

## Chancellor Parent Cabinet Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 14, 2016  
5:30-8:00 PM  
DCPS Central Office

### Meeting Objectives

Meeting participants will:

1. Hear an update on Cornerstone implementation
2. Learn about the different types of Cornerstones that have been developed
3. Provide feedback on the communications parents receive about Cornerstones

### Meeting Attendees:

- *DCPS Chancellor's Parent Cabinet Members:* Robin Appleberry, Davena Archie, Ameen Beale, Tara Brown, E. Andre Carter, Charles DeSantis, Kristine Erickson, Camille Fair-Bumbray, Laurence Gill, Diane Jackson, Helene Klusmann, Michael Koppenheffer, Corinne McIntosh-Douglas, Dionne Moore, Matthew O'Hara, Beth Osborne, Sweta Shah, Shameka Stewart, and Adria Wright
- *Not in Attendance:* Nazanin Ash, Cristóbal Rodríguez, Kevin Sampson, and Alejandra Vallejo
- Chancellor Kaya Henderson
- *Office of Family and Public Engagement:* Josephine Bias Robinson, Cassandra Sánchez, and Allison D'Aurora

### Notes:

Topic	Comments
Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The My School DC lottery has opened. The application deadline for grades 9-12 is February 1, and the application deadline for grades PK3-8 is March 1.</li><li>▪ DCPS is opening the Empowering Males High School, a new high school for male students in the former Ron Brown Middle School. The school will open School Year 2016-2017 and will begin with a ninth grade class.</li><li>▪ In the November Cabinet meeting, members asked the Chancellor for more information on the fraudulent residency claims that DCPS investigates. The Compliance and Policy office shared that in the past five years, the number of total cases that DCPS has investigated increased, but the percentage determined to be non-residents has decreased. DCPS is working with the Office of the Attorney General to identify other methods to verify students' residency that will alleviate the burden for families.</li></ul>
Focus Topic: Cornerstones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Representatives from the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) will present an update on their progress with Cornerstones. At the June</li></ul>

	<p>Cabinet meeting, Chief Brian Pick introduced Cornerstones and discussed the implementation plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Three team members from OTL who have worked with Chief Pick on development and implementation will share updates on Cornerstones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Corinne Colgan, Deputy Chief of Literacy and Humanities</li> <li>○ James Rountree, Science Director</li> <li>○ Marisa Edmonds, Coordinator of Cornerstones Operations</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ To introduce Cornerstones to the group, Mr. Rountree led the Cabinet in a Cornerstone activity for high school physics students. Cabinet members were given two race cars and two race tracks of different slopes. Cabinet members had to make observations about the cars' speed, distance, and ability to stop on the different ramps. In the actual Cornerstone, students find equations and use them to calculate if cars can stop safely in the time a traffic light turns from yellow to red. They then determine if the city has set an allowable margin of error for drivers to cross the road safely. If students find there might not be enough time, they are encouraged to write a letter to the mayor – or take similar action – asking for yellow light times to be extended using their calculations as evidence.</li> <li>▪ Over the summer, OTL brought together a group of teachers to develop 216 Cornerstones for grades K-12. There were 118 Cornerstone developers as well as specialists, who provided services such as translation of Cornerstones for dual language programs, guidance on incorporating educational technology, and modifications for diverse learners, among others.</li> <li>▪ There are three tenets for all Cornerstones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ They provide rich, engaging, and important content.</li> <li>○ There is a student work product, which is graded, to demonstrate what they learned.</li> <li>○ They are based on high-impact teaching techniques.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The three goals of Cornerstones are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increase equity across the district so that every student in DCPS experiences engaging, rigorous lessons</li> <li>○ Provide a better professional development model for teachers where they can plan together, discuss shared challenges, and best practices</li> <li>○ Empower teachers and students through hands-on activities and real-world connections that activate learning core concepts.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Cornerstones are mandatory lessons that all teachers throughout DCPS use. Some teachers who teach multiple grade levels were given the option to be trained in Cornerstones for only one grade level this first year of implementation. The goal will be for these teachers to be trained in other grade levels in the coming years.</li> <li>▪ Teachers have enjoyed Cornerstones and have requested more from OTL because they see the lessons are engaging and rigorous.</li> <li>▪ Cornerstones are one- to three-day lessons of an entire unit study, which is 35 days. There are Cornerstones for each unit of study for each subject area.</li> <li>▪ For each Cornerstone, there are non-negotiable parts of the lesson to ensure equity across the District, but teachers do have some room to adapt the lessons to meet the needs of their students.</li> </ul>
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	<p>historical landmarks, and monuments. The parent took her daughter on a tour of the monuments because her daughter was so excited to learn about them in school. The parent said Cornerstones prompt parents to be more engaged in their students' education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Another parent said her daughter completed an English Language Arts Cornerstone where she had to interview an older person to learn how technology has advanced in their lifetime. Her student talked about the lesson a lot at home and has been asking more questions about the differences between years past and now.</li> <li>○ Some parents said they have not heard their students or teachers talk about Cornerstones. OTL representatives said they can incorporate training about how teachers can communicate about Cornerstones in the professional development sessions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Update on Recess and Physical Education</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Since the last meeting in December, Cabinet members have sent several e-mails raising two primary concerns about how schools schedule recess and physical education.</li> <li>▪ First, some Cabinet members reported that teachers at their schools will take away recess from students as punishment. As a result, John Davis, the Chief of Schools, is sending a directive to all school leaders to remind them that it is unacceptable to withhold recess as a form of punishment. If Cabinet members see this occurring in the future, they should notify OFPE staff immediately, so DCPS can follow-up with the school.</li> <li>▪ The second issue that was raised was about the amount of time DCPS requires elementary schools to schedule for recess and physical education classes. Parents have expressed concern that schools, specifically Title I schools, reduce time for recess and physical education to implement academic interventions. One of the biggest challenges in scheduling is that there is a fixed amount of time in the school day to implement many competing priorities. School leaders have made trade-offs in their schedules to make their best effort to meet scheduling requirements and do what they think is necessary for their student body. This is one reason DCPS has been looking to expand the Extended Day program, so schools can more comfortably fit in all of the scheduling requirements and academic interventions they deem necessary for their students. Some schools do a great job in scheduling, but some schools need help. DCPS needs to improve how it monitors elementary school schedules to ensure they are meeting the minimum requirements. As a result of the Cabinet raising these concerns, DCPS will send staff to each school in the next few months as principals prepare their budgets for the coming school year to ensure they have staff and time dedicated to all scheduling requirements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Open Forum</b></p> <p><i>This portion of the meeting is reserved for the Cabinet to pose questions of any topic to the</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Question: Principal Aqueelha James of Burroughs Education Campus was recently appointed to serve as principal of Roosevelt High School effective immediately. Burroughs now has an interim principal during the lottery season when the school is trying to attract new families.</li> </ul>

*Chancellor. The questions and the Chancellor's responses are recorded in this section.*

Can the Chancellor come to Burroughs to talk to families about the process for finding a new principal for their school?

- Response: The Chancellor often does not meet with schools in these situations because families want to know information that she cannot share because personnel information is confidential. When the Chancellor has attended similar meetings in the past, parents often leave more dissatisfied than when they arrived. Chief of Schools John Davis attended the Burroughs PTA meeting to address their principal hiring process with families. DCPS acknowledges that this principal announcement for Roosevelt came at an unfortunate time for the Burroughs community. DCPS learned some valuable lessons in making this announcement in how to improve this experience moving forward. DCPS is trying to help both school communities move forward to ensure that student experiences are seamless.

- Question: What action should parents take if they are experiencing an issue with the school that they have already raised with the principal?

- Response: Parents can contact their instructional superintendent who supervises the principal and can help parents address these kinds of concerns.

- Question: The Duke Ellington School of the Arts principal said there has been a challenge retaining the school's field through its modernization process, and it might be used for other purposes.

- Response: The school and the field are on separate plots of land, and DCPS owns both. DCPS has not been notified of any outside organizations that are requesting to use the field.

*(Post-meeting note: DCPS has proposed using the DESA field to host trailers for Hyde-Addison Elementary School students when that building undergoes its modernization.)*

- Question: The PARCC results have shown that writing is a challenge for students. What will DCPS do these results to improve student's writing skills?

- Response: Preparing students and teachers for the PARCC has been a big shift because most assessments are multiple choice. DCPS has included more writing requirements into its curriculum, so students have more practice in this area throughout the school year.

- Question: Does the Chancellor feel optimistic that DCPS will see increases in its budget allocation this year?

- Response: For the past few years, DCPS' enrollment has increased, which means it is allotted more funds to cover the costs for all of its students. Each year, DCPS needs roughly a 5% increase to continue to do everything it has done in the previous year. Even though DCPS' enrollment has increased over the past few years and the overall budget has also increased, that increase only covers the costs for the

	<p>new students. For example, if enrollment increases result in a 2% budget increase, then DCPS has 3% to maintain its operations. DCPS has had to make budget cuts even though there are more students. Last year, DCPS made a 25% cut to central office so schools would not have to cut their budgets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Question: A teacher at Turner ES was fired recently for allegations of student abuse. Since then, the classroom has had a substitute teacher. Parents are concerned that their students are not receiving the same level of instruction they would with a permanent teacher. Is there a timeline to fill this position?</li> <li>▪ Response: After the incident, DCPS did send a letter home to parents and sent a crisis management team, including counselors, to support the school community. The principal may be facing challenges filling the position mid-year because there is typically a smaller pool of candidates. Parents should communicate their concerns about the substitute teacher to the principal. All substitute teachers do have licenses administered by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education.</li> </ul>
Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Next meeting is February 9, 2015.</li> </ul>