

Feedback Summary from Chancellor Community Forum Lafayette ES (January 9, 2018 at 6:00pm)

Overview of Community Forum at Lafayette Elementary School

On January 9, 2017 Chancellor Antwan Wilson met with parents, school staff, and community members from across the district. As part of the event's agenda, attendees participated in a polling session around the DCPS Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) budget by answering questions related to the following four priorities:

- Technology
- Attendance
- Literacy
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Summary of Feedback from Lafayette- Polling Questions

Budget Planning Feedback

- When asked what additional information and supports would be helpful while thinking of budget planning, participants listed the following:
 - Every school needs a full-time librarian to support reading and instruction.
 - Minimum student funding and why it changes
 - Easy and timely access to enrollment projections and budget numbers
 - Is it possible to have Central staff presence at any of the LSAT school meetings?
 - Better estimates of student population growth for future years
 - Is there an ability to bulk purchase items such as paper towels, etc. for individual schools; would this incur savings?
 - How are ESL funds determined?
 - A good explanation of the relationship (and mechanics) between the enrollment projections and CMS
 - Enrollment projections
 - How much discretion do principals have, to ignore the staffing suggestions?
 - Information regarding how per pupil amount is decided
 - Why haven't teachers gotten their retroactive pay that was promised in the new contract?
 - Transparency around numbers and how they go into the budget.
 - Finding to support programs for our ELS and SLS programs
 - More detail on relationship of actual enrollment to budget—if a school comes in over or under expected census, what happens and when?

Technology

- Participants were asked: How important is digital curriculum and digital literacy at school today, for college and career readiness on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being least important and 5 being most important. The results were:
 - **5 - 32% of participants**
 - **4- 39% of participants**

- **3- 18% of participants**
- **2- 4% of participants**
- **1 - 7% of participants**

- When asked if it serves students to have 1:1 devices for instruction and assessment needs,
 - **65% of participants said yes.**
 - **16% of participants said no.**
 - **19% of participants said somewhat.**

- When asked if it serves teachers to have 1:1 devices for instruction and assessment needs,
 - **65% of participants said yes.**
 - **13% of participants said no.**
 - **23% of participants said somewhat.**

- When asked if it was important for students to take devices for use at home and outside school hours,
 - **58% of participants said yes.**
 - **42% of participants said no.**

Literacy

- When asked which was more important, classroom libraries or take-home books,
 - **53% of participants said classroom libraries were more important**
 - **47% of participants said take-home books were more important.**

Attendance

- When asked what supports they would like to see for students with attendance struggles, participants listed the following:
 - Incentives/Consequences
 - Prizes for students for reaching attendance milestones? i.e. attend first 30 days of school receive chipotle coupon (and developed good habits for the year)
 - Home visits
 - Intensive case meeting; parental accountability, tool that shows parents absences, before school support.
 - Social worker involvement if appropriate.
 - Real connections with social workers and teachers
 - I speak from experience as a teacher 10+ years all over DC. My student attendance is always best— no matter the family— when SEL is strong (When I'm close the parents, kids, families).
 - SEL programs that help build student teacher relationships.
 - Attendance is usually about challenges at home or kids who are struggling to get safely to and from school. Given that, counselors or social workers or others who can do home visits and strategize with youth and families about how to get to school or deal with other challenges would be helpful.
 - Identify the reasons for attendance struggles. Then develop work around. Create individualized plans.

- Increasing the allocation of social workers per schools for schools that have greater social and emotional support needs.
 - One-on-One Counseling Incentive programs
 - Communication with parents
 - Outreach to families to assess the problem and possibly coordinate help beyond the school.
 - We need more social workers to work and support families on the importance of attendance.
 - Follow through with administration
 - Additional home connection options.
 - Lower counselor to student ratios, so all students feel known and understood.
 - Restorative practices replacing suspensions
- When asked the best way to communicate with families if their child is absent from school,
 - **57% of participants prefer a text message.**
 - **57% participants prefer an email.**
 - **46% of participants would prefer to be called on their cell phone number.**
 - **4% of participants prefer to be called on their house phone number.**
 - When asked if they felt well-informed about student attendance requirements,
 - **62% of participants said yes.**
 - **17% of participants said no.**
 - **21% of participants said somewhat.**
 - When asked if it would be more helpful to have several new school leadership teams trained in restorative justice practices, or if the focus should be on 10-20 schools that have already started the restorative justice work but need further support,
 - **59% of participants said that DCPS should have several new schools trained in restorative justice practices.**
 - **41% of participants said that DCPS should focus on the 10-20 schools that have already started the restorative justice work but need further support.**

General Comments/Feedback

- "We are so grateful that you highlighted Lafayette's peace prog in one of your email messages."
- "More information on how new initiatives (LEAP for instance) affect staffing model or budget."
- "Revisit LEAP; you've probably heard loud and clear it doesn't really improve teachers; teachers dislike it; there is no differentiation; and it drags morale."

Questions from Sli.do/Q&A Session:

- What is being done to improve enrollment forecasting so that budgeting is accurate?
- What is being done so that there are sufficient resources for remediation and enrichment/acceleration?
- How can central office prevent massive under projections of enrollment on its part from negatively impacting funding levels?

- Central office has been in the news regarding ethics concerns about priority placements and soliciting contractors. What has changed since these concerns were reported?
- When was the last per pupil funding minimum adjustment? What percentage of school budgets were dedicated to staff including benefits then versus now?
- It has been reported that an audit is taking place re graduating students at Ballou. Will an audit take place for other high schools and middle schools in DCPS?
- Subjects on PARCC (math, ELA) are prioritized over science, social studies. What is being done to discourage "teaching to the test"?
- Many schools seem to be top heavy with multiple vice principals for everything imagined. Can this be changed?
- Can we get full-time librarians in every school to support learning and literacy?
- Will you provide written responses to questions that you are unable to answer due to time constraints
- How can central office work with schools to make sure that schools in swing spaces do not take a hit when enrollment takes a dip during school renovation.
- What are you doing to ensure teachers are a good fit for the community?
- Would DCPS use money spent on branded items such as pens on academic purposes (savings from buying branded pens versus non-branded pens)?
- Can you provide parents with research showing that access to devices improves learning outcomes?
- How can we get science & social studies into curriculum as standalone classes? Families don't want PARCC testing to hold all else hostage. Only choice seems to be opt out.
- What is being done to ensure principals don't need to ask for \$40,000+ to cover the cost of basic supplies like what happened at Lafayette last year?
- What is being done to ensure principals are a good fit for the community?
- Can DCPS develop a system where schools with large class libraries can share with schools in need?
- As MLK Day is coming up, can we focus on book drives as examples of a day of service?
- Will the per-pupil funding amount finally increase after stagnating (and hurting school budgets every year) for nearly a decade?
- Why don't we have a later start time for HS if research shows our older students need additional sleep?
- What can DCPS do to restore/increase funds for DC TAG prog? Are you working on it? It has never been increased and college tuition has gone through the roof.
- Can DCPS do a better job about working with schools to send robo-calls in the home languages of students?
- Do you feel dcps central office is so large and cumbersome that it cannot dynamically and quickly adjust and implement?
- Was it an oversight that you didn't say program was parent funded?
- Are these forums geared to disseminate information or to truly have an information exchange from which DCPS will take into consideration when making decisions?
- At what point will DCPS get to the heart of the issue with the achievement of so many of the City's students...and that's parental support?
- How can we get more speech and debate in our schools? Is it a budget issue?

School Communities Represented:

- Barnard ES
- Deal MS
- Dunbar
- Lafayette ES
- Tubman ES
- Wilson HS