



DCPS engaged approximately 200 stakeholders on the proposed closure of Washington Metropolitan High School. Main stakeholder groups included Washington Metropolitan staff, students, families, and community members. This document provides a high-level summary of our feedback timeline and process, as well as key themes that emerged from these feedback sessions.

Overview of Timeline & Process

On November 26, 2019, DCPS announced a proposed closure of Washington Metropolitan High School at the end of the current 2019-2020 school year. To gather feedback from stakeholders on this proposal, DCPS hosted staff meetings, community forums, student listening sessions, and created a phone number for community members to leave feedback via voicemail.

- **Staff Meetings**

- 3 staff meetings were held within the first two weeks of the proposal announcement
- Total number of attendees: 45
- At these staff meetings, DCPS senior leadership shared proposed closure timeline details; the DCPS Student Supports Team shared details on how Washington Metropolitan students and staff and families would be supported; and the DCPS School Staffing and Employee Services Team shared its FAQ resources for staff.

- **Community Forums**

- Community forums were held on December 9 at Washington Metropolitan High School and on December 12 at Martha's Table in Ward 8.
- Total number of attendees: 81
- At these forums, DCPS senior leadership shared context and background of Washington Metropolitan High School, gave an overview of the proposed closure, and discussed the factors and considerations that informed the proposal.
- Feedback was shared by the community through small group discussions and large group question and answer sessions. Afterwards, meeting materials and a summary of feedback was shared with the participants and publicly posted on the [DCPS School Planning Blog](#).
- Attendees submitted 56 feedback forms, although nearly half of the respondents did not state their affiliation with the school. Of those who did, 23% were community members, 12% were DCPS staff, 10% were Washington Metropolitan staff, 5% were DCPS parents, and 2% were Washington Metropolitan students.
- 76% of feedback form respondents strongly disagreed with the proposed closure, 17% did not respond to this question, 2% disagreed, 3% agreed to the proposed closure but requested some changes, and 2% were undecided.

- **Student Listening Sessions**

- 4 listening sessions were held at the school with middle and high school students
- Total number of attendees: 45

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- Chancellor Ferebee hosted two listening sessions. He spoke with students during the lunch hour and visited with students in their classroom.
 - Chief of Secondary Schools Sito Narcisse also hosted two listening sessions; one with middle school students and another with high school students.
 - In all four sessions, students had the opportunity to ask questions and share feedback on the proposed closure as well as share their career goals and personal experiences with DCPS leadership.
- **Voicemails**
 - In order to ensure that there was a means to communicate feedback on the proposal for stakeholders that could not attend any of the planned meetings or could not submit a completed form, DCPS established a voicemail box for students and families to call and share their feedback.
 - DCPS received two voicemails: One from a Washington Metropolitan parent and one from Washington Metropolitan staff member
 - Both voicemails disagreed with the proposed Washington Metropolitan proposed closure.

Feedback Themes

Approximately 200 stakeholders engaged in this process in some capacity and shared their experiences, perspectives, frustrations, and hopes for the future of Washington Metropolitan High School. Below is a summary of the themes that resonated most from this feedback. It does not represent every experience shared.

- **Impacts the most vulnerable population within DCPS.**
 - Stakeholders spoke of the range of social-emotional and educational needs of Washington Metropolitan High School students. Whether students have a history of safety concerns, incarceration or disengagement with school, Washington Metropolitan serves a student community whose significant needs that must be considered.
- **Inequity in program offerings and resources.**
 - Students and staff felt that the school did not get the same range of programming offered at other Opportunity Academies. They also highlighted the limited support services offered at Washington Metropolitan, including day care. Staff shared they didn't have the resources necessary to offer more social-emotional learning supports to students.
- **Process and timeline.**
 - Stakeholders expressed their frustration with the proposed timeline of engagement, sharing that they did not think it was enough time to fully consider all the factors surrounding a closure. Some stakeholders requested the proposal be delayed by a year.
- **Lack of transparency.**
 - Stakeholders felt that the rationale for closure was unclear and wanted additional data to support the proposal. Stakeholders expressed interest in learning more about interventions that were previously implemented, and the related outcomes.

Many stakeholders shared their concerns and desires for how the transition should be implemented, should the proposal move forward.

- **Personalized student support is a priority.**
 - Staff requested support from Central Office teams in creating one-on-one plans tailored for each student. In-person family meetings were also discussed in order to ensure families are aware of their child's academic needs.
- **Attention to students' Individualized Education Plans (IEP).**
 - In the event of a closure, stakeholders emphasized needing to connect with families to discuss how DCPS will ensure the student's IEPs will be served by the school.
- **Receiving schools.**
 - In the event of a closure, stakeholders expressed concerns about students returning to schools where they previously attended and did not have a positive experience. Staff shared they would like to connect with any potential receiving school staff to share information about students' progress.
- **Programming and support services.**
 - Stakeholders are seeking more extracurricular opportunities and support in seeking employment outside of school hours. Many students have a sense of what career they would like to pursue and are interested in related internships or shadow days.
- **Modernized building.**
 - Stakeholders expressed frustration with the state of the current building, specifically housing secondary students in an elementary school building. Staff and students do not feel the building is a welcoming place and they are limited in the extracurricular activities that can be offered. Students are seeking a modernized learning environment that provides more welcoming common spaces and can engage in academic, athletic, and enrichment programming.
- **Prioritize credit recovery progress.**
 - Students emphasized not wanting to lose progress with any credit recovery they have made and continuing to work toward transitioning to their right grade. Students also wanted to learn more about how to apply via the My School DC lottery for other high school options, outside of Opportunity Academies.

Next Steps

DCPS thanks all who took time to provide feedback on this proposal and engage in conversations around the future of Washington Metropolitan High School. A school closure is something we never consider lightly, and we recognize the impact the proposal has had on the Wash Met community and its students. The feedback received during this process is informing our strategic planning initiatives of how we can better serve all students.