All Students Succeeding

A MASTER EDUCATION PLAN
FOR A SYSTEM OF GREAT SCHOOLS

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The following office has been designated to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies:

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825 North Capitol Street, NE, 6th floor
Washington, DC 20002
T: 202.442.5424

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Title IX Coordinator
Office of Student and School Support Services
District of Columbia Public Schools
825 North Capitol Street, NE, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20002
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INTRODUCTION

Mission

The mission of the District of Columbia Public Schools is to ensure that all students acquire the knowledge, skills and values necessary to live rich and fulfilling lives as responsible, productive and enlightened members of a democratic society.

Vision

The District of Columbia Public Schools will be known as one of the best urban school districts in this country. The District of Columbia Public Schools will offer an outstanding education to every student within a safe, healthy and educationally appropriate environment. The District of Columbia Public Schools will be among the first major urban school districts to eliminate the achievement gap among all subgroups of our student population. The District of Columbia Public Schools will dynamically engage parents and the community in the lives of our students and schools. The District of Columbia Public Schools will be the first and best choice for families living in the District of Columbia.

— DC Board of Education, December 14, 2005

This Master Education Plan details how we intend to achieve these goals by addressing eight areas critical to education excellence:

- strong learning standards, curriculum, instruction and assessments — a challenging academic core for all students;

- teachers and principals who are prepared to deliver high-quality instruction to every student;

- a culture of inclusion that offers a wide range of learning opportunities for our diverse students;

- increased supports and assistance that meet students' individual needs;

- partnerships that take advantage of the Capitol City's global stature and many community assets;

- schools that are organized in ways that better serve students and families;

- an accountability system that more clearly defines the responsibilities of the central office and the schools, and proposes a series of interventions to turn around low-performing schools; and

- a commitment to equity that ensures that every student has access to an appropriate range of educational resources.

For each of these eight interlocking areas, the plan provides a picture of progress to date and identifies steps DCPS must take to achieve sustainable, systemic reform. It also lays the groundwork for further discussion of how DCPS can best use our facilities and other resources to support the necessary changes and provide safe, healthy and effective learning environments for our students over the long term.

Our approach is comprehensive and strategic. It meets students where they are … and provides opportunities for all children to succeed. High-performing schools will be encouraged

with additional flexibility, low-performing schools will be helped with additional supports. Our approach welcomes parents, families and others in the community as partners. And our approach focuses on results, through regular program evaluation and improvements.

Some of the strategies addressed by this Plan will be implemented immediately; others will require additional planning. All interventions will be regularly monitored and evaluated; as necessary, we will make revisions. To help the community monitor action, the superintendent will present an annual progress report.

The Process: Collaborating for Children

Developed through a highly collaborative planning process, this Master Education Plan brings together the best thinking of DCPS educators and staff, district parents and students, and nationally recognized experts in urban education and education reform. (For a complete list of participants, please see the acknowledgments on page 121 of this report.)

This plan expands on the strategic planning process used in the *Declaration of Education,* our May 2005 strategic plan. It closely reflects the Core Beliefs and Commitments of the Board of Education (see page 14). We reviewed the literature on systemic reform in other school districts; the work of the Council of the Great City Schools was especially helpful.

We also consulted the requirements of applicable federal legislation, including the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and local polices. We also examined the performance of DCPS schools on stan-

dardized tests, including recent scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

In a series of meetings and forums, we identified a variety of issues that affect student performance — from curriculum, instruction, professional development and extended learning opportunities to school size and grade configuration. We examined these through in-depth discussion papers followed by intensive workshop sessions with DCPS staff and others that brought the topics together into a comprehensive framework.

We used a variety of community engagement approaches to gain the widest possible participation from parents, students and other community stakeholders. Through a telephone survey in early November 2005, almost 15,000 DCPS parents expressed their preferences, expectations and attitudes regarding their children's education. Hundreds more parents and citizens attended one or more of five community forums, held at schools throughout the city, that offered the opportunity to explore the specific issues and provide their input through detailed surveys and recorded interviews. Many other parents, students, principals and teachers gave their input through surveys on the Master Education Plan Web site. District teachers also provided their input through three forums hosted by the Washington Teachers Union.

An iterative writing process involved many members of the senior management team and the Board of Education. The result is a plan that is very much a product of DCPS. This is critically important because those who are responsible for its implementation

About the Community Forums

Throughout this Plan, we include quotations (Community Voices) and survey results (Community Survey Results), which were drawn from questionnaires that participants completed during the five community forums we held in November 20005.

own the plan. And the students, parents, principals and teachers who will be most affected by the success of this Plan can feel confident that the vision and goals of the school board's Core Beliefs and Commitments and in the *Declaration of Education* will be brought to life in our schools and classrooms.

It is another in a series of important building blocks that will energize and guide all of our future work on behalf of the nearly 59,000 students and broader community we serve.

As part of the Master Education Plan, DCPS has developed in-depth profiles of all DCPS schools, which are designed to help parents and families better understand their many choices … and take advantage of them. The online profiles will provide up-to-date information about:

- Basic school contact information

- School addresses, maps and school boundaries

- Student demographics and enrollment

- Information on academic programs, including special education

- Test scores and other student achievement measures

- Detailed facilities information

- Staffing

- School/community partnerships
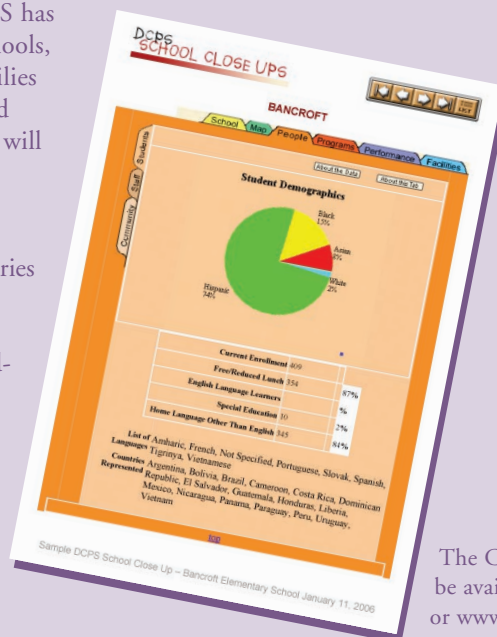
The Close-Ups will be available at www.k12.dc.us or www.greatschools.k12.dc.us.

The Plan was submitted to the Board of Education on Feb. 27, 2006, for consideration and subsequent adoption.

DCPS Board of Education Core Beliefs and Commitments

Core Beliefs	Commitments
1. We believe that all children can learn at high levels and that the achievement gap can be eliminated.	We believe that every student has the right to a high-quality education, and we accept responsibility for high levels of achievement for all students. We affirm our belief that the capacity to learn is not determined or limited by race, income, native language, gender or place of residence. As long as there is any achievement gap, however broadly defined, between rich and poor, between white children and children of color, we have not met our responsibility. We further acknowledge that providing every child with equal opportunity to a high-quality education may require the targeted investment of resources. All students who graduate from the District of Columbia Public Schools should possess the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve success in postsecondary education and employment.
2. We believe that individual schools have a profound impact on children's lives.	Improving educational outcomes for all students requires that every school in the system be held to uniformly high standards. It is unacceptable for any school, regardless of neighborhood, staff or student demographics, to fail to meet rigorous education and management standards. A performance-driven highly qualified teacher must be in every classroom, and a highly qualified principal who is a performance-driven instructional leader must lead every school. The most important relationship is between a teacher and student. Therefore, the District of Columbia Public Schools' structure, governance and policies must enhance and support the quality of that relationship. All elementary school-age children should have access to an excellent general education school within a reasonable and safe walking distance of their home. Parents and caregivers are responsible for sending their children to school ready to learn, but the District of Columbia Public Schools is responsible for educating all children regardless of family support or involvement. We will not abandon children who come to school unprepared to learn and must search for ways to teach them.

Core Beliefs	Commitments
3. We believe that the District of Columbia Public School System can be a high-performing organization.	The District of Columbia Public Schools' core organizing principle is improving student achievement. Decision-making and policy-setting must be defined by the impact on student achievement. Improving the efficiency, responsiveness, and effectiveness of the central office and other administrative support functions must be a continuous goal to ensure that an increasing level of resources are focused on teaching and learning. All adults (parents, employees, vendors, volunteers) who interact with the District of Columbia Public Schools should have high expectations for all students. All contracts should be performance based and aligned with student achievement objectives.
4. We believe that community collaboration is fundamental to achieving and sustaining excellence.	Improving the educational outcomes for all students will require support from all of the segments of our community, including parents, caregivers, businesses, elected and appointed officials, and civic and faith-based organizations, along with the District of Columbia Public Schools' leaders, staff and students. Principals must dynamically engage parents and the community in the lives of our students and schools. Schools must be responsive and accountable to their communities, providing parents and members of the community (and where appropriate, students) with formal, structured input into decision-making.
5. We believe that all children should be educated in a safe, healthy and educationally appropriate environment.	The design, condition and use of public school buildings affect the quality of our educational programs and services and our ability to attract and retain families and staff in our schools. School buildings must be designed, improved and maintained so they support our commitments to student achievement as well as the physical, emotional and social well-being of children and staff and collaboration with our communities. School buildings must be used efficiently so they support our commitment to be a high-performance organization.

Toward a World-Class Public School System in a World-Class City

In planning for the future of the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), it is important to consider what we have to start with — both our assets and our liabilities. The shortcomings of our public school system have been widely publicized, as have countless theories for how we got here. We need to give our accomplishments equal attention, especially as they are the result of good work by our leaders, teachers, students and partners. Less well known is the context in which we make our decisions and do our daily work of educating the district's children. We do this in an ever-changing landscape that incorporates some of the best aspects of American life and some of the hardest, including high rates of poverty and adult illiteracy in many areas of our city. Together, these factors present us with the issues that inform our planning process.

Here are 12 critical challenges and opportunities we face today and how DCPS is responding to them:

12 Challenges and Opportunities

- Be the system of choice
- Start learning earlier
- Strengthen our special ed program
- Focus on basic skills
- Close achievement gaps
- Create opportunities for advancement
- Keep students in school
- Build on strengths
- Improve accountability
- Create culture of partnerships
- Attract great staff
- Use facilities wisely

1. Make DCPS the "school system of choice" for District residents.

Residents of D.C. have many options for educating their children, and many are making choices other than DCPS. In SY2004–05 more than 15,000 District students attended public charter schools and many others attended private and parochial schools, paying full tuition. In addition, more than 1,000 students received scholarships to attend private schools under the federally funded D.C. school voucher program. Since 1998 when the first charter schools opened, the increase in students attending charter schools has mirrored a decline in DCPS student enrollment.

At the same time, the city is committed to attracting 55,000 new households into the District; many will have school-aged children. We owe it to all the District's residents to make DCPS the first choice for their children's education. To do this, of course, we have to demonstrate that we can compete successfully with all the other available choices — not only in the quality of our academics but also in the condition of our facilities and many other factors, such as safety, convenience and parent involvement.

We know that we can do this. High-performing schools — such as Langdon, Burrville, Oyster Bilingual, Shepherd and Janney elementary schools, Deal Junior High School, Hardy Middle School and Banneker High School — are in high demand. We are committed to achieving this level of excellence systemwide, so that every community will have its own DCPS schools of choice.

DCPS at a Glance

2005–06 Enrollment by School Levels and Programs

Total DCPS enrollment for SY2005–06 is 58,212 students, a decrease of 2,925 students from the year before.

	Enrollment
Elementary school	33,531
Middle school	4,064
Junior high	4,184
Senior high	12,479
Alternative schools*	232
Nongraded students**	2,201
Citywide special education schools	1,076
Nonpublic tuition***	2,350
General education students who are wards of D.C. in surrounding counties	296

*Such as the Taft Middle School and Douglas Senior High School Choice Academies and Oak Hill Academy
**Nongraded students (mainly special education students, who are counted in other categories and should not be included in this table's totals)
***DCPS special education students who attend non-DCPS private schools when DCPS programs cannot meet their needs.

Enrollment by Grade, 2005–06

Grade	Enrollment
Preschool	1,302
Prekindergarten	2,965
Kindergarten	4,465
Grade 1	4,247
Grade 2	4,189
Grade 3	3,975
Grade 4	4,047
Grade 5	3,932
Grade 6	3,964
Grade 7	3,536
Grade 8	3,714
Grade 9	4,247
Grade 10	3,518
Grade 11	2,946
Grade 12	2,318
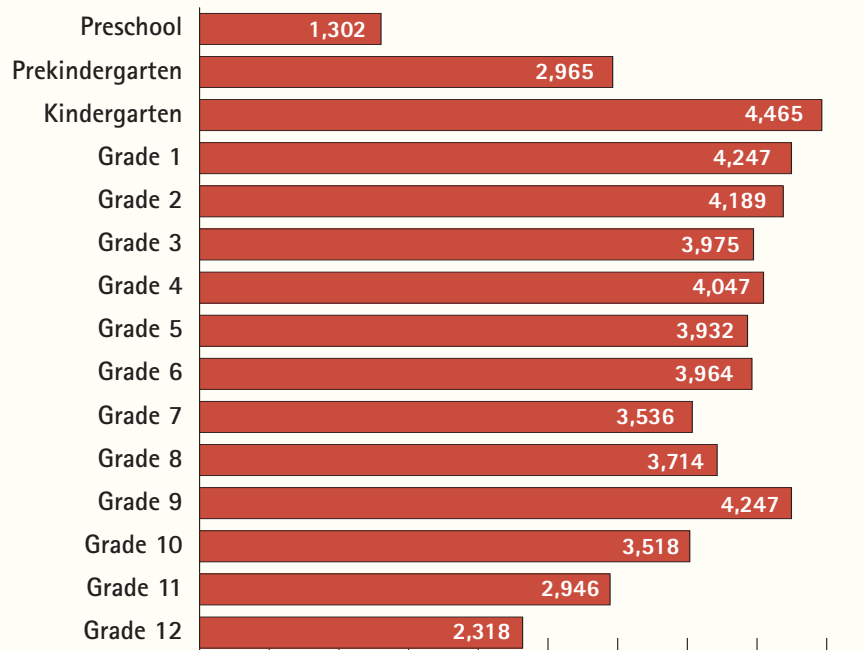
Snapshot of Our Student Population

Race/Ethnic Distribution:

1.64% Asian/Pacific Islanders
5.4% White
10.82% Hispanic
82.04% African American
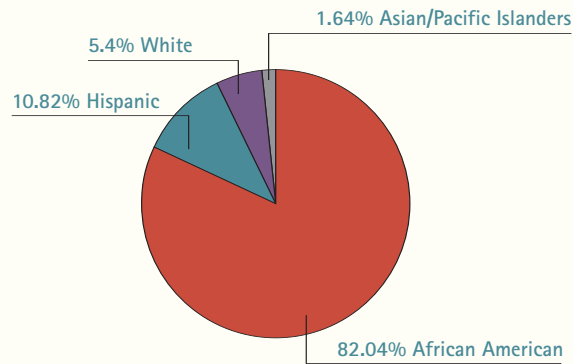
Most students come from low-income homes: For SY2005–06, 61.5 percent of DCPS students received free or reduced-price meals.

A growing immigrant community: The district has experienced a steady growth in its immigrant community, especially its Latino community. DCPS students and their families represent approximately 135 nationalities, with El Salvador, the Dominican Republic and Mexico having the greatest numbers of students among DCPS English language learners.

Linguistically diverse students: Nearly 12 percent of DCPS students are classified as linguistically and culturally diverse (LCD), and about 8 percent of students are either non-English proficient (NEP) or limited English proficient (LEP). DCPS students speak some 121 different languages at home. Of NEP and LEP students, 74.4 percent speak Spanish; among the other frequently spoken languages are Chinese, Vietnamese, Amharic and French.

Serving special education students: Students in special education programs comprise 17.6 percent of the total DCPS enrollment. Of these, 78 percent are in DC public schools and 22 percent are in nonpublic, residential and interagency programs. Of the students in special education, 46 percent have learning disabilities, 18 percent have emotional disabilities and 13 percent have mental retardation.

22% in non-DCPS programs

78% of special education students in DCPS schools
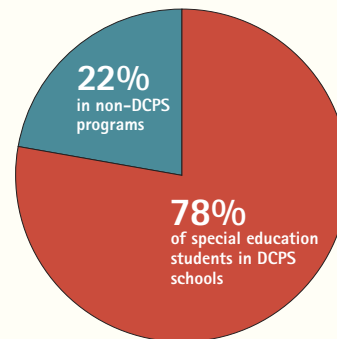
Declining Enrollment

DCPS enrollment has been dropping since the mid-1990s. Since the first charter school opened in1998, DCPS enrollment decline has generally paralleled the growth in charter school enrollment.

DCPS Enrollment Declines, Charter Enrollment Rises

Total public school enrollment
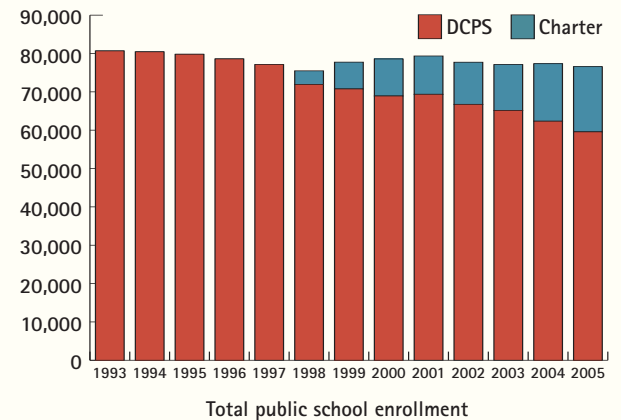
In SY2004–05, the largest enrollment declines occurred in grades 6 and 7; the single grade where enrollment rises is 9th grade.

Largest Enrollment Declines in Grades 6 and 7

Grade-to-grade losses

2. Bring children into the system earlier.

Our schools face many challenges in teaching young children the basic skills they need to succeed in school and in life. For example, more than 30 percent of the District's children are low income, and two-thirds are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Many students begin kindergarten

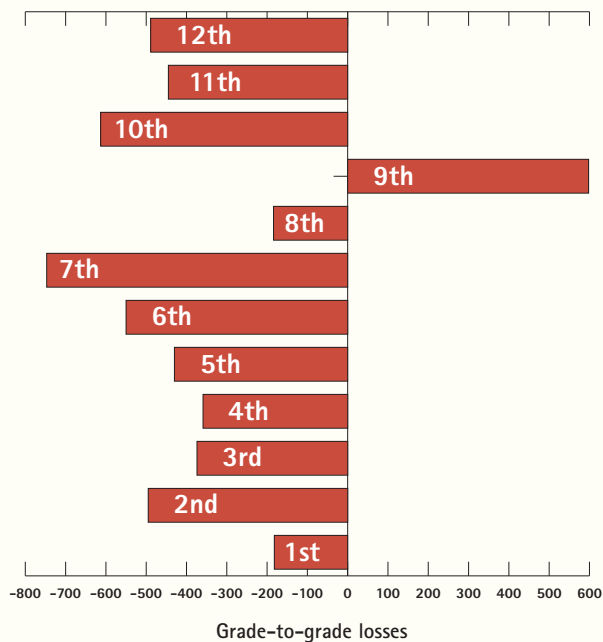with no exposure to books; more than one-third of adults in the city read only at or below the 3rd-grade level. These and other factors put many of our students at a disadvantage from their first day of school. They need something more.

Extensive research, such as the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program, confirms that well-designed and well-implemented early childhood education programs help prepare children to succeed in school. We need to build on our current initiatives to make quality, standards-based preschool and prekindergarten programs available for all students in every part of the city.

Working parents at all income levels and in all parts of the city also have expressed strong interest in having high-quality preschool and prekindergarten programs. In response to parent demand, during SY2005–06, DCPS is piloting a preschool program at 12 school sites for children whose household incomes fall just outside Head Start guidelines. We plan to expand the program to six additional sites in SY2006–07. In our progress toward becoming the District's school system of choice, we will continue to pursue programming options and partnerships to meet the growing demand for quality early childhood education.

3. Serve our special education students within our own system.

In SY2005–06, DCPS' special education enrollment was approximately 10,200 students — almost 18 percent of our

CURRENT EARLY CHILDHOOD ENROLLMENT

- **Preschool: 1,023**
- **Pre-K: 2,510**
- **K: 4,500**

total enrollment — and accounts for about 30 percent of costs — both much higher than national averages.

Of our special education students, 22 percent — more than 2,300 — were placed in nonpublic, residential and intera-gency programs because school leaders or a hearing officer determined that DCPS could not meet their needs in SY2005–06. Placements outside the DCPS system are costly, and they create extra burdens of time, transportation and distance on students and their families. In contrast, serving students in or near their neighborhood schools provides them with the continuity of a home learning community, saves hours per day of travel, exposes them to a broader range of instruction options and gives them the opportunity to meet our learning standards.

DCPS is working to improve the education and services for students with special needs as an integral part of its commitment to serving all students. We need to implement an inclusive schools approach that is based on high expectations for all students; extended learning supports for students, teachers and families; and increased capacity throughout the system.

4. Focus on basic skills.

Reading and mathematics are foundational skills — children who do not master them are likely to do poorly in other subjects as well and are at greater risk of dropping out of school.

It is true that DCPS elementary schools are making strong gains in reading and mathematics — in SY2004–05, two-thirds of our elementary schools achieved adequate yearly progress (AYP) on the standardized SAT-9 test in reading, up 9 percentage points from the year before; and three-fourths made AYP in mathematics, up 8 percentage points from the year before.

Still, there is room for improvement. For example, just 57 DCPS schools achieved Incentive School status by making

AYP: Strong Gains in Elementary School Reading and Mathematics

Percentage of Elementary Schools Achieving AYP, SY2003–04 and SY2004–05
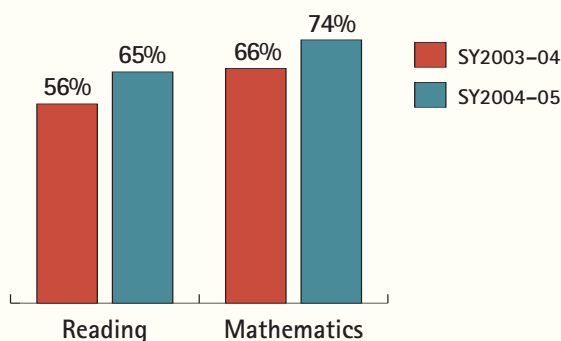
AYP in both subjects last year. And while elementary schools made gains, the middle, junior and high schools still are struggling to reach proficiency. For SY2004–05, 43 percent of secondary schools achieved proficiency in reading and 33 percent achieved proficiency in mathematics. One-third of secondary schools achieved proficiency in both subjects. Moreover, 13 elementary schools and one secondary school failed to make AYP because of low attendance.

Our school performance is reflected in student performance on the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress. In both reading and mathematics, the district had the highest percentages of fourth and 8th-grade students scoring "below basic" of the 10 major urban districts reporting: Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Cleveland,

AYP: Gains in Secondary School Reading and Mathematics

Percentage of Secondary Schools Achieving AYP, SY2003–04 and SY2004–05
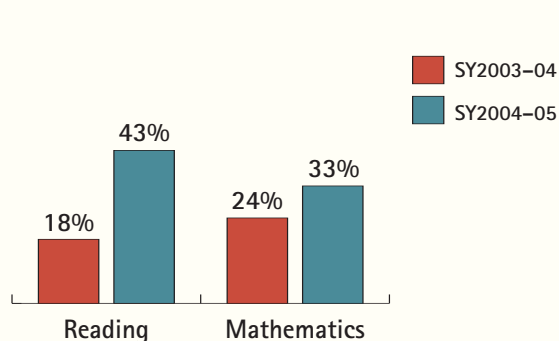
Houston, Los Angeles, New York and San Diego. Substantially higher percentages of our students scored "below basic" than the national average.

We have made important progress by adopting our new, rigorous learning standards and curriculum in reading and mathematics. Moving forward, we will continue to embed these essential subjects into all areas of study as part of our strong, cohesive core curriculum.

5. Close achievement gaps.

While all groups of students continue to make some gains in reading and mathematics, achievement gaps remain wide in both subjects and at all grade levels — particularly between African American students (who comprise more than 80 percent of the DCPS student population), and their white and Asian/Pacific Islander peers. Closing these gaps and raising achievement in these basic skills requires an intensive and coordinated effort that begins early and cuts across grade levels and subject areas — within and outside of school time.

As the charts on elementary and secondary reading indicate (next page), even though the gaps remain great, we made some progress in closing them this past year. The gaps in elementary and secondary mathematics also narrowed somewhat last year.

Students who are retained in a grade face another kind of gap — an age gap. In SY2005–06, 15,190 students — about one-

Elementary Schools — Reading Results Disaggregated by Racial and Ethnic Subgroups for SY2004 and SY2005 (Percentage Proficient)

Secondary Schools — Reading Results Disaggregated by Racial and Ethnic Subgroups for SY2004 and SY2005 (Percentage Proficient)

To supplement existing programs across the city, our FY2006 operations budget funded an expanded Advanced Placement program to offer a minimum of two AP courses in every high school, as well as additional preparation for students and teachers. To support our International Baccalaureate Degree program at Banneker Academic High School, we will expand programs to four elementary schools, a middle school and a neighborhood high school, pending authorization by the IB Organization.

We also are expanding our extended learning and out-of-school-time programs to provide academic and other enrichment for students who seek it, as well as supports for students who need it.

7. Keep students in school.

Of every 100 students who enter a DCPS high school, more than one-third will drop out before they earn their degree. Many other students will drop out during or after middle school, never entering high school at all. As dropouts, they face a lifetime on the margins of the global economy and our highly competitive local job market.

Keeping students in school requires multiple approaches, including course work and degree-completion options that meet their individual needs. Schools also must provide an array of learning supports, such as mentoring or SummerBridge programs, as well as wraparound services, such as health care, to help students come to class ready to learn.

fourth of the students in the system — were older than their classmates by at least one year, and 3,619 students were over age by at least two years. In grades 9–12, more than one-third of DCPS students — 36 percent — were over age for their grade levels. More than 500 students were 19 years old or older. These students face a greatly higher risk of dropping out of school — in a 2003 study reported in *Research Briefs,* published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, researchers found that 71 percent of retained students eventually drop out of school.

DCPS is developing a system of timely intervention, acceleration and supports for students who need additional help.
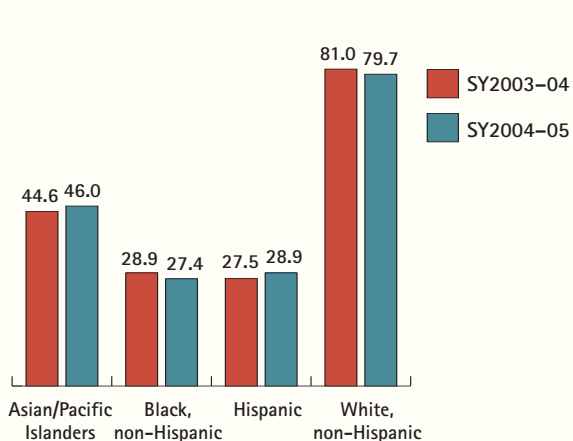
Benchmark assessments given throughout the school year are a keystone of that system, helping teachers more quickly identify students who are falling behind so they can provide the help sooner.

6. Expand opportunities for students to excel.

In this city of high achievers, becoming the school system of choice also means keeping our best and brightest students challenged and rewarded. DCPS is committed to providing opportunities and supports for students to learn at their full potential at every grade level and across the continuum of student interests and achievement.

DCPS is developing these approaches through initiatives such as our new Office of Community Partnerships, our Extended Learning and Differentiated Learning programs, and through expanded Career and Technical options in middle and high schools. The next step is to forge these and other options into a seamless system that will support students from preschool through graduation.

8. Replicate innovative and successful programs.

Within DCPS are some of our area's most admired schools, programs and educators. In 2005, for example, Benjamin Banneker Academic High School was named by *Newsweek* magazine as one of the top 50 in the nation, and Jason Kamras, a mathematics teacher at John Philip Sousa Middle School, was honored as National Teacher of the Year. DCPS graduating seniors earned more than $18 million in college scholarships.

Citywide, 22 schools have been identified as "high performing" — schools that have achieved AYP and scored above the 70th percentile. DCPS rewards these schools in part by providing them with grants to be used to create demonstration

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DCPS boasts a top-50 high school, National Teacher of the Year, more than $18 million in college scholarships and 22 "high-performing" schools.

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models of successful programs that can be used to help raise achievement in lower-performing schools.

This approach can serve as a model for DCPS as well. As we fix what's broken, we also need to identify the things we do right and use these as the foundation for sustained, and sustainable, systemwide change.

9. Get focused and define clear roles and accountability for student success.

In its January 2004 report, *Restoring Excellence to the District of Columbia Public Schools,* the Council of the Great City Schools pointed to the school system's lack of focus:

The district has lost its instructional focus; its efforts have become fractured and incoherent; its instructional moorings have loosened; and its unity of purpose has splintered. To make matters worse, the district has piled one program on top of another for so many years that one cannot tell what the system is trying to do academically or why. ... The D.C. School district has abdicated its leadership responsibility for student achievement to the schools and has had trouble hitting its instructional mark over the years because so many people were aiming in different directions.

In developing a coherent and consistent core curriculum aligned with our new learning standards, DCPS is taking the first giant step toward achieving academic focus; this Master

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A strong core curriculum, aligned to our new learning standards, provides the kind of focus DCPS needs.

Education Plan is another critical step forward. In addition, we have made it a priority to meet Goal 2 of the 2005 Strategic Plan, *Declaration of Education,* to "ensure management and operations support high-quality teaching and learning in every classroom in every school." In essence, this means getting the details right so that everyone in the system can do their jobs: Principals can lead, teachers can teach, and all students can learn.

Our FY2006 performance-based budget inaugurated a new era of transparency in our decision-making and systems, and we have followed that up with ongoing management improvements that have encompassed virtually every area of the organization. (See "A Year of Progress," page 26.)

10. Create a culture of partnerships and collaboration.

Washington, D.C., is an extraordinary place to live — and to go to school. Within our borders or close by, we have one of the world's richest concentration of learning resources, including almost 70 museums, about 40 theatres, theater companies and related groups, almost a dozen major colleges and universities, embassies of most nations, and hundreds

dreds of performing arts organizations, which include the-aters, bands, choruses and orchestras.

Yet, we also have elementary and middle schools within blocks of the Library of Congress and Smithsonian Institution museums where students have no exposure to art and music in their classrooms. And while our metropolitan area is home to some of the world's leading medical researchers and institutions, many of our students go without the basic health care and other supports they need if they are to learn at their full potential.

It is good education policy to seek out and apply the assets of the community to secure the future of its young people. We are developing the approaches and systems that assure potential partners that it makes good sense as well.

11. Make DCPS the workplace of choice for the best teachers, principals and other staff.

Assets that make the District an excellent learning environment also attract leading educators to the area, along with experts in countless fields. Overall, almost 20 percent of the District's residents have graduate or advanced degrees.

More than 85% of DCPS teachers have more than two years of experience. For the past three years, the average annual turnover rate has been 8 percent for teachers and 17 percent for principals.

While DCPS is fortunate to have some of our nation's best teachers, too many others in our system do not meet the requirements set by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, our own certification criteria or the high expectations we hold for our students.

Research clearly shows that quality of teaching connects directly to quality of learning — so to meet our new high learning standards we must do a better job of putting a highly qualified teacher in every classroom in every DCPS school. We have begun a systemwide approach to improvement that includes professional development that is organized around our new learning standards, new teacher mentoring, and other supports for teachers and principals.

We also are addressing operational issues, such as contracting and payroll problems that in the past have kept us from recruiting, hiring and retaining the best teachers for our students. And we are improving our certification processes, including alternate certification, to bring the skills of our area's rich supply of scientists, world language experts and other subject-area specialists into our classrooms.

12. Make better use of our school facilities.

While some of our school buildings are filled to capacity, others are only partially utilized, due to declining enrollment and population shifts within the city. Overall, with an average enrollment of just 459 students per school, DCPS operates some of the smallest schools in the nation.

Our new Office of Community Partnerships will help us leverage the community's many assets.

For SY2005–06, DCPS operates 167 schools and learning centers throughout the city. These include special education centers, alternative education facilities, an arts center, a career senior high school, partnership education centers with the Department of Human Services, Schools to Aid Youth (STAY) programs, and schools within schools.

Elementary Schools	101
Middle Schools	11
Junior High Schools	9
Comprehensive Senior High Schools	10
Citywide Magnet Senior High Schools	10
Educational Centers	6
Special Schools	20

Many schools have relatively few students. Underenrolled schools cost more per pupil to operate because each school must be staffed with a principal, support staff, teachers, custodians and others based on the Weighted Student Formula (WSF). This draws resources from the larger schools and their students. High schools also need a minimum number of students to support a comprehensive curriculum. DCPS has

made changes to the WSF to allow for a more equitable way to fund small schools. During our planning process, we also are identifying criteria for viable school size at each level, and creating new models and initiatives for bringing wrap-around services and other community resources into under-used school buildings to support our students.

Elementary, Middle and Junior High School Size by 2005 Enrollment
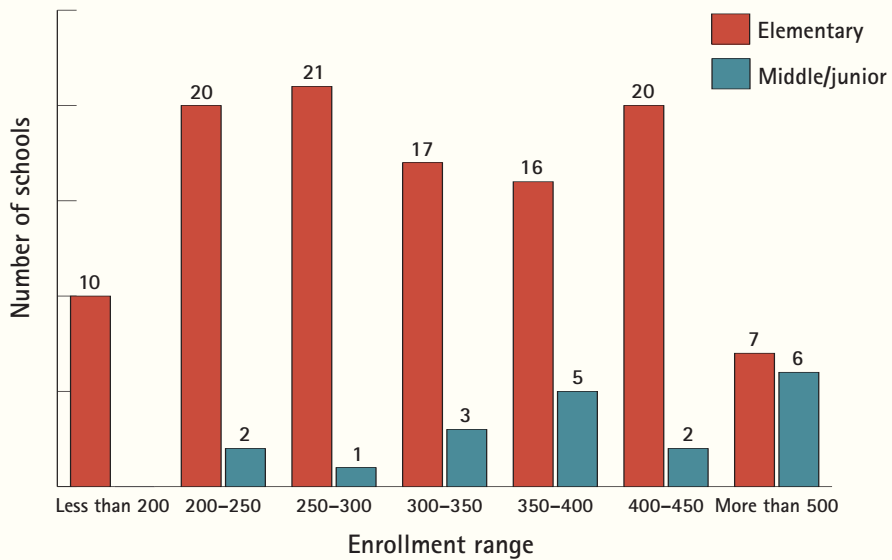
High School Size by 2005 Enrollment
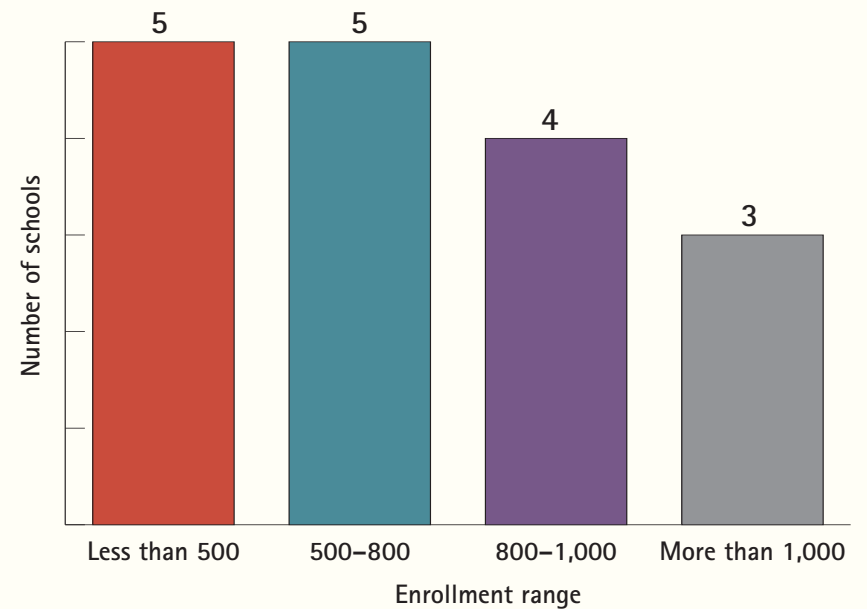
Best Sizes for Schools

Elementary Schools

To offer a quality program and operate as a stand-alone school (without creating inequities in the system), an elementary school needs at least 318 students enrolled. That assumes two classrooms per grade level and a full complement of art, music, physical education and library services with a student: teacher ratio of 20:1 for grades pre-K–2 and 25:1 for grades 3–6.

The 2000 Facilities Master Plan and 2003 Update recommended elementary school size of between 300 and 500 students.

In 2005, 40 elementary schools enrolled fewer than 300 students, 20 enrolled between 200 and 250 students, and 10 enrolled fewer than 200 students. One way schools have continued to operate with lower enrollments has been to eliminate educational offerings; for example, elementary schools have cut staff for art, music, physical education and libraries.

In all, DCPS is currently supporting 600 underutilized elementary-level classrooms and has about 13,913 available elementary school seats.

Middle/Junior High Schools

With a traditional model of five to six classes per grade, a middle school can support an adequate core educational program with a minimum of about 360 students. The 2000 Facilities Master Plan and 2003 Update recommended middle/junior high school size of between 400 and 600 students. The larger middle schools would have the capacity to provide additional course variety beyond a high-quality core program.

In 2005, DCPS had 13 middle or junior high schools with less than 500 students, including three with fewer than 350, one with less than 300 and two with fewer than 250. In all, DCPS is supporting 250 underutilized middle/junior high school classrooms and has more than 5,000 available seats.

High Schools

High schools of 600 students or more have the capacity to support a comprehensive high school curriculum. The 2000 Facilities Master Plan and 2003 Update recommended that comprehensive high schools have been 600 and 1,200 students.

DCPS operates 20 senior high schools — 10 comprehensive high schools and 10 citywide magnet high schools.

Four high schools enroll between 1,000 and 1,500 students, four enroll between 800 and 1,000, five enroll between 500 and 800, and five enroll less than 500. In all, there are more than 2,200 available high school seats in DCPS.

A Year of Progress

In spring 2005, Superintendent Janey presented a strategic plan for the DCPS, *Declaration of Education: Keeping Our Promise to the District's Children.* In setting high-quality teaching and learning as Goal 1, the plan also took the essential steps to secure implementation by setting improved management and operations as Goal 2 and communications and transparency as Goal 3. Importantly, each goal made it clear that the intention is for high-quality teaching and learning in *every classroom* in *every school* across the district.

Already, significant progress has been made toward these goals:

Goal 1: Provide high–quality teaching and learning in every classroom in every school.

We adapted and adopted nationally acclaimed standards in the foundational subjects of reading/English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. To implement the standards, we developed new curricula, bought new textbooks and provided professional development for teachers. Now, we are focused on adopting and implementing high-quality standards in science and social studies.

We have begun the process of re-establishing art and music programs in all schools.

Our new universal free-breakfast program will help more students start their school day better nourished and ready to

learn, which research shows contributes to increased student achievement.

Goal 2: Ensure management and operations support high-quality teaching and learning in every classroom in every school.

Our aggressive procurement reform initiative is the center of our business systems improvement efforts. For DCPS to meet its primary goal of improving student achievement, all employees must be able to focus on their areas of responsibility, instead of spending time managing support needs such as procurement. Our detailed plan outlines three strategies for reducing time spent on the procurement process: adding capacity and improving training of our support personnel; reducing the burden of purchasing at the school level, and introducing automation to the system.

In SY2004–05, we replaced our slow and unwieldy manual processing system for school supplies with the American Express Buy Down program, an automated system that lets schools buy supplies within a fixed dollar amount. The new program delivers supplies to schools within three days — compared to 60–90 days under the old system — and is the precursor of a planned, completely automated procurement system for DCPS.

In partnership with city agencies, we currently are testing and training for implementation of the Procurement Automated Support System (PASS), which will greatly improve our speed of purchasing, transparency of requisitions and purchase orders through the system, access to competitively priced goods through negotiation and cataloging, and user-friendly automated interface on all Web-based applications.

Our efforts so far have significantly cut costs while raising the level of service to schools. Fully implementing PASS will increase our operational efficiencies even further, while giving us greater ability to manage and report on our financial condition.

PASS also will let us quickly automate our human resources and payroll systems — the first time that all DCPS business systems will be fully integrated and sharing real-time information.

We eliminated a multiyear backlog of debts to teachers and other employees. In all, we manually reviewed nearly 13,000 personnel records and processed more than 10,000 retroactive payments.

DCPS' Office of the Chief Financial Officer and our Human Resources Department worked with the Office of Pay and Retirement as well as insurance vendors to identify employees who are no longer employed by DCPS but still had insurance premiums paid by us. These employees were taken off the benefit rolls, saving $1.4 million in overpayments.

Goal 3: Create a culture of transparency, open communication and collaboration to support high-quality teaching and learning in every classroom in every school.

Parent Guides to the new standards let parents know what their children should know and be able to do at each grade level in reading/ELA and mathematics. The guides are available in Amharic, Chinese, French, Spanish and Vietnamese as well as English. Community meetings throughout the city this past fall gave families opportunities to learn more about the new standards and other improvements in DCPS.

Neighborhood meetings in five sites across the city, and a phone survey of about 15,000 parents gave families and other residents a voice in the development of the Master Education Plan.

DCPS also is making substantive changes to its budgeting process that will make allocating its resources more transparent, effective and responsive. These improvements include:

- Changing the current year-by-year budget to a multiyear process. This will allow us to plan for long-term programs.
- A fairer and more effective WSF that will distribute more resources to schools with more students and that will allow schools to make staffing decisions earlier in the year.
- Greater transparency and accountability through performance-based budgeting.

- Budgets aligned with the Master Education Plan and the forthcoming Facilities Master Plan.

Much work remains. This Master Education Plan provides a roadmap for the educational approaches, structures and organization that will help DCPS toward its goals of high-quality teaching and learning in every classroom in every school. Later in spring 2006, we will present a Facilities Master Plan that will detail the facilities needed to provide high-quality teaching and learning cost effectively across the district. Similarly, the Proposed FY2007 Operating Budget and the Proposed FY2007 Capital Budget will detail how DCPS intends to allocate its resources to carry out this Master Education Plan and the Facilities Master Plan. And additional, more detailed, Education Implementation Plans will continue to be developed and implemented.

Good Things Are Happening in DC Public Schools

While DCPS faces a multitude of challenges, many of our students, teachers and schools in all parts of the city continue to excel. Here are a few of the things they accomplished during SY2004–05:

- Burrville, Mann and West Elementary Schools were among 233 schools nationally chosen as Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education under the NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program. The program honors schools that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic grains in student achievement.

- Graduating seniors in the class of 2005 received a total of $18,577,028 in college scholarships.

- All 340 students who graduated from School Without Walls High School in June 2005 went on to college.

- John Mahoney, a teacher at Banneker Academic High School, was inducted into the National Teacher Hall of Fame.

- Jason Kamras, teacher at John Philip Sousa Middle School, was named National Teacher of the Year at a White House ceremony.

- Hardy Middle School mathematics teacher Sarah Bax received a $25,000 Milken Educator Foundation Award for SY2005. She joins previous DCPS Milken Award recipients Patricia Wilkins, a kindergarten teacher at John Tyler Elementary School (2004), Kim Burke-Ables, a biology/life sciences/chemistry teacher at Benjamin Banneker Academic High School (2003), Laura Hills, a 2nd-grade teacher at Francis Scott Key Elementary School (2003), and Jonathan Jou, a department chair and teacher of ESL at Jefferson Junior High School (2003).

- Doris Jean Hurd Savoy, a teacher at Coolidge High School, won the Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher award presented by the *The Washington Post* Educational Foundation.

- Fourteen DCPS teachers earned certification as National Board Teachers from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The superintendent's goal is for 100 DCPS teachers annually to earn National Board Certification over the next five years.

- Five students at J.O. Wilson Elementary School placed in the top 10 in the 2005 National French Contest sponsored by the American Association of Teachers of French.

- Miner Elementary School represented DCPS in the national Odyssey of the Mind academic competition, the first time DCPS has participated.

- The Cardozo High School baseball team advanced to the High School Baseball World Series.

- The Ballou High School band and the Eastern High School choir participated in the 2005 presidential inaugural parade.

- More than 1,000 volunteers — parents, students and business leaders — participated in the first DC Ready Schools Beautification Project to spruce up the grounds of schools across the city. Their labor and other in-kind donations supplemented the $6 million in funds that the City Council allocated to improve schools.

Key Academic Goals

In the *Declaration of Education,* we set specific goals for improved academic achievement. The actions described in this Master Education Plan will help us meet these goals.

DCPS Assessment Goals — Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Above*

	SY2003–04 Actual	SY2004–05 Actual	SY2005–06 Goal	SY2006–07 Goal	SY2007–08 Goal	SY2013–14 Goal
Elementary — ELA	46	50	54	59	65	100
Elementary — Mathematics	56	58	59	64	69	100
Secondary — ELA	31	30	43	50	57	100
Secondary — Mathematics	37	33	47	53	60	100

NAEP — Percentage of Students Scoring Basic or Above

	2003 DCPS Baseline		SY2004–05 Actual		SY2006–07 Goal		SY2008–09 Goal	
Grade 4	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics
% at or above proficient	10	7	11	9	16	14	22	21
% at or above basic	31	36	33	44	42	51	53	67
Grade 8								
% at or above proficient	10	6	12	7	16	13	22	20
% at or above basic	47	29	45	31	54	41	62	54

*The targets set in May 2005 in the *Declaration of Education* will be used only as a guide as we re-establish more rigorous goals for our children, and the targets will change to reflect the new baseline data from the new state assessment, District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS). Targets will be adjusted to reflect the results of the first administration of the DC CAS and setting of the new performance levels. The current cut score for "proficient" is the 40th percentile. These cut scores and targets may change.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses and Exams

	SY2003–04 Actual	SY2004–05 Actual	SY2005–06 Goal	SY2006–07 Goal	SY2007–08 Goal	SY2013–14 Goal
Number of students enrolled in AP courses	2,284	2,356**	2,428	2,500	2,572	3,000
Average AP exam scores	2.25	2.24	2.75	3.0	3.25	4.0
Number of students taking AP exams by racial and ethnic group						
Asian	49	61	57	61	65	98
African American	411	387	493	534	575	822
Hispanic	114	138	136	147	158	228
White	158	167	190	206	222	316
Other	86	69	106	116	126	172
TOTAL	818	822	982	1,064	1,146	1,636

Graduation, Attendance, Truancy and Dropouts — Percentage of Students

	SY2003–04 Actual	SY2004–05 Actual	SY2005–06 Goal	SY2006–07 Goal	SY2007–08 Goal	SY2013–14 Goal
Graduation rate	70	73**	76	79	82	100
Attendance rate	91.9	91.7	93.3	94	94.7	99
Truancy rate	23.5	21.4	18.5	16	13.5	5
Dropout rate	6.9	6.7**	6.5	6.3	6.1	5

**SY2004–05 goal, not actual

I.

Ensure Challenging Curriculum and Instruction for All Students

Quality … coherence … consistency … community. Research and experience show that these four factors are essential for sustained school improvement. *Quality* ensures that students receive high-quality instruction in every classroom in every school. It is the paramount value; without it, coherence, consistency and continuity will not produce the results we need. *Coherence* ensures that the various elements of the system are connected by a common focus. *Consistency* ensures that students, parents, staff and the community know what to expect; that policies and practices are applied equitably across all schools; and that exceptions to these policies are based on rational and predictable mechanisms. *Community* ensures that the school system stays committed to its goals and resists the temptation to start anew when there is a change in leadership. The high expectations and standards for educating our students have to be shared by parents, families and communities, and ultimately owned by them — schools, particularly in urban districts, cannot make it alone.

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) must focus attention and resources on a systemic approach to student achievement to rapidly improve student, staff and school performance. Among the top priorities are recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers and principals, developing and implementing learning standards in all subject areas, adopting related and rigorous curricula, and making the best use of technology and time to support teaching and learning. The needs of special education, English language learners (ELL), alternative education, and gifted and talented students will be deliberately and explicitly part of the common core, not add-ons or afterthoughts.

School Board Core Beliefs

We believe that all children can learn at high levels and that the achievement gap can be eliminated.

Key Strategies

- Clear and challenging standards in all subjects — with aligned curriculum and programs
- Consistent and aligned instruction
- Higher graduation requirements
- Stronger middle school programs
- Aligned assessments (quarterly and end of year)

1. Complete the Development and Implementation of Clear and Challenging Learning Standards for All Core Academic Subjects — with Aligned Curriculum Resources and Education Programs

Rationale

Clear academic standards that challenge learners are the foundation for all instruction. They define for students, teachers, principals, families and the community exactly what students should be learning in each of the core subjects, grade by grade, from prekindergarten–grade 12. Having explicit learning expectations that are used consistently in every school will help ensure that all students receive the quality instruction they need for success after high school.

Teachers also need resources aligned to the standards to help guide their daily classroom instruction. Good practice is clear, as articulated in the guidelines for the Broad Prize for Urban Education (the prestigious national recognition for high-performing urban school systems):

The selection of instructional programs, resources or materials should be based on proven success and demonstrated need. Any materials used in the classroom should pass this selection criterion. The district should make certain that this practice is clearly understood and communicated to all educators in the district. When low student achievement levels are identified in a particular school, the district should provide far greater direction in the use of the instructional programs and resources and greater support to staff in developing the capacity to successfully use these materials. (Guidelines appear on the National Center for Educational Accountability's Just for the Kids' Web site www.just4kids.org.)

Key Actions

Develop clear and rigorous standards in science, social studies, art, music, health and physical education, and world languages. These new standards will build on the challenging expectations for reading/English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, which took effect in fall 2005. The new standards will cover prekindergarten–grade 12. By building on knowledge from one grade level to the next, they provide coherence and consistency throughout the subject area. The new standards will be developed through a collaborative process that involves teachers, central office administrators, community representatives and nationally recognized educational leaders.

Timeline:

- The Board of Education approves science and social studies standards in spring 2006 for initial classroom use in fall 2006.
- The Board approves art, music, health and physical education, and world languages standards in spring 2007 for initial classroom use in fall 2007.

Develop a wide range of curriculum resources to help teachers transform the learning standards into daily instruction in their classrooms (see sidebar, next page). Teams of teachers will work with consultants to develop similar resources to those developed for reading/ELA and mathematics for the remaining content areas. Additional resources for teachers will include performance tasks and assessments, more references, and specialized inserts to help teachers incorporate research-based strategies into their daily lessons in each core subject.

These core education materials include textbooks and supplemental instructional materials that are aligned to the new learning standards. Such programs already have been selected for reading/ELA and mathematics.

Timeline:

- Additional ELA and mathematics resources, such as lesson plans, will be developed in SY2006–07 and SY2007–08, based on teacher feedback and evaluation.
- Science and social studies curriculum resources will be developed in spring 2006 for initial classroom use in fall 2006. These resources will include common syllabi, exemplar lesson plans, unit roadmaps and reference materials. Additional resources will be developed in SY2007–08 and SY2008–09, based on teacher feedback and evaluation.

- Art, music, health and physical education, and world languages curriculum resources will be developed in spring 2007 for initial classroom use in fall 2007. Additional resources will be developed in SY2007–08 and SY2008–09, based on teacher feedback and evaluation.
- Adopt new science and social studies textbooks for use in fall 2007.

Provide professional development to all teachers and principals to ensure effective implementation of the learning standards. Our train-the-trainer model focuses on three components — knowing, teaching and assessing the standards — and will ensure every teacher is trained to create and manage a standards-based classroom.

Chapter II has an extended discussion about professional development for teachers and principals.

Expand the use of education technology. DCPS is committed to ensuring that every classroom has the technology — computers, printers, aligned content resources and broadcast media — to supplement printed instructional materials and teach students effectively. Our schools should be teaching students how to program, process knowledge, and maximize the features and connectivity of their tools. DCPS has started a program to ensure that every classroom's technology

resources are updated every five years. The first upgrade has been completed in 84 elementary schools. Two major initiatives to expand the use of education technology will roll out over the next three years.

Timeline:

- Begin a five-year refresh program in secondary schools, starting with the schools with the highest poverty and continuing until SY2009–10, when all secondary schools will have received the first round of technology and professional development for teachers.
- Complete the technology refresh program in 18 elementary schools not eligible for Title I funds by the end of SY2008–09. This will include at least three computers in every classroom for grades 4–6, professional development and the purchase of software licenses for classroom use.

CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- Lesson plans and unit plans
- Samples of exemplary student work
- Weekly and monthly pacing charts (scope and sequence), which describe how the standards can be combined into units of study
- Sample classroom activities
- Curriculum roadmaps
- Sample test items
- Formative benchmark assessments

2. Deliver High-Quality Instruction to Every Student

Rationale

To benefit from the kind of challenging content described in Strategy 1, school districts around the country also are requiring minimum instructional requirements to ensure all students have an equal chance to succeed. This effort is a key part of our commitment to create more coherence, consistency and equity among our instructional offerings. These minimums represent an instructional floor; the goal is to ensure that all students in every school have access to a challenging curriculum that ultimately prepares them for college or careers.

Establishing minimum requirements for systemwide instruction such as these has become more commonplace, especially in urban school districts. For example, many of the winners and finalists of the Broad Prize for Urban Education require a daily minimum of 120 minutes spent in reading/ELA and a daily minimum of 60 minutes in mathematics instruction, aligned to their standards and curriculum (as reported on the National Center for Educational Accountability's best practices Web site, www.nc4ea.org).

Although school districts give primary attention to the core subjects of reading/ELA, mathematics, science and social studies, they continue to strengthen their arts, music, health and physical education programs to reinforce the value of teaching other subjects and the importance of these subjects in their own right.

Key Actions

Provide a minimum amount of daily and weekly instruction in the core subjects to all elementary and middle school students. These requirements will supplement the content described in Strategy 1 and ensure that all students have equal access to challenging lessons based on the learning standards. Specifically, all elementary and middle school students will have:

- **A total of 120 minutes of high-quality reading and writing instruction every day.** These minimum requirements do not suggest that all ELA instruction should be delivered in a single two-hour block. For many students, such an approach is not productive. It is recommended that teachers schedule two 60-minute blocks daily, which will facilitate students' reading and writing about other subjects such as social studies and science.
- **Seventy minutes of mathematics instruction every day.**
- **Forty-five minutes of science instruction daily —** through direct instruction of science skills and concepts, math and/or through reading.
- **Forty-five minutes of social studies instruction at least three times a week —** through direct instruction of skills and concepts and/or through reading.
- **Forty-five minutes of instruction in art, music and physical education at least once each week.**

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

All schools should use a common curriculum: 79% support

Offer art, music and PE at least weekly to every student: 100% support

Teaching across the subject areas will be critical, so students are acquiring reading and writing skills while learning about science and social studies. Dr. Douglass Reeves, noted educator and researcher, found that schools with student populations that were 90 percent minority, 90 percent of low socioeconomic status and 90 percent high achievers had placed a high priority on teaching reading. DCPS will study these schools and attempt to mirror their successful efforts.

Timeline:

- Implement new minimum instructional requirements in every elementary and middle school. (SY2006–07)
- Survey staff and parents to determine the early impact of these new minimum instructional requirements, and modify the program accordingly. (SY2007–08)

Overhaul the high school course catalog to ensure that all courses teach challenging content aligned to the learning standards and new graduation requirements. The revised high school course catalog will include structured course descriptions, showing how each course is

aligned to the learning standards and outlining the prerequisites that students need to succeed in each course. This effort will involve weeding out non-rigorous courses such as "algebra courses" that do not focus on fundamental algebraic concepts. The goal is for each high school student to take and succeed in a challenging set of courses that are focused on achieving proficiency on the new DCPS learning standards. The course descriptions also will provide guidance to teachers in planning a syllabus that meets course requirements and expectations.

Timeline:

- Introduce new high school course catalog and eliminate courses that do not advance this goal. (SY2006–07)

- Publish the new catalog on the Web. (SY2006–07)

Expand library centers. Strong library media centers with up-to-date materials and qualified staff help students reinforce their learning and explore their interests. To that end, DCPS (with help from a federal grant) has begun allocating funds to develop such centers in each school.

Timeline:

- Fifteen new elementary schools will benefit each year, starting in SY2006–07.

3. Raise High School Graduation Requirements

Rationale

In the past several years, the national focus on education reform has been on strengthening the high schools to make them more rigorous and relevant. The improvement efforts are in response to two primary concerns: Too many students are dropping out of high school without graduating, and too many graduates, even with diplomas, are not necessarily prepared to succeed in college or in high-wage, high-skill jobs.

According to the Institute for Higher Education Policy, an average of 46 percent of incoming college freshmen nation-

wide need remediation courses. Only 24 percent of high school graduates say they were significantly challenged in high school, college instructors estimate that four in 10 high school graduates are not prepared for college courses, and employers estimate that 45 percent of high school graduates do not have the skills to advance beyond entry-level jobs, according to Achieve, a coalition of governors and CEOs of major corporations.

DCPS is taking several steps to strengthen its high schools. Some are described below, and others are detailed in Strategies 10 and 15.

Key Actions

Raise the number of graduation units required to earn a standard diploma from 23.5 to 26.0 (see the table on page 36). To ensure all students have enough time to master the academic core, we will raise the requirements in math, science and world history. In addition, we will require additional credits in career and college preparation, and a

Community Survey Results

Raise graduation requirements: 82% support

senior composition/project. Students who earn 27.5 credits or more will be awarded a diploma with honors. Special education students whose disability alone precludes completing any of the course requirements will be awarded a Certificate of Competencies. These new requirements will initially impact the class of 2010 (those who enter grade 9 in fall 2006).

Timeline:

- Create new graduation requirements, construct policy, seek Board approval and notify counselors, administrators, parents and students about new graduation requirements and pathways. (SY2005–06)

- Class of 2010 students begin lower division (grades 9–10) courses for three-, four- or five-year pathway. (SY2006–07)

- Staff begin framing higher-division courses for grades 11–12. (SY2006–07)

- Students begin higher division. (SY2008–09)

- First class graduates with new requirements. (SY2009–10)

NOTE: Strategy 19 discusses the lower and upper divisions in more detail.

AN EXTRA YEAR OF:

- Mathematics
- Science
- College and career prep
- New senior project

PROPOSED GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

For the class of 2010 (students who will enter grade 9 in SY2006–07)

Course Title	Current Carnegie Unit	Future Standard Diploma
English	4.0	*4.0
Mathematics	3.0	*4.0
Science	3.0	*4.0
Social Studies	3.5	*4.0
Art	0.5	0.5
College and Career Preparation	1.0	2.0
Senior Composition/Project	0.0	0.5
Electives	4.5	2.5
Music	0.5	0.5
Physical Education/Health	1.5	2.0
World Language	2.0	**2.0
Total Credits	**23.5**	**26.0**

* Represents core areas in which end-of-course examinations are required.
** World Language may be waived for students with disabilities if so indicated by their Individual Education Plan.

Note: Students will also be required to complete 100 hours of community service to receive a standard diploma. Students must complete coursework to satisfy technology requirement or score proficient on assessment to opt out. A Certificate of Competencies will be awarded to special education students whose disability significantly affects their ability to complete any of the course requirements.

Note: Ultimately, 9th graders will take World History I, 10th graders will take World History II, 11th graders will take U.S. History, and 12th graders will take American Government and DC History, but the classes of 2010 and 2011 will have modified course offerings while DCPS fully implements its new social studies standards.

4. Create Stronger Middle School Programs That Attract Students and Help Them Succeed Academically and Socially

Rationale

Youth in middle grades are experiencing the growing pains of adolescence while tackling increasingly difficult curricula. Students begin to drop out, some students who performed well in elementary school have difficulty making the transition and some students fall further behind. Violence and bullying; alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; and lack of parental involvement become more prevalent during these years.

Because middle schoolers are clearly facing different challenges than students in either elementary or high school, they need a school experience that recognizes their unique stage in the developmental process. The most recent research (Kannaple & Clements, 2005; Washington State Department of Education, 2005; Reeves, 2000; University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, 2004) indicates that high-performing middle schools have the following key features:

- Culture of high expectations and academic rigor;
- Aligned curriculum, instruction and assessments;
- Maximized and focused instructional time;
- Purposeful assessment;
- Collaboration and hard work;
- Effective leadership focused on instructional issues;
- Parent involvement in the teaching and learning process;
- Differentiated and flexible instruction;
- Small and personalized learning environment;

- Multiple support services for students;
- Responsiveness to the unique challenges of early adolescence;
- Organizational arrangements that support and sustain learning and excellence;
- Technology program that provides students with real-world experience and application of learning;
- Shared decision-making and continuous self-improvement of teachers and principals;
- Transition programs;
- Teachers who have expertise teaching young adolescents and who have been specially prepared for assignment to the middle grades; and
- Connection between schools and communities, which together share responsibility for each middle grade student's success.

For various reasons (including weak programs, fears about safety and difficulty in navigating the system), middle grades traditionally have been the point when large numbers of families decide to leave DCPS. Indeed, while DCPS loses students in all grades except 9, the largest enrollment declines occur in grades 6 and 7. (See table, page 20.)

DCPS is not the only system struggling to strengthen its middle grades programming. The problem is pervasive. For example, a recent report from the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation observed:

There's been evidence for years that U.S. middle schools haven't been pulling their weight — and that something needs to change. Generalizing, one can say that American students do reasonably well in kindergarten–grade 4; that their performance falters in grades 5–8; and that (with splendid exceptions) it is dismal in high school. The middle grades are where the slope of the achievement curve alters for the worse, where trouble sets in and disappointment is born. One need only examine the 2004 long-term trend results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for the latest evidence that, despite some gains in math, the overall performance of 13 year olds in general remains woefully deficient. (Mayhem in the Middle, *2005.*)

Going forward, we will focus on creating two different models: a high-quality middle school approach (serving grades 6–8), and demonstration schools (serving prekindergarten–grade 8), organized around instructional themes such as the arts, International Baccalaureate, dual-language immersion or technology.

Key Actions

Develop an engaging and rigorous middle grades model that addresses students' academic and social needs. Because DCPS is preparing to rationalize its grade-level configurations to be more consistent — primarily grades 6–8 — there is a special urgency to create one or more middle grades models that will attract and retain more DCPS students. (Details on phase-in strategy to move grade 6 stu-

dents into middle school, Chapter VI.) The improved middle grades model will focus heavily on academic rigor, expanded use of technology, comprehensive guidance and counseling, and a character education program.

Prior to completing middle school, students entering grade 6 in fall 2008 must complete a minimum of 20 courses of study and meet grade-level standards; 15 of the courses must be reading/English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The number of additional courses taken will be based on students' individual needs. Students failing a required course will be able to recover by successfully passing a similar summer school course. Middle school programming will include the following courses:

- 12 courses in reading/English language arts, science, social studies and mathematics (Algebra I will be required);
- Three courses in developmental reading;
- Three courses in the arts (art, instrumental or vocal music, dance, theatre, etc.);

Community Survey Results

Make rigorous academic curriculum a priority for middle grades: 88% support

Middle grades should focus on unique needs of adolescents: 95% support

- Three courses in health/physical education;
- One course in character education;
- One course in technology applications; and
- Two courses in world language.

Strategies for success will include:

- Enrichment programs for gifted and talented students;
- Learning contracts for students and parents;
- Introduction to world languages and cultures;
- SummerBridge program for incoming 6th graders;
- Co-curricular enrichment activities, such as Odyssey of the Mind, chess clubs, Beta clubs, National Junior Honor Society and other content-related clubs (mathematics, art, computer and drama);
- More technology in the curriculum (whiteboards, laptops, video screening, etc.);
- Multiple extracurricular and athletic activities such as tennis, soccer, track, basketball, football, golf and volleyball; and
- School uniform policy, if parents are interested.

We will engage national organizations focused on middle schools, such as the Southern Regional Education Board's

Making Middle Grades Work and the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, as partners.

Timeline:

- Appoint a broad-based stakeholder task force (teachers, principals, parents and others) to assess model middle school programs — in D.C. and elsewhere — and create a plan to strengthen the middle school program. (SY2006–07)
- Conduct market research to better understand why parents are withdrawing their children from middle school and how DCPS can retain them. (SY2006–07)
- Provide intense professional development for administrators and teachers on middle grades education. This includes peer-to-peer discussions to improve instruction. (SY2006–07)
- Conduct quality reviews of middle school libraries, and use findings to begin a program of upgrading print and media materials. (SY2006–07)
- Begin implementation of the DCPS middle grades model program in four current middle schools in SY2007–08, with full implementation in SY2008–09.

Develop prekindergarten–grade 8 demonstration schools. These schools will have one or more instructional threads or themes, such as art, International Baccalaureate, dual-immersion, technology or possibly single-gender schools.

These prekindergarten–grade 8 models would supplement the grades 6–8 structure and allow DCPS to develop multiple approaches for engaging young adolescents. Recent research from the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation points to some recent urban successes with the prekindergarten–grade 8 model (*Mayhem in the Middle,* 2005).

Timeline:

■ Design an effective prekindergarten–grade 8 demonstration school model, based on research. (SY2006–07)

■ Identify low-performing schools and/or invite proposals from schools or clusters of schools wanting to develop new prekindergarten–grade 8 demonstration models, focused on specific themes. (SY2007–08)

■ Begin implementing new prekindergarten–grade 8 demonstration models, focused on specific themes. (SY2007–08)

5. Develop Aligned Assessments To Monitor Student Progress and Target Instructional Interventions

Rationale

It is essential that summative (end-of-year or end-of-course) tests be closely aligned to the district's learning standards; otherwise, we cannot be sure if students are mastering the content we expect them to know at each grade level. The Stanford 9 standardized assessment, which DCPS has used for the past several years, did not provide a complete measure of DCPS students' learning because it was not aligned to DCPS' academic standards. The new DC Comprehensive Assessment System is aligned.

Virtually all of the higher-performing urban districts also have made the use of formative and benchmark assessments a core component of their strategy for continuous and sustained improvement. These are districtwide assessments, given a few times a year, to help teachers in all schools monitor student progress; they go beyond the traditional classroom tests and quizzes given by individual teachers. In its 2003 report on urban districts, the Council of the Great City Schools says, "The nation's faster improving urban school systems assess their students several times and use the results to decide where interventions and additional professional development are needed." (*Foundations for Success,* 2003)

To make effective use of testing information, districts also must have a robust system for collecting, processing and distributing the test data to teachers and administrators in a timely way, along with systematic and sustained professional development to help teachers and principals know how to interpret the information and use it to adjust instruction in their classrooms. (Details, Strategy 30.)

Key Actions

Develop and administer strong end-of-year tests in reading/ELA, mathematics and science. The DC Comprehensive Assessment System exams are directly aligned to the new DCPS learning standards in these subjects. The new reading/ELA and math tests will be administered initially in spring 2006 in grades 3–8 and 10, as required by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The new science test will be administered for the first time in spring 2008; it must be given at least once in elementary (grades 3–5), middle (grades 6–9) and high school (grades 10–12). These new tests will provide a much more accurate measure of whether DCPS students are learning what the new standards say is important for students to know and be able to do.

Develop and administer end-of-course tests for Algebra I, Geometry, English 9 and 10, Biology and Physics (or Chemistry) for grades 8–12. Again, these tests will be aligned to our new learning standards.

Develop and administer a new DC CAS Composition Test to measure students' writing skills. This test will be administered for the first time in May 2006 in grades 4, 7 and 9.

Develop and administer new benchmark/formative assessments for grades 2–8 in reading and mathematics at the end of each of the four advisories. These kinds of quarterly tests will provide teachers, administrators and students with much more timely information on performance, allowing for more targeted and timely instructional assistance. Teachers will know which students need more help on specific topics and which students can accelerate their learning. A top priority will be for expert curriculum workgroups of teachers, coaches and administrators to explore how to integrate the benchmark assessments with the tests that are currently available from the textbook publishers, such as the skills and integrated theme tests from

Houghton Mifflin and the Secure Level Assessments that accompany the Everyday Math program.

Expand the use of the early childhood assessment. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is currently administered in all DCPS Reading First schools in kindergarten–grade 3 and is considered the national standard for early childhood assessment. In SY2006–07, DCPS will use the DIBELS to assess all students in grades K–3 in the fall, winter and spring. The DIBELS also will be expanded to grade 5 for each "struggling reader" (more than six months below grade-level proficiency). This data will allow teachers to better monitor students' progress toward the districtwide goal of having all students reading on grade level by grade 3 and provide useful information for developing intervention plans for students who are reading below grade level.

Expand the use of computer-adaptive assessments for students in alternative and special education programs. These systems, currently being piloted in several DCPS elementary schools and one alternative school, permit "on-time" diagnostic and monitoring assessment tools. Such programs provide instructional-level data for students as they enter alternative programs and as they progress over time (e.g., quarterly).

Timeline:
- Starting in SY2006–07, administer all of these tests districtwide.

DCPS Tests

- End-of-year tests in ELA, mathematics and science
- End-of-course tests in grades 8–12
- New writing test
- Quarterly benchmark assessments
- DIBELS early childhood
- Computer adapted

Community Voices

"Each student should know at the end of each year how close he or she is to competing in the graduation requirements before the senior year. Parents need to be aware so that they can monitor their child's progress."

II.

Expect Teachers and Principals Will Deliver High-Quality Instruction to Every Student

Professional development matters. A recent Ford Foundation-funded report by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence stated, "Ongoing professional development for staff that was connected to student achievement data" was one of five factors found in high-performing, high-poverty schools serving as a critical link among curriculum, standards and assessment as well as helping to establish positive staff morale (*Inside the Black Box of High-Performing High-Poverty Schools,* Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, 2005).

The Council of the Great City Schools' 2004 report on DCPS made professional development the focus of one of its key recommendations. The report urged the school system to "provide focused and sustained districtwide professional development on the implementation of the new curriculum." All of this year's finalists for the Broad Prize for Urban Education have strong professional development programs: Norfolk, Boston, New York City, San Francisco and Aldine, Texas.

Not only is professional development important for teachers, it is just as important for principals. Principals are partners in shaping and participating in teachers' learning. Professional development must support continuous learning opportunities for professionals in the schools. (*Revisioning Professional Development,* National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching, 2000)

School Board Core Beliefs

A performance-driven highly qualified teacher must be in every classroom, and a highly qualified principal who is a performance-driven instructional leader must lead every school.

Key Strategies

- Aligned and coordinated professional development
- Stronger professional development for teachers and principals
- Improved certification and mentoring programs

DCPS, like other urban districts, allocates professional development funds in many different ways; a significant portion of the funds has gone directly to schools, while various portions have been retained for centralized training (*Inside the Black Box: School District Spending on Professional Education,* The Finance Project, 2005). Districts that are making marked progress in improving student achievement have taken greater control of professional development funds and aligned them with strategies focused on improving teaching in critical subjects, often with an emphasis on lower-performing schools. Schools regain some measure of autonomy over these funds as they become high-performing schools.

Since the adoption of academic standards in reading/English language arts and mathematics, DCPS has begun to make significant investments in professional development, to help teachers teach the standards. The strategies in this section focus on better aligning, coordinating and strengthening professional development for teachers and principals and improving certification and mentoring programs.

6. Align and Coordinate All Professional Development Efforts

Rationale

According to the Council of the Great City Schools and other national experts, one of the characteristics of school districts that are accelerating student achievement is the presence of a high-quality and cohesive professional development program, focused on the district's standards and curriculum, delivered uniformly across the districts, and modified regularly based on teacher and administrator feedback.

Professional development in DCPS is currently managed by two offices: the Office of Academic Services, which provides training related to the learning standards, curriculum and content; and the Office of Accountability, which provides training to teachers and principals related to assessments, school improvements based upon the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, and other areas outside the direct scope of the standards.

Going forward, professional development must be better aligned to serve as an active and effective link among curriculum, standards, and assessment for teachers and administrators alike. The top priority will be to help teachers and principals understand the new standards, implement curricula, administer frequent assessments and employ proven instructional strategies needed to help students succeed. These were among the central recommendations from the Council of the Great City Schools' 2004 report prepared for DCPS.

Key Actions

Align Title I, Title II and local budget funds to pay for districtwide professional development training. This action will help to ensure that DCPS is spending its professional development dollars on the most important training priorities. DCPS has commissioned a study to assess the effectiveness of our professional development spending and will use the findings of this study to create an alignment strategy.

Timeline:

- The study will be completed by summer 2006.
- Aligned professional development strategies will be implemented in SY2006–07.

Improve management, coordination and communication of professional development. Because two offices play a lead role in managing professional development, a high level of coordination and collaboration is central to success. The Office of Academic Services and the Office of Accountability will work to improve coordination of professional development; it is essential that principals and teachers are on the same page.

Establish a districtwide panel on professional development. A panel of effective principals, mentors, classroom teachers and nationally regarded educators will be appointed to help oversee programs, research best practices, develop standards and recommend improvements. The group will advise the Offices of Academic Services and Accountability. This group will be charged with developing an appropriate evaluation protocol to assess and ultimately strengthen the professional development program. Use the recommendations below as a starting point.

Regularly assess the usefulness, relevance and learning effects of each component of districtwide professional development. This will allow us to demonstrate the return on the system's investment in this area. For instance, the professional development panel will consider the following indicators:

- Track retention rates of principals and assistant principals;
- Monitor their participation in professional development and attempt to correlate their participation rates with improvements in student performance;
- Standardize the evaluation for professional development of teachers and administrators; identify which offerings to continue extend or minimize/eliminate;
- Regulate the number of new professional development models introduced to the system; and
- Eliminate ineffective models.

DCPS will continue to work with our partners at the Washington Teachers Union to implement and refine our professional development program to ensure that all teachers are accountable for their performance.

Align and establish quality assurance mechanisms for local school–funded professional development. Local schools retain some funds for professional development. It is important that these funds are expended in alignment with districtwide goals. DCPS will create an approved vendor list to ensure schools are selecting high-quality training that is aligned with current standards and approaches.

Establish a communications and coordination strategy for professional development. This includes developing a systemwide professional development plan to communicate and coordinate central office and local school professional development efforts, including a Web-based database of scheduled training opportunities, and placing copies of materials used in the programs on the Web site.

Timeline:

- Appoint a districtwide panel on professional development by summer 2006.

- Survey teachers on the quality and quantity of professional development opportunities in the fall 2006. Results will inform coordination and planning by the two offices and be shared with newly appointed panel.

- Begin systematic evaluation of districtwide and school-based programs in SY2006–07 and eliminate unsuccessful models.

- Start a Web page focused on professional development in fall 2006. A fully populated database will go live in spring 2007.

7. Strengthen Professional Development for Teachers

Quality teachers are the single-most important determinant of student achievement. Teacher education, ability and experience account for more variation in student achievement than all other factors. Studies have found that 40 percent to 90 percent of the variation in student test scores can be attributed to teacher quality. Knowing the subject matter, knowing how students learn and practicing effective teaching methods translates into greater student achievement. Therefore, it is vitally important that teachers be well prepared when they begin teaching and that they continue to improve their knowledge and skills throughout their careers.

**Teacher Professional Development:
A Primer for Parents and Community Members**
(Public Education Network and the Finance Project, 2004)

Rationale

Professional development for teachers, as the above quotation suggests, is critically important to improving student achievement. One of the most important roles for central office is providing an effective, relevant and supportive professional development program for teachers.

Professional development must cover several content areas. Teachers must receive comprehensive and continuous training that teaches concepts, strategies and skills for effective delivery of standards-based curricula, assessments and differentiated instruction. Teachers also need training opportunities in classroom management and parent and community relations.

As instructional leaders of their schools, principals must be aware of what teachers are learning in professional development to assist them and hold them accountable for implementation in the classroom.

NOTE

The professional development program described here is augmented by the Literacy and Math Coaches and Solutions Teams described as a part of the accountability section in Chapter VII.

Focusing on the Learning Standards

The Office of Academic Services and the Office of Accountability have developed a series of training activities including peer instruction, classroom visits,workshops, videotaping, demonstrations, practice, feedback and coaching spaced over the calendar year to ensure comprehensive professional development. Training on the implementation of standards, using a common lesson development model, has been a priority with the adoption of new standards. Training on the use of this model will be ongoing and required of every teacher. It will be provided at the local school by designated lead teachers.

During summer 2005 and the first week of school for SY2005–06, more than 4,000 teachers and support staff participated in the first component of the standards implementation model, based on the work of the nationally recognized Center for Performance Assessment. Each teacher spent approximately 15 hours this past summer learning the new standards in reading/English language arts and mathematics. In January 2006, an additional 15 hours of professional development was focused on teaching and assessing the standards. Going forward, there will be continuous and intensive focus on "job-embedded," in-school support for all teachers, re-emphasizing these components to help

ensure high-quality, standards-based instruction in every classroom in every school. This model for developing effective and engaging lessons will be used for teaching standards across the curriculum.

Core professional development offerings include:

- Two- to four-day standards workshops for all teachers

- Content institutes to ensure teachers understand the core concepts of their disciplines

- Curriculum and instructional strategies workshops on developing and implementing lesson plans

- Workshops for all secondary school teachers on teaching reading across the curriculum

- School-based lesson studies and study teams, focused on school-specific challenges

- Training in College Board's SpringBoard program for low-performing schools

- In addition, Literacy and Mathematics Coaches and school improvement specialists will provide on-site coaching and training

Key Actions

Continue the innovative, train–the–trainer initiative on teaching standards. Established to ensure every teacher is trained to create and manage a standards-based classroom, principals select at least two lead teachers from every school to serve as anchor teams. These teachers receive training in instructional practices, which they, in turn, provide to teachers in their buildings. These anchor teams work to standardize quality instructional practices in their schools. Training of the anchor teams, comprising more than 325 teachers, has ranged from 15 to 20 hours for each of the two-day sessions. Top priorities going forward are to assess the effectiveness of this approach; strengthen it where necessary; and apply it to training teachers in science, social studies and the other subject areas.

Timeline:

- Evaluate and revise, as necessary, the train-the-trainer model where lead teachers are trained on specific strategies or content to return to their schools and provide the same training for their peers for ELA and mathematics. (SY2006–07)

- Train anchor teams from each school to provide professional development on the new science and social studies standards. (summer 2006 and ongoing)

- Train anchor teams from each school to provide professional development on the new art, music, health/physi-

cal education and world language standards. (summer 2007 and ongoing)

- Provide training to use newly adopted curricular materials in music, health/physical education and world languages in the spring, summer and fall 2008, through grade-level and subject-specific workshops as appropriate.

- Incorporate the expertise of visual and performance arts teachers as members of anchor teams to develop integrated, standards-based instructional themes that use adopted texts as supports for instruction.

- Expand the number of certified trainers to address attrition and transfers by training 25 additional teachers each year for the next three years.

Create a professional development school in each ward of the city, which exhibits excellence in teaching. These schools will serve as demonstration schools to teachers, contain model classrooms and be able to demonstrate how actions described in Chapter I, such as using blocks of time to teach reading and math, are effectively implemented. Schools will be selected based on whether they have created internal learning clusters and developed and implemented exemplary teaching methods. As this effort matures, these schools also may become direct providers of fee-based professional development training.

Identify model classrooms for every grade level throughout the District. Formal identification and recogni-

tion of model, standards-based classrooms and schools will begin in May 2006 and continue through May 2009, with the goal of meeting the superintendent's priority of quality teaching in every classroom in every school.

Timeline:

- Select two demonstration professional development schools during the SY2006–07 school year and one to two additional sites annually in subsequent years until there are eight schools.

- Starting in May 2006 and continuing through May 2008, select four to five model classrooms to cover each grade level.

Implement plan to increase the number of Board Certified teachers in next five years. Currently, DCPS has 14 teachers with this certification. The presence of a high proportion of these excellent teachers also will raise the overall level of professionalism in the system and help attract more highly qualified teachers to DCPS.

As set forth in the *Declaration of Education,* DCPS intends to increase the number of teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards by 100 each year for the next five years. This means that at least that many teachers annually will participate in the rigorous, research-based, year-long process that includes four portfolio entries of teaching practices and six exercises on a teacher's content

Forthcoming Standards

- The Board approves science and social studies standards in spring 2006 for initial classroom use in fall 2006.

- The Board approves art, music, health/physical education and world languages standards in spring 2007 for initial classroom use in fall 2007.

- Science and social studies curriculum resources are developed in spring 2006, for initial classroom use in fall 2006.

- Additional resources developed in 2007 and 2008, based on teacher feedback and evaluation.

knowledge, requiring between 200 and 400 hours on certification-related projects.

Independent evaluations show that students of teachers with this certification learn more than students of teachers without this credential. To promote candidates, DCPS now covers the cost of two pre-candidacy options: an online, self-directed program and two evening writing classes offered through George Washington University. American, George Mason, George Washington and Howard universities have partnered with DCPS to provide support services for the National Board process from January 2006 through September 30, 2006.

Timeline:

- Recruit at least 150 teachers per year for participation in the National Board certification process over the next five years.

Train teachers to support differentiated instruction. Starting in SY2006–07, DCPS will establish performance-based training programs directed toward a wide range of students: those more than two years above or below grade-level proficiency in any core subject and those less than two years above or below grade-level proficiency in any core subject. Such training is the centerpiece of our strategy of differentiated instruction. (Details, Strategy 12)

The principal and two lead teachers at each school will receive intensive training. All teachers will have to complete online training modules. They then will have 24 months to demonstrate improved delivery of instruction, with student performance results documented on DCPS assessments.

Timeline:

- Provide training to principal and two lead teachers, starting in SY2006–07.

8. Strengthen Professional Development for Principals

Rationale

Principals also must play an increasingly important role as an instructional leader in today's performance-oriented environment. Indeed, the Institute for Educational Leadership suggests: "The core mission of the principalship must be redefined as leadership for student learning. Communities must fill the pipeline with effective school leaders … and guarantee quality and results." (*Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalship,* Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000)

In one survey of elementary principals from successful schools in Washington state, 93 percent said the biggest impediment to implementing higher standards was the lack of leadership/vision (*The Reality of Reform: Factors Limiting the Reform of Washington's Elementary Schools,* Seattle Pacific University,

School Research Center, 2000). Professional development for principals helps prepare principals for this work.

Key Actions

Deliver quality professional development to principals and differentiate based on need. Managed by the Office of Accountability, with support from the Office of Academic Services for content, the Principals Leadership Institute (PLI) provides principals with the necessary tools to lead schools in meeting the standards, including time to focus on the academic health of their schools. The focus is on six critical areas where principals should excel: collaboration, effective instruction, leadership, operations and management, professional development and strategic planning. Principals also discuss standards, instructional strategies and student comprehension.

PLI training incorporates monthly meetings with the superintendent, course work, workshops and other learning strategies. In addition, organizations such as the Education Trust provide a series of forums for principals in support of standards, assessment, and rigorous curriculum and teaching across all grades. A New Principals Forum offers opportunities for newcomers to share their experiences, support each other and increase their familiarity with the system. Finally, PLI works in conjunction with the Offices of Workforce and Professional Development and Academic Services to plan and deliver monthly trainings for all administrators to ensure that they understand systemic instructional objectives, compliance issues and district/federal legislation.

Expand PLI efforts to develop a "pipeline" of future leaders. To this end, the PLI will train current assistant princi-

pals, resident principals and other potential school leaders, including lead teachers, counselors, team captains, curriculum coordinators, National Board Certified Teachers and others. Training will occur in reading across the curriculum, research-based best instructional practices, differentiated instruction, implementation of standards, classroom management, supervision and evaluation of instruction, team building, and leadership skill development. Specific criteria will be established to determine individual participation with the specific goal of building the internal capacity of the school system to train and maintain administrators from within. Ultimately, the PLI will foster a collaborative learning environment and strengthen the knowledge base and capacity of each DCPS school-based leader.

Timeline:

- In SY2006–07, develop core leadership training in identi-fied areas through partnerships with the Education Trust, the Center for Performance Assessment (standards implementation), New Leaders for New Schools and other institutions.

- Starting in SY2006–07, provide all principals (162) and assistant principals (132) with opportunities to engage in interactive learning experiences three to four times per month.

- Starting in SY2006–07, use standardized evaluation rubrics to identify offerings to continue or eliminate.

Create training for principals on how to identify, encourage and support teachers in applying to and receiving certification from the National Board Professional Teaching Standards. PLI, in conjunction with the Office of Workforce Professional Development, will coordinate principal training to support teachers pursuing that goal.

Timeline:

- Two meetings will be held during winter 2006 to provide an overview of principal support of the program, each meeting serving half the DCPS principals.

9. Strengthen Certification and Mentoring Programs To Ensure There Is High-Quality Teaching in Every Classroom in Every School

Rationale

Ensuring effective teaching requires more than quality professional development. DCPS also must strengthen the certification requirements for teachers in ways that respond to federal mandates and create paths to certification for skilled, veteran teachers.

One of the other critical challenges faced by DCPS and other school systems is the fact that many new teachers choose not to stay in the profession. Using a nationally recognized model, DCPS is ramping up efforts to stem the tide of departures.

Key Actions

Implement stronger criteria for recertifying teachers. As DCPS works with teachers to build their professional capacity, we will design and implement a comprehensive standards-based professional development program that provides ongoing high-quality training that can be applied toward renewing a teacher's license. To do so, DCPS will design a comprehensive outreach program to monitor and provide appropriate guidance and support for individual teachers.

Timeline:

- DCPS will apply for Teacher Quality Grant funds from the State Education Agency to support the establishment of the standards-based professional development program in SY2006.

- Administrators from central office will meet individually with teachers to outline specific steps to meet individual certification or recertification goals in SY2006–07.

Create additional partnerships to expand the availability of alternative certification programs. Under NCLB, teachers who do not hold full state certification and are participating in a recognized alternative-route program, such as Teach for America and The New Teacher Project, can be considered highly qualified for up to three years while completing the program. To expand support for alternative-route candidates, DCPS will explore expanding financial resources to support an increased number of teachers enrolled in recognized programs. In addition, the district will work to increase its capacity to identify high-quality candidates for these alternative programs. Among such candidates are career changers, recent college graduates from the arts and sciences, and current teachers who wish to pursue an additional license and teach in new subject areas (with priority given to high-need areas or hard-to-staff schools).

Timeline:

- Identify potential partners and execute Memoranda of Understanding by SY2006–07.

- Identify and secure resources for alternative certification programs in SY2006–07.

- Develop an expanded recruitment plan in SY2006–07.

Work with the State Education Agency (SEA) to pursue the feasibility of establishing an alternative certification instrument. Local school districts and the state are required to ensure that teachers are highly qualified in the subject areas they are teaching. The federal law allows some flexibility in assessing the subject-matter competency of existing teachers. As a means of demonstrating subject-area competency, the law permits states to establish a high objective uniform state standard of evaluation (HOUSSE) for experienced teachers. Currently the SEA has not adopted such a HOUSSE instrument. DCPS will continue to urge the state education agency to establish a HOUSSE.

Timeline:

- Assess the impact of developing a HOUSSE instrument on current DCPS staff in SY2005–06.

- Establish procedures for stakeholder participation in the validation of a HOUSSE (based on the findings of the impact assessment) in SY2006–07.

- Implement the HOUSSE in SY2006–07.

Strengthen orientation and mentoring for new teachers. Many teachers leave teaching after the first several years; this is costly to students and the system. DCPS is establishing an induction and mentoring program for all first-year teachers, which includes weekly and in-school, classroom-based professional development using a formative assessment system. The mentors of new teachers will receive ongoing training and support in skill areas focused on increasing student achievement. This intensive, mentor-based professional development support system for all new teachers is based on the research-based model developed by the New Teacher Center at the University of California at Santa Cruz. The center will train 45 DCPS mentors who will work full time with groups of approximately 12 new teachers, helping them with all aspects of their teaching practice. This effort is being supported by a three-year, $750,000 grant from Wachovia Bank.

Timeline:

- The mentoring program for new teachers started in SY2005–06 school year and will continue for the next two years with grant funding.

III.

Construct a Seamless, Inclusive System That Serves All Students from Prekindergarten through Grade 12

One of the major advantages of being a comprehensive system is being able to offer a seamless continuum of programs that can meet the needs of individual students and provide multiple pathways for them to progress. Some students will be ready for academic enrichment and advanced coursework, including the possibility of graduating early. Others, including students with special needs, will need more time and supports.

The common denominator is that all students, except the most severely disabled, will be expected to meet or exceed the same learning standards. To help students meet these standards, school systems must offer viable choices, create a culture of inclusion and develop the capacity to meet the learning needs of individual students.

DCPS made a major commitment in the *Declaration of Education* to address the learning needs of *all* students — English language learners (ELL), students in accelerated programs such as Advanced Placement (AP), "kids in the middle" and students with special needs — as part of its regular education program. This approach is generally referred to as "differentiated instruction." Providing such individualized learning opportunities will require major changes in curriculum, instructional strategies, delivery of instruction, and training for teachers and principals.

Chapter I discusses our standards, curriculum and instruction. Chapter II discusses teacher and principal preparation. Chapter IV takes a closer look at the multiple supports that DCPS is or will be providing students. *This chapter* focuses on the various options

School Board Core Beliefs

We believe that all children can learn at high levels and that the achievement gap can be eliminated.

We believe that individual schools have a profound impact on children's lives.

Key Strategies

- Options to accelerate (G/T, AP, IB, etc.)
- Targeted assistance for English language learners
- Special education inclusion and reform
- Improved alternative education
- Expanded early childhood
- State-of-the-art career and technical education

that are available for students and how DCPS intends to strengthen and broaden those options.

10. Offer Additional Options for Students Who Want To Accelerate Their Learning

Rationale

Gifted students or those requiring content-specific or overall acceleration already know a significant amount of the curriculum we are planning to teach, and they can learn new material in much less time than their peers. They often go through assigned work waiting for the rare time when there will be something new, challenging and exciting for them to do or learn (*Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom,* Winebrenner, 1992). They deserve more. Research shows that by compacting lessons, offering more choices, encouraging nontraditional creativity and collaborative learning, and teaching them how to self-assess and self-manage their own performance, we can help these students soar.

Key Actions

Offer enriched, gifted and talented and advanced programs at all levels. Student Support Teams (details, Chapter IV) will identify enriched and advanced programs for individuals and groups of students. An Advanced Academic/ Behavioral Intervention Plan will identify students who may thrive in city or district programs that offer advanced con-

tent and accelerated performance opportunities. Programs may be offered by groups or clusters of schools. At the *elementary* and *middle school* levels, we will identify school-wide or school-within-school specialty programs and opportunities. Each *high school* will expand its accelerated offerings through a broader choice of AP courses, the three-year graduation pathway, and dual enrollment with colleges and universities (details, below).

Timeline:

- Begin developing individual Advanced Academic/ Behavioral Intervention Plans for students in grades 3–12 in September 2006, after training Student Support Teams in each school.

- Develop assessment protocol and opportunities for gifted and talented students in grades 4–8. (SY2006–07)

- After community and staff stakeholders' reviews of schoolwide enrichment possibilities in spring 2006, two to six elementary schools will be ready to begin training and implementation of enrichment programs during SY2006–07.

Expand the AP program. This well-known and fast-growing program (35 courses in 20 program areas) offers a challenging curriculum that allows students to earn college credit while in high school. The *Declaration of Education* made AP course-taking rates and test scores two key indicators of DCPS academic performance. We have had some recent success: *The Washington Post* Challenge Index found that DCPS' participation rate in AP exams rose 6 percent in 2005. Currently, all DCPS high schools offer at least two AP courses, and in SY2006–07, all schools with fewer than five courses must be prepared to offer two additional AP courses. Enrolled AP students will be required to take the AP test at the end of the year; students scoring 3 or above on the test may earn college credit, although select colleges are now requiring scores of 4 or 5.

Timeline:

- Raise the minimum course offerings from two to four or more in each high school by August 2006.

- Audit each AP course in each high school by spring 2007 to ensure that teachers have completed required training,

and the course syllabi are aligned with the rigor and level of work that meets the College Board's requirements to certify each course.

- Provide observational feedback on instruction and the quality of student work by spring 2007 to ensure high-quality teaching and learning in every classroom.

- Require each student enrolled in an AP course to take the relevant AP exam in SY2006–07, with scholarships for fees provided as needed.

Expand the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma program. The IB Diploma program is a challenging two-year program of international education that leads to a qualification that is widely recognized by the world's leading universities. Among other features, students learn to communicate with and understand people from other countries and cultures. The pre-IB (grades 9–10) and IB (grades 11–12) Diploma programs have been growing at Banneker High School since 2000; the first class graduated in 2004. Each year, approximately 100 9th-grade students from across the city (43 different feeder schools) begin their pre-IB classes. Top priorities now are to build feeder capacity through new

AP Growth

DCPS had 822 AP test takers and 1,463 exams taken in 2005, up from 818 and 1,424 the previous year. Of those, 549 exams received a score of 3, 4 or 5, up from 525.

Middle Years and Primary Years programs, which include dual- or partial-immersion language opportunities.

Kelly Miller and Hardy middle schools and Deal Junior High School (a school within a school) are preparing to start 6th–7th grade programs in fall 2006. Pending authorization by the International Baccalaureate Organization, Woodson High School will open a program in SY2009–10 for students entering grade 9 from Kelly Miller. Shepherd, Thomson (Chinese) and Burrville elementary schools will begin their training for a fall 2006 start. Beers Elementary will add a program during SY2006–07 that will create a feeder pattern to Kelly Miller and Woodson.

Timeline:

- Kelly Miller, Deal, Hardy, Burrville, Shepherd and Thomson will begin training for fall 2006 implementation. Beers will begin training for implementation later in SY2006–07.

- Complete partnership agreement with IB North America in spring 2006 for on-site training, registration scholarships, start-up materials and full-time coaching for SY2006–07 in selected schools.

- It is projected that Woodson High School will begin pre-IB training in SY2008–09 as it prepares to receive incoming 9th-grade students from Kelly Miller in SY2009–10.

Offer students the option of graduating in three, four or five years. As part of the broader effort to redesign DCPS

high schools (Strategies 3 and 15), we will be developing an approach that gives students the option to accelerate their learning if they are ready or take more time if that is what is needed for them to meet the standards. In a standards-based system, the standards are constant, while time is variable. Students who need more time should have it.

Timeline:

- Develop a more comprehensive plan that spells out the various graduation options. (Spring 2005)

- Begin communicating options to students and families at the middle school and high school levels. (Spring and summer 2006)

- Implement plan for students who enter high school in fall 2006 (the class of 2010).

Create a Fourth Year Abroad program for students who complete high school in three years. As DCPS offers expanded opportunities for students to concentrate on international studies and world languages (through language immersion and dual-language programs, internationally themed high school programs, and IB), an increasing number of our students will be in a position to benefit enormously from firsthand international experience. International exposure is of increasing importance in a global economy. Through living abroad, students will have the opportunity to gain intercultural skills, increased fluency in a second language and a better understanding of their place in the world.

Private funds will be sought to support student participation in a variety of work, academic study and service programs abroad. Selection for the Fourth Year Abroad program will be based on academic achievement, career goals and leadership qualities.

Timeline:

- Implement in SY2009–10, when next year's 9th-grade students are in their fourth year of high school. Use the intervening years to plan and publicize this option.

- Seek partners, such as embassies and international organizations, to develop this program. (SY2007–08)

Partner with one or more local colleges to expand dual enrollment programs through which students simultaneously earn high school and college credit. We will expand current efforts through (a) the High School/College Internship Program, which since 1975 has given hundreds of students the chance to maintain their high school status while enrolled part-time or full-time at a participating college or university, and (b) the George Washington University School Without Walls program, which offers 100 free college courses to qualified students.

DCPS also will use the Early College High Schools model, through which students earn a high school diploma and two years of college credit toward a bachelor's degree. The initiative targets students who are under-represented in higher education — students who have not had access to the academic preparation they need to meet college readiness standards, students for whom the cost of college is prohibitive, students of color and ELL students.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Expand dual enrollment programs: 91.3% support

Expand AP/IB programs: 88.6% support

Timeline:

- Use the Early College High School model to expand program to juniors. (SY2008–09)

- By SY2009–10, expand the program from the current 104 students to 500 students.

11. Ensure English Language Learners Acquire Appropriate Knowledge and Skills

Rationale

Bilingual education, from dual language to partial immersion to English for second language learners, describes the continuum of research-proven program options to help ELL students learn to listen, speak, read and write English. In DCPS, dual-language programs (Oyster, Cleveland, Barnard, Bruce-Monroe, H.D. Cooke and Marie Reed) help some students learn English, while native English speakers learn a second language. In addition, Brightwood and Bancroft currently offer Spanish language instruction for native speakers. As students work to gain proficiency in English, it is imperative that they continue to be instructed on grade level, using differentiated teaching and materials, so that they can pass standards-based tests and meet gateway promotion requirements in grades 3, 5, 8 and 10.

Key Actions

Use new ACCESS assessment for ELL students to ensure that each student is learning English, as required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. As part of our commitment to use formative assessments to help target instruction to each individual student (details, Strategy 5), we will regularly assess (at a minimum, quarterly) students' ELL work for all levels: newcomer (Level 1), progressing (Levels 2, 3 and 4) and attainment/exiting (Level 5). We also will monitor their progress in reading using the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills) in grades K–3, benchmark assessments on essential DCPS standards in grades 2–8, and mid-course and end-of-course assessments in core high school courses. Group and individual Academic/Behavioral Intervention Plans will be required for any student yet to reach grade level or English language proficiency benchmarks. Addenda to local school plans will be required for (a) any school not meeting Title III annual NCLB requirements for adequate yearly progress in reading and math for ELL students (38 in SY2005–06), and (b) for schools that are not making sufficient progress for increasing English language proficiency for students at all levels (newcomer, progressing and attainment/exiting).

Timeline:

- Begin annual use of ACCESS summative assessments for ELL students in February 2006, after training all bilingual services providers.

- Assess all grade 1 students to identify beginning reading proficiency levels and required interventions during winter 2006 and in grades K–3 beginning in SY2006–07.

- Develop quarterly, formative English language proficiency assessments, based on portfolios of student work, to monitor progress and guide required interventions for students yet to reach grade level or English language development benchmarks. (SY2006–07)

Expand Parents as Partners program districtwide for all ELL parents. Using a highly effective curriculum, we will teach up to 100 parents each semester how to conduct quality student- and parent-teacher conferences, understand the requirements for graduation and college success, and encourage their children to read every day.

Timeline:

- Continue to graduate a minimum of 75–100 parents each semester. (Ongoing)

12. Create a Culture of Inclusion That Welcomes Special Education Students into Their Neighborhood Schools

Rationale

Research shows that the majority of students with special needs are best served in general education classrooms in local schools, not in separate special classrooms or schools. Across the country, school districts are integrating their special needs students into regular schools. Part of this movement is driven by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal law that requires students to be educated in the least restrictive environment, and NCLB, which requires that virtually all students meet state standards in reading, mathematics and science by 2014.

The academic benefits are twofold: Regular schools benefit by having access to specialists working with challenging populations, while students moving from these smaller special education centers have access to more rigorous academic

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Most students with special needs are best served in local schools: 89% support

Equip local schools with support services that help students with special needs succeed academically: 100% support

Expect students with special needs to achieve proficiency: 94% support

Put more resources into early identification and intervention: 97% support

programs and resources. Moreover, districts can redirect money spent on administration and operations into instruction by integrating special and alternative education schools with regular schools.

Priorities

DCPS is now working on a number of initiatives to improve the education and services for students with special needs as an integral part of its inclusive schools strategy. Those with special needs include students with physical, mental, learning and emotional disabilities. Exceptions for an inclusive schools strategy are students with intensive needs who require a specialized environment as determined by a school-based multidisciplinary team.

For the immediate future, beginning June 2006, all multidisciplinary teams will forward proposed recommendations to the central Individual Education Plan (IEP) team. This team will review and approve for appropriate, least-restrictive environment; inclusion of DCPS grade-level standards; and alignment with *2006 DCPS Guidelines for Related Services.* This process will be used until school and divisional capacity are developed and sustained at the highest level. This will help to ensure that Academic/Behavioral Intervention Plans are having a positive effect and assessment requests are appropriately screened and/or approved following referrals.

Key districtwide priorities, as identified by the *Declaration of Education,* are to:

- Increase the capacity of teachers and staff to serve more special education students in their neighborhood schools.
- Increase by 20 percentage points annually the number of students who are assessed and receive appropriate special education services in a timely way (from 36 percent to 56 percent in SY2006–07, for example).
- Provide early, required interventions to all students yet to reach grade level/exit/gateway performance levels.
- Reduce by 25 percent annually (about 1,000) the number of complaints and requests for due process related to special education services and placements.
- Reduce by 5 percent annually the number of students in nonpublic placements (about 125 students per year).

Key Actions

Transition special education students from nonpublic placements and center schools into their neighborhood schools. The superintendent has challenged DCPS to transition a total of 200–400 students a year. Students will be taught in the least restrictive environment: cluster programs, schools within schools, partially self-contained classrooms or full-inclusion classrooms. We will provide intensive professional development and on-site support (details, Chapter II) to ensure administrators and staff can provide the level of differentiated instruction and intervention these students will need. Schools will receive monthly recognition for reaching 95 percent or 80 percent rates for: timeliness of

IEPs; completing assessments; implementing hearing officer decisions, agreements or resolutions; and reducing the number of complaints. Schools will have to prepare addenda to their local school improvement plans, describing how they will meet these goals. Schools that consistently demonstrate 95 percent completion will no longer require addenda to their plans.

Timeline:

- Identify students to transition and staff teams to receive students, and provide high-quality, differentiated programs and services in neighborhood schools, beginning in summer 2006.

- Provide intensive professional development during the summer, followed by ongoing, embedded coaching, feedback and intervention specialists' support throughout SY2006–07.

- Develop a monthly recognition system and annual recognition system in February 2006 for schools consistently meeting the 95 percent standards.

- Develop central IEP team procedures, guidelines and training for spring/summer 2006 implementation.

- As students move back into neighborhood schools, close standalone centers.

Create four small model centers (approximately 100 students each) to serve students with emotional and learning disabilities who are returning from nonpublic schools and continue to need restricted settings. To reduce our reliance on private programs, we will open model demonstration programs for students preparing to return to or coming from neighborhood settings who require intensive, therapeutic interventions and treatment outside of a school environment for a specified period of time. These programs will offer higher-quality service than existing centers do by integrating research-based best practices, model differentiated teaching and instruction, provide model classrooms, and serve as training sites for special and general educators. Prospect Learning Center is the first such demonstration model for students with learning disabilities who require a self-contained setting in grades 1–8.

Timeline:

- Open a high school model in fall 2007, most likely as a school within a school.

- Develop a comprehensive plan within the Facilities Master Plan in spring 2006 to establish four small, self-contained, elementary- and secondary-model school organizations and support services for students with emotional disabilities. These schools all would be open by SY2008–09.

Restructure and refocus the central special education organization. Our goal is to have an early prevention and intervention unit and then a special education unit that meets or exceeds compliance, customer expectations, and efficiency and effectiveness standards for finance and budgeting, legal, procurement, and human resource operations. Priorities for the next 6–18 months are:

- Restructure central office and staff assignments, and gradually move (as we are released from consent decrees) toward prevention and intervention through differentiated learning; our goal is to reduce the number of students for whom special education is the only option.

- Create a customer-friendly organization whose services to students, families and schools meet federal, state and local expectations.

- Manage the transitions for returning students to their neighborhood school and less restrictive environments in a way that meets or exceeds satisfaction expectations of students, families and receiving school staff.

- Rewrite, focus and monitor multidisciplinary team recommendations for all IEPs to ensure appropriate incorporation of (a) new grade-level learning standards, (b) use of 2006 guidelines for specifications for related services, and (c) the least restrictive environment for all students.

- Monitor monthly Student Support Team and Academic/Behavioral Intervention Plan results. Audit any school that consistently falls below the standard for compliance and/or is identified as persistently requiring corrective action by the central IEP team. Provide the intervention required to enable school teams to meet or exceed compliance goals and program expectations.

- Bring DCPS into compliance with all the court mandates governing timely assessments, referrals, IEPs and com-

plaint resolutions at both the school and district levels. Again, monthly data will be used to support and monitor school and district performance results by both internal and external (city and court) monitors.

- Reduce the number of unnecessary referrals while simultaneously ensuring group and individual interventions that quickly enable students to meet grade-level literacy and math standards.

- Improve Medicaid revenue by maximizing eligibility for reimbursement through improved record and data management, compliance with documentation requirements, and updated position descriptions.

- Work with the state education agency to develop policies to certify private schools and establish rates, ensuring that nonpublic programs meet our policy guidelines, and set procedures for early dispute resolution. Once these are established, remind our judges and hearing officers of the model placements developed within DCPS and provide them with a list of DC-certified nonpublic placements.

- Monitor the implementation and outcomes of early disposition and resolution meetings for increasing numbers of resolved disputes.

As we are successful, we will be able to gradually realign resources toward differentiated instruction and early intervention for all children and to open model inclusion and customized programs and services for students with special needs. Currently, 90 percent of the office's budget is spent on special education, which we intend to reduce by 5–10 percent per year for the next five years.

Timeline:

- Reorganize central office teams to work in divisions and be accountable to local schools, starting in SY2006–07.

- School principals will evaluate services for all special programs and related services, with help from the Office of Differentiated Learning. (SY2006–07)

- In SY2006–07, student, staff and parent satisfaction feedback will be collected and embedded in continuous improvement processes at school, divisional and central office levels.

- In SY2006–07, include an addendum in Local School Restructuring Team (LSRT) plans that monitors whether a school is meeting or exceeding targets set by Student Support Teams, the multidisciplinary team and *Blackman-Jones,* a major court case.

- Use the ENCORE database to improve billing, reimbursement, recordkeeping and monitoring of compliance or need for improvement on internal and court-monitored targets, beginning in spring 2006.

- Disseminate information to DCPS students about nonpublic certifications and rating requirements for all services as soon as the Council of the District of Columbia passes them in 2006.

13.
Offer Alternative Education Programs To Meet the Needs of Students with Multiple Academic and Behavioral Challenges

Rationale

DCPS is committed to providing a high-quality learning experience for all students, including those with multiple academic challenges. Alternative education programs provide a viable educational option for at-risk students when the programs are clearly linked to standards, are developmentally appropriate, and adhere to best practices in the field for fostering resilience and youth empowerment. Essential elements for effective alternative programs include the following:

- Low teacher-pupil ratio and program size;

- High-quality instructional staff and committed leadership;

- The availability of one-to-one interaction between staff and students;

- Flexible structuring that accommodates academic and social emotional needs;

- Curriculum that is relevant to student interests;

- Training, support and coaching for teachers working with students with typical and unique learning needs;

- Interagency links to ensure a full continuum of support within the alternative setting for students with special education needs;

- Mental health services and supports to address social, emotional and developmental needs; and

- Continuous evaluation of program goals and student outcomes.

Common characteristics found among youth in alternative schools include poor literacy and academic skills, inadequate social, emotional and behavioral skills; alienation from school; low self-esteem; limited language proficiency, impulsivity and poor judgment; limited or unavailable family support; antisocial peer influence and lack of positive adult role models ("Alternative Education Support for Youth At Risk," Guerin and Denti, 1999).

Key Actions

Evaluate our existing alternative education and extended-day programs, with an eye to establishing a continuum of alternative educational and comprehensive high school programs in an extended-day format. An extended-day program in the comprehensive high schools, comprising additional class periods between 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., would provide students with the academic support and courses they need, while allowing the Schools to Aid Youth (STAY) schools to properly carry out their primary mission of dropout recovery.

Current suspension and expulsion programs focus primarily on the needs of secondary students, which leaves a gap in service delivery for students in the elementary grades who may need alternative structures and supports to meet their academic and social-emotional needs. We will assess the existing CHOICE programs. If warranted by the assessments, we will expand the program to include two additional campuses (one elementary and one secondary), based on a review of statistics of feeder patterns over the past three years.

Timeline:

- Research and plan, including a review of best-practice models (staffing, support and instructional implications for alternative programs); an evaluation tool; and public awareness campaigns. (SY2006–07)

- Assess and evaluate programs for over-age and under-credited students such as the Luke C. Moore Academy. (SY2006–07)

- Implement the extended-day program in several comprehensive high schools. (SY2007–08)

- Expand extended-day program to additional high schools. (SY2008–09)

- Assess and evaluate CHOICE programs. (SY2006–07)

Provide standards–based educational services for the city's committed and detained youth. The city's Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) is currently examining the structure of the juvenile corrections system. DCPS will continue to work with DYRS to ensure that our incarcerated and detained youth receive appropriate educational services that are aligned to the new learning standards.

14.

Create Partnerships To Offer Stronger and Expanded Early Childhood Programs That Provide a Smooth Transition to Elementary School

Rationale

To eliminate the achievement gap that exists between economically and ethnically diverse groups in high school, we have to close another gap, the preparation gap. This gap can be measured in kindergarten by the social, motor and cognitive skills with which students arrive to begin their formal education. Nationally, children in the highest socioeconomic groups far outscore their peers in the lowest socioeconomic groups. It is estimated that, by the time these students reach high school, the gap will have widened to what is equivalent to four grade levels.

Science has helped us understand that stimulating the brain of a young child — before he or she enters kindergarten — significantly affects later success. The introduction to the *Prekindergarten Policy Framework* of the Prekindergarten Policy Center states:

Decades of early intervention research have shown that early exposure to high-quality care and education can make a significant, positive impact on a child's later school and life success, especially for children with certain socioeconomic and

Current Enrollment

- **Preschool (3 year olds): 1,023**
- **Prekindergarten (4 year olds): 2,510**
- **Kindergarten (5 year olds): 4,500**

health risks. Experts cite an increasing belief in society that young children benefit from — and should receive — early education experiences in a caring environment. (Bowman, 2001)

Given the high rate of poverty in the District of Columbia, DCPS is committed to providing and promoting high-quality preschool programs to all 3 and 4 year olds in the city. This goal not only levels the playing field for starting kindergarten, but it sets the stage for a more competitive and successful life beyond formal school years. Strong early childhood experiences have immediate payoffs through 3rd grade, last into junior or senior high school, and extend into adulthood, including reduced crime rates. A number of studies, including the longitudinal research of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program and the Carolina Abecedarian Program, clearly document the benefits of high-quality early childhood programs in preparing students for academic rigor in school and overall success in life.

Head Start is intended to provide economically disadvantaged 3 and 4 year olds with a wide range of health, nutritional and social services and a rich variety of learning experiences that prepare them for success in school. While all students do not require or qualify for the comprehensive services available through Head Start, all children need the stimulating experiences and exposures that help them develop cognitively. In1998, 65 percent of students from the most affluent families in our nation attended preschool, while only 47 percent of

students from disadvantaged families attended preschool, including Head Start programs (*Open the Preschool Door, Close the Preparation Gap,* Progressive Policy Institute, 2004). With such a discrepancy in early educational opportunities, the achievement gap begins.

Currently, DCPS serves 1,790 students through its Head Start programs. We must expand learning opportunities to families who do not qualify for Head Start and who may not be able to afford other high-quality preschool programs by offering universal prekindergarten to all 3 and 4 year olds. This will complement our current Head Start programs and allow DC residents to leverage federal funds.

By ensuring that more children in the city have access to high-quality early education programs that prepare them academically, socially and emotionally for kindergarten and beyond, DCPS will both provide services directly and house programs operated by other community-based organizations and private providers. Preschool and prekindergarten programs provide an excellent opportunity to strengthen the kinds of partnerships with city agencies, community-based organizations and other providers envisioned by the *Declaration of Education* and discussed more fully in Chapter V of this plan.

The superintendent has formed an Early Childhood Council comprised of experts in the area of early childhood development (including Dr. Craig Ramey, the principal investigator

for the Abecedarian study) to advise and inform him on research and practices in early childhood education.

One possible partnership model for DC is the Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Partnership. This collaboration of community organizations provides data analysis on early childhood programs, enriches the learning experience of children, and improves early childhood environments and school performance. Each program is held to high standards, including those assessed by the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales (ECRS).

Key Actions

Reach more students earlier by adding 200 preschool (3 year olds) and 200 prekindergarten (4 year olds) seats per year, in partnership with city agencies and private providers. Maximum class size would be 15 children per teacher and aide in preschool, 16 in prekindergarten. DCPS will give top priority to children who are considered at risk and who generally start school with fewer skills than more advantaged children — children from economically disadvantaged families, who are homeless or who have limited English proficiency. The goal is to have preschool and prekindergarten enrollment at the same level as kindergarten enrollment.

Move the cut-off date for student registration for kindergarten from December 31 to September 30. Many current DCPS kindergarten students are up to six months younger than children in other school systems, which many educators and parents say puts them at an academic disadvantage.

Implement a universal early childhood screening program (similar to the Head Start model). The program, developed with city agencies and other providers, will identify health, human service and education issues that, if addressed early, will lay the foundation for student success. The goal is for all children in the city to receive such screenings within five years.

Begin phasing in a requirement that all existing and new programs are nationally certified to the National Association for the Education of Young Children standards. Currently, only one DCPS-operated program has such

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Make bilingual pre-K instruction available: 83% support

Emphasize developmentally appropriate pre-K instruction: 77% support

Place pre-K programs in neighborhood elementary schools, not specialized regional facilities: 89% support

certification. A long-term and expensive challenge will be to retrofit classrooms and other spaces to meet these standards.

Timeline:

- Begin implementing all initiatives by fall 2006, except the new kindergarten cut-off date will begin in fall 2007.

15. Develop an Integrated and Coherent, State-of-the-Art, Career-Technical Education System

Rationale

The term "career-technical education" (CTE) refers to coherent programs of study at the secondary, postsecondary and adult levels that (a) combine both high levels of core academic rigor and career-specific knowledge and skills, and (b) prepare students for success in both college and high-skills, high-wage technical and professional careers. The core academic credit and course requirements for all CTE program majors are the same as those for other programs of study, such as liberal arts. In contrast to the traditional vocational education system of earlier decades, CTE programs respect the right of students to enter the workforce after high school, but also recognize the need for continuous postsecondary education after initial employment.

Key Actions

Develop an expanded college and career preparation system throughout the city, featuring a thematic program focus at each high school. Just over three years ago, efforts began to rebuild a citywide CTE system to replace the traditional vocational-education model. Rather than DCPS attempting to replicate CTE programs at multiple sites, high school students will be given the opportunity to enroll in, or attend part-time, whichever school offers programs that meet their individual educational and career plans, regardless of their home neighborhood. In effect, the CTE programs across the city will function as a districtwide, "virtual" CTE center.

The Office of Career and Technical Education is developing and implementing at least 40 sequential programs of study — Program Majors — grouped into 12 Career Clusters (see sidebar). Each of the 40 Program Majors will be offered by at least one high school; together they address all of the six priority targeted-trades sector-based categories identified by the DC Office of Planning and Economic Development: Construction, Health Care, Transportation, Information Technology (IT), Hospitality and Retail Trade.

CTE Program Majors will include partnerships with national and local industry or trade associations; nationally validated, competency-based curricula, program standards and assessments; industry-backed certificates of skill mastery for all program completers; and articulation agreements with the University of the District of Columbia, community and technical colleges, and four-year colleges and universities throughout the area. More than 30 CTE programs were offered during SY2005–06 — ranging from TV and video production to engineering, culinary arts, and health and medical sciences — and more than 5,000 students enrolled in CTE courses.

A centerpiece of the districtwide college and career preparation system will be the selection of one or more programmatic themes — career-technical or professional-technical, liberal arts, or IB — for every public high school, like those of the well-known magnet and thematic high schools of New York City, Boston and other cities. Broad community input will be solicited on the selections, each anchored in a flag-

CAREER CLUSTERS

DCPS now has 40 Program Majors grouped into 12 Career Clusters:

- **Arts, Media & Communications**
- **Biotechnology & Environmental Science**
- **Business, Finance, Commerce & Entrepreneurship**
- **Construction & Design**
- **Engineering & Manufacturing**
- **Government & Public Administration**
- **Health & Medical Sciences**
- **Hospitality & Tourism**
- **Human Services, Education & Training**
- **Information Technology**
- **Law, Public Safety & Security**
- **Transportation**

ship program major, career cluster or postsecondary pathway. For example:

- Ellington High School already serves as a regional magnet school of the performing and visual arts, including advanced CTE programs such as Technical Theatre.

- Newly reopened McKinley Tech is easily the equal of the famed "High Tech High School" in Los Angeles, with flagship programs in biotechnology, IT and broadcasting.

A History of Vocational Education in DC

Like many other communities, the District of Columbia has a vocational education tradition with very deep roots — predating the 1917 passage of the Smith-Hughes Act that established the program of federal-state cooperative support for career-specific skill training at the secondary level. In 1912, the Phelps Vocational School opened doors that remained open for the next 90 years, initially offering cosmetology and barbering training to African American young people. In the 1930s, DC operated five vocational schools: two for African Americans and three for whites.

The 1960s saw the rapid expansion and diversification of vocational-technical education programs across the country, as technical education rose to prominence for the first time (in the post-Sputnik era), and youth unemployment became an increasing concern in both rural and urban areas. By the end of the 1960s, DC supported a network of five full-time vocational high schools (Bell, Burdick, Chamberlain, Phelps and M.M. Washington), offering more than 40 defined programs of study.

A major transformation of the vocational-technical delivery system was carried out in 1982–83; to increase access to quality skill programs throughout the District, the five full-time vocational high schools were all converted to shared-time area "career development centers." But in 1989, DCPS moved back toward full-time "career senior high schools" as the primary delivery mode for CTE — and in so doing set in motion a process of devolution that virtually dismantled career-technical education in less than 10 years. Today, only one legacy vocational high school remains open — M.M. Washington.

The 21st-century labor market needs and demands a rebirth of CTE in the District of Columbia, and student, community and employer interest and support for CTE remain strong. Four years into the latest economic expansion, in December 2005, average unemployment across the District remained at the recession level of 6 percent. Moreover, the DC-wide average masked huge disparities among Washington's wards and neighborhoods, with full employment in Ward 3 contrasting sharply with double-digit unemployment in Ward 8. High school dropouts in DC — upward of half of each new generation — face a lifetime of chronic unemployment, stranded on the margins of the global economy. High school graduates with no postsecondary credentials have great difficulty securing full-time, full-year, family-supporting jobs. Even the small fraction of our students who attain baccalaureate degrees face intense competition from applicants attracted to the nation's capital from literally around the world.

A state-of-the-art CTE system — focused on the emerging technical sector (a centerpiece of the new technology economy), backed by strong, active partnerships with business and industry, and closely aligned with DC's economic and community development strategies — can play a pivotal role in recapturing a future for DC's youth.

- Cardozo is becoming an areawide hub of transportation programs, including planning, operations and logistics ("TransTech"), and aeronautics, and it is also implementing an Academy of Construction and Design.

- Dunbar has long been known as an engineering, electronics and robotics center, affiliated with the national Project Lead the Way initiative.

- Ballou is emerging as a magnet for media and communications and IT students, and it also has implemented a state-of-the-art automotive technology center.

- Anacostia could focus on health and medical sciences, becoming a feeder school to medical and health care providers throughout the region.

- Banneker has already built a reputation as an IB High School; Woodson might achieve a similar status for eastern and southern neighborhoods.

As part of our high school redesign, we also envision establishing high schools that focus on hospitality and tourism; international studies and world languages; construction and design; business, commerce, finance and entrepreneurship; education; health and medical sciences; and a Latin school, patterned after the Boston Latin School. The CTE programs in these high schools will supplement and support the schools' core academic offerings.

Timeline:

- Establish expanded, state-of-the-art building trades and culinary arts programs at Cardozo and Roosevelt senior high schools, respectively. (SY2006–07)

- Continue planning or developing program majors in new career areas, including environmental science; planning, operations and logistics; education; health sciences; and aeronautics. (SY2006–07)

- Continue program expansion and quality upgrades, including developing industry-backed certificates of skill mastery; creating student leadership organizations; and negotiating open-ended articulation agreements with local colleges and universities. (SY2007–08)

- Finalize roster of programmatic themes for each high school; schedule program development, expansion and phase-out consistently with the final roster; and organize outreach to parents and student recruitment based on the new configuration. (SY2007–08)

- Begin implementation of proposed themed schools. (SY2008–09)

Provide a Variety of Supports for Students To Succeed

Improving student achievement is a team effort. A coherent and consistent framework for learning (Chapter I); high-quality teachers and principals (Chapter II); and a continuum of seamless, inclusive options, multiple pathways and differentiated instruction (Chapter III) are necessary, but not sufficient by themselves, to improve student achievement in all schools. The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) — indeed, the entire DC community — must make a commitment to providing the supports that students need to learn at the much higher levels that society demands and our new standards reflect.

Our schools are increasingly diverse, and we have a responsibility to meet students where they are. More than two-thirds of DCPS students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, a standard proxy for estimating the percentage of students who come from low-income families. Some of the factors related to poverty that *may* place a child at risk for academic failure are poor attendance, leading to truancy; low adult literacy rates; drug abuse; a lack of books and technology at home; physical and mental health problems; and unemployment or underemployment. Helping students overcome these and other barriers to learning is a critical role — one served by supporting students holistically.

The role of poverty in student achievement is important. It also is important to recognize that all students — regardless of socioeconomic status — need sustained support to succeed. As James P. Comer, who founded the School Development Program at Yale

Key Strategies

- Personalized supports
- Extended learning opportunities for all students
- Comprehensive dropout prevention and re-entry programs
- Strategic promotion/retention policy
- Parents as academic advocates and supporters

University, emphasizes, "No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship." One of the underlying values in designing supports for students is to create many ways in which students can form significant relationships with trusted adults.

Much of the previous chapters focused on what should happen academically in classrooms during the school day. This chapter focuses on *in-school interventions that go beyond the strictly academic* and on activities that *are outside the classroom and before or after the school day* — often called "beyond the bell."

16.

Personalize Support To Meet Students' Individual Learning Needs

Rationale

The comprehensive system described in Chapter III will create multiple options for students to graduate prepared for postsecondary education and training or work. To help students and families take advantage of these options will require a high level of guidance and assistance from teachers, principals, support staff, parents, families and community agencies.

When a student connects, really connects, to a caring adult, it often unleashes the desire to achieve. When the caring adult helps remove or reduce the barriers to learning, stu-

dents blossom. Our goal is to connect each student to caring adults inside and outside the schools who have professional training and skills to link students to a wide range of services.

Key Actions

Establish Student Support Teams at every school. These teams serve as an early warning system to help schools identify students who would benefit from academic and/or behavioral interventions (e.g., students who are academically not on grade level, chronically absent or truant, at risk for grade-level retention, etc.). Student Support Teams are

school-based committees that include administrators, general educators, counselors, parents and other staff. Teams develop six-week intervention plans for individual students and/or groups of students with similar needs. Teams collaborate with city agencies, community groups and parents to provide services to students beyond the school day, if necessary. Members of the Student Support Teams will receive professional development to help them identify and implement research-based interventions. Research shows that Student Support Teams improve student achievement and reduce referrals to special education. ("Teacher assistance teams: A descriptive study of 96 teams," 1989)

Timeline:

- Implement Student Support Teams in all schools. (September 2005)
- Conduct one-day Summer Institute. (Summer 2006)
- Disseminate Pre-Referral Intervention Manual to all teachers. (Summer 2006)
- Provide monthly professional development on research-based instructional/behavioral interventions.
- Implement parent/student awareness campaign of the Student Support Team process. (Summer 2006)

Offer each high school student an Individualized Graduation Plan (IGP). A key responsibility of the secondary counselor will be to help students develop their IGPs, which will help them navigate various pathways toward a high school diploma. While all students will be expected to complete the core academic courses, some will focus on our expanded career and technical education programs, others might pursue a more traditional liberal arts or college-preparatory pathway, and others might focus on an International Baccalaureate program. Students also will have the option to graduate in three, four or five years (see Strategy 10). An IGP details the courses necessary for the student to prepare for graduation and successfully transition into the workforce or other postsecondary educational experiences.

Timeline:

- Begin implementing in all high schools. (SY2006–07)

Further develop 9th-grade academies. Significant numbers of students drop out as freshmen. School systems have addressed this problem with 9th-grade academies, a strategy to keep 9th graders together and to provide strategic assistance. High schools will establish an area of the building where 9th-grade lockers are located and most 9th-grade courses are taught. Academies will offer academic and social supports, from study skills courses and catch-up curriculum courses to community-building activities. These academies will be especially important as DCPS moves all 9th graders from junior high schools to high schools over the next few years. (Details, Strategy 23)

Timeline:

- Assess existing academies to determine effectiveness and demand for replication. (SY2005–06)
- Redesign and/or expand academies during SY2006–07, and begin implementing in SY2007–08, as 9th graders in junior high schools start moving to high schools.

17. Provide Extended Learning Opportunities for Students Who Need or Want Them

Rationale

When students are behind academically, they need additional learning opportunities to accelerate through the material and catch up. When students are interested in subjects and activities that are not available during the school day, they need extended learning opportunities to support their interests. Many parents want a safe place for their children between the time school ends and when they are able to return home.

Children expect and want many different things from after-school time, especially as they get older. A recent report concluded that children "are most likely to benefit if they and their parents are able to put together a mosaic of positive experiences — broadening the range of activities, widening their geographic horizons and increasing their network of adults and peers." (*Multiple Choices After School,* Public Private Ventures, 2002)

Given a choice among organized activities, just 9 percent of youngsters in a national survey would take the option emphasizing academics; 54 percent would choose sports; and 36 percent would choose art, music or dance. Yet three in 10 students say they would very much like an after-school program that provides homework help. Low-income and minority families are exceptions; both groups are considerably more likely to want activities that emphasize academic learning. For example, 52 percent of low-income parents would go "out of their way" to find an after-school program that provides supervised homework time, while only 28 percent of higher-income parents would do so. (*All Work and No Play? Listening to What Kids and Parents Really Want from Out-of-School Time,* Public Agenda, 2004)

Extended learning opportunities, therefore, must balance DCPS' goal of increasing student achievement; the interests of students and parents; and the objectives of external funders and providers, who provide much of the programming. Within this framework, DCPS will seek to maximize the focus on learning, recognizing that music lessons, games with complex rules or theater programs that encourage reading and writing can contribute to academic achievement as do programs focused on extending lessons from the school day.

Key Actions

Two overarching principles will help ensure that extended learning opportunities are focused and effective:

Coordinate and focus programs and extracurricular activities on accelerating student learning, and fully integrate them with the district's learning standards and regular curriculum. A priority will be to ensure that students meet or exceed grade-level DCPS literacy and math proficiency. DCPS will proactively identify students who need to improve their performance, diagnose what they need and support only those programs that have a proven track record for improving students' academic and behavioral performance. This will be accomplished in part by supplementing the After Care for All program to provide grade-level literacy and mathematics services for students; effectively delivering research-based intervention programs; and developing a program to annually monitor the results achieved by vendors and community-based organizations that provide supplemental or intervention programs.

Extended Learning Programs

This includes intensive tutoring opportunities, computer-assisted learning and summer school. Some of these opportunities are available to any student. Others are available to students in particular schools through federally funded initiatives such as Supplemental Educational Services and Title I.

Out-of-School-Time Programs

The city, in the past six years, has built a significant set of out-of-school-time programs.

DCPS serves about 11,500 children in grades K–8 through the DC Afterschool for All program, which is supported exclusively by the Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Early Childhood Development and the federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

The Department of Parks and Recreation provides recreation, enrichment and homework assistance to about 1,200 young people in 16 elementary schools.

The DC Children and Youth Investment Trust supports approximately 10,000 participants annually.

Specific "success indicators" or outcomes for the programs largely depend on the funding sources, Memoranda of Understandings and supporting agency requirements.

Minimize the number of intervention strategies that DCPS uses, but provide enough programs to address the full spectrum of student needs. The ideal intervention program will be tied directly to the district's core reading, writing and math programs and will support instruction that occurs during the school day. But we also recognize that out-of-school-time programs often serve many other important, nonacademic goals. These goals range from offering enrichment opportunities beyond the school curriculum (e.g., arts, music, etc.); developing students' physical, social and emotional capacities; providing meaningful experiences that keep children and youth connected to schools and communities; and using a diverse but interrelated set of prevention goals (e.g., gang prevention, substance abuse prevention, etc.). (*Making Out of School Time Matter: Evidence for an Action Agenda,* 2005)

Sample Co-Curricular Programs

- Odyssey of the Mind
- Chess club
- Beta clubs
- National Junior Honor Society
- Other content-related clubs (math, art, computer)
- Music
- Drama
- Athletics

Expand the SummerBridge program. The six-week program for rising 9th and 10th graders, piloted successfully in four schools in summer 2005, improves student achievement; prepares students for educational opportunities in high school and beyond; creates safe, supportive learning environments; and provides high-quality, sustained professional development for the staff. Our immediate priorities are to extend the program to all incoming high school students and then to extend it to incoming middle school students.

Timeline:

- Offer to all high school students. (SY2006–07)
- Begin expanding to middle school students. (SY2007–08)

Strengthen out-of-school-time programs for middle school students. Our out-of-school-time initiatives will provide enrichment for students who want it, as well as supports for students at risk of dropping out of school based on four risk factors identified in a 2005 study by the Philadelphia Education Fund and Johns Hopkins University: low school attendance, poor behavior, failing grades in mathematics and failing grades in English. A top priority will be to serve the 6th through 8th graders who are two years or more out of grade. In part because of DCPS participation, the District of Columbia, through the DC Children Youth Investment Trust, has received a grant from the Wallace Foundation to create a business plan to strengthen the out-of-school-time system in the city, with a particular focus on middle schools. The Trust is developing a pilot initiative serv-

New Leadership

DCPS has consolidated the management of summer school, before- and after-school programs, extended learning programs, DC Afterschool for All, and the New Heights Teen Parents program and other programming related to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) under an Executive Director for Extended Education Programs. This office also shares responsibility for out-of-school-time partnerships with the new Office of Community Partnerships.

ing middle grades students in five to seven schools that would align with DCPS standards; be outcome based; and include system-building elements such as setting program standards, building capacity, providing technical assistance and collecting data. DCPS is investing significant resources in the planning process.

Timeline:

- Implement pilot program in 5–7 schools. (SY2006–07)

Explore adjusting the school calendar. A School Calendar Task Force of parents, teachers, union representatives, field administrators and central office staff will explore multiple issues for crafting the best instructional calendar for DCPS. First, we will consider extending the school year by 10 days or so, as discussed in the *Declaration of Education,* and extend-

ing the school day. This would provide additional instructional time during the regular school year, summers and weekends and between advisory periods, which could be particularly beneficial to students who are behind. Second, we will discuss a more limited proposal to start the school year earlier; the earlier start will allow more instructional time before end-of-year state testing in the spring.

Timeline:
- The task force will make recommendations to the superintendent for SY2007–08 and SY2008–09 school calendars for the Board of Education's consideration in June 2006.
- The task force will advise the superintendent on future school calendar recommendations that must be made to the Board no later than Feb. 1, 2007.

Provide tutoring to more students with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act funding. Under NCLB, students in schools that "need improvement" are eligible to receive federally funded Supplemental Educational Services (SES), such as special classes, tutoring, computer-guided instruction and similar supports.

Timeline:
- Raise parent awareness of their choices through an Annual Parent Vendor Fair in each quadrant of the city,

training, back-to-school nights and collaboration with community-based organizations. (SY2006–07)
- Work closely with school principals to ensure that SES providers are meeting the needs of the students. (SY2006–07)
- Annually provide data on impact of SES programs on student performance and update the state-approved list.

Revive and maintain a strong athletic program. Throughout its history, DCPS has boasted a dynamic athletic program that has opened doors to a wide array of high school and post-high school opportunities for thousands of students. But recently, funding and support have declined steadily. To reverse this trend, DCPS will establish a standing Athletic Advisory Committee of coaches, parents, school administrators and students to monitor our programs and recommend changes to the superintendent. The focus will include athletic support systems (transportation, equipment repair, trainer assignments and facilities maintenance), elementary and middle school intramural programs, staffing, potential local and national partnerships, and timely communications to students and the public.

Timeline:
- Form Athletic Advisory Committee, develop framework for intramural program, develop budget to support existing athletic programs and publicize athletic facilities changes recommended by the Facilities Master Plan (FMP). (SY2005–06)
- Implement comprehensive intramural program, begin implementing committee recommendations, establish and maintain athletic Web site, and monitor FMP implementation. (SY2006–07)

18. Develop a Comprehensive Dropout Prevention and Re-Entry System

Rationale

The intensifying national debate about reinventing the American high school is often focused on low levels of academic achievement among high school graduates and poor preparation for postsecondary education and family-sustaining careers. But beyond that, huge percentages of students are not graduating from high school at all. High school improvement does not benefit those who have left high school altogether.

A recent report by Paul E. Barton of the Educational Testing Service *(One-Third of a Nation: Rising Dropout Rates and Declining Opportunities)* underlined the gravity of the dropout problem in communities across the country and highlighted the severely diminished life prospects facing contemporary high school dropouts — even those who subsequently attain GED certificates. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the earning power of high school dropouts has fallen by *more than one-third* since the early 1970s, when real wages in the United States peaked and began a long decline. As Barton's research has reaffirmed, the promise of "no child left behind" will never be fully realized as long as the dropout crisis is not addressed.

Key Actions

Develop a comprehensive program that reduces the dropout rate and makes it easier for dropouts to get back into school. The program will be offered through Jobs for America's Graduates – District of Columbia (JAG-DC), which is affiliated with the successful national JAG network. The program will include an early intervention model for *grades 7–8,* REACH for DC's Future; a multiyear Opportunity Awareness Program for *grades 9–11;* a School to College and Careers Transition Program for *12th graders;* and a dropout re-entry program, STEPS to Success, for *recent dropouts and young adults.*

At 12 schools, students and/or young adults (40 per site) will receive intensive and individualized classroom instruction, academic remediation, career and college counseling, and employability development services — provided by a full-time JAG-DC specialist — combined with membership in a student-led youth leadership organization, including employment, community service and work-based learning activities. The senior year and dropout re-entry programs include at least 12 months of one-on-one educational and employment placement and retention assistance and other follow-up services after graduation.

Timeline:

- Begin piloting the program at 12 schools: the first four "restructuring" high schools (Anacostia, Ballou, Eastern and Woodson); the four middle schools that serve as feeders to these high schools (Ron Brown, Kelly Miller, Kramer and Sousa); the three Schools to Aid Youth (STAY) schools that offer afternoon alternative education pro-

KEY GOALS

- **100% continued enrollment of 9th graders in 10th grade**
- **95% cumulative graduation**
- **90% of re-entry program participants completing secondary education**
- **90% positive outcomes**
- **80% full-time placement**
- **60% employment placement**
- **60% full-time employment**
- **40% educational placement**
- **20% reduction in the dropout rates of participating high schools**

grams (Ballou, Roosevelt and Spingarn); and the Oak Hill youth correctional center. (SY2006–07 through SY2008–09)

- By SY2009–10, implement full-scale operation to involve at least two sites at 12 high schools and at least one site at 12 middle schools, in addition to four re-entry sites — a total of 40 sites at 28 schools, serving 1,600 participants annually.

19.

Establish a More Strategic Promotion and Retention Policy

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Make summer school mandatory for students not meeting the standards: 89% support

Rationale

An effective policy for promotion and retention identifies students before they fall too far behind, and it provides targeted and appropriate supports that allow them to catch up with their peers. Currently, DCPS students who do not meet academic expectations can be retained at *all* grade levels. But research shows that academic achievement gains decline within two to three years of retention to such an extent that retained children do no better or perform even more poorly than similar groups of promoted children. Further, research reveals that the effects of failure have a negative impact on all areas of students' achievement and social emotional adjustments (peer relationships, self-esteem, problem behaviors and attendance). In addition, retention has been found to be one of the most powerful predictors of high school dropouts.

Research compels us to reconsider the practice of retaining students. In the gateway grades when students may be retained, significantly different approaches to instruction must be provided during the retention year. Those approaches may include being placed in a class with fewer than the average number of students, curricula that focus on specific skills that students lack, alternative curricula, parent involvement and intensive counseling. In addition, DCPS will study, modify and, where appropriate, implement strategies researched by Jim Grant and Irv Richardson (Society for Developmental Education); their Retention/Promotion Checklist suggests that 50 factors be considered before retaining any student.

Key Actions

Allow retentions only at the key juncture grades of 3, 5, 8 and 10, and provide intensively focused supports. Such a policy (similar to that of Boston Public Schools) will provide students with more time at strategic junctures to meet the learning standards. Based on annual testing, students yet to meet grade-level standards will use an Academic/Behavioral Intervention Plan, developed collaboratively by the teacher, Student Support Team, student, and parent or guardian, which will drive instruction and academic support for the ensuing year. This plan will recommend safety nets or support services from an approved menu of possible choices. (Students also may accelerate within grade junctures upon demonstration of having exceeded grade-level learning standards.)

Participating students will be required to attend summer school and receive intensive support. The results of their summer performance will be shared with their receiving teacher for a seamless transition to accelerated learning on the first day of school.

A student may be retained only once at any juncture grade and no more than once throughout his or her enrollment in DCPS without the review and approval of the appropriate divisional assistant superintendent. By the end of the 8th grade, any over-aged student will be referred to the academic intervention team. Depending on the individual needs of students, recommendations could include placement in support programs with intense academic supports in the core academic areas, wraparound social services and career certification programs.

As part of our high school redesign, we propose establishing an organizational structure that divides secondary students into lower and upper divisions. Students in the lower division would take a core curriculum designed to make sure that they meet DCPS performance standards by the end of grade 10. Students in the upper division would have differentiated programs: continued college preparation or career and technical education. The new high school redesign model of lower and upper divisions will eliminate traditional promotion or retention practices. Instead, it will transform the high school environment into one that is student focused and achievement oriented. Rather than being classified by grade levels, students will move seamlessly within each high school division as they complete course requirements. Students will need to meet all of the lower-division requirements before moving to the upper division. (Details, Strategy 10)

Timeline:

- Develop the infrastructure for implementation: professional development for teachers and administrators on the new policy and its implications; procedural and monitoring guidelines; and communications and training for parents. (SY2006–07)

- Implement the policy. (SY2006–07)

- Establish advisory teams to provide support to schools in all aspects of implementation of the policy. (SY2006–07)

20. Help Parents Become Full Partners in Their Children's Learning

Rationale

Recent research has demonstrated convincingly that when parents and caregivers are actively involved in their children's education, their children do better in school. Children whose parents are involved:

- Earn higher grades and test scores;
- Enroll in higher-level programs;
- Pass their classes and are promoted;
- Attend school regularly;
- Have better social skills; and
- Graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

Students whose parents are involved also are less likely to require special education, drop out of school, be arrested or require public assistance. (*A New Wave of Evidence,* Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002)

Parent involvement can take many forms: parent as teacher, helping their children at home; parent as volunteer, helping the school; parent as advocate; and parent as decision-maker, serving on Local School Restructuring Teams, for example. "Research has found that children do best when their parents are able to be involved in their children's learning in all four ways," according to *The Case for Parent Leadership.* (KSA-Plus Communications and Center for Parent Leadership, 2004)

Recognizing the untapped power of parents, a growing number of urban school districts are making significant investments in this area. For example, New York City now has a paid parent coordinator in every school; Boston has totally revamped and upgraded its parent involvement program; and districts such as Miami-Dade and San Diego have established parent academies to help train parents in a wide range of areas, from parenting skills to advocacy.

In promoting broader and deeper parent involvement, DCPS will be guided by the following values:

- Teachers and principals should make extra efforts to be inviting, welcoming and accessible to all parents, especially who may have had earlier negative experiences with schools.
- Teachers and principals should proactively reach out to involve parents before there is a crisis.
- Teachers, principals and parents need to create a system of shared responsibility so they work together in partnership for the well-being of the child.

Community Survey Results

Parents and schools should agree on expectations for students: 98% support

Set clear partnership goals to support academic achievement: 98% support

Involve parents and community more in decision-making: 98% support

Schools and parents should work together for the child's well-being: 100% support

- The DCPS central office must more proactively value open communication and transparency at all levels.
- Communication between home and school needs to be regular, two-way and meaningful.
- Parents and the community should have more opportunities to be involved in school decision-making.
- DCPS must communicate more frequently and more effectively with the broader community.
- DCPS must listen.

Key Actions

Open Parent Resource Centers that will bring together the services families need to ensure that their children are ready to learn and the family is able to support that learning. There will be five centers in all. Three are scheduled to launch in spring 2006 in Wards 1, 7 and 8. The centers are

envisioned as one-stop centers for providing services and/or referrals to outside services that will reduce barriers to parents' ability to help their children succeed. These barriers may include parents' own literacy and numeracy challenges and/or other social and economic factors. Ultimately, the goal of the Parent Resource Centers is to ensure that parents are better able to navigate the school system, make informed decisions about their children's education, and advocate for high-quality teaching and learning throughout the system. The Parent Resource Centers will engage external partners to provide programming and deliver services. Centers will be autonomous, locally managed by steering committees of parents, and centrally coordinated by the Office of Community Partnerships.

Timeline:

- Open two additional Parent Resource Centers. (SY2006–07)
- Work with city and community partners to enhance services for parents and families. (SY2007–08)

Focus training on the new standards, curriculum and tests. Train an initial cadre of 20–30 parent leaders to explain the new standards and assessments to other parents at the school level. Parents learn better from their peers. This training may be done through the Parent Resource Centers.

In addition, as part of their regular professional development, train principals and teachers to work with parents and family members around the standards, curriculum and tests.

Timeline:

- Initiate training for parents and educators no later than fall 2006.
- Continue training each year.

Establish policies and protocols that invite parents into the schools and classrooms as respected participants in their children's education. We will create materials and workshops to help principals and teachers create welcoming environments for parents and families.

Timeline:

- Revise and/or develop, with the assistance of parents, teachers and administrators, policies regarding parent engagement and involvement. (SY2006–07)
- Widely disseminate new policies and procedures prior to and during the first week of school. (SY2006–07)
- Include parental engagement and involvement indicators as part of the principal evaluation tool. (SY2006–07)

Organize and support an effective parent organization at every school. To achieve this goal, we will work with existing citywide parent organizations and others, and we will train principals specifically in how to work with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or other parent organizations and with the Local School Restructuring Team.

Timeline:

- Survey existing parent organizations at each school. (SY2006–07)
- Work with local and national parent experts to identify best practices. (SY2006–07)
- Launch new parent organization model. (SY2007–08)

Build on Our Community's Assets

To say that the District of Columbia is rich in educational resources is an understatement. We are an international city, home to global organizations, internationally focused federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations, embassies, multinational businesses, and strong international and foreign relations programs at area universities. DCPS students come from 135 countries and speak 121 languages. This is our "home-field advantage."

We have world-class museums, cultural centers and performing art centers. We also have some students who have never visited even one of these centers. We need to galvanize the good will of individuals and organizations and strategically align these resources for the enrichment of all of our school community.

There are many services and programs for children and their families in the District, but they are not always coordinated. Moreover, fewer efforts are aligned fully with academic goals. "Community schools" — schools that are open longer and have myriad community resources within the building — are being used in cities around the country to remove barriers to learning and improve academic outcomes (*Community Schools: Partnership for Excellence,* 2003). We will be developing community schools, building from the rich resources already found in many of our schools, neighborhoods and service communities.

School Board Core Beliefs

We believe that community collaboration is fundamental to achieving and sustaining excellence.

Key Strategies

- Nine new community schools
- Policies that support partnerships and co-location
- Aggressive engagement of community partners to improve student outcomes

Every effort requires the union of collaboration and commitment. DCPS has not always been an easy partner to work with. Likewise, dealing with myriad special interests, associations and organizations has proven challenging in the past. That is changing. We are setting up a new Office of Community Partnerships to strengthen our capacity to build and promote solid partnerships that support the District's priorities.

21. Implement Full-Service "Community Schools," Providing Integrated Services Such as Health and Enrichment, for Children and Families

Rationale

Imagine a school open seven days a week, well into the evening hours, providing strong after-school programs, adult education, health and social services, and other programming. Imagine all of those providers working together, under the guidance of the principal and a coordinator. This is a full-service community school. DCPS already has one such school — the JC Nalle Elementary School, which is offering a broad range of programs and services, with major external support from the Freddie Mac Foundation.

In many school systems, including DCPS, schools host a diverse set of programs. They may have been placed there by central office, invited by the principal, offered by a community-based organization or continued as remnants of initia-

tives from past administrations. This panoply of programs can create organizational chaos. In a community school, the watchwords are collaboration, shared responsibility and integration. The principal, teachers and program providers work together to support students, their families and the broader community. The coordinated, integrated approach of a community schools model offers several measurable benefits: improved student learning, increased family engagement, shared responsibility for results and increased neighborhood vitality, according to independent evaluations from sites across the country (*Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools,* 2003). The community schools approach, importantly, frees the principal to spend more time supporting and coaching and allows teachers to improve the amount of time they spend on effective teaching.

Coast-to-Coast Growth

Several major urban school systems — including Chicago; Providence; New York; and Portland, OR — have made major and successful commitments to the community schools model. We will learn from their efforts.

By bringing needed services into underused school facilities, community schools can transform empty space into an educational asset. Creating a community school, however, requires more than haphazardly co-locating programs and services in a school building or adjacent campus. It is a systemic, deliberate initiative that calls for identifying a school's specific needs, forging the partnerships needed to respond

appropriately, building a supportive culture among the principal and teachers within the school, and establishing the governance and accountability to ensure that the goals are met.

In the *Declaration of Education,* DCPS called for a citywide forum approach to develop its community schools model: "Working with partners, we will establish a forum for regular communications and coordination among school, government and civic sectors to plan and implement mental health and child and youth service program delivery with city agencies, community-based organizations and service providers at the school level. This forum will be an important mechanism for coordinating the delivery of 'wraparound' services that will support students and families ... and help schools become neighborhood anchors."

Key Actions

Establish nine additional community schools. With the leadership of the Office of Community Partnerships and the support of the Office of Extended Learning, DCPS will start a school-based planning process for three additional community schools to open annually over the next three years. Local School Restructuring Teams will serve as anchors for each community school in the planning process. We will begin with schools that already have substantial services and/or programming in place and work with schools in making the selection. A districtwide Community Schools Advisory Board will vet all proposals.

Establish financial and programmatic supports. Community schools do not happen without significant support. We will provide professional development and other supports to principals, teachers and community members to help develop the community schools orientation. As part of the planning for community schools, DCPS will develop financial support for a community schools coordinator. Drawing from local and national organizations, we also will develop a training and technical assistance program to support schools as they develop their programming and build their team.

Timeline:

- Open three additional community schools in SY2007–08 based on evidence of performance and need.

- Open at least three additional schools per year for the following two years.

- Establish financial and programmatic supports in SY2007–08 and expand them for FY2008–09.

- Determine in SY2009–10 whether to continue to expand the program based upon the experience to date.

POSSIBLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL PARTNERS

- **Department of Mental Health**
- **Department of Recreation**
- **Department of Health and Human Services**
- **Child and Family Services Agency**
- **DC Children and Youth Investment Trust**
- **Metropolitan Police Department**
- **Office of Court Social Services**
- **Community-based organizations**
- **Foundations**
- **Embassies**
- **Federal agencies**
- **International agencies**
- **Businesses**
- **Many others**

22. Build Strong Partnerships with Local and National Businesses and Organizations

Rationale

When we think about operationalizing that oft-quoted phrase, "it takes a village … ," the conversation inevitably moves to the role of organizations found locally, be they internationally known institutions such as the Smithsonian Institution or homegrown community-based organizations doing excellent work and helping children in schools. DCPS is fortunate to have a diverse set of partnerships that help students of every age in every neighborhood.

A more pressing question in today's achievement-oriented environment is how an organization can help improve student achievement. DCPS and its partners need to find the appropriate balance in responding to that challenge. For example, organizations that provide courses and homework help should fully understand the new DCPS academic standards and appropriately align their offerings. Others, such as those that provide sports or other activity-focused programming, have strong support from the research literature to argue that

Did You Know?

- Of the 7,614 active nonprofits in the Greater Washington area in 2000, 4,032 focused on local issues, compared with 3,582 national and international nonprofits.

- The Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area publishes a guide to nearly 400 partnerships and programs linking local schools and communities with its 14 member institutions.

those extracurricular activities can help students maintain the motivation to keep attending school and doing schoolwork. (Details on support programs, Chapter IV.)

DCPS is especially committed to developing cost-effective partnerships with local organizations that will work with DCPS as collaborative partners. These partnerships will provide targeted educational and facility support services to address specific priority needs.

In welcoming these partnerships, DCPS must address many sometimes challenging issues such as ensuring safety, managing liability and creating equitable access to school space.

Key Actions

Develop a partnership policy that eliminates historic barriers to effective collaboration between external organizations and DCPS. The policy will establish clear priorities for partners, embrace a full-service community schools model, create mechanisms for principals to easily access resources, link programs to academic standards and create school-based coordination mechanisms that unite service providers to work on shared goals.

In addition, DCPS will review rental costs for the use of DCPS schools, developing a sliding scale based upon clear factors. DCPS will vet these policy proposals with potential partners, adjust them accordingly and propose a partnership policy for the Board of Education to review.

Create and staff an Office of Community Partnerships. DCPS has created an Office of Community Partnerships to promote, support, and coordinate a range of sustained initiatives to involve parents and multiple stakeholders, including faith-based organizations, businesses, community-based and nonprofit organizations, immigrant groups, service providers, governmental agencies, higher education institutions, and other city and national partners. The community has requested such a districtwide focal point.

Improve coordination of out-of-school-time programs. Currently, the distribution of these resources is haphazard, reflecting years of ad hoc decision-making. The director of Community Partnerships will develop clear administrative polices to guide current and future out-of-school-time efforts. The Office of Extended Learning will continue to coordinate the variety of out-of-school-time community-based programs. (Details on out-of-school-time programs, Strategy 17.) These are expected to include:

- DC Afterschool for All, which has provided after-school programming (arts, sports and community service) to an average of 10,000 students a year for more than 10 years.

- Collaboration with the District of Columbia and the DC Children and Youth Investment Trust to develop an out-of-school-time initiative targeting at-risk youth in the middle grades.

- After-school and summer school programs provided by community-based organizations.

- Extracurricular programs and clubs such as theater, chess, the school paper and other activities likely to interest students.
- After-school sports programs, including varsity, junior varsity and intramural programs.

Align local school improvement plans with out-of-school-time programs and services. DCPS will require each school to identify out-of-school-time services and programs in its building and use the revised annual school improvement plan (developed by the Local School Restructuring Team with participation from parents, teachers, local community-based organizations and school partners) to present plans for coordinating services with school improvement goals and community needs. This local input will be specifically requested in the school improvement plan, which is being revised by the Office of Accountability.

Revise co-location policy to create more effective use of space in schools. More extensive use of school facilities is a high priority for many city leaders, residents and DCPS staff. The potential benefits are many. The presence of other organizations on site will attract more supports for students and additional parent involvement. Greater public use of school space can create stronger ties between the community and schools and create greater public support for public education. Revenues from sharing space can be used to support education priorities at the local school and neighborhood level. DCPS will use three criteria in considering co-location decisions.

- *Educational mission.* Priority should be given to uses that support the mission of schools, including after-school programs, libraries, charter schools and recreation programs.
- *Audience served.* Priority should be given to uses that serve the school community — students, their families and caregivers, and the neighborhood.
- *Safety.* The safety of students, teachers, and other personnel is essential. Any safety issues will be mitigated through approaches such as controlled access. Where there are significant safety issues that cannot be mitigated, the use should not be allowed.

It should be noted that by law, DCPS is required to give priority to public charter schools in the allocation of school space. This mandate will be more fully addressed in the forthcoming Facilities Master Plan (FMP).

Expand and strengthen international partnerships. Partnering also presents an opportunity to engage organizations that will help our graduates thrive in an increasingly global economy. DCPS will pursue additional partnerships with international organizations (e.g., government agencies, embassies, nongovernmental organizations, businesses, and other international organizations) in support of prekindergarten–12 global education through the Center for Global Education and Leadership within the Office of Academic Services.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Better link after-school programs to learning standards: 96% support

Focus after-school programs more on physical, social, and civic development: 89% support

Overwhelming support for sharing space to improve student outcomes, reduce costs and raise revenue, including before- and after-school programs (95%), learning centers for students with special needs (93%), and health and other social services for students (87%)

Co-locate with public charter schools: 51% support

Timeline:

- Develop and disseminate new partnership policies by September 2006.
- By SY2006–07, create a school-by-school, Web-based inventory of all community schools-related supports and services offered to DCPS students, whether they are located inside or outside of the school building. This Web-based inventory may be housed outside of DCPS and build on existing inventories, such as the Fannie Mae Foundation Getting Connected Initiative.
- Change the format of school improvement plans in SY2006–07, reflecting recommendations from this section and from Chapter VII.

- Starting now, engage more community and international institutions – museums, businesses, universities, nonprofits, and others – in our work to improve student outcomes through efforts led by the Office of Community Partnerships.

- The co-location policy will be revised as part of the FMP in spring 2006.

BUILDING ON A STRONG FOUNDATION

Some have said it is difficult to partner with DCPS, and we are sure there is some truth in that statement — every relationship can be improved. DCPS also knows how to make partnerships work, with literally hundreds of productive relationships. These include partnerships with the DC Department of Mental Health, which offers mental health services in our schools; the Freddie Mac Foundation, which supports a full-service community school at JC Nalle Elementary School; the DC Children and Youth Investment Trust, which supports after-school and summer school programs; and the DC Education Compact, which supports community engagement, immunizations and school beautification.

Through the 31-year-old DCPS Embassy Adoption Program, 50 embassies this year are matched with 50 elementary schools to teach 6th-grade students about the geography, culture, history and government of their respective countries. The Washington Performing Arts Society is also a partner in this program. The United Nations (UN) Association provides Model UN classes in all DCPS senior high schools, with a culminating Model UN conference at the U.S. State Department, and Alliance Francaise of Washington, DC, provides free part-time French teachers in five Northeast and Southeast elementary schools.

By itself, the Office of Career and Technical Education has numerous partnerships with, among others, almost a dozen Industry Advisory Councils (IACs); trade groups representing the automotive, culinary arts and construction trades industries; and companies such as Toyota, Honda, Daimler-Chrysler and General Motors.

Amid this list of larger organizations, it is important to note the dozens of community-based organizations linking to our schools to provide after-school activities, homework help, tutoring, theater, sports and other activities.

Going forward, DCPS is looking for partners to help establish professional development schools, create an evaluation partnership, support training for parents, join in Parent Resource Centers, and offer services and programs in community schools.

Organize Schools To Better Serve the Needs of Students

Because the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) has such a comprehensive system of schools, we can serve the educational interests and ambitions of a diverse population of students. We incorporate a broad range of educational programs into our schools. We welcome everyone — from children as young as 3 years old in preschool classes to adults as old as 60 in the Schools to Aid Youth (STAY) programs in our senior high schools. DCPS schools and programs offer alternative, special, and gifted and talented education in both citywide magnet and neighborhood schools.

Going forward, we need to do a better job of organizing our schools so that the grade configurations and feeder patterns ease the transitions of students and their families from one grade level to another — providing families clusters of schools with which to work and which, in turn, are working with each other. Our system also can ensure that school policy enables families to choose where their children will attend school with the least effort and uncertainty for the family.

Around the country, school systems are using different approaches for organizing schools. Some are embracing a more traditional approach — elementary school (kindergarten or prekindergarten through grade 5), middle school (grades 6–8) and high school (grades 9–12). Others are moving toward a pre-K through grade 8 model. The research is mixed about which model is most effective. Not at issue, however, is the need for districts to find better ways of educating young adolescents (students in the middle grades) and to rationalize their approach so that parents, students, teachers and administrators

School Board Core Beliefs

We believe that all children should be educated in a safe, healthy and educationally appropriate environment.

Key Strategies

- Consistent school organization: pre-K–5, 6–8, 9–12
- Coherent feeder patterns
- Revised assignment policy

Did You Know?

- 3,072 high school students (23% of all DCPS high school students) attend citywide schools that use an admissions process.
- In the comprehensive, attendance-area high schools, 40% of students attend out-of-boundary schools.
- 55% of *middle school* students attend out-of-boundary schools; many students travel across town to attend one of the 20 DCPS middle or junior high schools.
- Although only 50.5% of DCPS *elementary school* students attend the schools to which they are assigned, many students use another school within their neighborhood and close to their homes.

Community Survey Results

Let students choose from a cluster of elementary schools that feed into local middle or junior high schools: 71% support

All elementary schools should have the same grades: 75% support

Prefer grades 6–8 structure for middle grades: 81% support

know what to expect. Also not at issue is the increasing importance of providing parents and families with clear choices about which school or cluster of schools provides the best opportunity for their children to succeed.

23. Organize Schools Primarily around Prekindergarten–5th Grade (Elementary School), Grades 6–8 (Middle School) and Grades 9–12 (High School)

Rationale

A system of schools that is organized around elementary schools (preschool and prekindergarten through grade 5), middle schools (grades 6–8) and high schools (grades 9–12) is age appropriate, provides educational coherence and consistency for students, tends to be easier for parents to navigate, and allows school districts to coordinate programs and services more easily. Moreover, consistent grade configurations from school to school can help improve the transitions of students from one school to another and from one grade level to another.

Although some are concerned that the middle school model that emerged in the 1980s is not academically rigorous enough, most educators agree that students ages 11–13 have unique social, emotional and academic needs that can best be served in schools dedicated to them.

Ninth graders in high schools have access to a full range of high school offerings and teachers, as well as student support staff, such as counselors and other advisers. They can engage in extracurricular activities and athletics and have the support to help them navigate academic, emotional and social challenges.

Schools organized according to a standard grade configuration will be primarily program-based, as they are now. But we will continue to maintain flexibility. In some cases, one building may house an elementary school and middle school — with one administration serving early childhood through 8th grade — such as in the education centers. In other cases, prekindergarten through 5th grade would be administered as part of a cluster of schools, such as the Capitol Hill cluster, which includes early childhood education, elementary schools and a middle school, but with various grades located in separate buildings.

Key Actions

Convert all DCPS junior high schools (grades 7–9) to middle schools or combined elementary and middle schools. This will require gradually phasing out the city's nine junior high schools by moving all approximately 1,200 9th graders from the current nine junior high schools into the existing 9th-grade programs at the high schools and by moving the approximately 3,000 6th graders currently in elementary schools to the 11 existing middle schools and into the nine newly converted middle schools. DCPS will make major improvements to our middle school programs (details, Strategy 4) to ensure parents are confident that the middle schools are ready to offer high-quality instruction and student support during 6th grade and throughout the middle school years.

Timeline:

- In SY2006–07, prepare to move 6th graders into middle schools and 9th graders into high schools. This will involve:

  - creating a school-specific working group at each school to facilitate staffing and textbook transfers;

  - creating a working group at each school to examine course quality, school staffing, organization and supports for incoming students, such as at the SummerBridge program;

  - developing a 9th-grade preparatory program in the high schools for over-age middle school students who are not academically prepared for the regular 9th-grade program;

  - developing space plans for high schools to accommodate incoming 9th graders;

  - evaluating the potential to use former junior high schools as combined elementary and middle schools, serving prekindergartens through 8th grades; and

  - exploring whether DCPS needs to add middle schools in areas of the city that are underserved.

- In SY2007–08, begin assigning 6th-grade students from feeder elementary schools to newly restructured and strengthened middle schools. Focus on schools where middle school SummerBridge programs and other supports are in place.

- In SY2007–08, begin moving 9th-grade students from all junior high schools into improved 9th-grade programs at the high schools. Ensure that high school SummerBridge programs and other supports are in place.

- In SY2007–08, begin moving over-age 7th and 8th graders from middle schools into 9th-grade preparatory programs in the high schools, with ample student services and supports.

- Complete this transition in SY2008–09.

24. Develop Coherent Feeder Patterns

Rationale

As school districts across the country attempt to offer high-quality instruction to all students, with sufficient supports to help them meet the academic standards, they are trying to coordinate and align programs across grade levels and across schools. Such alignment has multiple advantages: Students and parents know what to expect; the transitions from school to school and level to level are smoother for students; an aligned system is easier for the district to manage and to hold schools accountable for the preparation of students; and educators can better coordinate program offerings so that, for instance, middle school and elementary teachers can work together to strengthen the academic program. Students who attended elementary or middle school together can stay together when they move from one school to another.

Current practice in DCPS falls short of this model. Students in the District currently are assigned to an elementary school, middle or junior high school, and senior high school based on their address and the attendance area boundaries that have been set around each school. A child is guaranteed a seat in his or her "neighborhood" school — elementary school, middle or junior high school, and high school — but he or she may choose to attend another school through a lottery process if there is space available.

DCPS offers no consistent pathway from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school. This lack of coherency means elementary school classmates may be split up for middle school, creating a more difficult transition to middle school for the students. The same is true for the transition to high school.

Transfer activity over the summer, student mobility between schools during the year, and the lack of consistent feeder patterns as students transition between school levels also make it difficult to coordinate student services, curriculum resources, staff and problem solving across schools.

Key Actions

Establish defined school clusters that result from coherent feeder patterns of elementary schools that feed entirely into middle schools, which then feed entirely into high schools.

Did You Know?

- Most school boundaries for DCPS schools were established in the 1970s and have not been changed since.

- Classmates who are in boundary for the same elementary school may be assigned to different middle schools or junior high schools.

Timeline:

- In SY2006–07, conduct the research and submit proposals to the Board of Education for feeder patterns that are both geographic and theme based.

- Improve communications to parents about the new feeder patterns, starting in SY2006–07.

- Implement approved plans for feeder patterns in SY2007–08.

25. Revise Assignment Policy To Better Support Sound Educational Practice and Parental Choice

Rationale

As school systems continue to explore new methods for improving educational outcomes, the practice of allowing parents and students to choose among a variety of schools has emerged as a major trend. Although recent research about the success of choice on improving educational outcomes is mixed, there is sufficient evidence to confirm that whatever choices families make, they are happier for having had the opportunity to make them. In the last couple of years, the debate on school choice has been concerned less with whether there should be more or less choice in education than with how the choice process should be structured and regulated. With the expansion of the number of public schools among which parents may choose to send their children, the way DCPS manages its policy on school choice within DCPS will be critical to retaining and attracting students.

Out-of-Boundary

The out-of-boundary lottery policy provides students citywide access to schools of their choice. Available slots at each school are determined January of every year; students apply and are accepted based on a lottery. To keep children with their classmates, and to find suitable schools for their children, parents may have to participate in an out-of-boundary lottery three times during their children's tenure with DCPS.

Key Actions

Evaluate the effect of the current out-of-boundary transfer policy. Assess the procedures, processes and practices related to the lottery enrollment system to understand its effect on parental choices and the overall enrollment trends of DCPS. Evaluate how the current policy affects collaboration between and among schools of different levels.

Strengthen the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act transfer process. To increase the number of parents and students who choose to utilize their rights of access under NCLB, we need to provide more information about the receiving schools. This will include disseminating information in June about the receiving schools and the availability of transfers for students from schools in need of improvement under NCLB.

Evaluate the effect of the choice/transfer provisions of NCLB. Clarify the relationship between these policies and the out-of-boundary transfer policy. We will need to fully analyze the enrollment patterns of DCPS and public charter school students by various grade levels to understand the choices of parents in relation to proximity to home, school quality, school size and building condition.

Revise the transfer policy to enable students who have transferred into a cluster (see Strategy 24) to continue to the next school level without the standard out-of-area lottery process.

Raise awareness of the out-of-boundary process and parental choices within DCPS. Among other strategies, we will use automated phone calls, particularly to provide 5th-, 6th- and 8th-grade parents with school-by-school information so parents have information about their choices.

Require schools to be more proactive in parent outreach. To help parents better understand their options, schools will have at least one open house a year, host a "buddy day" for students from the feeder school(s), and have information readily available for prospective families and students.

Timeline:

In SY2006–07, as part of the Facility Master Plan:

- Propose revisions to school boundaries to support school clusters and reduce the need for such extensive use of out-of-boundary permission to attend schools located in close proximity to a student's home.

- Propose out-of-boundary policy with revised cluster plans and NCLB requirements.

- Propose a schedule for the implementation of the revised student assignment policy.

- Provide principals and school office staff with support and training to communicate with the public.

Develop a Strong System of Accountability

To develop a strong and valued system of accountability, school districts must keep in mind the primacy of the classroom, where quality teaching and learning must be the standard. Accountability systems, at their best, help schools and school districts stay focused on what has worked for all students, not just for some. In past years, DC Public Schools (DCPS) has tried many strategies, all too often embracing new ones before prior strategies had even been fully implemented or evaluated. This approach, partly the result of instability at all levels of leadership and partly the result of schools making choices about educational reform without the benefit of proven models that are supported by research, must be discarded in favor of strategies that are fully implemented — even as leadership changes.

A new approach is long overdue.

School Board Core Beliefs

We believe that DCPS can be a high-performing organization.

Key Strategies

- Performance management contracts for senior staff
- School measures focused on value-added
- Strong, transparent school improvement strategies
- School-driven improvement strategies
- A robust data management system
- An evaluation partnership
- Annual performance report for DCPS

26. Hold Central Office Leadership Staff Accountable for Supporting Schools

Rationale

An effective central office is essential to school success. Teachers must be hired, books must be purchased and delivered, buildings must be maintained, and so on. To the maximum extent possible, principals and teachers should be able to devote their time to the delivery of school-based programs, services and, most important, instruction.

Key Actions

Establish performance contracts for the senior staff. These performance contracts will set specific goals for each area of responsibility. The superintendent already has a performance contract. The performance contracts shall reflect the Board's core beliefs and be based on the plans set forth in the *Declaration of Education,* Master Education Plan, Facilities

Master Plan and the annual Operating Budget. Central office responsibilities extend beyond the academic programs to areas such as procurement, information technology, human resources, facilities, safety and health, financial management, communications, parent and family involvement, and community partnerships.

Timeline:

- Create performance contracts for members of the senior management team for SY2006–07. These include Chief Academic Officer, Chief Accountability Officer, Chief of Staff, Chief Communications Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Business Operations Officer, Chief of Strategic Planning and Policy, Director of Resource Allocation and Management, and Special Assistant to the Superintendent.

COLLABORATION

The NCLB Act forces unfamiliar choices upon schools and school systems. DCPS will build a broader understanding of how the central office and schools can work together. Currently, schools and the central office frequently act independently of one another.

- Create performance contracts for other senior staff, including assistant superintendents, deputies, executive directors, directors and division heads, for SY2007–08.
- Develop performance contracts for vendors who provide significant services to schools and the school district. (SY2007–08)

27. Use Multiple Measures of Academic Achievement

Rationale

The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act has drawn significant national focus to student performance. Particular attention has been focused on the achievement gaps among many subgroups of students: racial and ethnic groups; students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged stu-

dents; and English language learners (ELL). These gaps often were obscured by the practice of school districts and states to report average scores. NCLB requires that student data be reported by subgroups.

Until now, NCLB has required school districts to use a "status" model to measure school performance. This kind of system

tem compares the performance of different groups of students from year to year (for example, this year's 3rd graders are compared to last year's 3rd graders). "Growth" models, on the other hand, track the performance of students from year to year (for example, the performance of this year's 4th graders are compared to last year's 3rd graders). This kind of measurement allows school systems to measure the

progress made by individual students and/or by groups of the same students. The basic question under this model is, "How much, on average, did students' performance change?"

"Value-added" models allow schools to set annual growth targets based on factors such as the student's previous performance. The basic questions are, "On average, did the students' change in performance meet the growth expectation, and by how much did it miss or exceed the expectation?" (Council of Chief State School Officers *Policymakers' Guide to Growth*

Why Use a Value-Added Model for Measuring School Performance?

Information is power. More information is more powerful. The achievement status of a school is not a sufficient indicator of success. Parents and other concerned citizens want to know if the school is improving the achievement of all students as they move through the school. A second reason often given by principals and teachers is that including value-added in accountability is fairer than current systems. Local staff members are more willing to be held accountable for the growth a student makes as a result of instruction provided in the school rather than all of the things that did or did not happen to the student prior to that instruction.

Models for School Accountability, 2005). Such a model can identify the effectiveness of teachers and schools in relation to students' growth. School districts and states, with the encouragement of the U.S. Department of Education, are now examining the use of growth and value-added models to determine the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) of schools.

Key Actions

Build a value-added system for school performance. DCPS is working with national leaders and the state's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for Accountability and Assessment to develop a value-added accountability model for DCPS. To implement a value-added system, DCPS must continue to improve its data-collection methods and technology infrastructure (see Strategy 30). This will include developing unique identifiers for all public school students and teachers in DC, including those in public charter schools. This will allow the state to identify teachers that are not highly qualified as required by NCLB. In addition, it will permit DCPS to follow the progress of individual students across school years to determine the degree to which teachers and schools are making an impact on the growth of student achievement.

Timeline:

- In SY2006–07, DCPS will strengthen its data collection and technology infrastructure to support a value-added model. DCPS will also develop its approach to a value-added model by working with national experts.

Improving Schools Using NCLB

Under NCLB, the 2001 federal legislation, each state must submit a plan that categorizes schools by their performance and spells out a strategy for school improvement. DCPS is both a state education authority, performing state educational functions for the District of Columbia, and a local education authority (LEA), managing a school system. This document describes DCPS strategies as an LEA.

- In SY2006–07, DCPS will pilot the value-added system in partnership with schools.
- By SY2006–07, DCPS will ask the state education agency to require all public schools, including charters, to develop unique student and teacher identifiers.
- By SY2007–08, DCPS will develop reader-friendly report cards that will help parents know how much academic growth their child is making in one year.

28. Implement a Strong and Transparent Central Office Strategy for School Improvement

Rationale

One of the most important roles played by the central office under the NCLB Act is following the mandate to intervene in schools that have not made adequate yearly progress (AYP). Core elements of DCPS' approach to school improvement include:

- Further develop and fully implement a focused approach to academics and accountability, including the full alignment of standards, textbooks, curricula, assessments, and supports for principals and teachers (see Chapter I).

- Provide a professional development program for teachers and principals aligned with standards (see Chapter II).

- Create a culture of inclusion (Chapter III) and offer multiple supports to students, depending on their individual needs (Chapter IV).

- Expand and articulate school-community partnerships to better and more strategically support students and schools through a full-service community school model, clear partnership priorities and internal capacity building to support partnerships (Chapter V).

Under NCLB, school districts must take certain actions when schools fail to meet specific achievement targets. DCPS has implemented an accelerated school improvement model with five levels of performance. (The five levels of performance and the related interventions are described in the side-

NCLB INTERVENTIONS

Incentive Schools

Incentive schools are schools that achieve AYP under NCLB and are recognized and rewarded with increased flexibility and autonomy. Incentive schools that score higher than the 70th percentile are recognized as high-performing schools.

Targeted Assistance (1 year not making AYP)

Targeted assistance schools will:

- Develop leadership support teams to review the school's practices, programs and services, and prescribe specific intervention strategies.

- Focus on improving academic achievement by strengthening the curriculum as the primary tool for addressing individual students' academic needs.

Schools in Need of Improvement (2 years not making AYP)

These schools will receive intensive training from on-site coaches and external audit teams. Teachers in these schools will receive job-embedded training that emphasizes the use of data to analyze students' academic needs and prescribe specific, curriculum-based strategies for each child. These strategies will be based on detailed curriculum guides aligned to the new DCPS standards and tests.

Corrective Action (3 years not making AYP)

These schools will select at least one of the following options:

- Targeted changes in staffing or leadership with adequate resources and a clear improvement plan;

- Comprehensive strategy for school improvement with appropriate supports for implementing the model; and/or

- Selection of an Instructional Management Organization (IMO), which typically provides support, training and coaching for existing staff within a school.

Restructuring (4 years not making AYP)

They must implement one of the following options:

- Major restructuring of a school with changes in leadership and staffing;

- Selection of an IMO; or

- Selection of an Educational Management Organization (EMO), which typically brings in its own staff to operate a school and uses its own systems — personnel, training, financial management and similar tasks.

These actions are consistent with the possible actions under NCLB. For further information on these options, please visit the U.S. Department of Education's Web site at www.ed.gov.

bar to the right). This plan, for the first time, provides recognitions as well as interventions. In addition, schools that fail to achieve the AYP goals for the first time are identified so that steps can be taken to prevent them from being classified as "in need of improvement." By accelerating the NCLB identification model by one year, DCPS will introduce interventions immediately when schools do not achieve the goals, and progressive consequences will take effect earlier if schools continue to not make progress.

Key Actions

Select or develop comprehensive school restructuring models for each school level. With 12 schools involved in restructuring and, unfortunately, more expected as the targets for AYP rise, DCPS needs clear, well-understood restructuring models. Some models, such as the America's Choice program (sidebar, next page), are already in use. However,

Adequate Yearly Progress

To meet the requirements of NCLB, schools must achieve annual performance targets or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP is measured by annual tests in reading and mathematics (districts will also have to use science tests in spring 2008), plus graduation rates at the high school level and attendance rates at the elementary and middle school levels. To make AYP, schools must meet or exceed AYP benchmarks for all students and all subgroups.

using externally administered models can be expensive. Therefore, DCPS needs models it can implement primarily using school and central office staff. Weight will be given to models that are already being successfully deployed in DCPS and similar cities. These may include models provided by an external organization, where the organization agrees to "teach the model" as opposed to staffing the school with its own personnel or developing a "homegrown" model that draws from best practices. This will also include consideration of Educational Management Organizations (EMOs) and Instructional Management Organizations (IMOs) as partners. As a part of this effort, DCPS will develop guidelines on how to work with the school community when restructuring is required. The selection process shall be transparent and incorporate parent, teacher, principal and community input.

Timeline:

- DCPS will select school restructuring models during SY2005–06 for implementation in SY2006–07 in all 12 schools.

- In subsequent years, DCPS will continue to provide technical assistance to support restructuring models.

Develop a protocol to support flexibility and autonomy for higher-performing schools. The protocol will guide central administration, local schools and Local School Restructuring Teams as decisions are made about creating greater autonomy and flexibility for schools over issues such as budget, professional development, personnel, facility

A Flexibility Model

New York City Public Schools have had great success with increasing the flexibility of schools through a partnership with an intermediary, New Visions for Public Schools. New Visions raises funds, provides technical assistance and has developed a school creation model in which a portfolio of unique schools is created. DCPS will consider creating a similar entity as a part of developing the flexibility protocol.

management, governance and management. The protocol will generally allow more flexibility and autonomy in exchange for greater accountability and performance. Eligible schools will be those that are high performing and/or showing steady improvement.

Timeline:

- DCPS will develop the flexibility and autonomy protocol for schools during SY2006–07 for implementation in SY2007–08. We expect that up to 5 percent of the schools will qualify in the first year, 10 percent in the second year.

Revise format for local school improvement plan to support more integrated planning. Currently, local school improvement plans only require limited reporting from schools about how overall school performance will be improved. The format for the plans will be revised, in part-

Multiple Interventions Under Way

The most dramatic intervention is restructuring. In SY2005–06, 12 DCPS schools were identified as being in need of restructuring, and they received major interventions. All high schools in restructuring will implement as part of their interventions the **America's Choice program.** (America's Choice is a national school restructuring model that features intense leadership training and professional development, with a focus on accelerating student gains in reading and mathematics.) All the middle grade schools in restructuring will implement the part of the America's Choice program called Ramp-Up. The two elementary schools in restructuring are receiving intensive literacy support through a partnership among the Teachers' Institute (a nonprofit founded with support from DCPS by former DCPS principals, teachers and librarians), Columbia University's Teachers' College Reading and Writing Project, and DCPS.

DCPS also has created a program so that all schools can learn from the highest-performing schools through **Best Practices Modeling.** In the FY2006 operating budget, $2 million was made available for high-performing schools to demonstrate best practices to lower-performing schools. Examples of the Demonstration Models include:

- Oyster Elementary School established an on-site training institute for schools starting or desiring to start a dual-language model.

- Lafayette Elementary focused on integrating arts with technology.

- Mann Elementary created a readers' and writers' workshop using active learning.

- Key Elementary developed a special education inclusion model.

- Whittier Elementary developed a model for improving school climate.

In addition to these specific interventions, DCPS has created supports and programming to help schools improve their performance. They include:

Solution Teams provide direct, on-site services to schools. Solution Teams include retired principals, instructional coaches, and other content and management specialists. The services provided include:

- Developing and modeling effective lessons;

- Entering student data into the new student information system;

- Developing schools' automated schedule and scheduling students for classes;

- Assisting in the development of school improvement plans; and

- Providing daily support and mentoring for new principals.

There is currently only one DCPS Solution Team. This team has directly served new principals at 48 schools and assisted 12 schools currently classified as being "in need of corrective action."

Literacy and Mathematics Coaches provide direct, on-site services to schools. Coaches provide expert instructional training, primarily in reading and mathematics, although coaches also may assist schools with special education services, policies and procedures, and other areas of need. Instructional coaches often help teachers develop strategies to better manage their classrooms. Currently, there are 14 Literacy Coaches and four Mathematics Coaches.

Where interventions are needed, the purposes and strategies must be clearly communicated to the schools and school communities. Generally, such efforts are made in conjunction with the school leadership. However, if a school continues to not make progress, the schools would likely be permitted less input into decisions and less autonomy over interventions.

Local School Restructuring Teams (LSRT)

Local School Restructuring Teams, required for all schools, advise the principal on ways to improve student achievement. Members include the principal, teachers, parents, support staff, a community representative and student (high school).

nership with schools, to address broader school performance goals, better integrate out-of-school-time activities, request assistance, such as content coaches and professional development and, as appropriate, discuss desired flexibility and autonomy.

Timeline:

- Revise the local school improvement plan format for use in SY2007–08.

Expand supports. DCPS will expand supports to help schools, including the number of Solution Teams and Literacy and Mathematics Coaches. Solution Teams will include central office staff reassigned to spend most of their time working directly in schools.

Timeline:

- Expand the number of Solution Teams from one to five in SY2006–07, allowing for more in-depth work with

schools. DCPS will also add 12 Literacy Coaches and six Mathematics Coaches in SY2006–07. Budget permitting, we would like to add 12 coaches in each subject in SY2007–08.

29. Encourage Schools To Continue Implementing Local and Aligned School Improvement Strategies

Rationale

When schools have the power to demonstrate progress over time, great results can occur. Revitalized central office leadership in areas from curriculum to accountability is essential. But equally important is *local school leadership* so that principals, teachers and Local School Restructuring Teams are thinking proactively and creatively about their own school improvement strategy, which is aligned to overall district priorities.

Key Actions

Continue to invite schools to develop holistic and integrated local school improvement plans. Schools are invited to develop school improvement plans that holistically address the needs and interests of students and strategically integrate all activities and programming to focus on those needs and aspirations. Plans must have clear strategies for improving student achievement in line with NCLB targets. Plans also should define the supports that are requested from the central office or other organizations.

Invite schools to participate in school–initiated restructuring. Some schools have the leadership capacity to lead their own restructuring. The central office will consider requests where the schools' plans meet specific improvement

Community Survey Results

High-performing schools should be given more flexibility: 89% support

and achievement criteria. In evaluating requests, the central office will consider the quality and depth of the school-based leadership, the role of partners that can assist, and the overall number of requests, knowing that the central office has constrained capacity to support local restructuring.

Timeline:

- All schools will be encouraged to develop more in-depth school improvement plans on an ongoing basis; quality planning is not a one-time-only activity.

- For low-performing schools, school improvement planning will include external reviews that closely monitor the schools' intervention strategies.

- Eligible schools can express interest in school-initiated restructuring at any time. Schools without a clear school improvement strategy are encouraged to wait until restructuring models have been selected (see page 91).

30. Build a Fully Operational, Robust Information Management and Data-Sharing System To Support School Improvement Efforts

Rationale

Having access to timely and accurate data is essential for accomplishing other academic goals, including assessing student performance and providing timely reports to teachers, principals, parents and students; intervening in a timely way, whether to preclude unnecessary referrals to special education programs or adjusting instructional supports for struggling students; and providing transparent, understandable information that helps the community hold schools accountable for results.

Key Actions

Implement SchoolNet. The Offices of Instructional Technology and Information Technology are developing the project plan for the implementation of the SchoolNet data system. This is a large and complex project; data from several independent systems must be integrated to make the information available and useful for non-technical users, such as teachers, principals, parents and the public. These currently independent systems include programs such as DC STAR, ENCORE and NCLB Report Card data systems.

Timeline:

- Initiate use of SchoolNet in the first pilot schools in September 2006. Since this is a large and complex project, the data in this system are not likely to be fully available until late fall 2006.

- Expand SchoolNet implementation systemwide in SY2007–08.

DCPS has partnered with SchoolNet to develop and implement a comprehensive, Web-based data system that will give teachers and principals timely access to student performance data. This will allow them to:

- revise and strengthen their instruction;
- develop additional curriculum materials, such as lesson plans;
- collaborate with each other more effectively; and
- target academic interventions more precisely.

The software also will allow central office administrators to:

- monitor administrative data, including demographics, test scores and attendance data;
- align the curriculum across the system;
- track the extent to which the standards are being covered in class; and
- establish an instructional planning system for teachers.

31.
Develop a Research and Evaluation Partnership and Protocol To Increase the Understanding of "What Works"

Rationale

It is hard to improve schools when you are not completely sure what works and what does not. While the level of understanding about successful techniques, strategies and programs has grown at a national level, that broad understanding does not substitute for more in-depth analysis of our *local* efforts, in part because models vetted at the national level are always adapted as they are implemented locally.

Further, it is difficult to evaluate a particular program and understand its impact over time without a supportive research infrastructure. For example, there are clear, initial positive impacts from DCPS' pilot implementation of the SummerBridge program described in Strategy 17. Will the positive impacts of the program sustain themselves through graduation? Beyond? Or were the positive impacts a result of the particular students who ended up in the program? Some school systems partner with local universities and maintain a large database that keeps data over time, allowing for these and other types of questions to be answered.

The Consortium on Chicago School Research is considered a strong national model research partnership. It conducts research on Chicago's public schools, the problems they face and mechanisms for improvement. The consortium, founded in 1990 and located at the University of Chicago, is guided by an independent federation of Chicago-area organizations comprising university scholars, foundation representatives, school system officials and reform group leaders.

Key Actions

Pursue the development of a partnership with one or more local research organizations or universities. Partnerships with research institutions bring expertise and capacity that DCPS does not have. The partnership will be developed with a focus on a sustainable, long-term strategy for research and evaluation. This effort will build from the positive relationships DCPS has with many universities and organizations.

Timeline:

- DCPS will identify potential partners in SY2006–07.
- DCPS will have a research partnership in place in SY2007–08.

32. Publish an Annual Performance Report for DCPS

Rationale

DCPS is required to publish a variety of performance reports for the state and local board of education, city council, federal agencies and other regulatory bodies. Data are collected, but often are not generally available to parents, guardians and other members of the public. Some data are hard to collect because the processes have not been automated.

In the *Declaration of Education,* DCPS committed to making its performance more understandable and transparent to the public. To help fulfill this commitment, DCPS will develop an annual performance report for the system. This document shall cover major topics presented in the *Declaration of Education,* Master Education Plan, Facilities Master Plan and the annual Operating Budget. This effort will be launched during SY2006–07.

As part of this plan, we also are making available online in-depth profiles of every school in the district through DCPS School Close-Ups. (Details, page 13)

Key Actions

Publish the first annual performance report at the end of SY2006–07. The report will include data on central office and school performance and will reflect goals set forth in this Plan, the *Declaration of Education,* Facilities Master Plan and other official plans.

Timeline:

- The first performance report will be published by August 2007 and published annually thereafter.

Make Sure That Every Child Has Access to an Appropriate Range of Educational Resources

Our city is changing. A significant challenge for DCPS is adjusting to the changing demographic conditions in District neighborhoods and the growth in the number of charter schools. These changes have affected all wards in the city. Although births since 1990 have dropped significantly in all wards, they have risen quite a bit since 1999 in Wards 4 and 8 and slightly in Wards 5 and 7.

One of the reasons for the change in birth statistics is neighborhood redevelopment. Housing redevelopment has reduced population density in many low-income neighbor-hoods and has contributed to significant enrollment drops in many DCPS schools. For
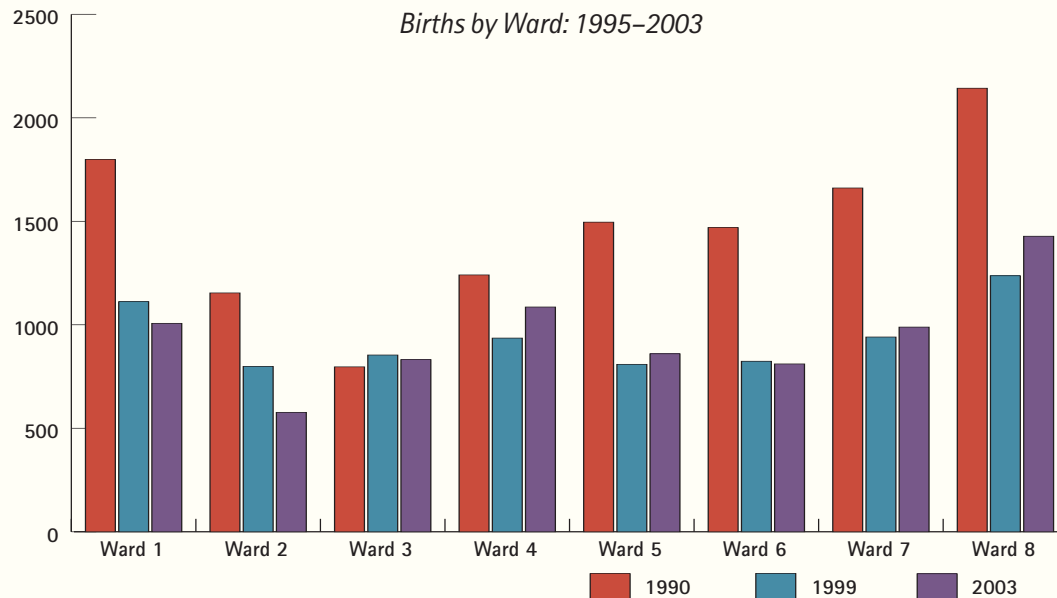
Highlights

Recommended minimum school sizes to support a complete core academic program are:

- Elementary schools (318 students: two classes per grade);
- Middle schools (360 students: five classes per grade); and
- High schools (600–700 students: two sections per course).

Births by Ward: 1995–2003

Legend: 1990, 1999, 2003

example, the population of Van Ness Elementary School declined from 485 students in 1997 to only 78 students in 2005. This was largely the result of the demolition of low-income housing units where students who attended Van Ness lived. While 24 schools have maintained or increased enrollment over the last 10 years, the other 123 have declined.

To support the implementation of the Master Education Plan's education objectives, DCPS will align its budget to the Plan. It will improve its school-based budgeting approach so it will be more equitable, transparent and stable, and it will help local schools with their own planning.

We also will re-organize some schools so that space and staff are allocated efficiently in support of high-quality educational programs and services. Most schools will be self-contained, responsible only for their own DCPS students and staff, but some will have to share staff and/or space. Others will have to consolidate. Although changing school boundaries and closing schools is always a challenge, DCPS is responsible for ensuring that its funds are spent fairly and effectively to improve student achievement. The result will be a better school system, one that will be able to take advantage of many of our small schools to meet the diverse needs of students and provide the range of choices desired by families. But it also will be a school system that is better balanced, in which students in larger schools are not penalized with less funding just to maintain schools that are too small to independently provide an adequate education.

33. Allocate Sufficient Funds to the Local Schools for High-Quality Programs and School-Based Decision-Making

Rationale

The city government uses a method called the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF) to determine local funding for DCPS and public charter school budgets. It sets a minimum foundation amount that is needed to provide an adequate level of services to the school system on a per-student basis. The foundation amount varies annually; it takes into account inflationary factors and is derived on a per-student basis, applying different weights to grade levels and students with special needs. The formula is expected to cover school-based instruction and pupil support as well as noninstructional services (such as facilities or security), administration and other overhead. The school system and charter schools will receive a base foundation of $7,600 per student in Fiscal Year (FY) 2007.

Once DCPS receives this funding from the city, budgets are established, setting aside the projected amounts needed to cover facilities costs, operations, special education, profes-

sional development and central overhead. The remainder of funding (usually about 50 percent of the total) is allocated to local schools, using the Weighted Student Formula (WSF). The WSF was introduced in 1999 to create equity and transparency in the allocation of school-level funding. Under the WSF, similar to the UPSFF, each student is allocated a certain amount of base funding; depending upon his or her grade level and special needs category, additional funding covers services for these specific needs. The WSF also adds funding to account for the student's economic status, whereas the UPSFF does not.

This funding is intended to follow each student to his or her school and to provide a sufficient proportion of the total funding for the local school to fully staff its local administration, classrooms and custodial operations. However, as enrollment declined, the original WSF system was modified to subsidize the smallest schools, which resulted in wide differences in the amount of funding each student received. In addition, local schools have had to absorb staff raises, which has significantly reduced their purchasing power.

Key Actions

Ensure that local schools receive sufficient funding. DCPS supports the state education agency's recommended

increase in the Uniform Per Pupil Funding Formula and the ongoing alignment of funding increases to negotiated and Council-approved pay increases. We will continue to seek adequate funding for state-level costs associated with special education transportation and private tuition, so cost increases or overruns caused by these court mandates are not paid for by reduced funding to the local schools.

The WSF Committee should be maintained as an ongoing venue for revisions and recommendations to local school budgeting and school-level funding.

Timeline:

- Ongoing.

Strengthen local school budget planning to ensure minimum programming. DCPS will establish regular training sessions to help Local School Restructuring Teams align their school-based budgets to Master Education Plan priorities — such as fully staffing art, music and physical education classes and libraries.

Timeline:

- Implement in SY2006–07.

34. Ensure That All Schools Are Large Enough To Offer an Adequate Program

Rationale

A school system committed to offering high-quality teaching and learning in every classroom in every school (Goal 1 of the *Declaration of Education*) must offer equal educational opportunities to all students. To provide sufficient funding to support a high-quality basic program in every school, DCPS must ensure that it is using its staff — both local school and central office personnel — efficiently and effectively. It also must fully use its building capacity to maximize the resources getting to the classroom.

Key Actions

Make sure that all schools can offer an adequate instructional program. (Chapter I describes our vision of an adequate instructional program.) Schools with enroll-

Community Survey Results

All students should have access to the same programs, even if several small schools must be consolidated: 74% support

Larger schools can provide more options and programs: 82% support

Close and consolidate schools with very low enrollment: 89% support

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ments that are too small to offer a full program without subsidies will have one or more of the following options:

- pair with another school to share administrative and/or teaching staff;
- share space with a public agency or private organization with a compatible use, such as a public charter school, private special education program, health clinic, library or community-based organization (details on proposed guidelines for co-locations in Strategy 22);
- reassign students to other neighborhood schools and close; or
- relocate as a small learning community within another DCPS school.

If, however, a school has enough students but too much space, DCPS will develop ways to downsize or share buildings. If a school has too few students to sustain itself, DCPS will develop plans to reassign students to schools that are able to provide an adequate educational curriculum, student supports and services.

Where there is appropriate space, DCPS will use former junior high schools to combine an elementary school and a middle school — aligned as a pre-K–8 campus to obtain the benefits of

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a larger school size with shared administration, staff and student supports, while retaining neighborhood access to elementary and middle grade levels in the community.

Suggested Thresholds

Elementary schools. To pay for a basic program (including library teachers and classes in art, music and physical education at least once a week), an elementary school will need two classes per grade — or approximately 318 students, with class sizes of between 15 and 25 students, per the current Washington Teachers Union contract. (See "A Closer Look," page 102, for a description of what each school will need to provide an adequate program.) Even with 318 students, the school may be able to retain certain positions on a part-time basis only. To obtain all of the necessary instructional services *without partial positions,* the school would need to maintain an enrollment of 500 students.

Middle schools. With a minimum of five classes per grade and class sizes of 24 students, a middle school would need to have a minimum of 360 students to offer the core academic program. Again, this assumes that some positions may be part time.

High schools. With an enrollment of 350 students, high schools can provide only one section of each course in all of the content areas required for a regular diploma. To provide a more

comprehensive program and meet the needs of a more diverse student population, schools would need to be significantly larger; providing two sections of each core subject would require 600–700 students, for instance.

Timeline:

- By fall 2006, solicit voluntary proposals from school communities to consolidate with other schools, co-locate with a charter school or community partner, and/or share services with a partnering school.

- In SY2006–07, develop a plan to reorganize elementary, middle and high schools that are too small to offer a full program, using one or more of the options described in this section: close, share staff, rent space or relocate program to a larger school. Begin implementing this plan in SY2007–08.

- Determine whether to convert former junior high schools into middle or pre-K–8 schools or to close them. (SY2006–07)

- In SY2006–07, identify co-location partners and space for co-location in underused schools and then begin sharing space with these partners.

- In SY2006–07, start reducing use of DCPS space by an amount specified by the School Board.

A Closer Look

Supporting the Elementary School Core Program

Definitions of viability and adequacy will vary. However, as part of its effort to achieve greater equity in funding, the WSF Committee tested the purchasing power of schools, using the assumptions advanced in the Master Education Plan, to determine school viability thresholds. To support the core academic program described in Chapter I, every elementary school will be required to have, at a minimum:

- A full-time principal and full-time administrative aide budgeted at the systemwide average cost.

- Systemwide class sizes per the current Washington Teachers Union contract: 15 students in pre-K without an aide, 20 with an aide; 20 students in kindergarten–grade 2; and 25 students in grades 3–6. For Title I schools, size would be reduced to 23 students in grades 3–5.

- Enough art, music and physical education teachers on at least a part-time basis that every student can have one period per week in these subjects. Schools may use an outside partner to provide programming.

- A librarian at least half time and a school counselor for every 250 students, which is the national standard.

- A Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach at least half time at all Title I schools.

- An aide for each preschool and pre-K class with more than 15 students (per the Washington Teachers Union contract).

- 3.5 percent of its total general education budget allocated for operations.

- $6,900 allocated for substitutes.

- At least one custodian foreman and two custodians.

- A Head Start teacher paid 40 percent by central office (the school covers the remaining 60 percent) and a Head Start aide paid by central office for each preschool class.

Supporting the Middle School Core Program

To support the core academic program described in Chapter I, the WSF Committee is assuming that every middle school will be required to have, at a minimum:

- Class sizes of 24 students.

- Art, music and physical education at least once a week.

- World language, technology and character education program.

- A fully functioning library.

- A counselor for every 250 students.

- A social worker and psychologist for every 400 students.

- A Reading and Mathematics Coach for every 350 students.

- 3.5 percent of its general education budget allocated for books, materials and supplies.

- At least one custodian foreman and two custodians.

Supporting the High School Core Program

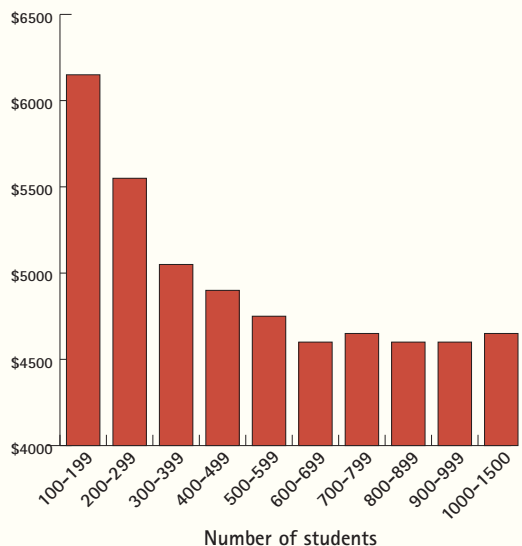To support the core academic program described in Chapter I, the WSF Committee is assuming that every senior high school must have sufficient enrollment to support the staffing required to offer all courses needed to meet graduation requirements (currently 23.5 units but soon to be raised to 26.0 for a regular diploma) or partner with another school to ensure that it can offer a full academic program.

35. Ensure School-Based Funds Are Allocated Equitably and Transparently

Rationale

Over the past 10 years, DCPS enrollment has declined by nearly 18,000 students, but the system continues to operate the same number of schools. Many small schools cannot provide the minimum educational requirements and services without substantial subsidies. The method DCPS has used to determine subsidies over the last five years has involved creating a "floor plan," which assumes that every school has at least 300 students and therefore is entitled to a basic level of staffing whether the enrollment reaches 300 or not. The modified WSF, particularly at the elementary level, eliminated any pressure on small schools to consolidate or share resources with other schools. These subsidies came at the detriment of other schools, especially those with larger or growing enrollments, creating wide inequities in per-pupil funding across the system.

As the table shows, the current differences in per-pupil funding are significant. The smallest Title I school receives $7,617 per pupil, compared to the average elementary school per-pupil expenditure of $6,186 — a difference of $1,431. Title I schools receive additional federal funds based on an economic poverty factor that requires at least 35 percent of their students to be eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Among non-Title 1 elementary schools, which receive no additional economic entitlement, very small schools receive $1,227 more local funds per pupil.

In the FY2006 budget, $11.2 million was used to increase funding for the smallest schools. Approximately 32 DCPS schools (including small special education centers) have enrollments of 250 students or less and 50 elementary schools have enrollments of 300 students or less. The inequities in funding ultimately result in the dilution of educational programming because resources are spread so thinly across a wider base of schools. As a result, larger schools — many of them high schools — have not realized their full entitlement under the pure application of the formula, even as their enrollments have increased or remained the same.

Equity is an important foundation for funding local schools, but DCPS needs the flexibility to test and support innovation, initiatives and exceptional programs. The public likewise has the right to know how specialty funds are allocated to the local schools.

	Enrollment	Current Per-Pupil Expenditure
Title I elementary schools		
Extremely small	142	$7,617
Very small	182	$7,125
Average	323	$6,186
Non-Title I elementary schools		
Very small	174	$6,514
Average	321	$5,287

Key Actions

Phase out the subsidy for small schools. This will require eliminating the "floor plan" and reducing the subsidy amount from $11.2 million in FY2006 to $3.9 million in FY2007, which will affect schools that are below the thresholds of 318 students for elementary school, 360 students for middle school and 600 students for high schools. The remaining $7.3 million would be redistributed into the WSF base. In FY2008, DCPS would eliminate the small-school subsidy altogether.

Timeline:

- Begin phasing out subsidy in FY2007 and eliminate it in FY2008.

SY2005–06 Per-Pupil Allocation to the Local Schools by School Size, According to WSF Basic and Floor Plan

Number of students

36. Create Stable Funding and Establish Consistent Budget Timelines for Local School Planning

Rationale

DCPS has not had a standard calendar for reconciling projected enrollments with actual enrollments. This has led to instability and lack of predictability for local schools. These conditions have been exacerbated by the significant yet uneven decline in school population. Over three years, the actual enrollment at 47 schools has averaged at least 22 students less than projected, which disrupts these and other schools. Some schools are receiving less than they need to staff their classrooms, and other schools have more than their fair share.

Key Actions

Improve the budget allocation and reconciliation process. DCPS will send fall enrollment projections to the local schools for review by February of the preceding school year. Adjustments, if necessary, will be made based on principal input. Each school also will receive a budget allocation memo and instructions shortly thereafter. Principals and Local School

Restructuring Team members will be trained in program-based and performance budgeting. Local school budgets will be approved by March 30. For schools with significant historical variance between and among projected, actual and audited enrollment, DCPS will hold back a portion of the local school allocation. School-level allocations will be reconciled early in the school year, based on October enrollment.

Timeline:

- Start training in SY2006–07 to make local schools aware of the reconciliation timelines and importance of early registration.

- Launch an aggressive public campaign urging parents to register students by September to ensure that proper student counts can be conducted earlier in the school year, prior to October.

COMMUNITY VOICES

"What is achieved by reduced class size? If we have classes of 16 now and we're still not producing scholars, what other issues do we need to address?"

"Classes and schools should not be so small that they 'break the bank.' There has to be a balance."

"I think we need to look at the number of small schools in a neighborhood and their facilities, so we can make sure we have great places of learning or consolidate if that will support our ability to have better buildings."

"Sharing staff and administrative costs between small schools makes sense."

"Must allow flexibility for small, successful, specialized schools."

Next Steps

The Master Education Plan (MEP) is both an important implementation tool and a springboard to deeper work on a variety of issues. The MEP proposes a system that is designed around a *high-quality core curriculum;* surrounded by layers of *student, staff and school support strategies;* integrated with transparent *accountability guidelines;* and seated firmly on a *cohesive organizational foundation.*

The Plan was submitted to the Board of Education on Feb. 27, 2006, for consideration and subsequent adoption.

Important related initiatives include:

■ **The FY2007 Operating Budget.** The priorities established in the MEP will drive our budget for next year and future years. See page 113 and "MEP Budget Implications," page 117.

■ **Facilities Master Plan (FMP).** The FMP, which will establish a building-by-building approach to facilities, will be developed based upon the educational priorities set forth in this document. It will be completed in May 2006. Facilities implications from the MEP are summarized on the following pages.

■ **Education Implementation Plans.** Throughout this document, we have called for major planning processes, such as redesigning middle school and high school, developing a wider array of extended learning opportunities, developing a state-of-the-art career and technical education system, and establishing Parent Resource Centers. These will require Education Implementation Plans, which will spell out in more

detail the specific activities, timelines and staff responsibilities for full implementation of the recommended action steps. A list of these is provided on page 114.

Summary of Facilities Implications from MEP

In many school districts across the United States, school facilities problems are often described as "the tail that wags the dog." Shifting enrollment patterns and aging infrastructure have focused far too much attention on what should be just one part of an underlying support system for a successful school district. Yet plagued by too little space, too much space or simply poor space, districts make budget decisions that do not reflect their educational priorities.

Poor conditions and excess capacity in DCPS have been publicly debated for many years. But for DCPS, especially for DCPS, *all* decisions must focus first on improving education in the classroom. For this reason, the superintendent called for the development of the MEP. One of the primary goals for this Plan is to lay out the educational framework and provide policy guidance for development of the FMP Update. This section summarizes some of the key recommendations in the MEP as they relate to school use, building design and the future of the DCPS infrastructure.

Ensure Challenging Curriculum and Instruction for All Students (Chapter I)

By focusing on learning in the classroom, the recommendations in this chapter envision how every DCPS school should operate in the future. It answers the question of what

we will teach and how we will teach it. In doing so, it provides the criteria for defining how school buildings should be designed and configured to support the educational programs. Some recommendations will affect enrollment; others will require facilities improvements, expansions or consolidations. Key recommendations that will affect facilities planning include the following.

Elementary Schools

- Adding art, music, physical education and science as core subjects in elementary and middle school

- Enhancing the role of library media centers

- Sending all 6th-grade students to middle schools

- Adding more preschool and prekindergarten students

Middle Schools

- Developing an interdisciplinary, student-focused middle school model that will attract and retain more students

- Moving all 6th-grade students into middle schools serving only grades 6–8

- Developing pre-K–8 demonstration schools, perhaps organized around a single instructional theme such as the arts or science/technology

High Schools

- Providing greater flexibility to allow students to graduate in three, four or five years

- Moving all 9th-grade students to 9th-grade centers in the high schools

- Moving overage 8th-grade students into specialized programs at the high schools

Expect Teachers and Principals Will Deliver High-Quality Instruction to Every Student (Chapter II)

No facilities implications.

Construct a Seamless, Inclusive System That Serves All Students from Prekindergarten through Grade 12 (Chapter III)

This chapter discusses the wide range of program offerings that DCPS will provide to meet the diverse learning needs and interests of its students … and how we will implement our commitment to educate special education and alternative education students in their home school, to the maximum extent possible.

- Expanding early childhood programs by annually adding 200 seats (12 classrooms) for 4 year olds and 200 seats (12 classrooms) for 3 year olds

- Developing an "inclusive school" model and differentiated learning opportunities for students with special needs, who will be served at their home school whenever feasible

- Developing a continuum for special education services that will close all stand-alone special education centers and provide more inclusive settings in regular schools

- Developing a continuum for alternative education services, and expanding the options as needed

- Completing the implementation of a comprehensive career and technical education program that creates three to five specialized centers for construction, medical/health and hospitality/tourism, among others

Provide a Variety of Supports for Students To Succeed (Chapter IV)

This chapter addresses the increasing number of supports, from summer school to parent involvement, which we will be providing to help ensure that all students meet the learning standards.

- Establishing Jobs for America's Graduates — District of Columbia (JAG–DC) and reducing dropout rates

- Implementing a more strategic promotion and retention plan focusing on the key grades of 3, 5, 8 and 10

- Creating and expanding programs to provide extended learning and out-of-school-time opportunities for students, increasing opportunities for co-location

- Establishing five one-stop Parent Resource Centers to provide services and/or referrals to outside services that will reduce barriers to parents' ability to help their children succeed, such as parents' own literacy and numeracy challenges and/or other social and economic factors

Build on Our Community's Assets (Chapter V)

This chapter answers the question of who will partner with DCPS to support the whole child, families and teachers. It provides the criteria for defining how school buildings should be designed and configured to encourage the communities that support our children.

- Developing "full-service" community schools to provide integrated health, social, educational and recreational services for children and families

- Expanding strong partnerships with community-based organizations, international groups and parents — more extensive use of school facilities is a high priority for many city leaders, residents and DCPS staff, and DCPS will review current policies and practices with the expectation that it will encourage greater use of space in schools in the future

Organize Schools To Better Serve the Needs of Students (Chapter VI)

This chapter outlines the key infrastructure changes that are needed to support program and grade organization changes.

- Organizing schools primarily around pre-K–5 (elementary school), grades 6–8 (middle school) and grades 9–12 (high school)

- Developing at least four pre-K–8 demonstration schools

- Revising feeder patterns among elementary, middle and high schools to reflect and encourage neighborhood-based continuity, which may require boundary changes

- Reviewing choice patterns and out-of-boundary attendance policies

Develop a Strong System of Accountability (Chapter VII)

Accountability is central to the success of any plan and the focus of this chapter. Although there are no immediate facilities implications in this section, two recommendations should be highlighted.

- Renovating some school facilities, if other "reform models" are used in schools that require Corrective Action or Restructuring

- Implementing parts of the MEP through the FMP Update — one of many steps toward greater accountability

Make Sure That Every Child Has Access to an Appropriate Range of Educational Resources (Chapter VIII)

This chapter establishes the minimum school sizes needed to support equitable school programs and services as defined in Chapter I. Schools that are too small to offer an adequate program without subsidies will close, consolidate with another school and/or share their space with other organizations — all with major implications for facilities use.

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This MEP provides a roadmap for the educational approaches, structures and organization that will help DCPS toward its goal of high-quality teaching and learning in every classroom in every school.

Next, the FMP will describe the buildings, space configurations and other physical assets needed to support the educational programs identified in the MEP and ensure that school buildings are used efficiently. The FMP, to be presented to the Board of Education in May 2006, will include plans and priorities for addressing:

- Building capacity and design for educational and community programs
- Condition of buildings and grounds
- Use of DC public school buildings
- Co-location and public-private partnerships

- Administrative space needs

- Financial feasibility

DCPS has an FMP that was vetted by the community in 2000 and updated in 2003. This upcoming effort will align the current plan to the MEP to offer solutions to better use the school district's building inventory and to create a financially feasible facilities plan.

School facilities, especially at this moment in the District, are a community issue. The Council of the District of Columbia; a wide array of community, neighborhood and advocacy groups; and charter schools and their associations all have a legitimate interest in facilities issues. Over the next few months, we will be reaching out to the community in many ways to work with us to develop the best solution for our children.

Budget and Resource Allocations

The MEP has major resource implications (see next chapter). Many programs will require additional funding, either by reallocating existing resources or by seeking new resources (city, federal and philanthropic). That is why we decided to release the MEP and the FY2007 Operating Budget simultaneously. The FY2007 Operating Budget will address immediate needs for SY2007–08, including programs already identified as Unmet Needs as well as additional priorities recommended by this Plan. We will continue to look at ways to fund the MEP priorities this fiscal year and beyond — through reallocating funds

and/or requesting new funds. In addition, the Office of Resource Allocations and Management has proposed a multiyear budget as one of its packages of planned reforms. The Capital Budget also will address some proposals for information technology.

Education Implementation Plans

Many of the Key Actions described by the MEP will be implemented immediately. In other areas, additional planning will be needed. Much of this work will be performed by staff as part of their responsibilities to implement the MEP's recommendations: developing budgets, designing departmental management plans, hiring and/or reallocating staff, and managing for results.

Some of the additional planning, however, will require major input from parents and other community stakeholders. Major planning processes that will move forward in the next two years include:

- Select and/or develop a middle school model, drawing from the work of national organizations (Chapter I).

- Select and/or develop a pre-K–8 model, drawing from the work of national organizations (Chapter I).

- Assemble an advisory board of teachers, principals and others to guide the professional development program (Chapter II).

- Continue the community-based planning for the Parent Resource Centers (Chapter IV).

- Develop a comprehensive plan for providing a more focused array of extended learning and out-of-school-time opportunities (Chapter IV).

- Develop a community schools implementation strategy (Chapter V).

In addition to these efforts, the MEP identifies a wide variety of opportunities and mandates for students, parents, guardians, community members, community-based organizations, businesses and others to be involved in the work of the schools. We welcome your participation.

MEP Budget Implications

The following table describes the estimated cost of fully implementing the Master Education Plan's major recommendations over the next three years. The proposed FY2007 Operating Budget includes $42.8 million to implement some of the key actions described in the Plan. We are working to identify additional resources (from internal and external sources) to cover the remaining $39.8 million to implement all of the proposed actions in SY2006–07.

Incremental Costs To Implement MEP Initiatives

Ensure Challenging Curriculum and Instruction for All Students	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009
Implementing & Evaluating Standards	2,469,200	8,324,200	310,000
Standards Implementation — Enhanced Technology Program (Refresh)	4,134,350	4,258,381	4,386,132
Standards — Textbooks & Consumables Adoption	6,500,000	6,500,000	6,500,000
Senior Project	*Cost Neutral*	*Cost Neutral*	*Cost Neutral*
Middle School Task Force	2,500	—	—
Market Research Study on the Attractability of Middle Schools	75,000	—	—
Implementation of Middle Grades Model	800,000	—	—
Pre-K–9 Demonstration Models	—	100,000	100,000
Pre-K–8 Models on Specific Themes	—	1,500,000	1,200,000
Increase Number of Librarians in ES	1,005,000	1,065,300	1,107,912
Increase Number of Librarians in MS	201,000	213,060	221,582
Evaluation of Library Improvement Program	125,000	128,750	132,613
Small Book Purchase for Library Expansion	870,000	464,000	896,100
Upgrade MS Libraries	—	91,700	—
New Science Test Grades 3–5, 6–9 & 10–12	950,000	500,000	300,000
End-of-Course Tests for Algebra I, Geometry, English 9 and 10, Biology, and Physics (or Chemistry) for Grades 8–12	1,000,000	500,000	500,000

Note: FY2007 covers SY2006–07, FY2008 covers SY2007–08 and FY2009 covers SY2008–09.

Ensure Challenging Curriculum and Instruction for All Students *(continued)*	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009
Benchmark Assessment Grades 2–8	600,000	618,000	636,540
Comprehensive Art & Music (WSF Allocation)	4,500,000	4,680,000	4,867,200
Expect Teachers and Principals Will Deliver High-Quality Instruction to Every Student			
Development of a Comprehensive Professional Development Plan	120,000	—	—
Principal Leadership Institute	1,800,000	1,854,000	1,909,620
Entrepreneurial Schools (10)	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Enhanced Teacher Mentoring Program	2,100,000	2,226,000	2,315,040
Construct a Seamless, Inclusive System That Serves All Students			
DIBELS/Pre-K Screening	500,000	500,000	500,000
Pre-K Expansion (Community-Based Organizations)	4,750,000	4,750,000	4,750,000
IB Expansion, Gifted & Talented & Acceleration for Black Males	1,250,000	650,000	650,000
Career & Technology Education (CTE) Expansion	3,200,000	3,328,000	3,461,120
Expanding ELL Services to Students	330,000	100,000	100,000
Nonpublic Tuition Transition Program	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,100,000
Differentiated Instruction — Coaching & Intervention	1,500,000	500,000	500,000
Blackman-Jones Implementation	1,755,240	500,000	500,000
Inclusion Model Implementation	2,700,000	2,250,000	2,250,000
Provide a Variety of Supports for Students To Succeed			
Implementation of Retention Policy	380,000	391,400	403,142
9th Grade Academies	86,000	311,600	254,000
Student Support Teams	813,320	837,720	862,851
9th Grade Prep for Over-Age 7th & 8th	260,000	267,800	275,834

Provide a Variety of Supports for Students To Succeed *(continued)*	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009
SummerBridge Program	2,665,000	5,750,000	6,184,000
Gifted & Talented & HS Accelerated Program (Extended Learning)	1,700,000	2,040,000	2,448,000
Extended Learning/Expanded Summer Program (Incremental Need)	1,800,000	2,800,000	5,800,000
HS Intervention & Academic Enrichment (Technology Based)	6,400,000	7,300,000	8,400,000
Saturday Schools	2,550,000	3,060,000	3,672,000
Web Site & Database for Student Career & College Opportunities	70,000	72,100	74,263
Enhancement of Extracurricular Activities	617,500	636,025	655,106
Athletics Expansion	2,870,000	2,308,000	2,426,000
Build on Our Community's Assets			
Parent Resource Centers	5,000,000	5,150,000	5,304,500
Full Community School Partnerships (Modeled after JC Nalle, 3 per Yr)	318,000	636,000	954,000
Director of Community Partnerships (Baselined)	98,400	101,352	104,393
Organize Schools To Better Serve the Needs of Students			
Implement Elem School Transition of 6th Graders	3,400,000	—	—
Implement JHS Transition	2,000,000	—	—
Consolidation of Leadership at STAY	(608,455)	—	—
Consolidation of Leadership at Spec Ed Centers	1,341,428	—	—
Appoint Campus Principals	120,000	—	—
Appoint Program Directors	600,000	—	—
Consolidate Leadership of 10 Elem Schools	(550,000)	—	—
Reduce Space Utilization by 500,000 GSF	(1,675,000)	—	—
Identify Co-Location Opportunities	(3,370,000)	—	—

Develop a Strong System of Accountability	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009
Instructional Management Initiatives	3,000,000	5,000,000	5,150,000
High-Performing & Other Incentive Awards	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000
Performance Contract for Senior Leadership	144,000	148,320	152,770
Publication of Performance Report	240,000	247,200	254,616
Additional Solution Teams (5)	2,775,000	2,858,250	2,858,250
School Improvement Brochure	150,000	150,000	150,000
Accountability Growth Model (Improvement, Value-Added Model)	100,000	500,000	500,000
SchoolNet Implementation and Maintenance Costs	1,400,000	500,000	515,000
GRAND TOTAL	**82,632,483**	**91,367,157**	**90,092,583**

Acknowledgments

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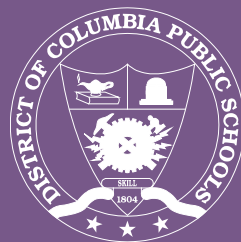
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