

Dear DCPS Community,

The values that we strive to lead with every day — Students First, Equity, Excellence, Teamwork, Courage, and Joy — have never been more important. When we are required to face the unexpected, these values guide DCPS' response and inform decisions like how we use our resources to support students. [Earlier this year](#), I spoke about how investments directly to schools help meet the needs of students while also retaining the best teachers, principals, and school staff. Today I am writing with an update on our Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) budget.

### **FY21 Budget Announcement**

**Mayor Bowser continues to make education a priority with historic investments in our schools.** This commitment will allow us to continue preparing every student for college, career, and life. Despite projected revenue decreases for the District of Columbia, [the Mayor's FY21 budget](#) includes a \$979.4 million local investment for schools, a \$77 million increase from FY20.

DCPS is ensuring school budgets will remain secure, including \$3.4 million in targeted Chancellor's Assistance funds, as well as another \$6.1 million in budget assistance. The only reduction between principals' February submission and now is a reduction in travel funds, which was implemented across all agency budgets. Putting students first is at the heart of our budget decisions, and our FY21 budget demonstrates that commitment.

Individual submitted school budgets will be available to review at [www.dcpsdatacenter.com](http://www.dcpsdatacenter.com) on Thursday.

### **Student Supports and Learning Enhancements**

DCPS believes **providing enriching and nurturing supports for the mind, body, and family to be more important than ever.** We are pleased to share that this budget includes \$2.1 million to Connected Schools to provide wraparound services, including wellness and behavioral health supports, housing, childcare, and financial assistance referrals.

To continue **increasing equity in technology access**, especially in the current environment of learning at home, the FY21 budget will advance our Empowered Learners Initiative with a \$6.9 million investment to close the digital divide and help reach a 1:1 student-to-device ratio by 2022.

The FY21 budget also includes a \$450,000 investment to support **early literacy intervention programs.** This investment will allow us to serve an additional 600 students across the city to help reach our goal of every K-2 student reading at grade level by 2022.

### **A Great School in Every Neighborhood**

Mayor Bowser's FY21 Budget and Financial Plan also covers long-term investments for our schools. Over the next six years, we anticipate more than \$1.4 billion in capital funds, including \$1.27 billion for more than 30 school modernization projects.

The [Capital Improvement Plan](#) (CIP) released today builds on our commitment to provide world-class facilities and a great school in every neighborhood. Some highlights include:

- A permanent home for Bard High School Early College with a new facility at the former Malcolm X Opportunity Center site in Ward 8, opening in 2023.
- Construction of a new elementary school building at the Old Hardy site on Foxhall Road to address overcrowding in Ward 3 and nearby schools, opening in 2025.
- Expansion of Early Childhood Development Centers — including new programming at Bunker Hill, Drew, King, Moten, and Wheatley — to offer more infant and toddler seats at schools in the coming years.
- Small capital improvements at schools such as outdoor field replacements and new HVAC systems.

To help our school community understand how the Capital Improvement Plan goes from page to project, [watch a brief explainer video to learn more](#).

### **Preparing for What's Next**

As we continue to evaluate and reimagine our budget model for FY22 and beyond, our goal is to allocate resources transparently and equitably while empowering schools to use resources to improve student outcomes. Over the coming weeks, we will hold virtual stakeholder meetings — including a town hall for families — to share information about new budget model options and collect public feedback. More information on how to get involved is forthcoming.

Sincerely,

Lewis D. Ferebee, Ed.D.  
Chancellor  
DC Public Schools