

Reclaiming the Promise of Public Education in the District of Columbia

1a. Yes. As a Councilmember, I co-introduced Bill 16-250, the "School Modernization Financing Act of 2006", which required the comprehensive modernization of our schools to ensure that our children will start each school day in state-of-the-art schools that are conducive to learning. The commitment of this legislation and funding demonstrated to our children that the leadership of this city views their education as a top priority. School buildings reflect a community's investment in its children's education, and better buildings create better learning environments. As mayor, the District's ongoing school-modernization efforts were accelerated, with nearly 30 schools modernized including, Cardozo High School, Dunbar High School, H.D. Woodson High School, Anacostia High School and Ballou High School. Additional modernization projects which were included in the Capital Budget when I was mayor are currently underway. This includes schools like Roosevelt (substantially completed), Ellington School for Performing Arts and Coolidge which is undergoing the SIT process.

1b. Yes, as Chairman, I fought against teacher layoffs that I believed were improperly caused by DCPS misallocating the budget. I will continue to fight to ensure the legal rights of teachers are protected. I also supported a systematic approach to teacher development so that there is a consistent effort around in-service training.

1c. Yes. DCPS currently offers all three options to students as electives. Given the budget increases I championed, additional resources are available to support art, music and the sciences.

1d. Yes. As mayor, I included funding in the budget for DMH clinicians, out-of-school time services, extended school year and school day--all of which support wraparound services to children. These services also extend to parents where possible

1e. Funding for DCPS begins with the basic, but critically important act of insuring the inflation adjustment to the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF) is included in the budget. Throughout the Great Recession and during my time as Mayor, even when we were closing a \$322.1 million budget gap, I preserved the UPSFF inflation adjustment. Additionally, I provided hundreds of millions of additional funding through the UPSFF, including a record increase of \$112 million in FY15. Last year, no inflation adjustment factor was given, even though there was funding for over \$100 million in other new policy initiatives whose benefit arguably may not match that of education. This was the first time in over a decade that the inflation factor was not included, and I am concerned because keeping pace with inflation is a crucial element for ensuring the District is able provide our teachers with compensation. I would seek to adjust the budget upward compensate for this lost year of inflation to ensure there are adequate funds to offer competitive salaries that will attract and retain high quality teachers.

As I did as Councilmember and Council Chairman, I would use the budget oversight powers of the Council to ensure that the District does not overspend on contracts and services in other agencies of the government, which so that funds will be available for educational priorities.

Measuring and Closing the Achievement Gap

2a. Nationally, there is an achievement gap that parallels the wealth gap. Over the last 8 years, though every subgroup within the District has improved on the NAEP, including charters. Assessing the factors which account for the achievement gap is a complex, multifaceted endeavor. The reality is that many of our children already are well behind by the time they start school. While there is no single antidote, I am convinced continued investments in early childhood education will make a material impact on narrowing the achievement gap. This would include solid investments in prenatal care; infant and toddler services and pre-kindergarten for three and four year olds. As mayor, I was able to facilitate growth in all of these areas as we observed reduction in the infant mortality rate in some of the most socio-economically challenged areas and we have essentially reached universality with our pre-kindergarten services. Additional investments are needed in infant and toddler programs which will help our youngest children and support their parents as well. Effective strategies must recognize that 90% of brain development already has occurred by the time a child is five. There is no age that is too early to intervene developmentally in the lives of our youngest children.

2b. As mayor, I put in place an at-risk formula that specifically targets and provides extra financial resources for at-risk students. Children who face circumstances such as homelessness, incarceration, extreme poverty, disciplinary problems, mental health or other familial conditions often face extraordinary adversity when it comes to their educational performance and attainment. So, early childhood reduction and intervention with older children offers a two-pronged approach of prevention and amelioration.

2c. As mayor, I oversaw significant changes in how the budgeting process was laid out that made it more transparent at the school level and for the public. Legislation was adopted requiring DCPS to report on at-risk spending to ensure transparency. As Councilmember, I will support this reporting mechanism and use the Council's legislative and oversight authority to the maximum benefit of our children.

Implementing the Common Core Standards

3a. DCPS lead the nation in implementation of the common core. OSSE held back from applying sanctions for the first year of PARCC exam; withholding consequences for teachers or schools based on testing, based on the understanding that it was only fair to allow for both students

and teachers to adjust to the new exam. I support OSSE's decision to withhold and allow for proper adjustment and development.

3b. Teachers, principals and school system leaders are those that have the expertise to ensure this is implemented. I must respect the knowledge and skills of these professionals and have trust and confidence in their ability to teach reading skills to our children.

3c. The Council, in its legislative role, can best support students by appropriating resources necessary to provide remedial services to ensure students graduate with requisite skills and credits. The instruments for appropriating resources is the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula. The council should then use its oversight role to measure whether appropriated resources are being used effectively.

Testing and Accountability

4a. The primary purpose of standardized testing is to assess the degree to which we are meeting the standards set for students and to hold the system accountable for meeting those standards.

4b. Yes, this is the current model. We also look at proficiency, but we mainly look at growth. The OSSE accountability system and Impact are intended to be based largely on growth. It also is a way of looking at progress in closing the achievement gap.

4c. I believe this decision is best left to the leaders of our State Education Agency (OSSE) with extensive input from our LEAs, as they have the best knowledge of the impact of the different types of assessments. We must rely upon the professionals hired into these positions to make these decisions; and then as Councilmember, us the Council's oversight authority to measure effectiveness.

Cultivating Labor-Management Collaboration

5. As Mayor, I re-established the Labor Management Partnership Council and co-chaired meetings. I have a long record of commitment to collective bargaining and labor agreements and will continue my commitment as Councilmember. The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) should spell out the role of educators in executing strategies to facilitate academic achievement by students. The Council should use its authority to review and approve such agreements and then exercise its oversight role to determine how well the CBA is being implemented.

Ending Neighborhood School Closures

6a. I do not foresee the closure of any traditional public schools in the near future. With over 1,000 new people moving to the District each month, our city's population is growing, which includes school aged children who will need to attend school. Thus, I believe the focus should remain on quality programs for our schools and not closure. Recently, Van Ness school which had been closed due to under-enrollment was re-opened because of increased demand.

6b. No, as the Council does not have decision making authority in regards to school closures. Decisions around school closure or opening should be based on demand and population projections. Otherwise, the decision making becomes very arbitrary. As noted, the District's population is growing which suggests that more classroom seats will be needed. That is how decisions should be reached in contracting or expanding schools and classrooms. The Mayor is the governing authority and the Chancellor is vested with the responsibility around managing growth, or lack thereof, in the number of schools. The Council should use its oversight authority to evaluate effectiveness in execution of this function.

6c. As previously stated, I co-introduced Bill 16-250, the "School Modernization Financing Act of 2006", which required the comprehensive modernization of our schools to ensure that our children will start each school day in state-of-the-art schools that are conducive to learning. The commitment of this legislation and funding invested communicates that the city's leadership views education as a top priority. School buildings reflect a community's investment in its children's education, and better buildings create better learning environments. As mayor, I ensured the District's ongoing school-modernization efforts were accelerated, with nearly 30 schools modernized including, Cardozo High School, Dunbar High School, H.D. Woodson High School, Anacostia High School and Ballou High School. Additional modernization projects which were included in the Capital Budget when I was mayor are currently underway. This includes schools like Roosevelt (substantially completed), Ellington School for Performing Arts and Coolidge which is undergoing SIT process. State-of-the-art schools in every neighborhood in the District creates easily accessible environments conducive to learning. It is imperative that there be ongoing collaboration between DCPS, the Public Charter School Board and charter schools to maximize the commitment to quality and walkability.

Serving Students with Special Needs

7. As mayor, I dramatically increased the funding formula for all levels of special education to incentivize DCPS and Charter schools to serve children with special needs, allowing these students to receive services in their local neighborhood public school, in as an inclusive setting as possible. Increasing these special education weights not only provided a strong public school option for our students, but it also saved the District significant money, reducing the funding

required for non-public tuition placements by nearly 60% in just four years, saving over \$100 million a year, allowing reinvestment into the UPSFF. Further, I would use the oversight metrics available to the Council in order to remain apprised of progress and changes.

Holding Charter Schools Accountable

8a. Charter schools provide an additional school choice option for students and families in the District.

8b. Yes and they currently must meet the same requirements as traditional schools, particularly as related to access for all students. Further, I support the mystery caller program used by the PCSB to ensure that schools are not discriminating against students with special needs for enrollment purposes.

8c. As discussed above, charters are required to meet the same requirements as traditional schools. Charter school teachers currently have the right to organize and join a union. Though, to date, there is no record of any charter teachers doing such.

8d. As mayor, my administration developed a draft for a different repayment method to schools to help address student mobility between LEAs. However, we were unable to complete this work due to a transition in administrations. I do believe that a different repayment method that allows for point-in-time student counts throughout the school year would be very effective to ensure that funding follows a student.

Improving Early Childhood Education

9. In 2008, I lead the passage of the Pre-K Expansion Act, making us the nation's leader in early-childhood education. While other cities and states are still focused on pre-K quantity, we have shifted our focus to increasing quality. As mayor, I worked to ensure that our youngest children benefit from quality child care. We started the process of establishing an innovative community-based Quality Improvement system that allows children and families to benefit from comprehensive child-development and family-support-engagement services. I believe the key to future success is a strong educational foundation; and universal early-childhood education provides the building blocks for our children and for families. The NIEER operated through Rutgers University has placed the District at the top of the list in providing early education services. This is an accomplishment about which we should be proud.

I heartily support increasing investments in the infant and toddler system towards creating a universal approach. In order to reach the most economically challenged families whose children may be at greater risk, it would be wise to have a means tested system of eligibility, thus facilitating reaching the optimum number of children with the most formidable needs. This will bring us closer to having comprehensive early childhood education that reaches the maximum

number of families and children in an economically integrated system. Ultimately, the goal should be to have a high quality system that includes:

- Prenatal care
- Infant and toddler services
- Pre-kindergarten for three and four year olds in public education schools.

The District has made enormous strides in achieving such a system that ultimately will reduce the achievement gap and will markedly improve the quality of life for the most challenged children. The reduction in children with special needs and in our juvenile justice systems, as well as, the number who suffer from under achievement will significantly contribute in human and financial terms to paying for the cost.

Implementing Supportive Teacher Development and Evaluation Systems

10. As chair of the Council, I fought to ensure teacher's rights under their contract. I have a long standing history of supporting worker's rights and will continue my commitment. Using the Council's oversight role, I would work to assess, with precision, the factors that account for turnover among teachers. I would as the D.C. Auditor to conduct a study of teacher turnover and provide recommendation on legislative remedies that could be pursued. In the context of that study, I would ask the auditor to examine turnover rates in charter schools for comparative purposes.

Summary

11a.

1. Early Childhood - We are the nation's leader in early childhood education. While other cities and states are still focused on pre-K quantity, we have shifted our focus to increasing quality. As mayor, I worked to ensure that our youngest children benefit from quality child care. We started the process of establishing an innovative community-based Quality Improvement system that will allow children and families to benefit from comprehensive child-development and family-support-engagement services. I believe the key to future success is a strong educational foundation; and universal early-childhood education provides the building blocks for our children and for families.
2. Special Needs Services - We have significantly increased the number of students that we are able to serve in our District Schools due to Increasing the special education weights in the USPPF. Not only do we provide a strong public school option for our students, but as a District we have saved significant money, reducing the funding required for non-public tuition placements by nearly 60%, saving over \$100 million. We implemented significant increase in the weights for all 4 levels of special needs children. By virtue of increasing the funding weight, we enhanced incentives for students to be served in the public system.

3. Career and Technical Education (CTE) - Career and Technical Academies currently operate out of virtually all high schools in the District. They allow for workforce development to provide opportunities for our young people to develop the skills that will prepare them for 21st-century careers and compete for jobs in our fastest-growing sectors. Currently, three areas are focused upon including information technology, hospitality and construction/engineering areas where jobs are developing rapidly in the District.

11b.

1. Clearly one of the top challenges, if not the top is the educational performance of our children and the achievement gap that has occurred over a period of years/ That issue has been addressed in multiple ways throughout this questionnaire and I won't restate those points.
2. The District has a robust system of educational choices in terms of traditional public education and the Charter movement. It is imperative that we work toward increased collaboration between the two sectors. It is clear that families are seeking choice as abundantly evident by the number of children enrolled in charters and by the overall enrollment growth in public education. With 86,000+ children enrolled, it is the largest enrollment in public education since the 1970's. We should be reminded that the ultimate goal is educational growth in all of our children. Collaboration between the sectors allows best practices to be shared while also preserving the benefits of healthy competition.
3. There have been ongoing debates about the length of the school day and school year. What is paramount is for decision makers to do what is best for our children. Charters have independent authority to create longer days and a longer school year. And many have done so. If, in fact, a longer school day and school year benefit the educational growth and development of our children, and that appears to be the case, I heartily urge the WTU and DCPS leadership to use contract negotiations to come to an agreement so that our children can derive the benefit of these opportunities. Not only is there educational benefit, but public safety benefits as well because involvement in a longer day will reduce the exposure to untoward incidents.

If endorsed by the WTU, I will be delighted to work collaboratively towards fulfilling the initiatives set forth in this questionnaire. Once the election is over, I will look forward to meeting with WTU leadership to craft a course of work together.