

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)**



Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Oversight Hearing

Testimony Of
Dr. Lewis D. Ferebee
Chancellor

Before the
Committee of the Whole
The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman
and
Committee on Education
The Honorable David Grosso, Chairman

April 24, 2019
Room 500
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004



Good morning, Chairman Mendelson, Chairman Grosso, members of the Council, and staff. I am Dr. Lewis D. Ferebee, Chancellor for DC Public Schools, and I am honored to testify before you today, after 90 days on the job. Last month, Mayor Bowser presented “A Fair Shot,” her “Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) Budget and Financial Plan,” the District’s 24th consecutive balanced budget. This budget does more to make Washington, DC a place where people of all backgrounds and in all stages of life are able to live and thrive by making key investments in education, infrastructure, housing, health, our economy, and public safety. These investments reflect the key priorities identified by District residents at Budget Engagement Forums and telephone town halls held during the budget formulation process.

SLIDE 2 - Mayor Bowser’s Historic Investments in Education

DCPS has seen student outcomes and enrollment improve year after year for a decade. We are thrilled that more families are choosing DCPS. As enrollment increases and the cost of core operations, infrastructure, and our most valuable asset - our employees - continues to grow, Mayor Bowser’s strategic investments are paying off. As more students enter our schools, we will work to ensure they receive a high-quality education, while tackling some of our greatest challenges.

DCPS is committed to transparent and equitable budgeting. That is why across the District, we want our community - particularly our families - to understand how every dollar is spent to meet the needs of their local schools. In my first few months as Chancellor, I visited schools across every grade level, in every ward, and met with DCPS families and stakeholders to hear from them in their own neighborhoods. I also met with each of you to discuss your priorities. These initial engagements have informed parts of DCPS’ budget and will continue to inform my work as we transition into our next phase of excellence.

SLIDE 3 - Despite Rising Costs, DCPS Continues to Prioritize Investments That Put Students First

In FY20, we’re moving resources closer to students to increase access to technology, expand early childhood education, and strengthen our college and career readiness programming. While budget decisions are never easy, they are necessary. Moving forward, we will continue to prioritize our commitment to excellence and equity to realize Mayor Bowser’s vision for DCPS. We have made critical budget decisions to bring new supports to neighborhood schools. DCPS has aligned resources to ensure more efficient and responsive support for schools, while reducing spending in Central Office by \$16 million.

Costs are rising in the district, particularly related to educator salaries, operating costs, and maintenance. We have consistently seen these costs rise faster than inflation. In the face of rising costs, I am proud to lead a district that is bold about programming in our schools and has intentionally invested in human capital over time.

This year, you’ll see we are directing more funds and resources from Central Office closer to our schools to support our students where it matters most. These choices are not easy, but needed across the District to do what’s right for our students. In the wake of rising costs and budget constraints, FY20 will mark the tenth consecutive year of funding increases for our schools overall. This allows transformative new programming, including the introduction of one-to-one technology, pairing every student with a



device; our Connected Schools model; and the opening of Bard DC and Ida B. Wells MS, which will provide students with engaging and rigorous content they need to succeed in college and career.

SLIDE 4 - To Support Greater Transparency in the School Planning and Budget Development Process, School Communities Received the Following Tools

While we know there is still more work to do, this year, DCPS worked to make the budget process more transparent than ever before. We did that by improving information sharing and introducing new tools to give our families, communities, and stakeholders access to the same information we had.

We created a *Family and Community Guide to the DC Public Schools Budget* to provide additional context on the overall budget development process, including how each school's budget is determined, and shared it with school communities across the District. School communities can now access a snapshot of their school's Comprehensive Support Plans (CSP), which are strategic plans to drive continuous improvement at each school.

For the first time, DCPS published a snapshot of each school's finalized budget for School Year 2019-2020. These snapshots show total funding received by each school – side-by-side – and how those funds were ultimately budgeted, so school communities can better understand how each school is using its resources.

SLIDE 5 - DCPS Fully Funded All Schools Through the Comprehensive Staffing Model

There has been a lot of important conversation in the community about a decrease in some schools' buying power, and I want to address those concerns. Like previous years, DCPS has fully funded all schools in FY20 through the Comprehensive Staffing Model. Through this model, schools receive positions and funding for required positions, such as principals, core and related arts teachers, related service providers, and flexible positions, such as business managers and assistant principals. Schools also receive funding for programs such as NAF academies and JROTC. Last, schools receive funding for Non-Personnel Spending items, which can include library books, related art supplies, custodial supplies, and more. These allocations are based on enrollment and programmatic need.¹ However, each school's buying power is impacted by rising costs.

Student enrollment is the primary factor in shaping any school budget. Each year, DCPS creates enrollment projections for our schools. These projections are then reviewed to ensure they reflect current trends and are adjusted to account for program changes. After budgets are created, principals review the budgets with their Local School Advisory Teams (LSAT) and have an opportunity to propose changes to their enrollment projections. Since 2014, DCPS school-level projections have differed only by 0.1 percent to three percent from our audited enrollment.

While DCPS' overall enrollment continues to grow, some of our schools are projected to see significant enrollment declines, which impact their funding. Based on the projections, there are schools that will receive less money in their school-based budgets for the upcoming school year due to both enrollment

¹ Comprehensive Staffing Models by school level are available on [DCPS' Budget Website](#).



decreases and major programmatic shifts, including the discontinuation of the extended year model at 13 schools.

We also have made some changes to the way we implement stabilization funding in FY20 compared to the prior year.² Last year, the budget provided additional one-time targeted stabilization funding to 20 schools, which did not roll over to the FY20 budget. That additional targeted stabilization funding brought schools to 100 percent of their previous year's budget. That means for some of our schools, we cannot make a year-to-year comparison since they received additional money that was not a part of the original budget allocation based on the Comprehensive Staffing Model.

I do want to acknowledge that the initial budget proposal is only a starting place for our schools. To make sure schools have the resources and personnel they need, schools can apply for additional funding through a budget assistance request process. DCPS has already provided \$3.7 million to schools. Overall, 42 out of 56 schools that requested budget assistance received additional funding. For these requests, DCPS considers factors like a school's ESSA star rating, the percent of at-risk students, and guidance from a school's instructional superintendent. We will continue to monitor enrollment through the Spring and Summer to provide schools with any necessary additional resources.

SLIDE 6 - DCPS Remains Focused on Accelerating Student Achievement

Overall, the Mayor's budget provided \$753 million to schools, an increase of 7.8 percent from their FY19 budgets. Our focus remains on ensuring an excellent education for every student, and particularly accelerating student achievement in Wards 7 and 8. We recognize that some families do not have confidence in their neighborhood school, which leads to decreased enrollment.

By investing in proven strategies for our schools, such as our Cluster Support Model and increased investment for our youngest learners, we will increase student achievement across grade levels. When we accelerate student achievement, more families choose their neighborhood schools, leading to increased enrollment and school budgets.

SLIDE 7 - DCPS is Making Significant Investments in Our Schools Beyond What is Shown on School Budgets

Our schools will see new investments and opportunities next school year beyond our school-based budgets. This year, DCPS is expanding its Cluster Support Model to focus on students furthest from opportunity. We believe that our instructional superintendents, who work between schools and Central Office, are best positioned to address challenges. This will include allocating \$9.2 million toward realigning key Central Office supports around 10 clusters next school year. Each cluster will have designated staff support in key areas: academics, data, attendance, operations, special education, and technology.

² Schools with declining enrollment receive additional funds that maintain their budget at 95% of the previous year's amount. The additional stabilization funds come through the UPSFF and from the overall DCPS budget. Note, some schools with programmatic changes like the discontinuation of extended year will receive less than 95% of their prior year budget.



As part of the Cluster Support Model, three of these clusters will focus specifically on the Anacostia and Ballou feeder patterns to ensure that these schools receive amplified support and attention. These schools will receive community-aligned supports within a smaller cohort. Central Office specialists will support schools with instructional development, data analysis, and with other student-focused interventions. We believe that this structure will provide resources that are more responsive and aligned to schools' needs.

SLIDE 8 - Comprehensive Support for Eight Schools

DCPS is supporting schools beyond their designated school budgets. While this year's budget prioritizes schools that have struggled persistently over time, we're also investing approximately \$6.6 million to create more *Pathways to Excellence* in schools.

As part of our work with OSSE's new STAR framework, we have set aside \$1.6 million to launch eight "Connected Schools," which will serve as neighborhood hubs of support by providing wraparound services and transforming the way DC agencies work together to break down in-school and out-of-school barriers students and families face. This model will help us to holistically meet the needs of our students furthest from opportunity, their families, and their communities.

These schools will receive support and resources to implement a new school-wide approach for integrating academics, student services, and community engagement to serve the whole child and whole community. Each school will have a Community School Manager as a member of the school leadership team to drive strategy and embed the work in the school's Comprehensive School Plan.

In addition, approximately \$5 million in anticipated federal funds will be used to deeply invest in school-wide improvement support. Schools will receive targeted interventions including leadership training, and academic and school culture interventions, all focused on the school community's unique strengths and areas of growth.

SLIDE 9 - DCPS Investments in Early Childhood Education to College and Career

The best way to set our students up for success in their later years is to provide them with a strong educational foundation early on. We appreciate the Mayor's \$52 million investment in early learning facilities through the District's Comprehensive Improvement Plan (CIP). DCPS will also be adding nine new early childhood classrooms across the district for next year.³

We are also making sure our older students have new opportunities to get the skills they need to succeed after graduation. This fall, DCPS will launch Bard Early College High School, where 150 students will have the opportunity to earn college credit and an associate's degree from Bard College while earning their high school diploma. We are also opening the Early College Academy at Coolidge, which allow high school students to earn college credits while in high school, and join the school's Mass Media Academy and NAF Health Sciences Academy.

³There will be nine new ECE classrooms at Bunker Hill ES, Ketcham ES, LaSalle-Backus EC, Miner ES, Takoma EC, Truesdell EC, West EC, Wheatley EC, and Whittier EC.



SLIDE 10 - DCPS Investments Educating the Whole Child

When meeting with parents, school leaders, and many of you, two things came up over and over again: the need for more technology and supports for mental health. We listened, and we're making significant investments in these areas.

Next year, we are funding an initial \$4.6 million to make sure every student in grades 3-12 has one-to-one access to a device, such as a laptop or tablet, within the next three years. By the end of next school year, our goal is for every student in grades 3, 6, and 9 to have one-to-one access and that there is at least one device for every three students in all other grades.

Separately, we are ensuring our students are not only academically supported, but that their social-emotional needs are met as well. As a result of the recommendations from the Task Force on School Mental Health, which included Council partners, and in partnership with the Department of Behavioral Health, Mayor Bowser's budget is expanding school-based mental health services for our students through a \$6 million investment that will include adding trauma-informed care sites to some of our schools. This will provide students impacted by violence with the support and services necessary to heal individually and collectively.

SLIDE 11 - DCPS Investments in 21st Century Learning Environments

In addition to investing in our talented teachers and developing engaging curricula, DCPS is building new, 21st century learning environments to support students' success. This fall, DCPS will open the new Ida B. Wells MS, along with the fully modernized Coolidge HS, Hyde-Addison ES, Kimball ES, and Maury ES.

We will also invest over \$350 million in FY20 and \$1.3 billion over the next six years to continue modernizing our school buildings. To address overcrowding, we're also investing \$77.9 million to add capacity at six DCPS schools.⁴

SLIDE 12 - We Want to Ensure We Have a Sustainable Budget Model That Meets the Needs of Every Student and Every School

While rising costs will continue to present challenges, I look forward to continuing to work with students, educators, and families across the District to develop a sustainable budget model that meets the needs of every student and school. Only by working together can we create a culture of excellence at DCPS that provides an equitable education for all of our students.

The resources allocated to DCPS through Mayor Bowser's FY20 budget will play a critical role in supporting the District's students and families. I look forward to our continued work together to achieve our shared goal that every student feels loved, challenged, and prepared to positively influence society and thrive in life.

⁴ Funding to add capacity will go to Deal MS, Key ES, Lafayette ES, Ross ES, Stoddert ES, and Van Ness ES.



DCPS will continue to invest in bold, data-driven initiatives that ensure that we are providing students with the resources and opportunities they need to thrive. I look forward to working with school communities to ensure that we are setting our students up for success in the upcoming school year. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to answering your questions at this time.



April 24, 2019

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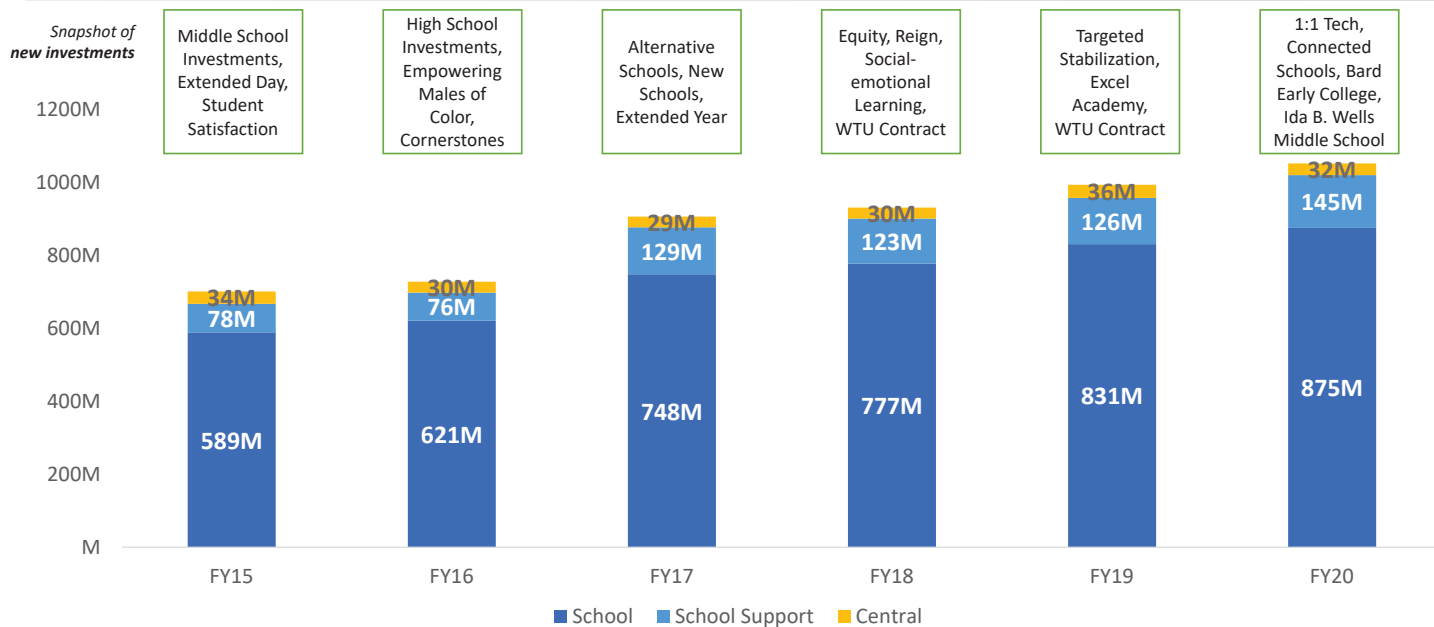
DCPS is proud that Mayor Bowser has made historic investments in education that allow us to continue our work preparing every student for college, career, and life.

Summary

- We are committed to **transparent and equitable budgeting**.
- Despite our rising costs, we continue to direct **more funding and resources to our schools**.
- Many schools will see **new investments and opportunities next school year** beyond our school-based budgets.



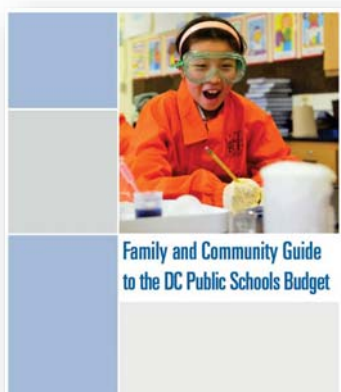
Despite our rising costs, DCPS continues to prioritize investments that put **students first.**



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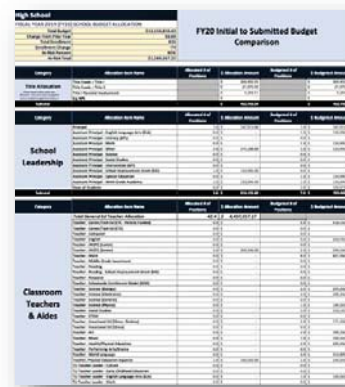
To support greater transparency in the school planning and budget development process, school communities received the following tools:



A Family and Community Guide to the DC Public Schools Budget



A snapshot of their school's Comprehensive Support Plan (CSP)



Snapshots of each school's finalized budget for School Year 2019-2020

DCPS fully funded all schools through the Comprehensive Staffing Model.

Changes to individual school budgets were influenced by several factors, including:



Enrollment



Security



Programming



Stabilization

DCPS also supports schools through budget petitions, budget assistance, and enrollment reserves.

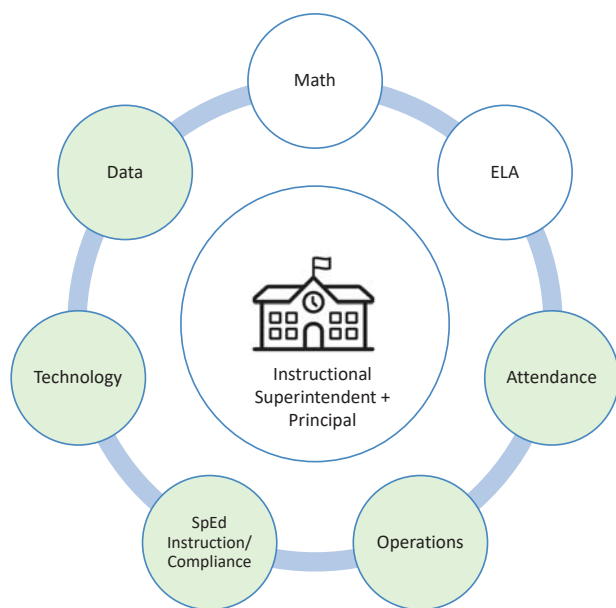
DCPS remains focused on accelerating student achievement.

By investing in proven strategies for our schools that have struggled persistently over time, we will increase student achievement across grade levels.

When we accelerate student achievement, more families choose their neighborhood schools, leading to increased enrollment and school budgets.



Cluster Support Model: DCPS is making significant investments in our schools beyond what is shown on school budgets



We will add a new cluster for a total of **10 clusters**.

Each cluster will have designated staff supports in key areas.

To drive resources to our schools that need more supports, **three clusters will focus on our schools in Ward 8:**

- Anacostia Elementary Feeder
- Ballou Elementary Feeder
- Anacostia and Ballou Secondary Feeder

New FY20 Investment: **\$2.9M**
Total Investment: **\$9.2M**

Comprehensive Support for 8 Schools

- Anacostia High School
- Ballou High School
- Cardozo Education Campus
- Eliot-Hine Middle School
- Kramer Middle School
- Sousa Middle School
- Langley Elementary School
- Moten Elementary School

School Improvement

Approx. \$5 million in federal funds to accelerate outcomes as a component of our work connected to OSSE's new STAR framework

Connected Schools

\$1.6 million invested to dramatically shift the way schools partner with other DC agencies and communities



DCPS Investments in Early Childhood Education to College and Career

Investing in Our Youngest Learners

- 9 new PreK classrooms
- \$52 million to expand early childhood education opportunities



Preparing All Students for College and Career

DCPS will launch Bard DC and the Early College program at the re-envisioned Coolidge High School

DCPS Investments in Educating the Whole Child



Ensuring Digital Equity

- \$4.6M in new funds to ensure a 1:1 student to device ratio in grades 3, 6, and 9 and 3:1 student to device ratio for all grades
- 1:1 ratio for students in grades 3-12 achieved over the next three years

Growing Social-Emotional Supports

\$6 million to expand school-based mental health



DCPS Investments in 21st Century Learning Environments



Providing World-Class Facilities

- \$1.3 billion over the next 6 years to continue to modernize DCPS schools
- \$77.9 million to address overcrowding and add capacity at 6 DCPS schools

We want to ensure we have a sustainable budget model that meets the needs of every student and every school.

Fall-Winter 2019

Research and Equity
Analysis

Spring-Summer 2020

Engagement and
Design

Fall-Winter 2020

New Model for
SY21-22 Budget
Development



Going forward, I am committed to evaluating the budget process and our funding model to ensure that we are engaging in transparent and equitable budgeting.