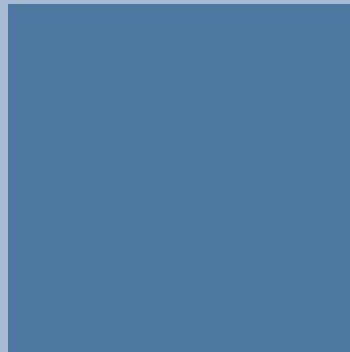
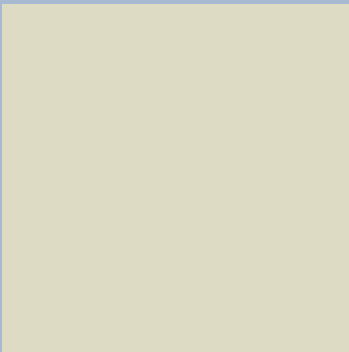
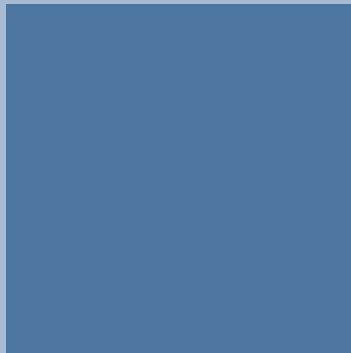


Declaration of Education: KEEPING OUR PROMISE TO THE DISTRICT'S CHILDREN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Vision

The District of Columbia Public Schools welcome all the children of this city. We want to be their first choice for elementary and secondary education. With support from the community, we help prepare each student to be a good neighbor and a responsible, productive member of a global society. In so doing, the district's schools uphold the democratic values and the promise of American public education at its best.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Plans for improving DC Public Schools have been numerous. At their best, they were important steps to keep our youth in schools and ready for success when they graduate. At their worst, they sat on a shelf without the will to move them forward.

It is clear to all who care about the students in DC Public Schools that past plans and the leadership to move them forward — both in schools and in the community — have not been enough.

This plan represents a new day. Since November of last year, hundreds of volunteers, parents and other residents, youth, business leaders, teachers, principals, public officials, university leaders, and many others have been meeting to develop recommendations, all focused on one goal: improving student achievement.

This collaboration, known as the DC Education Compact, invited all participants to sign an agreement to put aside “personal, parochial, and political interests” to “ensure that our schools provide excellent student learning and achievement for all children in the District of Columbia.” It is this work that lays a new, stronger foundation for efforts to improve outcomes for students. Our work together established the basis for this plan and, as important, the commitment to move it forward.

This plan is guided by three core values:

- Each and every student *will* learn.
- As adults — staff and community — we are mutually accountable for providing students with quality opportunities to learn ... and for modeling responsible behavior.
- Actions matter most, as a testament to effective implementation and steady progress toward our goals.

The plan is organized around three goals, each with strategic priorities that will guide our work in the coming years:

- Improve teaching and learning in every classroom in every school.
- Provide more efficient management and operations systems to support teachers and students.
- Create a culture of increased transparency, open communications and expanded opportunities for involvement.

The following pages offer more detail on each of these goals. Our next step is to build an implementation plan in partnership with our educators, the DC Education Compact and many new partners. Please join us as we work to deliver on the promise of American public education in our nation's capital.

Sincerely,

Clifford B. Janey, Ed.D.

Superintendent and Chief State School Officer

May 2, 2005

OUR SINGULAR FOCUS: IMPROVED STUDENT LEARNING

Ultimately, our success will be determined by how well students achieve academically, starting in the core subjects of English language arts and mathematics, so that they graduate prepared for college, work, the military or other postsecondary opportunities. Instead of testing all students every year, as DCPS has done recently, starting in 2004–05 we will test students in grades 3, 5, 8 and 10. Beginning in spring 2006, we will test students annually in grades 3 through 8 and grade 10, as required by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. DCPS has four critical benchmarks — three for achievement, the other for graduation, attendance, truancy and dropout rates — where the goals either meet or exceed the expectations of the state.

DCPS Assessment Goals — Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Above

	2004 Actual	2005 Goal	2006 Goal	2007 Goal	2008 Goal	2014 Goal
Elementary — English Language Arts	46	50	54	59	65	100
Elementary — Mathematics	56	57	59	64	69	100
Secondary — English Language Arts	31	37	43	50	57	100
Secondary — Mathematics	37	42	47	53	60	100

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) — Percentage of Students Scoring Basic or Above

	2003 DCPS Baseline		2004–05 Goal		2006–07 Goal		2008–09 Goal	
Grade 4	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
% At or Above Proficient	10	7	13	10	16	14	22	21
% At or Above Basic	31	36	36	38	42	51	53	67
Grade 8								
% At or Above Proficient	10	6	13	9	16	13	22	20
% At or Above Basic	47	29	50	35	54	41	62	54

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses and Exams

	2004 Actual	2005 Goal	2006 Goal	2007 Goal	2008 Goal	2014 Goal
Number of Students Enrolled in AP Courses	2,284	2,356	2,428	2,500	2,572	3,000
Number of Students Taking AP Exams	818	900	982	1,064	1,146	1,636
Average AP Exam Scores	2.25	2.5	2.75	3.0	3.25	4.0

Graduation, Attendance, Truancy and Dropouts — Percentage of Students

	2004 Actual	2005 Goal	2006 Goal	2007 Goal	2008 Goal	2014 Goal
Graduation Rate	70	73	76	79	82	100
Attendance Rate	91.9	92.6	93.3	94.0	94.7	99.0
Truancy Rate	23.5	21.0	18.5	16.0	13.5	5.0
Dropout Rate	6.9	6.7	6.5	6.4	6.2	5.0

Graduation rate measures the percentage of 9th-grade students who graduate four years later. Attendance rate measures average daily attendance. Truancy rate measures the percentage of students with at least 15 unexcused absences. Dropout rate measures the percentage of students who drop out each year.

GOAL 1: PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN EVERY CLASSROOM IN EVERY SCHOOL

If parents and families do not help prepare their children to learn and if DCPS does not ensure effective teaching and learning in every classroom, in every school, in every part of the community, we are not doing our job. What happens in the classroom determines whether the school district's students graduate truly prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. Will they have the knowledge, skills and work habits to compete for good jobs — not just with other Americans, but with students from other nations that have made world-class education a national priority? And will they have the character and confidence to raise their families, be good neighbors and succeed in an increasingly diverse global society?

Strong Standards and Curriculum. The cornerstone is a new system of more challenging standards, tests and curriculum, starting with English language arts and mathematics this year, science and social studies next year, and four electives the following year. A stronger career and technical education program will ensure DCPS graduates can take advantage of fast-growing job opportunities in the area. We will continue to strengthen our special education program by reducing our reliance on expensive outplacements and creating new opportunities for students with disabilities to learn in neighborhood schools. All elementary, middle and junior high schools will have art and music again.

A System of Effective Schools. Schools will be provided with different levels of rewards, assistance and interventions, depending on their performance. Schools performing well will have greater autonomy, while the lowest-performing schools may be operated by educational management organizations such as the KIPP Academy. High schools will be restructured to provide more engaging pathways (such as International

Baccalaureate, arts and music, and upgraded career and technical education options) to help students graduate well prepared for college, work, or military or community service. Students will be able to earn a diploma in three years if they're ready, or they can take up to five years if they need the extra time.

Welcoming and Safe Schools. New discipline policies will reduce suspensions and referrals while strengthening violence prevention, peer mediation and conflict resolution programs in all schools.

High-Quality Teachers and Principals. A new Leadership Academy for Principals, expanded professional development for teachers, mentoring programs for new teachers, and tighter certification and recertification policies will help ensure quality

Already we have ...

- Created strong academic standards in English language arts and mathematics.
- Begun developing new curriculum, tests, instructional supports and professional development.
- Drafted science and social studies standards.
- Added 1,200 seats for special education students and reduced expensive outplacements.
- Added classroom libraries in all elementary schools.
- Created a model automotive certification program.

instruction in all classrooms. In the next five years, 500 teachers will earn National Board certification. A future goal is for at least 50 principals to have a similar opportunity to be nationally certified.

Partnership for Success. Partnerships with the DC Education Compact, the DC government, local businesses, community-based organizations and others will address multiple priorities, including reading and math support, early childhood education, school-based health services, after-school and summer-school programs, and the transition to high school. Students will graduate from DCPS at higher rates, and they will be better prepared for college, postsecondary training or good jobs.

GOAL 2: ENSURE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS SUPPORT HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN EVERY CLASSROOM IN EVERY SCHOOL

Procurement, facilities, information technology. Those often have been code words for dysfunction and mismanagement in DCPS. We have turned the corner on many of these systems, with major improvements, new leadership and a focus on performance. Principals, teachers and staff need to know that the computers and phones will work; the right supplies will arrive on time; payroll checks will be processed; jobs will be posted and filled promptly; and resources will be allocated in fair, strategic and timely ways.

Staff and students need to know that the classrooms, bathrooms and grounds will be safe and clean ... and that teaching and learning will occur in buildings where the roofs do not leak, the heating and air conditioning work, and the windows are sealed. Administrators, policymakers and the community need access to understandable information that will allow effective learning and oversight of taxpayer dollars.

Already we have ...

- Accelerated recruitment of quality teachers and principals.
- Developed a performance-based budget that ties spending to academics and operations goals.
- Identified \$31 million in savings.
- Finished modernizing or renovating 11 schools.
- Adopted a plan to modernize or renovate 44 additional schools by 2010.
- Resolved long-standing backlog in payments to employees.
- Earned federal certification for food service.

Procurement. DCPS is seeking to save \$1.5 million in the next school year through the Phoenix Project, an aggressive effort to completely overhaul procurement services over the next several years; take advantage of our buying power; and allow procurement staff to focus on the high-value purchases. This year, principals will be able to order supplies online through American Express, cutting delivery times from 30 days or more to three days.

Human Resources. Administrative systems are being upgraded so we can hire quality teachers and administrators before the school year. DCPS and the city are partnering to fully automate the personnel system and eliminate the payroll backlogs that have plagued the district for years.

Facilities. Major rehabilitation work will soon be under way at an additional 19 schools, and we will continue to reduce maintenance backlogs as part of our multiyear plan to ensure that all DCPS students have adequate learning environments. The forthcoming Master Education Plan will ensure that the city is making the best use of all of its school facilities. A new office will explore innovative public-private partnerships to create new educational opportunities and new facilities.

Safety and Health. A new model discipline policy is being crafted to help improve student behavior and ensure that all students' instructional needs are being met. DCPS is partnering with the Metropolitan Police Department to assist with security issues in the schools and to help build our in-house capacity. We will explore similar partnerships with other community-based organizations. School security programs will align with student support programs such as peer mediation and conflict resolution.

Financial Management. We are revising the major budgeting formula that allocates funds to schools to reflect the refocused mission of DCPS and restore public confidence in the equity and transparency of the process. Our new performance-based budgeting system ties spending directly to academic and operations priorities.

Information Technology. The school district's first comprehensive integrated information technology plan will be completed next year to address our huge technology gap and more fully automate our human resources, procurement and student information systems.

GOAL 3: CREATE A CULTURE OF TRANSPARENCY, OPEN COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN EVERY CLASSROOM IN EVERY SCHOOL

Working collaboratively with a responsible community requires the transparency that builds effective communication and trust — essential to any collaboration — and makes it possible for everyone to be on the same page.

Already we have ...

- Collaborated extensively with the DC Education Compact, a unique citywide coalition, to develop strategic priorities.
- Established new levels of cooperation with the school board, mayor, city council, charter schools, Congress and the Bush administration.
- Involved multiple teachers, administrators, parents and community members in developing new academic standards.
- Worked with early education providers to create 400 additional openings for pre-K students.

At a minimum, unless employees at every level of the system — from custodians to senior members of the superintendent's cabinet — understand the school district's priorities and their roles in meeting those goals, they are denied a basis for passionate commitment. Unless parents, school partners and other members of the community know where we are headed — and how specifically they can support our work — it will be virtually impossible to synchronize our efforts or to achieve our ambitious goals for improved student achievement.

During Year 1, we will emphasize getting the basics right: building staff capacity; creating the infrastructure and networks that will allow us to communicate cost-effectively and quickly with multiple stakeholders; developing the core materials that both explain our

work and suggest how recipients can support it; establishing the mutual relationships that invite participation from across the city; and listening better to understand information needs and partnership opportunities inside and outside the schools. This work will be aided by borrowing best practices from elsewhere or re-establishing best practices from past DCPS administrations. During Years 2–5, we will gradually build many avenues for stakeholder feedback and participation so that together we improve our children's future.

Basic Communications. Top priorities are to re-establish consistent and effective internal and external communications — fact sheets and other informational materials, Web, Channel 28, media and community briefings — and to launch a yearlong campaign to mobilize the community around our challenging new standards, tests and curriculum materials.

Parent and Family Involvement. A new office will be devoted to parent involvement and five new parent resource centers that will help parents become more active and effective advocates for their children.

Community Partnerships. We will be working proactively with a wide range of city agencies, civic organizations and others to improve coordination among the many initiatives affecting youth, from early childhood programs to schools serving as hubs for mental health and other social services. A business advisory committee will help guide our communications and outreach efforts. The superintendent will establish citywide coalitions of parent and community groups that advocate for all children.

Copies of the full strategic plan are available on our Web site, www.k12.dc.us or by calling 202-724-4222.



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