



IMPROVING OUR HIGH SCHOOLS

OVERVIEW

Over the past two years, DCPS has made significant investments in elementary schools and middle grades. Our aim was to ensure that all students at all schools had equal access to a wide range of courses regardless of school size or location. In the upcoming year, we will take a similar approach to high schools, broadening and deepening the high school experience for all students.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES

DCPS is committed to investing in programs to help high school students across the city better prepare for college and careers. DCPS will prioritize funding high schools with a special focus on:

- **Increasing Access to Advanced Classes**
In an effort to ensure more students have access to courses that will properly prepare them for college and career, DCPS will provide additional advanced courses and high performing, well trained educators to teach them.
- **Improving Equity Across the District**
Every student at every high school should have an equal opportunity to take classes from foreign language to career and technical education to advanced math. DCPS will ensure that schools are funded and staffed to allow for these opportunities.
- **College and Career Preparation**
To ensure our students are ready for college and a career, we must expose them to colleges and careers. DCPS high schools will provide career exploration and college access opportunities for students.
- **Improved Student Satisfaction**
DCPS will expand extracurricular and athletic offerings across the District so that every high school student loves their high school experience.
- **Classroom/Instructional Experience**
DCPS strives to guarantee students enjoy in-class experiences as well. To ensure teachers and administrators are successful, DCPS is looking to expand best practices that work to keep DCPS high school students engaged and ready for life in college and career.
- **High School Effectiveness**
Improving our high schools does not just mean offering more classes. We will look at school safety, schedules, staffing, and a wide variety of other factors that can contribute to a better high school experience.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increase Student Satisfaction
- Improve Graduation Rates
- Increase enrollment
- Improve student achievement

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is working well at your high school that you want to see continued or expanded?
2. What two investments in your high school should be made to support its continued improvement?
3. Which of the proposed funding areas is most important to your high school?



EQUITY IN ACADEMIC RIGOR

OVERVIEW

At DCPS, we take seriously our responsibility to prepare every single student at every school for success in college and a career. This is what drove us to adopt a rigorous curriculum for all of our schools. This is also why we have allocated funds to ensure that students at every elementary and middle grades school has equal access to foreign language, arts, music, PE, libraries, and technology.

However, we know that just providing teachers and curriculum isn't enough and just testing to high standards isn't enough. If we want to make sure, for example, that every third grader can explore character development by constructing puppets for performances, that every 7th grader can show an understanding for opposing viewpoints by participating in a debate on internet neutrality, and that every 11th grader can demonstrate their knowledge of foreign language through travel and service learning, we need to do much more to support learning. We need to show teachers what successful students are capable of. We need to train teachers to expect outstanding work from all students. We need to provide the lesson plans and the tools that will let students show what they know. And we need to create a culture where, district-wide, hold the same expectations and give the same opportunities to all students.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES

DCPS is prioritizing the budgetary support of Cornerstone Assignments, high-quality, in-depth activities offered across the district. Developed by DCPS' top teachers, Cornerstone Assignments will give every great DCPS educator the tools they need to be even more effective. Some of the resources Cornerstone Assignments will offer include:

- **Online Resources and Opportunities for Collaboration**
DCPS teachers will not only be able to access rigorous Cornerstone Assignments online, teachers will also have the ability to collaborate with their DCPS colleagues across the city, to share and review work, and to trade instructional strategies.
- **Engaging Course Materials**
Teachers throughout the city will begin receiving robust course materials and resources that will allow them to begin preparing engaging lesson plans over the summer. Materials will include student texts, arts equipment, science lab supplies, and math gadgets.
- **Opportunities to Expand Student Learning**
DCPS is expanding enrichment programs to provide every student with exposure to new experiences. Every DCPS student will have the opportunity learn multiple languages and engage in music and the arts – regardless of the school they attend.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increased student achievement
- Improved student satisfaction
- Increased student enrollment
- Improved outcomes in lowest performing school

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What kinds of opportunities can you envision with Cornerstone assignments in your school?
2. How can we position your school to be successful with Cornerstone assignments next school year?
3. Do you anticipate any complications or challenges from Cornerstone assignments?



EMPOWERING MALES OF COLOR

OVERVIEW

Across the District of Columbia Public Schools our young people have made significant gains academically since 2007. While this growth has happened across the district for all students, we have not been able to demonstrate the same rate of growth amongst a significant portion of our males of color. Many of our males of color are reading at grade level while others are graduating from high school and attending some of the most prestigious universities in the United States, and doing tremendous work in the community. However, we believe that our DCPS community can support our males of color by empowering them such that high rates of truancy and suspensions from school won't be the norm, and their proficiency in reading and math will become the standard for males of color attending urban schools across the United States.

Accordingly, the DCPS community believes that the time is now for change. The time is now for our community to support our students and commit to transforming the educational experiences of African American and Latino males through our *Empowering Males of Color Initiative*. The impact of this initiative will be felt everywhere – across every ward and in every school. We are DCPS and we can do this!

PROPOSED STRATEGIES

In an effort to prepare our males of color for college, careers, and life beyond graduation, DCPS will collaborate with the community, as well as school and district leaders on best practices and strategies by prioritizing funding to support the following strategies:

- **Mentoring Through Literacy**

The work to dramatically improve outcomes for African American and Latino males will not be successful without the support of the community. DCPS is committed to providing 500 literacy mentors to 500 students over the next three years. Mentors will be trained by community partners through research-based approaches to improving student literacy ability. Mentors will provide firm and unwavering support to guide students throughout all levels of their education.

- **Proving What's Possible Grants**

The Office of Innovation and Research will collaborate with schools to provide multi-year grants over a three year period to support one of the three focus areas proven to change the trajectory of males of color: social and emotional well-being, community and family engagement, or academic enrichment. Through these grants, schools will be able to best meet the needs of their students.

- **Single-Gender School**

To go further, faster, DCPS will provide our African American and Latino males with targeted, proven, high-impact support. To do this, DCPS will open a high school dedicated to preparing and accelerating their achievement and path to high school graduation and college admittance.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increased Student Satisfaction
- Improved Academic Outcomes
- Increased Enrollment
- Increased Graduation Rate

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the biggest challenge in addressing the needs of males of color?
2. What is one thing you believe can improve outcomes at your school for males of color?
3. If you had \$100,000, what would you do with it to support this work?