

Mayor Muriel Bowser

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington DC, 20004 January 26, 2017

Dear Mayor Bowser,

We want to thank you for the opportunities that were provided to give input on factors you used to select Mr. Antwan Wilson as the new Chancellor for the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). As advocates for DCPS—its educational potential and its importance as a centerpiece of local democracy—we look forward to developing a positive working relationship with him. We have heard from the Council and the Mayor that closing the achievement gap for all students including ELL and Special Needs students will be the top goal of his administration and we share that priority.

It is our understanding that once Mr. Wilson begins in February 2017 there will be a 60-day period in which to establish performance evaluation criteria for him. The purpose of our letter is to provide values and criteria which we will use to evaluate Mr. Wilson’s performance in additional areas and to suggest that an important measure of an effective administration is enrollment growth in our DCPS neighborhood, by-right schools.

The DCPS share of the total number of students attending publicly-funded schools has decreased every year since the Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 was passed. In 2007, 69% of the students attending publicly-funded schools were in DCPS. Each year since, the percentage has fallen, and in 2016 only 56% of the total students attended DCPS.[[1]](#footnote-1) **We suggest Mr. Wilson be held accountable for addressing this decline in DCPS by growing the DCPS enrollment in neighborhood schools. Particularly at the secondary level, and especially in areas that have lost DCPS schools. We suggest a target of at least 65% of the total enrollment of publicly funded students within three years.**

The new Chancellor must work to strengthen both the capacity and quality of DCPS matter-of-right feeder systems in all parts of the city so that families and communities throughout the city have quality DCPS matter-of-right schools serving their neighborhoods.

Achieving this growth will require a focus and priority associated with the following values and criteria:

**Healthy and productive relationships with principals, teachers, communities, parents and students:** Mr. Wilson must engage with all stakeholders, and show a demonstrated commitment to authentic partnerships and interactions with communities, administrators, teachers, parents and students.

* **Demonstrated support for a well-rounded education for every student.** Mr. Wilson must be held accountable for measures beyond test scores and graduation rates. It is the only way the achievement gap can be adequately addressed. He must demonstrate leadership abilities that foster rich exposure to the arts, sciences, sports, language instruction and career and technical education for all students, before and after-school programming.
* **Explicit continued expansion of a positive approach to school climate and discipline issues** by providing alternatives like restorative justice practices and mentoring. We need to see better attendance, and a reduction in suspensions, expulsions and involuntary transfers.
* **Transparency in budget development, budget management and resource allocation**. Mr. Wilson must develop annual and long-term budgets for DCPS that meet the current and future needs of students while remaining fiscally responsible. He should deliver transparent budgets with community input that prioritize putting resources at the local school level, and delivering resources to at-risk students.
* **Planning and management skills encompassing core school and district functions.** Mr. Wilson must lead the development of educational, facilities, and operations plans to guide educational progress in DCPS and successfully manage an administrative team that focuses on all functional aspects of a large-school system, including curriculum, personnel management, contracting and procurement, food services, out-of-school time, facility maintenance, utilization and modernization.

Only with dedication and commitment to these ends will he be able to achieve growth in enrollment across the city for DCPS and at the same time close the persistent gap in the achievement of students from low and high income families.

Your selection of the DCPS chancellor, Mr. Wilson, will deeply affect the lives of thousands of DC citizens and have a profound influence on the future of our city. We urge you include the growth of our DCPS, neighborhood schools as an explicit indicator in your evaluation of the effectiveness of his administration. We are committed to helping him achieve this goal and to supporting him as he works with the values and criteria listed.

Sincerely, These Members of the Coalition for DC Public Schools and Communities

Ward 1 Education Collaborative

Ward 2 Ed Network

[Ward 4 Education Alliance](http://www.ward4ed.org/)  
[Ward Five Council on Education](http://w5coe.org/about-us/)  
[Capitol Hill Public Schools Parent Organization](http://chpspo.org/)

Ward 7 Education Council

Ward 8 Education Council

Teaching for Change

Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs  
[21st Century School Fund](http://www.21csf.org/)

Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals and Educators (SHAPPE)

WeAct Radio

Cc:

DCPS Chancellor Mr. Antwan Wilson

Deputy Mayor for Education Jennifer Niles

DC City Council Chairman Phil Mendelson

DC Education Chairman David Grosso

Members of the Council Education Committee

1. Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Enrollment Audit Data, http://www.osse.dc.gov/enrollment. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)