additional community service opportunities** during school breaks.

We know that **we have more work to do.** We are committed to continuing to implement this work with fidelity to ensure high-quality, equitable outcomes for our students, and to working with our community throughout this process. We will continue to invest in our students furthest from opportunity through support for schools identified as “Comprehensive” under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). We are expanding enrollment opportunities at our NAF Academies and access to early college through the opening of Bard DC and Early College at Coolidge. **I will continue to emphasize transparency because I know that our progress as a district can only move at the rate of trust.** Together, we will ensure that

every community has a strong neighborhood school at every grade-level and that every student feels loved, challenged, and prepared to take advantage of the growth and opportunity in our thriving city.

In partnership,

Lewis D. Ferebee
Chancellor
DC Public Schools