

Chancellor Parent Cabinet Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 13, 2016
5:30-8:00 PM
DCPS Central Office

Meeting Objectives

Meeting participants will:

1. Learn about the enrollment strategies DCPS is using to increase enrollment for SY2016-17
2. Provide feedback on ways parents can play a role in helping the school district reach enrollment goals

Meeting Attendees:

- *DCPS Chancellor's Parent Cabinet Members:* Robin Appleberry, Nazanin Ash, Ameen Beale, Tara Brown, E. Andre Carter, Charles DeSantis, Kristine Erickson, Laurence Gill, Helene Klusmann, Michael Koppenheffer, Dionne Moore, Matthew O'Hara, Cristóbal Rodríguez, Kevin Sampson, Sweta Shah, Shameka Stewart, Alejandra Vallejo, and Adria Wright
- *Not in Attendance:* Davena Archie, Camille Fair-Bumbray, Diane Jackson, Corinne McIntosh-Douglas, Beth Osborne, Shanti Sale,
- Chancellor Kaya Henderson
- *Office of Family and Public Engagement:* Josephine Bias Robinson, Shanita Burney, Eli Hoffman, and Allison D'Aurora
- *Guest Speakers:* Anjali Kulkarni, Deputy Chief of Strategic School Planning, Office of the Chief Operating Officer (OCOO); Zaneta Graves, Director of Enrollment, OCOO

Notes:

Topic	Comments
Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The mayor submitted her budget to City Council in early April. Council is holding public hearings for all DC agencies. DCPS' public hearing is Thursday, April 14, and the hearing for DCPS officials is on Thursday, April 21. ▪ Several DCPS students have been featured in the news in the past month: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Edwin Ordoñez, a senior at Columbia Heights Education Campus who is likely to be named valedictorian, was recently featured in a Washington Post article. Edwin and his father came to DC from El Salvador. Edwin has worked really hard in school and now has offers to attend very competitive schools, but he is an undocumented student and does not qualify for many financial aid sources. ○ Akilah Johnson, a student at Eastern High School, recently won Google's Doodle contest. Her doodle was featured on the Google homepage on March 21. She won a \$30,000 college scholarship, a \$50,000 Google Grant for Education for Eastern, and a trip to Google

	<p>Headquarters to meet Google staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Chancellor met with NBC4 Anchor Jim Vance this month. He is interested in brainstorming new ways to feature DCPS schools and students during his news program. ▪ DCPS has been troubled by the recent violence across the city, particularly the two incidents that have happened at the Deanwood Metro Station. DCPS is working with the Deputy Mayor of Education, Metropolitan Police Department, and the Metropolitan Transit Police Department to figure out how to stem some of this violence. ▪ PARCC assessments began this week. Overall, schools are reporting that they were better prepared to implement the assessment this year.
<p>Focus Topic: Enrollment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One of DCPS' Capital Commitment goals is to increase enrollment. The original goal was to reach 47,000 students, but DCPS exceeded that goal in 2014. The new goal is to reach 50,000 students by 2017. ▪ There was a dip in enrollment after 2007-08 because of school closures, but DCPS has been growing since 2011. In audited enrollment reports for School Year 2014-15, DCPS exceeded 48,000 students. ▪ The largest growth is in kindergarten and first grade. Historically we were not able to retain kindergarten students, but now larger cohorts of students are staying with DCPS through the fourth grade. The goal is to retain cohorts of students through the 12th grade. ▪ Last school year, DCPS lost 26% of students from fifth to sixth grade. Some of that loss is because families move out of DC, and some of the loss is to the charter sector. Some students do return to DCPS for high school. Last school year, there was a growth between eighth and ninth grade. ▪ DCPS has created an enrollment strategy for the very first time this year to better attract and retain families. There are six prongs to the strategy. <p><i>1. Improving retention of elementary students to feeder middle schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DCPS sees the biggest movement of students from fifth to sixth grade. Charter schools are outpacing DCPS in sixth grade, so the Enrollment Team is trying to understand what those schools are offering. Additionally, the team is working with middle schools to build better relationships with parents at their elementary feeder schools to get parents invested in their middle schools early on. ▪ DCPS has also started to build more cohesive and intentional feeder patterns, so students have a clearer path for specialized programming, such as STEM or dual language. <p><i>2. Meet enrollment projections for new schools and programs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are four new schools or programs for School Year 2016-2017: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Empowering Males High School ○ MacFarland Middle School ○ Roosevelt High School's Global Studies program ○ Houston Elementary School's dual language program ▪ DCPS is supporting schools to fully enroll these programs. The outreach in these cases is grade specific and community specific to make sure the school is recruiting the right students for those programs. ▪ DCPS has started to coordinate Community Cabinets for our new programs to bring community members into the planning process for these schools. Members are helping DCPS staff with recruitment and

	<p>communicating about the programs. It has been a successful strategy.</p> <p><i>3. Increase applications to early action PK</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DCPS is working to provide a right to PK3 and PK4 for in-boundary families for Title I schools. This project was piloted with six schools last year, and it expanded to seven schools this year. ▪ By getting families into their neighborhood school early, DCPS hopes these families will buy-into that school through fifth grade. <p><i>4. Re-enroll our students</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If DCPS could re-enroll all of its existing students, it would be close to 70% of the way towards its 50,000 target number. ▪ The Enrollment Team providing re-enrollment support to schools that need help reaching enrollment benchmarks throughout the year. For example, last year, enrollment opened before spring break. Orr Elementary School announced that they would watch the kids of any family who enrolled before spring break for three of the five-day break. By the end of the school year, Orr was 60% enrolled, whereas the same time year before, the school was only 30% enrolled. ▪ The Enrollment Team is targeting schools that have not reached their benchmarks in the past to create a plan and various incentives for families to enroll early. For example, the registrar at School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens Education Campus is understaffed and has had difficulty inputting all of the enrollment data. A specialist from the Enrollment Team meets with him regularly to help him with data entry. ▪ A focus of the re-enrollment messaging will be to communicate to families that DCPS wants them back. J.O. Wilson Elementary School will look at lottery data to identify if their existing families have applied to go to another school. Staff will call those families and ask what it would take to get them to stay. <p><i>5. Attract more new students to DCPS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DCPS will be focusing more on specifically attracting students from charter schools. <p><i>6. Provide school-specific support</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Enrollment Team is supporting schools that have specific enrollment needs. For example, a charter elementary school is opening in a neighborhood where there are two DCPS elementary schools. The Enrollment Team is meeting with those schools to create a plan unique to their community to keep families already enrolled at the school and attract new families.
<p>Group Discussion on Enrollment</p>	<p>Cabinet members provided the following reactions to the six enrollment strategies presented above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comment: The enrollment drop-off in sixth grade happens because families plan to go to DCPS for elementary school and charter schools for middle school. DCPS has to re-program people’s expectations and make it the norm for families to attend DCPS middle schools. ▪ Response: DCPS put \$9 million in middle schools two years ago to build strong investments in these schools and make them better places for students to learn. This pattern of parents choosing charter middle schools is not so deeply engrained that it can’t be reversed. There are pockets

	<p>where parents are choosing DCPS middle schools, and the hope is this becomes the next trend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comment: When middle schools come to the elementary school to talk with the parents, it has a positive effect on how parents view that middle school. It changes the way parents think about where they should go next. ▪ Comment: When middle school principals invest this kind of time in relationships with elementary school feeder families, it takes away a lot of the time they have for the actual middle school. Focusing on feeder schools also tends to isolate the out-of-boundary students, which can make up large percentages of a school’s population. By outreaching only to parents in the feeder pattern, the school isn’t building relationships with parents across the city who might also want to consider that school. ▪ Comment: DCPS receives a lot of negative attention on community listservs, and those perceptions resonate with parents. DCPS should have a stronger presence on community listservs to counter these messages. ▪ Comment: In many cases when parents are going to great lengths to enroll their students in charter schools, it is because they attended DCPS and had a bad experience. DCPS should try and reach these families to show them how DCPS has changed. <p>Cabinet members were then asked to provide suggestions for roles parents can play in supporting enrollment efforts at their school. They provided the following suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Find opportunities for parents lead meetings and speak to a group of parents about their school. ▪ Create videos featuring current parents. ▪ Create template materials that parents can use to host a house gatherings with prospective parents and potentially school staff. Materials could include a template agenda, outreach e-mail, sign-in sheet, etc. It would be helpful if the Enrollment Team could find funds to help cover costs for food for these types of events. ▪ Set-up events like a “campus visit day” or a community night at middle schools where students and parents can attend together. ▪ Create a guide for schools to host open houses.
<p>Open Forum</p> <p><i>This portion of the meeting is reserved for the Cabinet to pose questions of any topic to the Chancellor. The questions and the Chancellor’s responses are recorded in this section.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comment: There needs to be a strong effort to ensure resource equity in DCPS. There is a large inequity when millions of dollars go into school modernizations but those funds are not equalized over all schools. ▪ Comment: Parents want neighborhood schools, but sometimes they do not have that choice in their neighborhood. Parents in Ward 1 would like to see Shaw Middle School be re-opened. Elementary schools in the area are increasing in enrollment, suggesting there will be a need for another middle school soon. What does DCPS need to see in terms of projected enrollment to consider re-opening Shaw Middle School? ▪ Response: Data shows that there are not enough students right now to support the school, but maybe in five years there could be enough to begin the conversation about re-opening the school. DCPS has re-opened

	<p>schools that were previously closed because the need for the school changed, such as with Van Ness Elementary School.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comment: If more in-boundary kindergarten students enroll in an elementary school than the school projected or budgeted for, does the school accept all of those students or is there a cut-off? ▪ Response: Yes, the school will serve all students who live in its boundary and have a right to attend. Schools will add classes to accommodate a growth in student body, if needed. ▪ Comment: Are there resources for parents of students with special learning needs? It is a very difficult process for parents to navigate and many do not know their basic rights or how to advocate for their students. Can parents help create these resources? ▪ Response: There are a lot of policies and programs for parents of students with special needs to understand. DCPS would be open to working with parents to create this type of a resource.
Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The next meeting is on Tuesday, May 17, 2016.