



Chancellor Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2019

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Emery Professional Development Center- 1720 First Street NE 20002

Meeting Objectives

Meeting participants will:

1. Receive an overview of Attendance and Truancy terms and changes made to the DCPS policies.
2. Engage in a small group discussion on Attendance and Grading Policies as well as sample parent and student truancy letters.
3. Participate in share out and reflection

Meeting Attendees:

- *DCPS Chancellor Advisory Board Members:* Christine Miller, Courtney Edwards, Rosa Singletary, Kristin Jennings, Valerie Boykin-Pair, Charline Smith-Johnson, Andre Taylor, De’Andre Anderson, Carmencita Jones, Ashley “AC” Edwards, Theotric White
- *Not in Attendance:* Jonathan Pajibo, Gabriela Jarquin, Arthur Griffith, Lorena Shank, Kishan Putta, Jon van der Veen, Jessica Morton, Joseph Snell, Sandra Moscoso, Andrew Patricio
- *Office of Family and Public Engagement (OFPE):* Sarah Parker, Deputy Chief, Community Engagement, Mahogany Blank, Coordinator, Community Engagement
- *Meeting Presenters:* Interim Chancellor Alexander, Andrea Allen, Director of Attendance and Support Services, Debra Reed, Specialist for Attendance and Support Services

Notes:

Agenda item	Comments
Chancellor Welcome	<p>Interim Chancellor Alexander welcomed members and thanked them for serving on her Advisory Board during her interim term as Chancellor.</p> <p>Chancellor Alexander celebrated what had been accomplished in 2018 including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PARCC scores were on the rise for the third consecutive year with gains for students at every grade level. Thirty-three schools made gains of two points or more including Burroughs Elementary School, Jefferson Middle School Academy, and McKinley Technology High School. ● DCPS opened Excel Academy, an all-girls school located in Ward 8. ● We announced a new partnership with Bard College, which will provide DCPS students an opportunity to graduate from high school with an Associate Degree. ● DCPS released new Pre-K to Graduation Policies that set clear expectations about the standards our students need to meet and what we will do to support them along the way. ● Updated Policies include: attendance, discipline, grading, promotion, and



	<p>graduation for School Year 2018-2019.</p> <p>Updates for School Year 2018-2019 mentioned in the presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Out of Boundary policy is <i>no longer</i> in effect. All students receive the same interventions. • Doctor notes/official documentation required after five <i>cumulative absences within a term</i> • Parenting students may receive excused absences for a sick child. Note policy applies. • School staff - phone calls home are expected at 4th absence (excused or unexcused). • This year, secondary students have a 5 minute “grace period” before they should be marked tardy rather than present by the teacher • Data will be locked on the 15th of each month for data entered the previous month. This affects ability to enter or change entered excuse codes. • New, more specific Aspen codes added, and emergency can only be added after an approval process and by the help desk
<p>Attendance Initiative Overview</p>	<p>Advisory Board Members received general information regarding chronic absenteeism and attendance at DCPS as well as updates to what changes were made in the revised attendance and truancy policies. Members learned about DCPS’ partnership with the Proving Ground team from the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University to pilot a communication initiative to address chronic absenteeism within the district.</p> <p>With this partnership, DCPS is joining a national network to test the effectiveness of our interventions before rolling them out more widely. The current intervention consists of “Energy Bill Letters”. For purposes of the pilot, DCPS sent letters to a select number of students and/or families to evaluate their effectiveness on a small sample before rolling them out district-wide. The letters were given their title because their design is like a letter received from energy companies when the bill has not been paid. Like an energy bill being sent to a customer to show progress and usage, individualized letters to a subset of students and/or families whose students missed 5% or more were mailed out in the 2017-2018 school year. The letters included individualized attendance.</p>
<p>Group Discussion</p>	<p>Members received samples of the Energy Bill Letters, as well as updated DCPS policies and the Chronic Absenteeism FAQ. After reviewing these documents, the members considered the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were there any sections of the updated attendance and truancy policies that were unclear to you? • Do you feel the “Energy Letters” are a great resource for parents? Did it answer additional questions regarding attendance? • How would you feel receiving one of these letters, from a parent perspective? • What additional resources/supports would help a parent dealing with



	<p>truancy issues?</p> <p>Topics and Questions that stemmed from the group discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What systems do we have in place for a child to be kept at home? Online work or assignments?• Why are students not coming to school?• Consider separate letters by grade-band (elementary, middle, high school) to provide more serious language in the high school letter• Give examples in the letter of how this affects the child- feeling embarrassed feeling out of place.• Are we encouraging Doctor's Offices to have later appointments after-school?• The 80/20 rule seems stringent and should be evaluated• Give the truancy notification letters to the attendance counselor instead of mailing them home so that the counselor can debrief with the student and tell students how they are helping them• Consider parent support groups for attendance.• 16-year-old and older should be held accountable and counseled on attendance in schools.
Next Steps and Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents were made aware of a follow-up meeting being held with Proving Ground (Harvard Research Group) and that their feedback will be shared in the meeting.• We thanked the parents for coming out in the weather and providing meaningful feedback. As a reminder, the March 21st meeting will be Chancellor Ferebee's first meeting with the advisory boards.