



Over 100 DCPS students from across the city gathered with Chancellor Wilson in spring 2017 to share their aspirations for the future of DCPS. Two students from every high school, and students representing middle grades campuses and elementary schools in every ward participated in the engagement sessions. The notes captured at each meeting are below. All students were asked the following questions:

- How can DCPS become a place of excellence and equity?
- How can DCPS help all students and families feel welcome?
- What do you hope to see when you walk into your classroom or school?
- What represents success for you, your school, or DCPS in the next 5-10 years?

Elementary School Student Feedback on April 10, 2017

It is important for everyone to be focused and to feel respected.

I would like to see students learning and being respectful, by making eye contact, listening, and following directions. I hope that students can get a college degree and get a job.

I want to see kids working together with other kids without having arguments.

I would like my teachers to know my home language, so our families don't feel bad about themselves because they don't know English. I want people in the main office to be polite and respectful to our families. I want events for parents and teachers to get to know each other.

For me, success means getting an education and becoming the President.

I want to see clean schools areas and teachers maintaining control of the classroom.

It is important to me that we have events that showcase student work. It is also important to me that families have opportunities to work with teachers, through events such as STEM nights.

In the next five years, I'm going to be in high school, and hopefully I will earn a scholarship to Spelman College. In ten years, I want to study journalism and to study abroad in London.

I think success means achieving our goals for the future; my goal is to become a football player.

Learning should be fun and all kids should feel included. In my school, we have many fun projects and clubs. Additionally, my teacher creates small groups in class so we can feel comfortable with what we're learning about.

I know that kids grow up and leave school, but at the same time I want to leave a gift for other people. I want to see peace and I want people to be mature about what's happening in the school. I also want to see diversity, because I don't want people feeling scared about who they are. I want people to show their inner spark. We are supposed to show pride by celebrating perseverance, diversity, and excellence.

Elementary School Student Feedback on April 10, 2017

I value diversity in our schools. Some students trip other students for no reason, and I want there to be less bullying. We don't blame it on teachers since there are only one or two in each class. I think teachers should be more aware of what people are doing, not only in class but also during recess. Sometimes students push people or say offensive things, and I think we should make a change there. I think students should feel comfortable directly approaching the teacher. I would like to see teachers added to classes and more projects focused on diversity. I want students' voices heard in our classrooms.

I would like to see friendship and no bullying. Some people who are immigrants get made fun of and they feel nervous, and I think that we should change that. Students have perseverance in their hearts and they want their voices to be heard, but they can't because they are afraid of being teased. For example, some students get called troublemakers and teased for being "smarty-pants." I would like everyone to have their voice heard.

We have a student council for kids and for adults. Parents get in their council and talk about problems in their school and how they can make them better by solving them together. We also have assemblies and parents get to come. We read poems to them to express how we feel for them, and we make stuff to show how much we care about them and to help them if they have problems.

Parents and students should meet not just with principal and teachers, but with other students too, because students spend the most time with other students as their peers and friends.

I would like to see no students with their heads down who think class is boring.

I would like to see a Promethean board the size of the wall, so all the students can go up and express their idea. That way, we wouldn't have to waste time calling on one student at a time. I would like to walk in to class and see most of the students' hands raised so I know they are motivated.

I would like to see holidays all around the world, in which each classroom has a city or state and culture and we see how they celebrate holidays. People could learn a lot about other cultures and get to see and share their own cultures, too.

We should have extra teachers in the school to help tutor students who need more help, and to challenge students more who are excelling.

The way that our school helps families and students feel welcome is by having events like mother-daughter tea, and holidays around the world, and sometimes we have carnivals on the soccer field and park cookouts with our families and teachers.

Instead of having computer carts, every student could have their own computers that they could take home and do projects and research on. Most kids don't have laptops to do research and learning.

I think it is important that students continue reading above grade level and hopefully be on grade level for math. I would like to go to Princeton to become an astronaut.

I want to see clean bathrooms because when I walk into the bathroom I see handwriting all over the stalls.

The best thing happening at my school are colorful posters because they provide detailed information and making learning fun.

One thing I would change about my school is the bathrooms because the ones at my school are dirty.

I like how my teacher takes new students and their families out for coffee at the local coffee shop to get to know them.

Elementary School Student Feedback on April 10, 2017

I think it is important for us to do all our work - students and teachers. If we don't do our work, then we can't go to recess, but then teachers can't do their work because they have to be with us. I want to be an engineer.

When I walk into my school I hope to see peace and stillness. My absolute school nightmare is for there to be total mayhem, like people running down the halls and bounding through playgrounds. I'm so sensitive to noise and confusion, which is why I try to avoid sports games because they give me anxiety. Chaos in a school environment is even worse. I'm unable to concentrate in an environment flooded with loud noises and lots of movement. It makes me anxious, and nobody should ever be anxious to come to school. My perfect day is for things to proceed in a perfect order, and for the schedule to be organized. Also, it warms my heart to see people being kind to one another, so I always hope that during class meetings no one is laughing, teasing, or picking on anybody else. I also hope that during class activities no one is being so competitive over a game of Silent Speedball that they are willing to target people to get out, or say hurtful things to. My hopes for when I walk into school is to see the beginning of a drama-free, productive, peaceful day--not just for me, but for everyone.

I think my school is fair towards all students. The rules prohibit dangerous things, but also encourage the students to enjoy themselves at school and follow their dreams. My school is fair to people of all colors, genders, and nationalities. I think my school is a place of excellence in the sense that the faculty is very supportive of the students in their goals and interests, but also wants them to be engaged in all subjects. I believe the community is a place where being different is a fear. You have this impending worry that you'll screw up and people will think badly of you, or think you're weak, or a weirdo. Respect isn't at its strongest point amongst the students at my school. I think if the student community can learn to respect teachers and their peers 100%, my school will undoubtedly be a place of excellence and fairness through and through.

A student at my school recently moved here from overseas. Not speaking a word of English, she seemed very nervous and different, as you can imagine if you were in a scenario where you had pretty much no way to communicate with the people around you. During library time, the other girls and I would point to puzzle pieces with pictures of animals on it, and ask her how to say the animals name in Arabic, then we'd tell her how to say it in English. This word exchange lasted until the end of library time. I liked how what we did was an opportunity for us to share about our culture and our language, but at the same time, an opportunity for us to learn something new from that exchange. I walked out of library time knowing how to say 'whale' in Arabic and English, and the new student walked out knowing the same. This shows how diverse DCPS is, because by merely chatting, we can learn something new about a new culture, a new language, a new person. So I think my school should have more activities where families get to share about their customs or native language, but also get to learn about other customs and religions. This way, every individual could be diverse in his or her own way, and take pride in it, share it, and learn something new.

I think students are a large factor of success in schools. I hope not only in my school, but in all DCPS schools in the next 5-10 years that students can conclude whether they like something after they try it; I've noticed that a lot of my peers claim they "don't like" or "aren't interested" in a certain thing before they've even tried it. I also think that students will be more successful by putting an effort in all subjects, even ones they don't like. I think what represents success in schools is definitely the production and effort given by the school's students, and the encouragement given by the staff.

I think it is important for teachers to make connections to real life and the world. I value kids working in small groups - asking things like, "what do you think about this?" I want to see students raising their hands and sharing ideas.

I think that each student and teacher should have a one-on-one opportunity to see what teachers and students need to work on. I think it is important for teachers to help identify what certain kids need help on, because maybe those kids don't feel as well or just shut down completely because they don't feel like they know what's going on. Maybe they're just lost, or feel like they don't belong there.

Elementary School Student Feedback on April 10, 2017

Success to me is when your teacher and your principal (and you) feel like you have reached your full potential and that you have worked your hardest throughout the whole year. I think students should strive the whole year and get to the point where they're able to make the decision on what they want to do in life.

I want to see students learning and teachers teaching; students in their seats and teachers showing the different strategies for teaching. I like to see nice, friendly staff, because their attitudes rub off on students.

I like breakfast meetings every quarter. Every parent goes to students' homerooms and talks about how their child is doing. STEM Night and Math Night show what every student has been doing. At the end of the year we have field day, and parents get to come and we have prizes. We have SGA updates - we go to the office and give announcements. We also have additional teachers to support students who speak other languages – for example, we have a student who is from Egypt who speaks Arabic.

I like the program Communities in Schools, which sends out people to help kids with their specific needs. For instance, if a student doesn't have a proper uniform, they have grants to give the family to help them get uniforms for their child.

I think that in order for us to have a great education, DCPS should do an annual check-up on each school so we can know where students are at in each school. Some of my notebooks are ripped/torn apart, and if you did an annual check-up, you would see that. I would like to make sure schools are free and public so we don't have to pay for education. I would like to see that every student is on target, and if not, they should be provided extra time.

Success for my school means making sure everyone graduates to learn to their highest ability. I think it's important that students get the correct education so they can be what they want to be in life. Success for me is to go to college and get my dream job. I think we can do that by getting some of our idols to come to our school and tell us things we might not listen to otherwise.

My teachers have a very good way of making things their own and engaging with the students.

I would like to see more field trips that parents can volunteer for. I also like things like STEM Night where everyone showcases what we've been working on.

I want to go to school in a calm setting where students are having fun - not just students all working with their heads down. This year, my teacher used music from the musical *Hamilton* to help teach the Revolutionary War unit.

I want to see peacefulness and mindfulness. My school has a peace program where we meditate and share our thoughts.

There should be teachers that not only help with the basic things that we're learning, but teachers that help children who are on a lower or higher level, so those students don't have work that's too easy or too hard for them.

I would like to be able to have my parents come in and help with writing projects, so they'd get to see what's happening and what's going on, and know what we're doing in class.

I think it's important for everyone to graduate and get to their highest level. My goal is to become a journalist.

If I could change one thing, I would add more enrichment programs for the higher level students.

I want a nice calm situation in schools, without kids running through the hallways.

I think it is important for no one to be getting bullied.

Elementary School Student Feedback on April 10, 2017

We welcome most people, and we do something in the morning and give recognitions out to each other. We stand in line and recognize our friends and family members. We also have parent meetings and parent teacher conferences and other activities for parents to come and check on their child. Sometimes when they walk into the school, they say "good morning" and "how are you doing?" and "how do you feel?"

I like events like Muffins for Moms and Donuts for Dads – they give our parents a chance to talk to the teachers and to see where we're at.

I think that each school should have enough notebooks and enough computers for each child, so that classes won't have to rush into the computer lab.

At our school, we do SOAR and we say it every morning. It helps us with our behavior and sets the tone for the day in terms of how we are going to work with each other and respect each other.

I think it is important to have a community where people feel welcome and kids are learning and engaged and having fun. When they graduate from our school, they should feel like they had a really good time and that they're going to miss it. I hope that carries on to the next school that I go to.

I think that at my school, every kid is a valuable part. It makes me more engaged when I'm not just waiting for other kids to talk, and when everyone wants to hear your voice.

My principal knows every student in the school by name. We have assemblies every Friday morning where parents can come. Teachers communicate with parents a lot about what their children are doing well.

Excellence happens when teachers are helpful and curriculum works for all students at all levels. At my school, the teachers are always there to help you. I think we should make sure that happens at all schools so teachers know what their part is in the school.

At our school, we have bake sales. When kids are allowed to sell food along with the parents, you get to talk to the parents and talk to kids you might not talk to a lot otherwise, and that helps because you know more kids.

At my school when we have a new student, we have something called 'Greet the Week' every Monday where our principal comes and acknowledges that there's a new student, so people know they can say hi. This helps people feel more welcome at school.

I want to see teachers mentoring kids who need help. My math teacher lets kids come upstairs at lunch on some days. I want to see kids who woke up on the wrong side of the bed smiling because a teacher made them feel good about coming.

Parents should be aware of what we're learning. We have award ceremonies where parents can see their student get their academic award. Our teachers greet our parents in nice ways, never in negative ways.

I want to see clean tables in the lunch room and kids who want to eat the food.

On Saturdays, my teacher teaches us alongside our parents, so they can learn what we're learning and help us on our math problems.

I think that if a teacher knows that some people understood the work that they're doing, the teacher should work with the people who are struggling. My teacher has three groups: if you know what you're doing you sit in the back; if you don't have it you sit in the front; and if you kind of have it you sit on the left side. You don't want to waste your time with students who need more time.

I want to see the achievements and awards the school has won, and I want to see what special things they have going on. I like to see a lot of afterschool clubs and sports like drama and track, so when I get to middle school and college I have a better understanding of that.

Elementary School Student Feedback on April 10, 2017

I want to be a mechanic full time and to be a barber part time.

I think that we should have better equality of schools. If students are in a good environment to learn, then they will want to be more engaged in what they are learning because they know they are privileged to be in that school.

I think we need to make sure everyone in the school is happy with what they're doing. If students are happy, they'll want to learn. A lot of times kids look like they don't want to learn, but it may not be that simple---it may be that they're not having fun. Teachers shouldn't give students too much responsibility, but they can in a way give them more responsibilities, so they get to do what they want but in a way that will be doable.

I think that when a lot of people think of success they think about getting all 5's on the PARCC and being amazing. But success is reaching your full potential and doing your best, and that's all you can do.

Before or when a parent is deciding where to put their student in school, I think schools should give tours to the parent so they can see the classrooms and quality of learning, and then they can decide if they want their son/daughter to go to that school.

Meals with teachers can help parents get to know the school. My school does breakfast with the principal and any parent can walk in and talk to the principal about what's happening and ask questions about plans.

I think we should have more projects because we want the students in our schools to feel comfortable around each other and not to feel scared because of the way somebody is. Some students might be new and other people might treat them differently because of the way they look, or if they speak a different language. But if we have projects, we can get to know each other.

I want to see students working, but at the same time having fun. When they're done with work, I hope they won't just sit there; they could do a little activity or a fun packet. I think that multiplication games, for example, would be fun in math.

I think families already feel welcome because teachers and students say hello to everyone who comes in. Some teachers invite them to a place and let students do something else while they talk to parents.

Most schools should have a meet and greet for every time a new student comes, so teachers can meet parents of the student and the student; that way, they can talk about where they're from and how the school can help to adjust.

Some of our school rooms don't have doors, so when teachers are talking loudly, it interrupts other classrooms. I think it would be good to put up walls so we can learn more and not get distracted by what other classrooms are learning.

If a family comes from another country to D.C. and if they speak another language, I think it would be helpful to give lessons to the parents too, so if you send work home they can help their child do the homework.

I like that when you answer a question correctly, you get a ticket, and when you get 10 or more tickets you get a prize at the end of the week. That makes learning a lot of fun.

I think that the thing that is the most fun is how the teachers can relate to us. For example, my teacher this year loves sports and the musical *Hamilton*.

I like car races and fun Friday events because they help me to learn.

I enjoy when my teacher lets us participate in a hands-on activity in order to help us learn an important period in history.

I think that a thing that I would change is the silent lunch.



Elementary School Student Feedback on April 10, 2017

There are many different ways that we learn. One thing that makes school fun is not being treated like a kid, which makes us feel like we are a valuable part of school. Morning meeting is fun with your class. I also learn more by getting help from my teachers.

I think there are different ways of doing problems. For example, you can work with people to help you, and I think it is important for students not to be treated like we are so young and that we don't understand a lot.

The best thing happening at my school that helps me to learn are the groups we are in that help us with our work.

The teachers try to make it as fun and easy as possible for all students to feel welcome, so no kid is left behind and feels like they are different.

I would like to change the lunch.

The one thing I would change about my school is that I would reduce the number of students in each class.

I would change recess from 15 minutes to 20 minutes, in order to get more free exercise.

The only thing that I would change is class size. I think maybe we should just have more small groups.

I wish that I could stay for one more year for 6th grade, because my school only goes up to the 5th grade.

I would like to see more small groups to let teachers pay more attention to students.

Middle Grades Student Feedback on March 27, 2017

I believe that equity means I can get an excellent learning environment in any ward.

I want a DCPS where all students are welcome no matter what, where all students are equal.

I think equity includes the classroom environment, and some classrooms in my ward are overcrowded.

I envision a future where all students have the same opportunity regardless of resources in the community.

I think that it is important to ensure strong connections between teachers, students, and parents, so that is easy for parents to reach out to teachers and vice versa.

I think we should pay attention to schools that don't have as much as other schools, and give them resources they need; some schools need more than other schools and should be funded until there is equality.

Some teachers pay attention only to the students who are understanding the lesson. Teachers should recognize when students don't understand, even when students don't speak up. Students shouldn't feel discouraged when they are struggling.

I want to see students and teachers having good communication. If you're in the classroom and the teacher is focusing on just one person who is causing disruption in the classroom, then the classroom won't be productive. If a student really needs a lot of help and the teacher is focused on something else, and one student is trying to get attention from teacher, then the teacher should know why/what the student needs.

Schools need to recognize their population and the needs of students. Our school gives tablets, but not everyone is on the same level. I think it is important to properly train teachers on how to use technology.

I would like to see more help with education, since not all students are perfect and some students will need help with different academics. I would also like to see more tutoring opportunities with different teachers or through different formats, like over video chatting.

I think it would be good to provide snacks for students who come to tutoring. I would like to base tutoring topics on student interest and to rotate teachers/subjects.

I think it is important for staff to help to encourage students to come to tutoring. Students might feel like tutoring is a bad thing, but it's a good thing.

I would like to see specific buses/transportation assistance to help students get home after tutoring.

Some kids can't stay after school because they have things they need to do at home, so I think that it might be helpful for teachers to offer tutoring at lunch.

Tutoring won't always help, because classes are big. If there are too many students, you may not get the help you need. The teacher has to give time to everyone, but they can't give attention to everyone. So, I think we should break the tutoring time apart so students could come at different times.

I would like to see field trips being connected to what is being learned in class to help students to learn better.

Some students might learn better with hands-on things. If there's a lesson that students don't really like and there is a field trip connected to that, then the teacher should use hands-on learning so students learn better.

When you go on to a new lesson in any subject, I think it would be helpful for teachers to give out a worksheet that explains how you complete the assignment. Maybe you wouldn't need tutoring, and you wouldn't need to worry about transportation if you had the sheet. I also think that websites with guide sheets could be very helpful.

Since some people learn differently than others, I think we should spend a variety of days on one lesson to show different ways to learn it. For example, some kids learn visually, while others learn better through writing.

Middle Grades Student Feedback on March 27, 2017

DCPS can help families and students to feel welcome by having more bilingual people working at the schools. Two common languages are Spanish and English, but there are other people who come to the school who speak other languages, and not many people know their languages, so these people feel like outcasts. I think that whenever a teacher calls a parent, it's always negative. I would like to see more teachers making positive calls home, too.

I think it is important to recognize the cultures that we have. We need to continue to learn about different cultures to help students understand why students do different things or act different ways. At another school, they have a program where we learned about Hispanic culture - dances, food, etc. I think that one day students could share their cultures and backgrounds and then we can post it on walls – with posters that say something like, "I come from..."

Students from different cultures can share what they do in their culture or religion to help students and teachers understand where they come from.

I think it is important for there to be help with the transition from elementary to middle school.

Before entering a new grade or school, I think there should be a summer bridge to help you learn about the new school. We had it at my school. I think we should make sure there are projects that allow students to talk about their culture. There should be events for parents to get to know each other and the school.

I would like to see more family events like game nights that parents, teachers and students can participate in.

When there are new students coming in, there should be another student helping him/her out. If they don't speak English, we should have a student who speaks his/her language to help them out in their classes.

I think it is important to make sure a new student has someone they can go to for help if they have questions about anything. I think it is important for them to be able to interact not just with speakers of their own language, but with the language they are trying to learn as well.

When my parents and I chose a middle school, parent connection to teachers was an important factor. I think teachers should tell parents what their expectations are and how they are supporting their child.

A lot of kids are being bullied or self-harm. We should create programs that release stress, like yoga or therapy, so they don't have to keep it all in and can focus on learning.

I would like to see teachers calling home just to check in. I think it is important for students to feel welcome.

When you enter a school, there should be a box that asks you how you're feeling. I think we could spend 5 minutes talking about it before starting the day to get our anger/feelings out.

If parents come to events after school, students get extra credit. I think we should give out prizes for parents who help out and come to events. I like how food markets help out families, so they know the school cares about them and wants them there.

In the classroom, we should have more technology and resources. It shouldn't be that a school doesn't have equal technology and resources as other schools just because of where it is. All students should have the full learning experience.

In the classroom, I think teachers and students should help each other out while doing the work, not just the teacher standing in one spot helping one student. Teachers should help all students no matter their race or their spoken language.

We use a lot of online programs, but if computers aren't working or taken for standardized testing then we can't use them. We need to make sure there's enough technology for everyone to use, and we need better maintenance so it works all the time.

I would like to see more open discussions, with teachers involved with students. I don't want to see people bored.

I think organization is important. I don't like seeing binders on the floor or papers kicked around. I think it is important for everyone to learn good management so

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warm-up activities and exit tickets don't take so long.

I want to see students smiling because they want to be there, not because they have to.

I see a lot of students having trouble with the tablets, but a lot of teachers don't know how to troubleshoot so they have to call for help. I used to be on a tech squad to help students learn and we also wanted to help teachers but we didn't have time.

I would like to see classrooms with interactive, hands-on activities. I don't learn just by having a teacher talking at the front of the classroom and with me taking notes. I like doing projects like cornerstones.

I think we should not always have the same pattern when we walk into class. In some cases teachers don't really do anything. After a while, sometimes we take a test.

If the teacher is at the front of the room, I like to see the teacher challenging students, asking them real-world questions. I think teachers should give them something to think about and imagine. Additionally, I like to see small groups working together; even if working on a worksheet, students who are bouncing ideas off of each other and asking questions learn better, because peers can help you to see a question in a different way and help you understand it better.

I like it when class is engaging and there is a lot of organization. I would like to see teachers calling on students who participate less, so that all voices are heard.

I would like to integrate games into the classroom so students aren't bored while learning.

I think it is important for all students to get along, not having one student being an outcast. I like it when teachers communicate well with their students.

When students enter a classroom, there should always be a different activity to make students feel welcome and engaged. Students should be able to ask questions of their peers when they are working, especially if the teacher is helping another student.

I would like to see beautiful young minds engaged in learning, happy to learn. We have tablets at our school and use them for testing and interactive activities. I am in charge of the tech team. Sometimes it's your job to help schools get better.

In five years I will be a freshman in college; I want to see the grades that I deserve and work hard for.

I would like to see higher attendance rates with more kids coming to school, test scores going up, and fewer suspensions. I think more people should know about us.

Sometimes people don't come to school because they don't have a way to get to school. Maybe there could be a bus to help them. School could be more appealing so students will work harder to get there.

I think it is important to build relationships and connections so students can reach out to teachers and friends.

Some parents give their children an option to go to school, but I don't think it should be an option.

I would like to see smaller class sizes to help students focus more.

I want to see DCPS schools out of the 40/40 list. I want everyone to be learning and for test scores to go up.

I think it is important to develop more dual language programs. If we want DCPS children to have a better future and to find good jobs, we need to teach them another language. I would like to see bigger buildings so teachers and students don't have to share classrooms.

I want to see more students starting to graduate, since if you graduate, there will be opportunities for you to get a good job and to be successful in life.

High School and Opportunity Academy Student Feedback on March 20, 2017

It is important to recognize the different ways people learn. I need visual aids in math, but my friend takes notes every day and that is how she is becoming excellent.

I would like flexibility in choosing/choice in study. There a lot of students, friends I know, that get thrown into classes they do not care about. There are teachers who have students in their class and they do not care. Students want to be a part of what they are learning so flexibility in schedules is important and choosing what classes they want to be a part of.

There is a focus on STEM classes, but there are other needs not being met – not enough arts, economics or political science.

Almost all seniors take AP English and they are forced to take AP classes, but they say it is too hard. Students should take a class according to what they need and that they are choosing. What happens if students are pushed into rigorous courses but are not prepared?

It is important to know the background status of each student so that each student has the ability to grow as a student inside the school. Some teachers may say, “this student does not want to learn.” Perhaps something is blocking them from allowing themselves to grow, or from being able to improve each year.

If schools can get additional funds, we could have more focus areas and more classes.

We should be able to customize our schedules. We should have classes where they teach life skills. We need more diverse electives, like economics, to prepare us for life.

We should have life skills or a variety of electives to allow folks to explore their electives. If a student goes to a different high school, they should be able to take the course and have good options so that it is a matter of preference.

When we talk about life skills, they are not preparing us for life. All they are concerned about is straight A’s and 4.0. If I did not want to go to college, they I would not know what life is because it is not taught to us. We need classes to show us how to be independent. We want freedom. It is not all about grades, but about how we can actually be successful once we get to college.

I am in Dual Enrollment and there should be more help to go to school. I am at Catholic in dual enrollment. Grades should not be prioritized over success. Anyone *can* graduate, but if they cannot do anything, then what is it worth?

I am in IB, I take rigorous courses, I am in band. All that work, I know I have to do it on my own. My school has a mentoring program called Men of Excellence, that program engages us as African American Males of Color. If that was broader, if students had someone to help guide them in life, just having that would be excellence and equity.

We had an entrepreneurship class that was taken away. I want to a psychiatrist, I wanted to be an entrepreneur, but they took it away. I want to explore these fields before I go to college and spend money. I want to take something in biotech or try IB.

If we are talking about equity, we should talk about AP and Honors. Teachers recommend you to be in honors, but they should look at how that affects our black and Hispanic students. Then they wonder why GPAs are different. Rather than recommendation for classes, they should put everyone on an equal playing field.

The best teachers leave because they cannot handle the students. We need a faster teacher hiring process, otherwise, we do not take that class seriously.

We want our curriculum to be the same. I feel like I am not learning like everyone else. When we talk about what we are learning, we hear “oh we have already

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done that.” I feel like if I go to a certain school and I am not getting those things.

We need to consider the most motivation of students. We have a motivation problem at my school. A mentorship program could help, we need help motivating to learn.

I want there to be staff members and teachers who are more engaged with families. We need more family engagement in high schools and more programs for mental health.

I think we need to think about motivation; if we treat students like they are not going to succeed when they come to school, how does that affect motivation?

We need to have activities for families to come and interact with teachers and administrators.

We should take mental health seriously. Teachers and administrators should invest in knowing what is happening outside of high school, in knowing the student and not just pushing them to graduate.

We have students from all backgrounds. Our Hispanic students do not understand what an English-speaking person would understand. This is about equity. If I understand, we need them to understand. My parents do not understand English. I want my teacher to be able to talk with my mom.

We live in a city where we do not understand each other. Our students do not even understand each other. We need to create systems to help students build understandings of each other.

When a student is bipolar, she might not look like she has a mental illness, but teachers do not understand if she acts out. I think having supports of teachers and administrators when a student is acting up is needed to understand if it because of mental illness.

On the question of equity, we want everyone to have the same opportunity but you cannot push the same curriculum on the same students. There has to be some level of flexibility. There are definite difference in our test scores at our school because that is not what we are learning and that is ok. DCPS should not have a set school culture that takes away from our culture. Changes have to be accepted and there needs to be buy-in from all stakeholders.

I have a good relationship with my counselor. Teachers, in general, should be interested and engaged. They should have relationships with students and parents.

We need a college explorer program. I was a Dual Enrollment program, and blessed to have that opportunity, but what about the students who are not deeply invested? We need to understand what is college? We need help on our resumes, personal statement writing, scholarship applications, interview etiquette... How am I supposed to be prepared for college? I would have no idea if I did not take it on myself.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is promoted, what about political science? What about doctors? What if we could know more before school what these look like? Why am I going to college? Who am I? ,

We did a community building exercise to break the ice to get to know everyone. It was weird, but it made us more comfortable. We should do that for all DCPS students.

It is important to know the principal and teachers and build relationships. For accountability, it is the idea of being present and respecting students enough to be able to explain why each thing is important. It is about being available and visible so that students know they are there and will be there tomorrow.

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We want to graduate with a certification or a 2 year Associate's degree in their pocket so that they can be certified at a trade school. We also need to advocate for the younger generation because, when I am an adult, they are the next group up. I want to see the younger generation prospering so that they can come out and do it bigger than me. This does not stop with us.

We need to be sure we are engaging students with rigorous activities and that starts with the teachers. We want a welcoming environment for all students. We need to have AP and IB at our schools.

Certain teachers really dig in and ask the questions and learn about us. They take the time to actually talk with students and understand why they are coming and what are they learning.

We need more technology to be engaged in learning and less lecturing. I need my hands on something or visuals to grab attention. We are hands-on learners.

We also need tackle bullying and ensure students are trained to tackle bullying.

There is a lot of emphasis on promotion and graduation. We want more teachers who take pride in their job rather than just receiving a check. Students are dropping out because it is boring or teachers do not show they care. Student are more likely to come to school and go to class when we have great teachers. When our teachers take pride in us, our grades go up. They love seeing us come to school and take pride in being serious about education. I know more people who drop out than graduate. To make the DCPS system better, hire people that will care, not only say they care but also show that they care. The high graduation rate is a huge success. We have students who have lost their lives. That high graduation rate is huge. Understanding success, knowing next steps, and teachers that care – those are the factors.

We would do better if we had more diversity. We need teachers who take their job more seriously and we need more diversity.

For students with special needs, they do not see the student as having an IEP, they see her as being bad, but she just has a different way of learning. She is not at the same level and so they need to meet here where she is.

They mentioned a student had passed. My school is dilapidated and it is disgusting to see how dirty the school is. Now they neighborhood is changing and then the school is being changed. DCPS does not care about us. No matter how much I try, it is never good enough. I was offered to go to UDC, I do not have economics classes. We only have two people on the swim team and the teachers had to buy us uniforms because we are overlooked. We cannot sell cookies from prom. Why do you all deny us that? I would like not to be treated as thhe black sheep and for people to be given what they need. We need to look at our own biases.

I want more respect for students and more respect of kids and adults. We should be correcting children and 9th graders. I want to be challenged and do my work and be respected.

I was like the substitutes to be knowledgeable. Otherwise, the students just go to the computers and they do not know what to do.

My principal always asked me how I am doing, and, because schedules are hectic, he would always ask about that. I want to come to school and feel like it is home. The feeling should be that I am your sister, brother, and I want us to go through this experience together and for it to be great. We need more desks and computers. We need things to help us progress and learn so that it feels like a home.

We have to find a way to motivate student students even more. When we come to school and people care about us, you can sense the love, then that is a way to

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motivate students.

Suspensions should not be a way to discipline students. Teachers are trying to battle students and it should be more of a communication. It is not a battle but a relationship and that change would better understanding.

Cutting arts and programs is a terrible idea. You need those so that when you are in a boring class, you want to stay there.

We should have time set aside from 3:30 – 4:30 just to help succeed. For example, we could use the help in applying for college and scholarships.

We need our schools to be the center of communities and be available, day or night.

For teachers PD days, if you are going to take away Fridays then it should be things that benefit them. I do not know of any teacher who feels as though it is a benefit to take time away time from learning. We need to be training teachers on how to deal with students from different backgrounds.

It helps to bring back alumni. We had a four-star general come and it really motivated.

We should have restorative justice at all schools and interrupt the school to prison pipeline. Sending kids back home does not help the problem. We should talk about the problem and work it out.

Safe space conversations are not necessarily open. My ideas will not be the same as everyone else's ideas.

We just want kids to be who they are. If you are hearing impaired, for example, you should be able to be you.

Our principal has made it easy for us to interact and promote equity. We all say hello, we talk. I feel as though I have a voice to say what I think. We have a communal exchange. I want to be an engineer, so I am preparing myself.

I do not want to see my teachers judging me based on who I hang out with.

Make relationships with students first and then parents. Have sessions where parents can come and meet teachers and principals. Give them the opportunity to build relationships.