



FY23 Student Budget Discussion
High School Students
November 8, 2021

| Event Information | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Facilitators | Chancellor Lewis D. Ferebee Sarah Parker – Deputy Chief, Community Engagement Jerry Ilar – Coordinator, Public Events and Engagement |
| Note Takers | Claudette Monroy – Coordinator, Community Engagement Bijan Verlin – Specialist, Community Action Team Eli Hoffman- Manager, Community Affairs |
| Target Group | High School Students |
| Date | November 8, 2021 |
| Time | 10:30am – 12:00pm |
| Number of Attendees | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 38 participants + students |
| Schools in Attendance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anacostia High School• Ballou Senior High School• Ballou STAY• Bard High School Early College DC• Benjamin Banneker Academic High School• Cardozo Education Campus• Columbia Height Education Campus• Duke Ellington School of Arts• Eastern High School• H.D. Woodson High School• Luke C. Moore High School• McKinley Technology High School• Phelps ACE High School• Roosevelt High School• Roosevelt STAY High School• School Without Walls High School• Wilson High School |



SEL Opener – Please share your name, grade and one word that describes how your year is going?

- Exciting
- Different x3
- Overwhelming
- Unorganized
- Interesting x2
- Chill
- Good
- Eventful
- Productive x2
- Tired
- Confusing but exhilarating
- Difficult
- Active
- Fast
- Readjustment
- Eye-opening
- Complex
- Challenging x2
- Unique
- Relaxed
- Beneficial

How are you feeling about being back in school? What did you miss the most?

- Excited to come back to school, especially since it feels like we lost a lot of our High School experience through the pandemic. Learning through a computer was hard; we missed out on human interactions and school spirit and just being together.
- Being able to go one-on-one with the teachers has made the academic experience much better for us this year.
- School has done a good job of keeping somewhat sense of normalcy even with masks and distancing. Mainly missed extra curriculars and sports also during the pandemic.
- Being at an arts school, I missed being able to create. Performing to laptop was awkward. Nice to be in spaces where I can create and perform in front of people; back to producing, acting in films, wrote an SNL sketch. It's awesome being back in schools.
- I live for sports and being able to do that at school in addition to academics. Being personable, saying hi to people, seeing friends and participating in sports again has been great. I am very involved in school I play soccer and run track; I participated in states recently for track.
- Being back in school is fun because virtual was boring, I missed the sense of normalcy.



- We all missed the human interaction.
- Being back feels good! Being around other students feels good.
- I learn better with in person teaching.
- The experience of going to school in person from Sophomore to Senior year has made the pressure on applying for colleges really intense.
- We need to increase awareness on how to keep our schools clean.
- Excited to come back to school for interactions with teachers and students. I was bummed that there were things that DCPS didn't fix in the Wilson school building.
- Even though we have to be socially distanced, I still feel the love and support for my teachers. My teachers motivate me to think about college. I don't feel alone, and I know people love me and make me feel welcome - teachers, AP, social worker.
- Completed community service and got straight A's during virtual learning. It has been bittersweet coming back. Transition times and running into people in the hallways as opposed to going from one virtual class to another has been nice.
- It has been an adjustment to come back; it takes more effort than just being in my room all of the time.
- Others and I have forgotten how to socialize so it has been hard to adjust and adapt. I am re-learning that it's okay to raise your hand, speak up, and not be shy for example.
- I miss the field trips.
- My experience back in school has been good. I am excited to see friends and socialize. My teachers have been patient and understanding in us needing leeway to transition back to school. I feel like I'm on my own with applying to colleges; not getting support there.
- It has been great being back in person; my school has strong extracurricular activities that depend on us being together in person. Ex: SGA has been better this year.
- I didn't like sitting in front of a computer. I like doing my work at school.



“Schools will receive funding based on students’ needs.” What does this idea mean to you?

- Counseling and mental health and for all students needs to be a priority.
- Facilities in DCPS need to be improve in general, overcrowding and failure to upkeep is detrimental for student success.
- Food is not appetizing, diverse, or healthy.
- Kids Ride Free is great but for kids who drive, it can be very difficult to find parking, feed meters, etc.
- Students need mentors to help them psychologically and accomplish goals.
- Safety and security staff aren’t helpful when fights break out.
- This is a useful forum to discuss issues at schools.
- I would recommend taking a look at individual students and schools. DCPS failed to identify what schools need. At Wilson, it’s hard to find water towards the end of the day. Also, not enough bathrooms, not all are accessible.
- We are also having water and bathroom issues at Duje Ellington also. Ellington must pay money to keep its arts programs going. I would also recommending focusing more on counseling; it’s overlooked but it’s what we need. It feels like we’ve been underfunded and like we haven’t received what we need.
- Agree with water and bathroom issues that others raised. I’m on the band, but we haven’t been able to go to games because we didn’t have a bus to take us there.
- Our soap dispenser is gone from the bathroom. Water fountains don’t work, and water bottles aren’t readily available to students. If you can fund transportation for the football team you should be able to do it for cheerleaders and band too.
- Counseling and mental health important. I went through a depressive stage during the pandemic, and this hasn’t improved since we’ve been back in the building. Counselors check in on college, but not on mental health. Give teachers trainings and they need to be restorative.
- Speaking for EOTR schools, we lack funding in arts and other programs that we see students in other wards are receiving. We see this happening.
- We need better mental health support. Teachers tell us to come prepared, but they don’t ask why we might not be prepared. There are things going on at home that they don’t seek to understand.
- In order to know what we need; you need to come to each school and see what each needs. We don’t have the water and bathroom issues at Woodson, but we need more mental health support for example.
- Banneker doesn’t have the facility issues that others are talking about because we have a new building, but we need more mental health supports. Also, security check to get into the building isn’t COVID friendly because there’s too many people close together.
- At Anacostia, we have a good support system- therapists for example. Also, our principal makes us feel like we’re one of his kids. But some kids don’t eat during the



day because they don't like school lunch. Upper graders allowed to go off campus to get lunch but there's nothing near to us worthwhile eating – just the carry out or 711.

- We need more resources; we have older kids that need programs like cosmetology. Also, better volunteer opportunities instead of just picking up trash. If we had internship opportunities, it might motivate people to think more about their future.
- We only have three sports and they're boring, especially having to wear masks the whole time.

Comments from chat:

- I agree counseling and mental health for all students needs be a priority.
- Facilities in DCPS need to be improved in general overcrowding and failure of upkeep hasn't allowed students to succeed.
- The food is not appetizing. There is not enough diversity beyond apples and basic salad. There is a lack of quality.
- DCPS has done a good job with transportation to and from school with Kids Ride Free. But for those students who do drive to school have to worry about paying for meters and getting tickets when the only parking available is on the street.
- I feel as if each student should have their own mentor to help them psychologically so they can become more motivated to accomplish their goals.
- Safety and security that do stuff. As fights break out and there is a lack of staff to help ensure a safe learning space.
- Also, for Bard, we are not in our official building, the sinks are falling off the walls and it's so much more about the infrastructure of this building is horrible. Funding for fixing temporary housing for schools should be expanded.
- I agree with everyone, DCPS staff should prioritize all schools having basic and fundamental necessities.
- We at School Without Walls agree about many of the issues others are having, like poor access to water, transportation, and a lack of a good support system. Also, more specific to our school, we have a pretty small building, and this causes issues both with the number of students and with space for extracurricular activities.
- I also think these types of meetings should be held more often to ensure these issues are being solved.
- Overcrowding and the populations of school is a big issue.
- To build on to Iyana's point about Ward 7 and Ward 8's underfunding in the arts, Ellington's student body is made of majority ward 5,7, and 8 students. The environment exist in is not representative of the students that we are actually helping, and it feels like sometimes people don't believe in our issues purely based on where we're placed. Due to that distrust of our issues we're not able to get students that come from underfunded and underserved communities what we need.
- to Jason's point we at Bard are over capacity in this elementary school full of high schoolers how is DCPs planning for another class to fit inside of the Davis building?



- Equity with breakfast and lunch provided across schools. Schools that have less markets/storefronts may need a different menu than other schools to support student nutritional needs. Especially in food deserts.
- Being an art school that goes to 5pm we have a completely different school experience that has a completely different set of needs and sometimes it feels like we're only seen as a basic public school

As we set new goals this spring, what would you prioritize MORE of for DCPS if you were me?

- Improve communication - we won't be able to know what's going on or what we need if people aren't communicating properly. Also, health/safety- sanitizer, mask wearing, mental health (physical and mental).
- Mental health – incorporate it into our weekly schedule.
- Identify basic needs and then find out school's individual needs. If you're a smaller school, you don't need as many resources as bigger schools.
- Ensure every school has clean bathrooms and clean learning environments so that they're comfortable learning. The food is so bad some kids don't even bother coming into the cafeteria because they know they're not going to like the food.
- Duke Ellington funding for staffing isn't enough. Mental health and counseling supports are important. Don't just focus on academics; kids can be great at arts or other things. Arts underfunded at Middle School level and so that side of a student isn't able to be developed.
- More mental health funding and more staff. Relook at policies, we shouldn't need to come into the building at certain times if we don't have class then.
- For STAY schools, make sure you give students what they need. ISA shouldn't be the only defining factor.
- Fund more for students to go different places and expand their learning beyond DC.

Comments from chat:

- If I was the Chancellor, I would prioritize initially these issues with bathrooms and water issues at some of these schools. Then solve any of these other basic needs that other schools have, such as mental health and transportation.
- I also agree with the points being shared. I would focus more on basic needs because we can't go to solve bigger issues when we struggle on the basics.
- And to add to Miki's point about the pay for teachers, a student can really enjoy a subject, however a teacher can ruin a subject for them due to lack of pay. Teachers need equitable pay to teach subjects effectively.
- If I were the Chancellor, I would prioritize food most of all because we cannot work at our best if we are constantly hungry and malnourished, also there are only so many kids that eat at home and it is not fair that some kids can go outside and get their own



food, but at the same time, other kids really on school food as their daily meals everyday

- If I were Chancellor I would prioritize the people, I agree what everyone in the chat and what they are stating, however it's not always attending to a person because they are physically in need is not all that comes with a person. Mental health is a big deal, it's been big since before the pandemic and the increase in depression with students the pandemic plays a big role. When you're a chancellor you should always do everything in your power to tend to every person even if they aren't putting their self out there that's they need support.
- Will there be more opportunities for students to participate and share their voice?
- On top of that, CHEC is primarily focused on academics so being able to provide enough counselors and mental support is crucial, especially in these times. I feel like the chancellor should focus on the basic needs of students. The student body has prioritized water, cleaning, and food in the building. We understand that there is only so much that you can do but meeting the basic needs at each school is a start and then going into the specifics of each school.
- One of the priorities should be security evaluation. Some of these officers have attitude problems and take their jobs to seriously. Sometimes coming school makes me feel like I'm at the airport. As a student this makes me feel un-welcomed and unmotivated to attend school.
- Thank you for having us.
- Have a good one everyone. Very appreciative of this opportunity.

Other Questions/Comments

- Will there be more opportunities for students to voice their opinions/concerns?
- When will students be able to visit colleges outside of the DC area?

Main Themes and Key Takeaways



- Students are looking for the basics- healthy and safe environment, enough water, functioning bathrooms, decent food, sufficient school staffing, and mental health supports.
- The social aspect of being back in person -interacting with peers and teachers- has been most beneficial.