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GREAT EXPECTATIONS: ASSESSMENTS, ASSURANCES, AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE MAYOR'S PROPOSAL TO REFORM THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

HEARING

BEFORE THE

OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UNITED STATES SENATE

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GREAT EXPECTATIONS: ASSESSMENTS, ASSURANCES, AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE MAYOR'S PROPOSAL TO REFORM THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2007

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:40 p.m., in Room 342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Daniel K. Akaka, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Akaka, Landrieu, and Carper.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN AKAKA

Senator AKAKA. It's really good to see all of you here today, and I've got to say, the panel is loaded with all of the Mayor's education team. This hearing will come to order.

I want to welcome all of our distinguished panel and our guests. I would like to thank all of you for joining us here today for this very important hearing on the District of Columbia's Public School System and the Mayor's reform efforts.

Before being elected to Congress, I was a teacher and a principal for my home State of Hawaii's Department of Education, and I worked in the Office of the Superintendent. As you know, Hawaii has a unified school system. There is one superintendent and one school board. So I know first hand the challenges facing educational systems.

After decades of failed policies, the system is in what I gather, a sad state. But as the Mayor knows, it cannot take us as long to revive DCPS as it did to erode the system. Every minute of a child's education that is lost can never be replaced.

With only 1 month to go before the 2007–2008 school year begins, much remains to be done. The challenges facing Mayor Fenty and his new leadership team are monumental. I want to commend the Mayor for making the education of the District's children a top priority.

Entire generations of students going through D.C. Public Schools have suffered through the failures of a broken system immune to reforms. In the past 20 years, this is the sixth major reform effort and no tangible improvements in student achievement have been realized. I will share a few statistics that highlight the problem. This is not new to you.

Approximately $13,000 is spent per pupil per year, but only 45.5 percent of those dollars are spent on educational instruction, compared to 54.4 percent for urban areas nationwide.

Thirty-three percent of fourth grade students rate above basic in reading, compared to a national average of 62 percent. Forty-five percent of fourth graders rate above basic in math, compared to an average of 79 percent across the Nation.

There are 74 critical health code violations, nearly 10,000 open maintenance requests, and 1,500 urgent maintenance requests.

Eighteen percent of students have special education needs, and $75 million is given to other school districts every year because the District is unable to meet their needs.

These statistics do not paint a clear picture of the daily challenges students face in buildings without bathrooms, falling plaster, doors with padlocks on them, and entire high schools without any working water fountains. These are not environments that promote learning.

A study of DCPS released in December 2006, by the Parthenon Group, recommended that teaching, curriculum, testing, human capital operations, the central office and its support functions, special education programs, facilities management, and community-wide engagement all needed to be redesigned. The challenge now is breaking the record of failure and implementing the reforms and achieving measurable success.

As the Parthenon study suggests, one of the major reasons for the failure of the school system, beyond poor management, crumbling facilities, unqualified teachers, and an overburdened bureaucracy, is the need for governance reform. While public school systems in the United States are traditionally run by elected boards of education, in many urban areas mayors across the country are increasingly seeking control of schools. It is important to lift the undue financial and bureaucratic burdens on resources, which will allow the focus to be on improving student learning.

However, governance reform is not a solution in itself. Accountability standards and curriculum reforms must be implemented for educators, administrators, teachers, parents, and students to reach the ultimate goal, improved student achievement.

Public education should be the great equalizer, not the great demoralizer. When our educational systems fails, those who need the system most are paralyzed and disenfranchised. When our schools are hampered with issues of poor student achievement, poor management systems, poorly maintained data systems, and unfit facilities, there is little to no attention given to the very individuals our school system is put in place to support, our children.

One thing is certain. The system that is in place is not effective and has not been for years. There are pockets of achievement in the school system and many people are working, and working hard to cultivate an environment of learning and achievement. Hope-

fully, this reform effort will create more positive actors in the system.

In this hearing, we hope to review the Mayor's plan to implement reforms, establish expectations for the plan's success, and set forth benchmarks for accountability. I am really hopeful that the efforts being made by the Mayor and his leadership team pay off and look forward to hearing how they plan to move forward to plant the seeds of progress.

To the Mayor and your team, it is a huge challenge, but it is one that will make a huge difference in the future. From what I see already, Mr. Mayor, I would say that you have a good beginning, and so I want to be, in a sense, part of that team to help bring this about.

With us today, we have the Hon. Adrian Fenty, Mayor of the District of Columbia. We have Michelle Rhee, Chancellor of the D.C. Public Schools; Robert Bobb, President of the D.C. State Board of Education; Victor Reinoso, Acting Deputy Mayor for Education; Deborah Gist, D.C. State Superintendent of Education; and Allen Lew, Executive Director of the Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization.

Our Subcommittee rules require that all witnesses testify under oath, so therefore I ask you to please stand and raise your right hand and join me in this oath.

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give this Subcommittee is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me, God?

Mayor FENTY. I do.

Ms. RHEE. I do.

Mr. BOBB. I do.

Mr. REINOSO. I do.

Ms. GIST. I do.

Mr. LEW. I do.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Let the record note that the witnesses responded in the affirmative.

Welcome again, and before we begin, I want you all to know that although your oral statement is limited to 5 minutes, your full written statements will be included in the record.

Mr. Mayor, please proceed with your statement.

TESTIMONY OF HON. ADRIAN M. FENTY,[1] MAYOR, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mayor FENTY. Thank you very much, Chairman Akaka, Members of the Subcommittee, and staff. Thank you very much for inviting us to testify today about the bright future of the District of Columbia Public Schools. For the record, my name is Adrian M. Fenty, the fifth elected Mayor of the District of Columbia.

Mr. Chairman, I took office on a pledge to improve the lives of all residents of the Nation's capital, but especially the Nation's capital's children. As a society, we have an obligation to make sure that our children have the tools they need to succeed as adults. Our children deserve the best environment we can give them for

[1] The prepared statement of Mayor Fenty appears in the Appendix on page 39.

learning, and our teachers deserve the best environment we can give them for teaching.

As you have stated, our public education system in the District has not done right by its students, including 55,000 in DCPS schools and more than 20,000 in the public charter schools, for quite some time. The situation is urgent because more than two-thirds of our fourth graders are reading below grade level. Fewer than half graduate from high school in 5 years. This means that the vast majority of students in the D.C. Public Schools don't stand a good chance of having what has been vital to the success of nearly every person in this room, and that is a college education.

I took office in January knowing it was time to do something radically different in the schools. Why? Because we have had study after study dating almost back to when I was a D.C. Public Schools student documenting how the schools are failing our children. This has to end.

Securing control over the schools is the first priority of my administration. After several months of careful consideration, including 70 hours of public hearings, the Council of the District of Columbia approved my School Governance Reform Plan on April 19. As you are aware, the bill was then approved by Congress and signed into law by President Bush on June 1. Let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, to Senator Voinovich, and to all the Members of the Subcommittee for moving that legislation through the Senate so quickly.

Today, I would like to formally introduce you to my team, the architects of a new future for the District of Columbia Public Schools. For the record, each of these individuals has a long track record of service, either to the city, to young people, or to both. Each has my complete confidence.

To start, I am very happy to introduce Michelle Rhee, to my left, our new Chancellor. She was confirmed by the Council just last week and has hit the ground running. She has already identified some of the key problems that need to be resolved before school starts in the fall and she and her team are already developing ways to fix them.

On the budget front, Victor Reinoso, my Deputy Mayor for Education, has hired a team of auditors to take a close look at the school system's finances so we can redirect more of our money to the classroom. He will also harness resources from across the government to address obstacles to success in school for our kids.

Deborah Gist, my new State Superintendent, will head a State education agency for the District that is truly independent, addressing a longstanding concern of many school activists.

Finally, Allen Lew, former head of the D.C. Sports and Entertainment Commission, will be in charge of facilities. He is sending construction professionals into every classroom in DCPS to make much-needed repairs right away. They are going to fix the roofs, the ceilings, and the toilets. Then he will turn to a full-scale effort to modernize buildings throughout the system.

We are also very excited to work with the State Board of Education as we continue to make sure that we have a real partnership in excellence for our school system.

Across the board, we are going to set clear performance goals, improve the way we measure progress toward them, and demand results.

As an aside, I recognize that our responsibility for educating our children doesn't end when they graduate from high school, so I want to thank the Subcommittee and especially you and Senator Voinovich for your work in reauthorizing the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant Program. With the help of Congress and private sector donors, such as the Gates Foundation, we plan to triple the rate of our students who finish college, beginning with the Class of 2014. Many of these young people are the first in their families to attend college. Just imagine the long-term impact this program will have on our city.

Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan once said, "If you can't get education right, nothing else matters." In the District of Columbia, for the first time in a long time, we are in the process of getting education right.

Chairman Akaka, this concludes my prepared remarks. I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to testify today and I am more than happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor. Thank you for your statement. Ms. Rhee, you may proceed with your statement.

TESTIMONY OF MICHELLE A. RHEE,[1] CHANCELLOR, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Ms. RHEE. Thank you and good afternoon, Chairman Akaka. I am honored to appear before you today and am grateful for your interest in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). For the record, my name is Michelle Rhee. Last week, I was confirmed by the Council of the District of Columbia to become the first Chancellor of DCPS. In this capacity, I have oversight of the District's 141 schools, from elementary through high school. I establish school curriculum, set performance standards for school staff and central office employees, provide the supports needed for teachers and students to succeed, oversee the school district's budget, and set policies for all of the schools in DCPS.

As Chancellor, I will work closely with my colleagues, the Deputy Mayor, the Director of the Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization, the State Superintendent, and the State Board of Education to ensure that the educational needs of our District's children are being met.

I am going to start by telling you a little bit about myself. I have worked in the field of urban education for the last 15 years. My career in education began in Baltimore, Maryland, where I was a second and third grade teacher at Harlem Park Elementary School. My experience there shaped the rest of my career because I had an experience where I saw that students who were performing at the bottom on nationally-recognized standardized tests could quickly be guided to be performing at the top through the hard work of teachers and through quality instruction.

To help more children realize this potential, I founded an organization called The New Teacher Project (TNTP), one of the country's

[1] The prepared statement of Ms. Rhee appears in the Appendix on page 42.

most well-respected education reform organizations. TNTP is dedicated to improving public education by increasing the number of high-quality teachers who enter our public schools and the number who are working in low-performing schools and districts across the country. In its work with some of the largest urban school districts in the Nation, TNTP has had a positive systemic impact in ways that were not thought possible. Across the country, TNTP has brought in over 23,000 teachers to educate over two million children in the urban school districts across the country, and I have advised many of the most successful urban superintendents on the issues of teacher quality.

All of this brings me to my first principle that will drive my work as Chancellor, which is the critical importance of having high-quality education professionals throughout our school system. I believe that people are absolutely paramount to the success of the District. To achieve the goals that we set forth, I will focus relentlessly on building a core of effective principals and teachers.

At the same time, because we currently have so many excellent educators in the system, it is critical that we are supporting, recognizing, and rewarding the effective educators that we do have. In short, we must have outstanding induction, professional development, and career growth opportunities for staff at every level. Building human capital in this system will require improved working conditions in schools, a truly supportive central administration that gives educators the tools they need when they need them, and professionalism at all levels. Finally, the role of the school principal is critical in identifying and growing talent. We must support our school leaders so that they can become great talent managers.

Next, I believe that we must transition from a culture of diffuse accountability to individual responsibility for student achievement. The Mayor has made clear throughout the city that he will focus on accountability and I intend to do the same. The way to do this is clear, through a combination of high expectations for performance and substantial support to those who meet expectations. We will establish and communicate very clear expectations for everyone in the system, from teachers and principals who will be responsible for improving student achievement to parents, staff, and administrators who are responsible for creating an environment in which educators can focus on children. Everyone must understand what they are responsible for doing, how it is aligned to student achievements, and how their performance will be evaluated.

After we lay out these expectations, we must as a system ensure that all individuals have the training, support, and resources necessary to be successful.

Last, I am going to insist on an instructional approach that is consistent and aligned throughout our schools, beginning with reading. By consistent and aligned, I mean that nearly every school will adopt the same highly proven programs and implement them with fidelity across grades and classrooms. Professional development will focus entirely on these specific programs and will be delivered in most cases by a single specialized provider across schools. We will track the progress in implementing the curriculum rigorously and consistently across schools and classrooms.

Consistency, however, does not mean a one-size-fits-all approach. Clearly, we must provide some autonomy in instruction to high-performing schools. We have many high-performing schools in this city who show strong academic results year in and year out and we want to make sure that those schools will be able to continue with their programs and, in fact, will look to them for best practices.

Finally, I will implement a high-quality interim assessment system that will allow us to track individual school, classroom, and student data to ensure that we are making progress towards our goals as a system.

We have everything we need to do this in our city and we can do this if we take our collective talents, resources, desires, and minds and turn them into an undeniable collective will. For me, that is truly the question before us today, is do we have what it takes to move forward, and I believe we do. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Ms. Rhee. Mr. Bobb, please proceed with your statement.

TESTIMONY OF ROBERT C. BOBB,[1] PRESIDENT, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. BOBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee. I would like to thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Robert C. Bobb. I am President of the District of Columbia State Board of Education, and joining me is Lisa Raymond, a member of our State Board.

The D.C. State Board of Education was established by the District of Columbia Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007. The State Board of Education looks forward to discharging our new duties and responsibilities. In our new role approving and advising on city-wide education issues, we will approve learning standards and graduation requirements. We will approve the accountability structure that will dictate how lagging and failing schools are supported and held accountable for their performance. And we will establish the criteria for operating all types of education institutions throughout the District of Columbia, including the D.C. Public Schools, charter schools, private schools, supplemental education service providers, and the education programs administered at the college and university level.

You have named this hearing "Great Expectations," and I can think of no better unifying theme for our education reform efforts in the District of Columbia. We must continue to have extraordinarily high expectations for our students that are supported by standards that are among the most stringent in the Nation, and that is what the State Board will advance.

I also believe that we must have extraordinarily high expectations for ourselves. There are many different benchmarks upon which to measure the performance of a State or school district, and I think we need to aim to have very high standards for ourselves and for our students. I also believe that the District of Columbia should aim for greater gains on test scores than the gains at all comparable large urban school districts across the Nation. And fi-

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Bobb appears in the Appendix on page 46.

nally, I believe that all students in the District of Columbia should be able to read at or above grade level.

To get there, we will make it part of our work plan as a State Board. We will focus on early childhood education. We believe that there is a cohort of education experts who have said that the student achievement gap is the most important issue facing urban school districts, but we are listening to a different set of experts who say that we should be looking instead at the preparation gap. The preparation gap, which is defined and measured as the social, motor, and cognitive skills with which students arrive to begin their formal education, is especially prevalent in urban areas where children have a predisposition to certain socioeconomic and health risks.

As outlined in the District of Columbia Public School System Master Education Plan, repeated research studies on early childhood education have shown that quality early care and education can have a significant and positive impact on a child's school and life skills and that the results are particularly strong for education with certain health and socioeconomic risks.

We will also work with the new Chancellor and with the city overall on a healthy focus on reading. We need a city-wide movement to improve reading proficiency in the District. Academic research demonstrates that children who are not reading by the third grade are less likely to succeed academically and professionally for the rest of their lives, and reading levels in the District of Columbia are dishearteningly low.

When we address the reading crisis in the District, we will be addressing many other pressing challenges facing our city. For example, many children are misclassified as special education children, not because of a learning disability but because they simply cannot read. By improving reading skills, we will begin to reduce the daunting number of District children in special education, which will help us reduce costs and focus special education services on those with the most need. And by focusing on reading, we can also begin to address the extremely high unemployment levels within the District of Columbia.

The nature of these challenges calls for a coordinated multi-faceted solution, and I endorse the Mayor's plan to unite all education-related services from birth to adulthood in one State agency to help us to address these problems comprehensively.

There are many positive examples for the District to follow to foster a city-wide reading improvement. For example, in Jacksonville, Mayor John Peyton put forward a wide-ranging initiative called Rally Jacksonville around reading initiatives throughout the community.

I look forward to working with the Mayor, the Chancellor, the State Superintendent of Education to institute an initiative across the District of Columbia to address the reading crisis within the District of Columbia directly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Bobb. Mr. Reinoso, we look forward to your statement. Will you please proceed.

TESTIMONY OF VICTOR REINOSO,[1] ACTING DEPUTY MAYOR FOR EDUCATION, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mr. REINOSO. Thank you, Chairman Akaka. I am Victor Reinoso, the Acting Deputy Mayor for Education of the District of Columbia. Thank you again for inviting us here today to discuss the exciting reform efforts underway.

I am here to talk to you about our reform efforts from a broader perspective and how with the newly-created D.C. Department of Education we are bringing all of the government's resources together to support public education in a comprehensive way that I believe will make us successful in raising student achievement.

The Mayor has made education the first priority of his administration. Recognizing that in order to truly reform and improve the delivery of educational services in the District, there must be coordination and alignment of resources, policies, strategies, and services at the cabinet level, the Mayor established the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, and through the District of Columbia Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 formalized this role by creating a D.C. Department of Education.

The Department of Education addresses a longstanding need in the District, the lack of central, coordinated, and aligned service delivery across all education levels, from birth into adulthood, pre–K through post-graduate work. In the District, we have over 50 local education agencies, including the D.C. Public Schools and each public charter school, a public university, a public library system, and numerous providers of early childhood and adult education services. Additionally, we have dozens of supplemental and out-of-school-time service providers for services ranging from violence prevention training to college preparation and workforce training.

Yet in the past, these services have not been coordinated or focused on a single set of goals and there has been no District-wide plan to bring these services together, ensure that they are effective, and strategically link them to better results for the children and families most in need. A similar lack of coordination has existed among other child and youth-serving agencies and services of the District Government.

Instead of providing direct services or replacing the work and efforts that are ongoing within agencies, the Department of Education works to ensure that the Mayor's vision for education and youth development in the District is implemented methodically and supported consistently across agencies and stakeholders, public and private. Since the beginning of the year, we have been working on several projects aligned with the Mayor's vision that lay the groundwork for policy decisions and implementation by the State Superintendent and Chancellor.

We have completed a review of potential teacher incentive programs in place in other cities and States, initiatives directed by nonprofit organizations, and innovations being implemented or planned by DCPS. We continue to build a strong working relationship with the Washington Teachers' Union, and we have reached out to leaders on this topic from across the country, including the

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Reinoso appears in the Appendix on page 51.

New Teacher Center, the Teacher Advancement Program, and the National Center on Performance Initiatives. We have developed two school facilities initiatives to reduce the backlog of work orders in the school system and we have worked diligently on accelerating the process by which surplus school buildings are made available to public charter schools in need of space.

Strengthening the current system of early childhood care and education programs in the District has the potential to yield some of the best results for our long-term education reform efforts. Whether we are working to ensure that children are prepared when they enter elementary school or identifying issues that can impede a child's education and implementing the appropriate interventions, aligning efforts between early childhood and the K–12 system is an important focus of the Fenty administration.

In addition to this substantial education-related policy work, my staff is also coordinating and facilitating support from other District agencies in support of the needs of the public education system. We coordinated with the City Administrator and the Office of Property Management to provide additional technical manpower to address pressing facilities needs during the severe cold periods of January and February. In addition, we have intervened to address potential lead contamination in drinking water. We have convened a working group comprised of the staff of the EPA, DCPS, the City Administrator, the Water and Sewer Authority, and the D.C. Departments of Environment and Health to develop and implement an accelerated intervention plan.

In preparation for the transition in governance, we felt it was critical to conduct a comprehensive review of the school system's finances, operations, and management structure. With a generous contribution from the nonprofit District of Columbia Education Compact, private firms were engaged to conduct these critical reviews, which should be completed by the end of September. Rather than doing just another study, we have structured this work to encompass key areas and produce deliverables that we can use to realign resources to support our main objective, high quality educational opportunity and increased student achievement.

The District's Public Education System faces many challenges. It will take a collective strategic effort, along with the resources, human capital, and a strong system of accountability, to accomplish our goals. Under the leadership of the Mayor, we are acting aggressively to meet the urgency of this situation, but also deliberately to address the complexity of the problem.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and speak on the Mayor's education reform initiative. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Reinoso. Ms. Gist, you may proceed with your statement.

TESTIMONY OF DEBORAH A. GIST,[1] STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION, OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT

Ms. GIST. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman Akaka, Subcommittee Members, and guests. I am Deborah Gist and I serve as

[1] The prepared statement of Ms. Gist appears in the Appendix on page 55.

the State Superintendent of Education. I am pleased to be here this afternoon to share my vision for the new Office of the State Superintendent of Education.

As specified by the requirements of the D.C. Public Education Reform Act, we are currently engaged in developing a detailed transition plan that will be submitted to the Mayor no later than September 10. This transition plan will provide a timeline and a road map for the transfer of each State-level function from the D.C. Public Schools, the Department of Human Services, and the University of the District of Columbia to the authority of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education.

The D.C. Public Education Reform Amendment Act accomplishes the goal of separating the District's local education functions from its State-level education functions, a goal that has long been sought by the U.S. Department of Education and more recently by the U.S. Senate. DCPS staff and State education agency staff will have separate reporting structures. As such, both the LEA and the SEA will be housed in different locations with different staff performing their respective functions.

This new structure ensures the independence of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education and that State-level policy making and its compliance-related activities while providing for oversight of the agency by the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for Education. This independence is achieved through the appointment of the State Superintendent of Education to a fixed term from which she can only be removed for cause. This key distinction provides the SEA with the autonomy that it needs in order to effectuate the necessary reform.

Under the structure established in the education reform legislation, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education will be able to move forward with a distinct but coordinated agenda with the DCPS LEA. The Office of the State Superintendent will provide a structure whereby enhanced oversight, accountability, and monitoring will replace a system with inherent conflicts of interest. As such, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education will have the responsibility as defined by Federal law to provide supports and interventions for all local education agencies when they are non-compliant with the law, specifically as it relates to student achievement. On the LEA side, the D.C. Public Schools will be able to move forward implementing their core mission, educating the children, absent the distraction of also performing the State-level functions.

The District of Columbia Public Education Reform Amendment Act is consistent with each of the requirements called for in Senate Appropriations Committee Report, S. Rept. 109–281. Specifically, the legislation places the Office of the State Superintendent of Education in charge of implementing the State-level requirements for "No Child Left Behind."

Second, the distribution of State-level education functions established in the legislation is consistent with the structure in other States. In New Mexico and Texas, for example, the governor is responsible for the appointed chief State school officer, while the State Board of Education is an elected body.

Finally, the Act establishes a strong and clear framework with regard to implementation of the Federal law. I am confident that the requirements established under Federal law provide the Office of the State Superintendent of Education with the tools that we need to support all of our local education agencies, both DCPS and the public charter schools, to intervene when necessary and to hold all LEAs accountable for performance.

It is important to note that we will have many challenges as we move through this transition process. First, we must ensure that the separation of the responsibilities is carried out in a thorough and thoughtful manner. Currently, there are employees at D.C. Public Schools who manage both State and local functions in any given day and we must pay attention to how those responsibilities are divided. Second, we must ensure that the Federal grants process meets the needs of the U.S. Department of Education's corrective action plan for our designation as a high-risk grantee. Also, we must pay specific attention to how we manage special education functions during this transition process.

Despite these challenges, I am confident and I am deeply committed to ensuring that the transition of State-level education functions is a success and that we act to utilize every tool at our disposal to make the necessary changes to increase student achievement and enhance our systems of accountability.

In looking at the long-term priorities of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, it is essential that we focus on efforts to prepare students to succeed in the 21st Century creative economy. To address this issue, we will, with the advice and support of the State Board of Education, focus to ensure that our standards are aligned with college and workforce readiness expectations, that our teachers are of the highest caliber, and that our students enter the classroom ready to learn, and we will ensure that there is a focus on providing high-quality early care and education and literacy programs to our residents.

Again, I appreciate this opportunity to testify on our transition efforts and our priorities and I look forward to further dialogue as we move forward with this transition effort. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Ms. Gist. And now, Mr. Lew, you may proceed with your statement.

TESTIMONY OF ALLEN Y. LEW,[1] EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION FACILITIES MODERNIZATION, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. LEW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am Allen Lew. I was nominated to this post by the Mayor several weeks ago and the City Council confirmed my appointment last week. Since being named, I have worked to assemble an interim team of staff, consultants, and contractors and have tasked them with thoroughly assessing the conditions in our schools and beginning long-overdue repairs in the schools that our children are attending.

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Lew appears in the Appendix on page 61.

Today, I will share with you our initial findings regarding the prior facilities management structure at DCPS and the benchmarks we intend to establish going forward so that our efforts can be accurately monitored and assessed in the months and years ahead.

The problems of DCPS facilities are well documented, so I won't recount them here. I will tell you, however, that I intend to establish a new culture for school facilities management that will be proactive and results-oriented. The current system has too many layers of bureaucracy and is too inwardly-focused. We will create a leaner, flatter management structure that is more like those in the private sector than a traditional government model. We will treat the school system's students, parents, and staff as our customers, our clients, and deliver school facilities that meet their needs.

In the immediate term, I am committed to resolving the longstanding problem of deferred maintenance in our schools. Specifically, we will tackle several thousand outstanding work orders over the next several months. However, we are also examining the full scope of work to be performed at each school, whether or not the problem was submitted as a work order.

To that end, Mayor Fenty has charged me with pushing forward to address critical quality-of-life issues for students and staff before the opening of schools in the fall. The first initiative is the Summer Blitz program recently approved by the City Council for 37 schools most in need of remedial repair. This phase of the work is focused on the most significant building deficiencies—leaking roofs, nonfunctioning gutters, repairs to boilers, heating systems, air conditioning, ventilation systems, and bathroom, kitchen, and plumbing problems. Additional work will include replacement of drinking fountains and windows.

While most of this work will be completed by the start of the school year, we will necessarily have to push into the fall semester to complete all of the work on the scopes of work for these initial projects. In my discussions with the school principals, I have been heartened to learn that they share the Mayor's view that it is more important to do the work correctly the first time, completely the first time, and have the necessary maintenance plans in place to ensure that these problems don't reoccur rather than rushing in to meet a particular deadline.

At the Mayor's direction, we also are undertaking an accelerated program this summer to make targeted repairs to another 33 schools. This work program was originally anticipated to begin in fiscal year 2008 but has been moved forward so that the most serious problems at many of the schools can be addressed sooner.

For the longer-term, I am focused on recruiting the staff necessary to run the large-scale modernization effort and ensure successful, cost-effective projects that are completed on a timely basis.

Within the larger charge to my office of systemwide school modernization, my staff and I are in the process of analyzing the school system's Master Facilities Plan. We plan to present to the Mayor and the Council any proposed revisions to the Master Facilities Plan as soon as practical. Going into this, we know that the Master Facilities Plan was designed as a 10- to 15-year program. We need

much faster results because we believe it is not fair to ask or expect that students and teachers wait this long for relief.

It is my intention that the new D.C. Public School facilities are on par with the best in the world. We will engage the most talented architects and engineers in the Nation to raise the design standards for D.C. Public Schools. We will develop these design standards and best practices with the help of groups like the American Institute of Architects. We will examine what works and what does not.

We will hire District businesses and residents to build these facilities. We will develop internships and special programs for students interested in architecture, engineering, environmental, historic preservation, business practices, as well as, obviously, construction. Perhaps, most important, we plan to include students and parents at every stage possible as we move forward with our modernization and renovation campaign.

As I mentioned previously, I know that our success will be predicated upon building the best and brightest staff, hiring the most qualified contractors, and changing the culture in the school facilities operation. The same standards and formulas were applied when we developed the new Convention Center in Washington as well as the Washington Nationals Ballpark currently under construction. We will use the same approach to instill a results-based, no excuses, bottom-line attitude to the tasks ahead.

With regard to benchmarks, by this time next year, each school in the system will be functional, with all major systems—heating, cooling, drinking water, bathrooms, roofs that do not leak, and all other quality of life essentials—fully operational. In addition, plans for both new and modernized facilities will be well underway after an exhaustive and inclusive community design review process.

I am excited to begin the process with Chancellor Rhee, principals, parents, most importantly, students, and the larger community to develop and modernize school facilities that will be true centers of education and community life in our city.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, that concludes my testimony. I look forward to any questions.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Lew.

I have some questions to ask. After I do that, I want to introduce our Senator from Louisiana to make her remarks and ask any questions she may have at that time.

Mayor Adrian Fenty, I am really glad to hear what I did from your team. It appears that you have a good beginning, and a good team. As I mentioned in my opening statement, in 1989, the Committee on Public Education released a 180-page report entitled, "Our Children, Our Future." The report detailed the challenges facing DCPS and offered recommendations to reform the school system. Since then, five additional reform efforts have come and gone. However, the challenges remain largely the same, and in some cases have gotten worse.

I know you mentioned or it has been mentioned that one of your aims is accountability. What accountability standards, performance measures, and benchmarks have you established or will establish to monitor the effectiveness of your team in the short- and long-term?

Mayor FENTY. Well, it is a great question, Mr. Chairman, and thank you again for having us and asking it. We believe that despite all of the studies and different recommendations that the success behind this particular plan is at least two-fold. One, that there is accountability from the top. So in the past, when someone would do something wrong, it was difficult to know who to blame. That is no longer the case. I alone have said that if something is not right in the system, I can be held accountable. As we all know, every 4 years or so, the Mayor of the District of Columbia has to go back to the voters to keep his or her job. We think that is an important part of the accountability here.

The second thing I want to put on the record is that we didn't stop at saying the buck stops at the Mayor. We really thought that peeling away school facilities, State education functions, and the ombudsman role was critical in making sure that the Chancellor had as her sole focus the curriculum, the test scores, the operations of the classrooms and schools under her and that she could focus on those things.

Some of the benchmarks were mentioned in the Chancellor's own testimony, as she talked about making sure that there are written benchmarks for every position, making sure that we are training our staff better, that we have instruction, that we are giving our schools autonomy.

The legislation envisions that in 5 years, we will come back, but we envision that every year, at the least, we will come back and check how test scores are improving, whether or not we are recruiting more teachers into the system, whether or not we are meeting the standards of No Child Left Behind, etc. We also believe through the Council's oversight process, through going into the community repeatedly, and then through the budget process which comes up annually through the City Council, we will have opportunities to show we are meeting those standards and report that back to the community.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Ms. Rhee, in your new role as Chancellor, you bring a fresh perspective to a troubled system. As I understand it, troubled urban education systems is your area of expertise. Now, a simple question to begin with is after a month on the job, what is your initial assessment?

Ms. RHEE. I am feeling extraordinarily confident and hopeful right now about our ability to turn this system around. Having been here for 4 weeks and having spent the majority of my time in schools and in neighborhoods talking to students, parents, teachers, principals, and community members, I don't think I can have anything but optimism at this point.

There is a tremendous will right now amongst the public in the District to ensure that its schools are successful, and I have been spending a lot of time with students recently. Yesterday, I was at Ballou Senior High School, which is probably one of the most troubled high schools that we have in the District, and I sat in a room with a group of students. The building there is literally crumbling. Paint is peeling off the walls. Ceiling tiles are falling down. There is no air conditioning in that building. The food is not great. I mean, there are sort of a myriad of problems.

And I sat with this group of students and I said to them, what do you think I can do to help improve the schools, and they looked at me and they said, "Bring us great teachers." It was poignant to me because they didn't say we need a subway or a Coke machine or something like that. They were extraordinarily focused on what I think is the right thing, which is how do we bring great educators into the system.

And as I have talked to their parents and as I have talked to businesses, everyone in this city understands that human capital and bringing great talent into this system and retaining the great talent that we have is really going to be critical to our success. So seeing that alignment through everyone in the system, seeing the hope that people have and their willingness to literally do anything that it is going to take to make the system succeed, I think gives me a tremendous amount of confidence right now.

Senator AKAKA. Well, that is great to hear and to hear you have visited with the school. I, like you, am amazed at that answer.

Ms. RHEE. Yes.

Senator AKAKA. Yet somebody was thoughtful enough to know what was needed, and for it to come from students, that is really great and so I thank you so much for that response.

At this time, I have more questions to ask, but I am so happy to have the Senator from Louisiana, Mary Landrieu, here to join us. I know she always has remarks to make and she always has good questions to ask, so this is your time, Senator.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR LANDRIEU

Senator LANDRIEU. Thank you, Senator. I really appreciate you calling the hearing and your oversight and partnership with this great team that the Mayor has assembled and the leaders of the District. It is good to see all of you.

I just want to say a few things briefly and then have just one or two questions. Mayor, I think it really is an extraordinary effort to take on the challenge of retooling and redesigning the school system. But obviously, and I am sure that your testimony offered this when you began, you have recognized the need for significant improvement.

These numbers that are reflective of the District's situation, although they are very stark, are not unique in the sense that we have this challenge and difficulty throughout many parts of the country. In fact, we in New Orleans, as you well know, are going through a monumental shift, partly driven by our need for reform and to improve achievement, and then partly due by the results of a terrible storm, and floods that are forcing us to rethink everything about our city.

But these numbers are really startling, that only 43 percent of the students in the District graduate from high school within 5 years. The national average is 68 percent. Twenty-nine percent enrolled in post-secondary education. Only 9 percent attending a secondary degree within 5 years of enrolling in college. And that is an average. I think I read here that it is only 6 percent of males and 12 percent of females.

So if people challenge us, and ask us why we are in some urgency to fix this system, is there anyone listening in this room that could argue that what we have is working?

Now, having said that, I spent years, as you know, helping the chair working on this issue as Ranking Member of DC Appropriations Subcommittee, trying to figure out what we could do from Congress to push, to prod, to be a partner, to hear good things coming from the District, because Congress does have a role in supporting not just the District of Columbia, but in helping other districts in the country, as well, and we are doing that through major breakthrough laws like No Child Left Behind. Senator Lieberman, Senator Coleman, and I just introduced with your wonderful new Superintendent supporting us, the Chancellor supporting us, the All Children Can Achieve bill that we introduced yesterday, which will bring into focus on the issue of getting the best teachers in the classrooms where they are needed the most, as well as many other things.

We must keep in mind, that these improvements must come from traditional public schools, and some of our charter schools I have worked to push for, the numbers aren't as high as they should be or we would like to see for charter schools and independent public schools and entrepreneurial. So clearly, even though there have been some good steps that have been taken, Mr. Mayor, I just want to commend you for trying to take this to another level, because these numbers have got to improve and we have got to get more children graduated, into college, and through college. And we have got, I think, to be open to—I don't want to use the word "experiment," but I will use the word "try,"—try some new things. Try some different things. Obviously, what we are doing is not working.

And the second thing I would like to say about facilities, the District is fortunate in one sense—in many senses—that you do have facilities that are available, if we could just get them into the right uses, with the right groups. There is excess space. Sam Brownback and I had a hearing, Senator. I think we found five million square feet of excess space in D.C. Schools. I see Dr. Gandhi. That space can be used more appropriately for innovation, etc.

I want to continue to press on this authority, this facilities authority. Maybe our teachers or administrators are too busy about the buildings and not busy enough about the schools, so let somebody in the real estate business manage the schools and let us get about the business of getting teachers trained and educating children.

And the final point is this Federal law that we are operating under now, all of us are operating under, requires there to be a separation between the management of schools on a day-to-day basis and then the independent sort of State authority. Obviously, the District is unique. It is not a State now. Maybe it will be one day, but it is not now. But there needs to be some independence.

So, Mr. Mayor, how did we end up working through this to make sure that the District is in compliance as all school systems are required to be in having that issue dealt with?

Mayor FENTY. Thank you very much, Senator Landrieu. In State Superintendent Gist's testimony, she really addressed this issue, but I do want to, for the record, state that the thrust of the SEA/

LEA division in the legislation really came out of working with you and your staff and the great advocacy you have done on this point for years now.

Essentially, the structure, we think, brings the District into compliance because we have separated out the local education functions from the State-level education functions. Essentially, the Chancellor and the State Superintendent report to different people, as has not been the case in the past. We will completely separate all State-level functions from the LEA, and I think we have until September 10 to do so.

We think by having different people in charge, by separating out the functions completely, we have addressed the lion's share of the problem, and as Ms. Gist's testimony relates, we think that we follow the model of several States, including New Mexico, Texas, and others, where the governor was responsible for appointing a chief State school officer, but we retain an elected State Board of Education who has substantive policy and standard recommendations and establishment of a strong and clear framework that we have to implement.

So we think we have now, for the first time in the system's history, established that type of independence, despite the fact that we are not yet a State.

Senator LANDRIEU. Thank you. I will finally just add that I look forward to working with Chairman Akaka, and continuing to be a reliable and respectful partner with you all to help us to really lift the quality of education that children can receive in the District. And again, it is a challenge throughout many parts of our country, but you all are in a special circumstance to be able to, I think, appropriately call on the resources of this Congress to help you in a very direct way that other jurisdictions don't have that ability. And frankly, I know some of them that would like to have that ability.

So please come to us. We want to be a good partner in your efforts and look forward to continuing to really bring up these benchmarks and grades and academic achievements of all of our children, and for the economic future of the city. I think this is just crucial to get a fine, operating, excellent school in every neighborhood, accessible to the students and making parents comfortable and happy with living here in the District and not having to move other places to search for something that they can't find right in their own neighborhood. So thank you very much.

Mayor FENTY. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Senator Landrieu, for your comments and your statement.

The reporting mechanisms on DCPS data, I think you would agree, are flawed. Be it special education data, DCPS contracts, there is not an exact figure. When we talk about DCPS contracts, I understand it is in a mess. In the area of student achievement, the method for tracking and reporting accurate, verifiable, and transparent information are not there.

So here is the question, in two parts. One is, what steps have each of you taken to address this issue? Within your areas as Mayor, Chancellor, President of the Board, as Deputy Mayor, and also Executive Director of Facilities, State Superintendent of Education, what steps have each of you taken to address this issue?

And second, what plans do you have to implement systems that will be able to provide accurate, transparent, and verifiable data?

Mr. Mayor.

Mayor FENTY. As you are aware, Chairman, under my predecessor Anthony Williams and the CFO, the District's finances have rebounded tremendously. But one of the biggest threats to our financial stability is actually the annual audit and specifically what has been identified by auditors in it in the past year as a material weakness related to the school system. And one of the big problems in the school system over the past couple years has been the inability to keep accurate track of our personnel, our records, and everything that relates to that.

One of the things that we have begun—just since June 12, when we took over the system, is to really make sure that we are using technology and best practices to keep track of those personnel records, one, because the Chancellor is going to need them to pay people and everything else, but two, because, again, it is at the heart of this material weakness which we have to get rid of both for our own audit purposes and for the U.S. Department of Education. So literally, we have a team that has gone into the DCPS personnel office and found boxes of personnel files piled high. This is something you may imagine from 50 years ago. And we have a technology team that is working hard to put them all into computers and to do this hopefully in 6 to 8 weeks.

So this is the type of transformation that we are having to engage in at the school system, but it is going to have dramatic results immediately. I will yield to the Chancellor to talk a little bit about what she has found in the school system.

Senator AKAKA. Ms. Rhee.

Ms. RHEE. As you know, for years, the D.C. Public Schools have been failing the children of the city, and unfortunately, the only people who have been suffering any ramifications or consequences of that failure have been the students whose life chances and life outcomes are negatively impacted by the fact that we are not providing them with the education they deserve.

And so when I agreed to take this job, one of the major drivers for me was the fact that the Mayor is solely focused on accountability at all levels. So we have to bring that accountability in a real way to the school system.

What we have begun to do is we know that we have to sit down with every single person who is employed in our system, have a very clear job description, and set very clear and measurable outcomes for what we expect to see. These all have to be measurable. And then we have to have tracking mechanisms in place so that we can see where progress is being made or not made, and ultimately, we have to hold people accountable to this, meaning that their performance and how their performance is evaluated has to be tied to these goals.

But the bottom line as I have walked through the District and talked to people over the last 4 weeks, people don't have a strong sense of what they are responsible for. So if you ask multiple people in the District very simple things like, how many students do we have, or how do we ensure that we can move out of corrective action status on our bilingual education, the people who I would

think would have the answers to those don't. And it is, I think, because of this lack of clarity around who is ultimately responsible for these things.

So the process that we are going to go through over the next few months of clarifying those expectations and setting very measurable goals for every employee in the system, I think is going to be critical in terms of moving forward and ensuring that we have the data necessary to ensure student achievement.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Mr. Bobb.

Mr. BOBB. From the State's standpoint, with respect to how we track students and come up with the number of students in the school system, there is an annual audit that takes place to determine the number of students in the school system. But at the end of the day, as was stated, we really do have to have a system to be significantly driven by technology and there is a need to improve technology across the entire system so that we are not just tracking students at the beginning of the school year and at the end of the school year, but that we are in a position to not only track the number of students who are coming into the system, but have a robust system wherein we can track students as they move throughout the system, throughout the course of the school year.

This is not only tied to where students are living, but it also has implications with respect to cost and budgetary issues, and so there is definitely a need for significant investment across the entire school system with technology, state-of-the-art technology that not only tracks students, but student movement, students coming into the system, but technology that addresses the issues of personnel moves, personnel systems. The financial systems definitely need to be significantly improved, not just from a technology standpoint, but also from a human resources standpoint, as well.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Mr. Reinoso.

Mr. REINOSO. My office has been engaged in a number of activities, but let me focus on some of the interagency work that we have been doing because I think one of the powers of this new Deputy Mayor position is the ability to coordinate and look across all city agencies. And so through the newly-created Interagency Collaboration and Integrated Services Commission, we will be bringing together the heads of all youth-serving agencies to work together and to hold them accountable as a group on youth development-related measures. So integrating those measures with the education measures that we will track at the State level, and at the DCPS level, will allow us to better coordinate the delivery of human services in support of the reform of our school system, and that is a critical opportunity that hasn't previously existed within the city.

As an example, a subgroup of that effort is a group we are calling the Reconnecting Disconnected Youth Task Force, which has been engaged on understanding the data around the population of students who have dropped out of school and are unemployed. This is a group that obviously is at high risk and needs interventions, and as a city, we haven't engaged in a systematic way of looking at who these kids are and at what points they disconnect and what interactions they have had either with the juvenile justice system or with other human services agencies so that we can plan targeted intervention strategies that affect this population. And so that ini-

tiative is underway. We are currently reviewing the data through that system.

Ms. Gist will, I am sure, speak to some of the State-level data systems that we are working on, but we will be working in coordination, again, to ensure that effort can be integrated with other city-wide data systems, because again, reforming the education system will go beyond the silo of the public school system or the silo of the individual LEAs to looking across that to address the larger social problems that can contribute to a failed education.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much. Superintendent Gist.

Ms. GIST. Yes. From the State perspective, it is our responsibility to ensure that we have strong systems in place, that we ensure that we have highly-qualified teachers in every school in the District of Columbia, that we have strong standards that are aligned both in terms of our standards, our service delivery, and our assessment, but also from the life of a learner, so from early childhood pre–K through 12th grade, post-secondary, and also adult education.

We also are responsible for ensuring that there is consistent reporting to schools, to parents and students, to policy makers, to the U.S. Department of Education, and, of course, to Congress. We also are responsible for interventions and supports when we have challenges with performance and accountability for student achievement ultimately rests with the State.

Now, that summary combined with everything that the panel has described so far has to have a tool in order to make that happen, and I am really pleased to tell you that the Mayor has set aside $19 million over the next 5 years for the development of a data warehouse to enable us to have the technology to use data in the way that everyone has described, and in addition, we are very pleased that we received one of the U.S. Department of Education's data grants. They were recently announced, and we received a $5.7 million grant.

We have a steering committee that is in place that is working on the development of that data warehouse. That steering committee represents the D.C. Public School System, the charter schools, our higher education community, our early childhood programs, and so it will truly be a data warehouse that will keep data about students, student achievement, teachers, and schools at every stage of a learner's experience in the District.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much. Mr. Lew.

Mr. LEW. We are currently examining all of the existing management systems for data, for information, for where the contracts are, for where every dollar is located. At the same time, we are setting up new systems as we go forward. We want to get to the point where every repair order can be tracked, when it was called in, when it was triaged, when it was expected to be delivered, and when the site was inspected, when the monies are made available, all of these kind of conditions that are kind of spread out and diffused at this point. We are looking to bring our data management process up to 21st Century standards.

It is going to take us a couple of months to get our arms around all of this and to put in place all of the necessary systems so we can go forward and manage it like a business. At this point, all I

can tell you is that what you read in the newspapers is true. The system is broken.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Before I call on my colleague, Senator Carper, let me ask this question of the Mayor, the Chancellor, and the Acting Deputy Mayor. It seems that DCPS has been in crisis mode to address these issues for some years. As we all know, it is rare that crisis mode decisions are sustainable solutions. How do you plan to address the short- and long-term problems while creating sustainable policies and solutions?

Mayor FENTY. Well, let me begin, and then I will yield to the people on the front lines. There are a couple of things that have already begun. One, there is a real need to closely examine and then quickly make improvements to both the training and the recruitment and retention of personnel. As any big city mayor will tell you, the No. 1 thing I have to do is hire good people. We have done it at the top, but the Chancellor has to be able to do that throughout the system.

Two, we have to make sure that as we go forward, we make some of the very difficult decisions early on. As we get into the next school year, the longer we get into running this system, the more we will have to focus on the day-to-day. But we know as a team that there are some really difficult decisions that need to be made about school autonomy, as I think Senator Landrieu said, thinking outside the box, trying new things, and when the Chancellor was interviewing for the position, one of the things we agreed on 100 percent was that this wasn't the time for either of us to think about how long we could be the Chancellor or the Mayor. This is the time to try some very bold things around personnel, around school autonomy, around facilities, and that is exactly what we plan to do, and we are going to have to do it very quickly.

I will yield to the Chancellor Rhee.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Chancellor Rhee.

Ms. RHEE. It is interesting that you say that we have been operating in crisis mode, because I think that what has struck me from being in the District for 4 weeks is the actual complete lack of urgency with which we are operating, and this is a problem because every decision that we are making at the District level, every decision that is being made at the school level, is impacting kids and their lives. Given that is the gravity of the situation, I would expect that our employees would be operating in a manner that understands that and we are not currently.

Right now in the District, we have a culture of compliance instead of a culture that is focused on quality, and that would be one thing if we could actually be in compliance with anything which we are currently not. So we do really have to shift our focus towards one in which we are looking at quality, the impact that our actions are having on students.

I will say also that if you look at the way in which we are working on a day-to-day basis, we are very much in reactive mode. So as problems arise, we are trying to solve those problems, but in trying to do that, what we have failed to do is actually think longer-term, think more strategically, and be more proactive about how we are going to ensure that we don't end up in this situation where we have the consistent backlogs of facility orders, etc.

So my hope is that we can, as we are moving forward, take the time and be very disciplined about creating longer-term strategic plans around how we are going to proceed in these areas so that we can have the foresight to do these things carefully and really, then, sort of balance that against working with a true sense of urgency.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

Mr. REINOSO. Along similar lines, I want to borrow an analogy that Mr. Lew used in his testimony about a real physical problem, but I think one that pertains to the broader problem. You can't run into a school building and say the ceiling needs to be fixed and then work quickly to fix the building and walk out without having asked the question, have you addressed the real core of the problem, being roof repairs and gutters, et cetera, and that is how the management by crisis has created a false kind of energy—an urgency that isn't grounded in long-term solutions but an urgency that is reactive, as the Chancellor said, and that is something that has affected efforts in the past to turn around academic programs and schools—a lot of activity at the surface without addressing and putting in place the long-term foundation.

So what we have to do is strike that balance between urgent interventions while building a culture that supports long-term solutions, and ultimately, I think that is the issue. It is about a culture of accountability that isn't about "gotcha," but it is an accountability that tells you, that focuses your work every day, wherever you are in the system, around education and then provides you targeted support that recognizes that, historically, the city hasn't provided the school district or its students the professional development and the other supports that families need, that teachers need, etc.

And so the current structure that the Mayor has put forth creates the focus at each level of the organization, with the Chancellor focused exclusively on what is going on in the classroom, a facilities director focused exclusively on the facilities issues, State Superintendent now truly focused at the State level with the strong community support of the State Board in setting those State expectations, and then the Deputy Mayor helping to provide that big picture, unifying and coordinating resources city-wide. And so I think that framework will allow us to, in fact, respond with real urgency as we implement long-term solutions at all levels of the organization.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. And now I would like to call on my friend, Senator Carper, for his statement or questions, as well.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARPER

Senator CARPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks for putting this all together today. I am just going to telegraph my pitch, if I could.

I am an old governor. I have been here for about 6½ years with Senator Akaka and my colleagues, but I still think like a governor and am described by some of my colleagues as a recovering governor. But I have a great deal of interest as a governor in what we are doing in the schools in our State and, frankly, in the country. I served for a while as chairman of the National Governors As-

sociation. The focus of my year as chairman was really education and a couple of aspects of what we are doing to strengthen our schools.

I would like to have a chance to hear some of your thoughts or your advice for us as we approach the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. How can we do it in a way that would be especially constructive for the students and the families that you are here to represent?

A little bit on early childhood. What are you doing with respect to early childhood? We focus a whole lot on K to 12. One of my old colleagues as governor and here in the U.S. Senate, Zell Miller from Georgia, used to say, if I had it to do all over again, I don't think I would fund the 12th grade. We would just take all those resources and put it in zero to five. There is actually some merit for that.

I would like to hear a little bit about what you are doing to attract and retain good teachers. We have in my State and other States, good teachers have a propensity to end up in the good schools with better pay and students who are more likely to succeed.

I would like to hear from you about what you are doing to be able to identify best practices and then to replicate those best practices from school to school.

And then maybe a little bit about accountability. I want to hear about your standards, the standards that you already have, if you have them set, how you regard the rigor of those standards and assessing performance. I guess all of your students take the NAPE, in grades four and eight. Some of the States dumbed down their standards in order to be able to demonstrate that they are doing well against their standards, but we catch them when they take the NAPE, because if they are doing great on their State tests but poorly on the NAPEs, that suggests that maybe they don't have the most rigorous standards. So I would like to talk about how you deal with that.

But before we do any of that, I would like to ask, have any of you been to Perryville, Maryland?

Mayor FENTY. Is that right off of 95, near Havre de Grace?

Senator CARPER. Yes.

Mayor FENTY. Yes, I have.

Senator CARPER. Has anyone been to Perryville, Maryland, this summer? Have any of you been in Perryville this summer to swim by Pig Run?

Mayor FENTY. I know I have. Have any of you?

[Laughter.]

You are not going to read my time into the record, are you, Senator?

[Laughter.]

Senator CARPER. My son, Christopher, is going to be a sophomore in college, Mr. Chairman, and he has gotten into triathalons, half-triathalons, and mini-triathalons, and he participated in that race, finished in the top 10 percent.

Mayor FENTY. Wow.

Senator CARPER. He says, next year, I would like for you to do that with me, Dad. And I try to stay in good shape. I said it would

probably kill me, but I know you were there and participated and I applaud you for that. It is nice to see you here today. Welcome.

Let us talk about reauthorizing No Child Left Behind.

Ms. RHEE. Sure.

Senator CARPER. Do you have some advice for us as we approach the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind?

Ms. RHEE. Yes. I think there are two main things that I think about as we are discussing the reauthorization, and I think that it is incredibly important for policy to take into account the practicalities that are going on in the District, so I will talk about two main areas here.

The first is around the current provision within NCLB around highly-qualified teachers. I think the positive thing that this provision has one is really to bring a focus on qualified teachers in a way that did not exist before NCLB. There is no doubt about that. From having worked with most of the urban districts across the country before and after the passage of this law, I know that there is a focus on high-quality instruction in a way that there was not before.

However, I think that we need to sort of take the next iteration of that and focus not on the qualifications necessarily of someone coming into this system, but rather looking at how effective are they once they are in the classroom, because I think we have seen that experience, degrees, those things don't actually correlate directly to student achievement. Those inputs can't tell us, unfortunately, whether or not somebody is going to be an effective teacher. So I think we have to move much more towards a system where we are looking specifically at student achievement data so it is related to teacher performance and really then gauge teacher effectiveness on that. So that is the first thing.

I would say the second thing, I think—

Senator CARPER. Let me interrupt. So the teacher performance would be evaluated, at least in part, by student progress?

Ms. RHEE. Correct. As opposed to credentials or degrees coming in.

Senator CARPER. OK. Thank you.

Ms. RHEE. The second piece, I think, that is important to look at is AYP. I think one of the important things that has happened is that we are now looking at students broken out by subgroup. I think this is incredibly important, because, as you know, the achievement gap in this country is severe and we have lots of districts across the country who are serving some students well but not others, and that is often masked if you don't break out by subgroups. So I think that is an incredibly important thing that has happened.

I think, though, again, when you look at the tactical level, if you are a school that has met 21 out of 22 performance indicators, you still don't meet AYP, which is very different than a school who has only met 7 out of 22 indicators, and so I think there has to be more granularity looking at the progress of schools and not just in the sort of black and white, met AYP or didn't, because I think within those various indicators, you can see a lot.

Senator CARPER. And when you are talking about the progress that is being made in schools, can you sort of weave into that any comments on the proposed—going to a growth model as part——

Ms. RHEE. Yes.

Senator CARPER. Is that what you are alluding to?

Ms. RHEE. I think it is incredibly important to look at a growth model because you want to make sure—and this is going to your previous point of making sure that we are incenting the best teachers to go to the schools that need great teachers the most. And I think that if you just look at the data thing, how many of your kids are on grade level, well, then obviously that is much easier to achieve if you are looking at higher-performing schools. What is more important is to look at where the students started when they came into a particular teacher's class or into a particular school and to understand how much growth they saw over that given year. I think that moving toward that model is incredibly important and does not in any way handicap the lower-performing schools from attracting the best talent.

Senator CARPER. Okay, good. Mr. Chairman, my time has expired. Will there be another round of questions?

Senator AKAKA. Do you have more questions?

Senator CARPER. I do.

Senator AKAKA. Yes.

Senator CARPER. Okay, thank you. Let me come back in the next round of questions and I will follow up on some of the points that were raised. Thanks very much.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Senator Carper.

Mr. Lew, while your office will be responsible for modernization and new school construction, I understand that minor repair and maintenance will remain with DCPS, which still brings up the issues of accountability in maintaining schools. There does not seem to be a clear division of these responsibilities. Who will be responsible for the maintenance of the public school facilities, and have schools received information and direction on how to work with your office to have their maintenance needs resolved?

Mr. LEW. Mr. Chairman, the legislation speaks of modernization focused on the new facilities, the major renovation projects, and defines maintenance, routine maintenance as not being part of that responsibility. It is my belief, and I believe it is also the Mayor's belief, that given the state of the schools, with the backlog of repairs, it is important that this office tackle all of the repairs outstanding, then put into place a system going forward that can correct these problems when they occur, not 2 years or 3 years later.

I have jokingly said at hearings that I would like to apply my wife's standard, which is you call the plumber, they come that day, they fix it, it is done, not 2 years later, not 3 years later. It has gotten to the point where school system employees are so demoralized that they don't even submit work orders because they know they are not going to get responses.

I think that we can talk about how the future will go once we resolve the present, and the only way the present will get resolved at this point is if my office tackles this maintenance backlog, clears the slate, gets all of the backlogged repairs out of there, and then establishes a new system and new order, and helps restructure

that organization so that maintenance becomes truly maintenance. Janitorial and custodial services stay with the schools. Repairs are conducted in a professional way and in a timely way. So there is still some communication going back and forth between the Council and our offices and the Mayor as to possibly redefining what my office is charged with, at least for the near term.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Mr. Bobb, I am pleased to see that the Board intends to promote early childhood education and literacy as two critical issues, and I am also pleased to see or to hear a commitment on the part of the Board to set rigorous graduation requirements. The very low proficiency ratings across DCPS, the high dropout rate that was mentioned, and the lack of a strong educational foundation means many of the students are far behind the curve. A lot of work must be done to prepare those students to meet the rigorous standard for graduation that I think you intend to set.

What effort is the Board taking to promote the needs of the students who have fallen behind in preparation for graduation?

Mr. BOBB. Previously, the Board did approve very rigorous graduation standards and those are on the books now. Those graduation standards require students to take more courses in math and science and also requires more support services for students who are falling behind in various classes.

But I might add that the State Board, while it promotes higher standards, cannot do it in a vacuum. It cannot sit in its room and then promote these higher standards for graduation, for dropout, for reading, et cetera, without having a real partnership with the Chancellor and her team and her staff, because at the end of the day, it does the system no good to set very high standards unless the school, the State Board, understands the practicality of actually implementing those standards at the level of the Chancellor.

So, whenever the State Board promulgates higher standards for graduation, for student achievement, et cetera, it has to do so in concert with the Chancellor and her team so that we are working together to reach the higher standards, and we can also put in the services that are needed to assist these students in reaching these higher standards so that we are not working as a school system, as a State Board of Education, in a vacuum, but are working cooperatively and we are doing it together.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. I have a question here for Ms. Gist. The U.S. Department of Education has placed DCPS on its grantee high-risk list. In a June 28 letter, the Department lays out the explanation of why DCPS is on the high-risk list, the required corrective action necessary, and ramifications for non-compliance. What steps are you taking to develop and implement a corrective action plan and comply with the U.S. Department of Education's requirements?

Ms. GIST. Removing the designation of the high-risk grantee is one of our highest priorities, and we do have a corrective action plan in place that we have worked very closely with the Department of Education to create. The Department has been incredibly supportive of DCPS over the recent years in its role as both the LEA and the SEA and has actually detailed an employee over to DCPS to the SEA to assist with the development of that corrective

action plan and over the past few months has begun implementing that plan.

And so once the legislation passed, I began working closely with the Chancellor and her senior staff and with the U.S. Department of Education to take a look at that corrective action plan and to begin to monitor how we are doing on that plan.

Much of the work that needs to happen to remove the status of high-risk grantee needs to happen at both the LEA level and the SEA level. So while the designation is a designation of the SEA and while the SEA is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all the improvements take place, the work is work that the SEA as an entity needs to change in its practices as well as being work that all of the LEAs need to improve in their practices.

Much of the work that needs to happen is improving the efficiency of our bureaucracy and our documentation, our monitoring of time and attendance toward grants, for example, allowable cost. So these are fixable problems. I am very confident—the Chancellor and I are very confident that we can get this designation removed, and this is a priority of the Mayor, as well. He recently held one of his CAPSTAT sessions specifically focused on these issues. And we feel like we are moving in the right direction to get that designation removed.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much. Senator Carper.

Senator CARPER. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. The second point that I wanted to get into was early childhood. My boys were born a couple years before I became governor, and I had the opportunity to watch them the first few years of their life just be little sponges and just suck up incredible amounts of information in their first few years before they were eligible to go into kindergarten. One of the things we sought to do in our State, and George Voinovich had done this earlier in Ohio, was to fully fund Head Start for all 4-year-olds who lived in poverty using State money to make up the difference.

We also provided extra learning time money to school districts and we said, we don't care how you use it, but we want you to demonstrate progress. We are going to hold you accountable. But, we said, you can use this extra learning time money for longer school days, longer school weeks, Saturday academies, summer institutes, whatever. You can also use it for pre–K for ages three and four. But what we set up was a vehicle by which we could track performance and just to see over a number of periods of years whether it works.

And we found that taking kids from some of the most disadvantaged backgrounds at the age of three and putting them in early quality pre–K programs and then full-day kindergarten and first grade, second, third grade with enrichment, longer school days, that kind of thing, we found that when we tested them with the State test in the third grade, they performed as well as kids from two-parent intact families who had every advantage in life compared to these youngsters. If I wasn't a believer in early education before, that sure made me one.

We bemoan the fact that we have a lot of kids who drop out, who are disruptive in school when they get into middle school and high school. I think we drop the ball way before that. It is not just the

schools, it is parents, many of whom do not do a very good job of preparing their children for education or being a partner with their children's teachers and so forth.

But just talk to me about where you are on early childhood—maybe there is something we can do in terms of funding that can help you in that regard.

Ms. RHEE. Absolutely. If you look at the data, which I am sure you have seen, kids from low-income communities come to school with up to 10,000 words less, having exposure to 10,000 words less than kids from more affluent communities.

Senator CARPER. Chris Dodd argues to me that it is more than that. I have said it may be as high as 25,000. He says it is even higher than that, but I know what you mean.

Ms. RHEE. Yes. So, I mean, this is going to impact their ability to be successful. It impacts their ability to read quicker. And what we know is that kids from home environments that are print-rich are at a significant advantage when it comes to educational outcomes. So we really believe that it is critical that we are thinking about school readiness. Before we even have kids step foot into a kindergarten classroom, what can we do to ensure that they are as ready as possible?

I would say that, having been here for 4 weeks, my major concerns when it comes to early childhood education are sort of twofold. One, how do we ensure that we have high quality? Right now, we need to look to outside providers and other folks to help us with the early childhood piece, and so what I think is critical to us as a District is ensuring that we put systems and processes in place to ensure that any outside providers who might be adding capacity to the District in terms of providing services to pre–K kids really do meet a high standard and that we can actually measure the progress of those children in those programs. So I think that is the first concern.

And then the second, as you mentioned, is funding. As we look at our budgets, I actually think that it could be a tremendous investment on the front end that will pay dividends on the back end several-fold if we could actually help to find funding for pre–K programs. As you mentioned, when we look at the discipline and academic issues that exist for our kids at the secondary levels, both middle school and high school, oftentimes those are actually linked to their academics. Because kids are operating so far below grade level, they are frustrated in class that they cannot keep up, and that is oftentimes the impetus for their behavioral problems and issues.

So I really do think that if we can find a way to make the investment at the front end, that we really will see significant benefits later on.

Senator CARPER. Anybody else? Yes, sir, Mr. Bobb? I love saying that, Mr. Bobb.

Mr. BOBB. Thank you. I like that, too.

[Laughter.]

Just real quickly, I came into this late, but I really like what I have seen from a lot of experts when they start speaking about the preparation gap. And as someone who is familiar with urban cities, I have become a champion for it because I just think that when it

comes to funding, where we really need to put our funding is between zero to three, because without the prenatal and postnatal health care, that impacts a child's ability to learn. And when you have a child in a household where the household itself has parents who are functionally illiterate by the State standards, that impacts a child's ability to learn. If a child lives in a household where there is lead-based paint and plays on playgrounds where there is lead-based paint, that impacts a child's ability to learn and impacts a child's cognitive schools.

There are programs wherein they use community volunteers and others who actually go into some of the homes at the age when a child is 16 months of age and start introducing into those households learning-appropriate toys, learning-appropriate materials, and start working with that child's cognitive and motor skills on the front end and working on the other pathologies within those communities. So I believe when it comes to making major investment in our urban cities, you need to make that investment at the time a child is conceived in the community and work with that household up until the child reaches age three and then enter the other universal pre–K programs. So I think it actually starts earlier.

Senator CARPER. OK, good point. Ms. Gist.

Ms. GIST. You can tell that you have tapped into something here on this panel as it relates to early childhood education. This is an issue that is very near and dear to all of us, including Mayor Fenty, who intentionally—

Senator CARPER. Is that true, Mr. Mayor?

Mayor FENTY. I think what she is getting to is we actually made a change in the structure to allow the State Education Office to have much more of a role in early childhood education. It is definitely the case. I support what you said on the record.

Senator CARPER. Good. Ms. Gist.

Ms. GIST. That is exactly what I was going to say. The Mayor intentionally in his structure moved early childhood, early care and education into the Office of the State Superintendent of Education so that we can focus on it, so we can focus on the quality of early care and education that we have in the District, and so that we can ensure that we have alignment from those early childhood programs and through the rest of our educational system.

And if I may, I also just wanted to thank you, Senator. Secretary Val Woodruff up in your State has been—

Senator CARPER. You know Val Woodruff?

Ms. GIST. We do. She has been incredibly helpful to us, and I just wanted to thank you. She and her staff have been wonderful to us as we have been setting up our new State office.

Senator CARPER. Well, that is good. Thanks for saying that. I asked Ms. Woodruff to become our Secretary of Education in our State a number of years ago, my last term as governor, and she is still our Secretary of Education and does, I think, a very fine job.

One of the things we realized in Delaware is that in terms of accountability, we figured out it was important to hold schools accountable. We figured out it was important to hold school districts accountable and it was important to hold students accountable. We are searching and probably still searching for ways to truly hold

parents accountable. We also wanted to extend accountability to educators, not just the teachers in the classrooms, but to administrators and others, as well. That was a difficult battle, as you might imagine. As a matter of fact, our State still struggles with how do we hold educators accountable and parents accountable.

I don't know to what extent you are looking at what is oftentimes referred to as pay-for-performance, but to the extent that you can come up with an approach that is fair, equitable for teachers, and fair to parents, fair to kids, we would look to you as a model. So if you do that kind of work, I hope you can share that with all of us.

The last thing I want to say, or can I ask one more question, Mr. Chairman?

Senator AKAKA. Yes.

Senator CARPER. Thank you. Talk to us for just a moment about your academic standards. We set academic standards in math, science, English, and social studies, and have come along and updated those and created some other standards for other core curriculum, and we think they are pretty rigorous standards. And I talked earlier about how some States like to dumb down their standards and that way they can make it appear that they are doing better when the kids take the test, but we find out later on when they take these NAPE tests in the fourth and eighth grades in reading and math that the kids don't do so well, and so you figure out, these schools or States are just dumbing down their standards, which doesn't really do the kids a favor in the long run nor the States.

Talk to us about the standards that you have in place. How long have they been in place? Do you look at them from time to time? How do your kids do under your standards when you test your kids annually, and how do they do on the NAPE?

Ms. GIST. We do have new standards in the District of Columbia. Within the last 2 years, our Superintendent in his role as the Chief State School Officer and our Board, which was then operating as both the Local and the State Board, approved standards for reading, math, science, and social studies, and we have draft standards in place for our world languages, health, P.E., and others are in the process right now.

Our standards are actually quite rigorous. They were, when compared with performance on the NAPE, rated very high, in fact, among the highest in the country. They were modeled after the Massachusetts standards. We feel confident that we have high standards, strong standards in place right now, although we do intend to take another look at those standards. We want to make sure that our standards are aligned across all educational levels, as I mentioned earlier, as well as ensuring that they are aligned with college and workforce expectations. But we do feel confident in the standards that we have in place and we also have a new State test that is aligned with our new standards.

Senator CARPER. OK.

Ms. RHEE. I would like to just comment and say that I agree with Superintendent Gist that our standards are very strong. Our challenge right now is ensuring that we have a curriculum and that we have instruction in the classroom that is actually stand-

ards-based and is teaching the children to meet those high standards, and that is really where we are struggling, is to make sure that the instruction in the classroom every day is standards-based—

Senator CARPER. So it aligns with the standards.

Ms. RHEE. Absolutely.

Senator CARPER. Good point. Let me close, if I can. Is this the end of the hearing, Mr. Chairman? Are you ready to wrap it up?

Senator AKAKA. Yes.

Senator CARPER. Okay. I won't give the benediction, the Chairman will give the benediction, but if I could just mention one last thing. We are so fortunate in Delaware, we have a State motto, Mr. Chairman, that is we are the first State that ratified the Constitution. For one whole week, Delaware was the entire United States of America.

[Laughter.]

And we opened it up. We let in Pennsylvania. We let in New Jersey and Maryland and eventually Hawaii. For the most part, I think we are pleased with the way it has turned out.

Mayor FENTY. For the record, we have got one more State to let in, Senator Carper.

[Laughter.]

Senator CARPER. Well, we are going to make sure that your Delegate has a chance to fully participate, and we are pleased to have been, Senator Akaka and I and Senator Lieberman and others were pleased to be able to have supported that.

Mayor FENTY. Thank you very much.

Senator CARPER. But we have been fortunate in Delaware—there are some things you don't want to be first in, we have found out, but there are a lot of things it is fine to be first in. One of the things that we are first in, we had a governor named Pete DuPont who was the governor for 8 years back in the late 1970s, early 1980s, and one of the things that Pete DuPont and his education advisor, a fellow named Ken Smith, identified was we had a lot of kids dropping out. They made it as far as the 12th grade. They dropped out in the 12th grade. I mean, normally you think if you get that close, you wouldn't drop out. But these kids were dropping out in the 12th grade.

They tried to figure out why, and it seemed like a lot of times, the kids who were dropping out were kids who didn't really feel they were getting prepared for anything. They could not relate what was going on in their classroom with the rest of their lives. They didn't feel a part of anything. They maybe weren't on a sports team. They weren't academically gifted. They just were kind of, maybe not misfits, but they just didn't feel a part of their school and they just drifted away and dropped out. They weren't doing well, so they quit.

In a high school in Wilmington, Delaware, called Wilmington High School, Pete DuPont, with the advice of his education advisor, Ken Smith, created a program that they called Jobs for Delaware Graduates, and it is not really a job program as such but it was a program just for 12th grade and they took about 20 kids at Wilmington High School, which was only one of two high schools in the inner city in Wilmington, and they said, we are going to pro-

vide for these kids the opportunity to have a combination mentor-social worker-teacher, and they ended up calling the person a job specialist. The job of this person was to make these kids feel a part of something and to prepare them in a real practical way for the world of work and to stick with them through high school and for a year after that.

And they started in this one high school in Delaware. Today, it is in virtually every high school in Delaware. It is not just a grade 12 program with a year after that, but we start with kids in the ninth grade. We identify kids that are at high risk for dropping out. We look at their older brothers and sisters who didn't make it through and get these kids involved early on, give them a sense of belonging and just a practical approach to why it's important. Why is it relevant to learn math, reading, and social studies? Why are these things relevant in your life? Involve them for a year beyond high school.

The program started off at one high school with 20 kids in Wilmington, Delaware. It is now not just in Delaware, but it is in 29 or 30 other States. I think it is in the District of Columbia. We call it Jobs for America's Graduates. George Voinovich and I, Mike Leavitt, some others served on the national board, Tom Vilsack, Governor of Iowa was the chair. I said Mike Leavitt. I should have said Tom Vilsack. But all of us have been involved at one time or other as governors, especially.

But I would just commend to you, as you look at ways to reduce your dropout rate in the District of Columbia, that you take a look at Jobs for D.C. Graduates. I think they have about a 90, 94 percent success rate these days for kids who they bring into the program who actually go on and graduate and find themselves later on in jobs, post-secondary education and jobs in the military.

As governor, I was always looking for things that work and to be able to replicate things that work in other States, steal good ideas. This is an idea that we are proud to have started and it has spread to a lot of places and it helped a whole lot of kids over the last 25 years or so. So I would commend it to your attention.

The last thing I want to say, on a more personal note, Mayor Fenty, I love to run. I like to exercise. I try to work out every day. When I get to the finish line at races, I like to stand there and shake hands with everybody who comes across after me.

Mayor FENTY. Right.

Senator CARPER. And as a politician, it gives me a great incentive to try to run faster and stronger.

Mayor FENTY. On that note, Senator, you are going to have to tell your son he is going to have to give me a rematch.

Senator CARPER. Okay.

Mayor FENTY. We had my staff do some research. It looks like I am a faster runner than him and we are about the same on the bike, but he is one heck of a swimmer.

Senator CARPER. He can swim. He swims on his college swim team.

Mayor FENTY. That is not fair.

[Laughter.]

Senator CARPER. But I tell you, of all the elected officials that were participating that day——

Mayor FENTY. Yes, I was the first Mayor to finish.

Senator CARPER [continuing]. You were far and away the first to come across.

Mayor FENTY. Tell him to come do the Nation's Triathalon September 29.

Senator CARPER. Is that when it is?

Mayor FENTY. Yes. It will be on my home court in the Potomac. [Laughter.]

Senator CARPER. What I find is that the people that I participate with, and I am not a great runner or anything, but I love to run, but I find that people that I participate with appreciate the fact that an elected official has a spirit of competition and that is great. I salute you for your activities there and for the leadership that you are providing.

Mayor FENTY. Thank you for your support of the city. We really appreciate it.

Senator CARPER. It is an honor. Thank you. Thanks for joining us today. And Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to participate in this hearing. I am sorry I got here so late.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Senator Carper.

Let me ask a few more questions, and these are going to be questions that are directly connected with the system. Ms. Rhee and Mr. Reinoso, I understand there is a hiring freeze on principals, but how many teaching and principal positions still need to be filled before the first day of school and how do you plan to fill those vacancies?

Ms. RHEE. When I first came into the position, one of the first things that came to light was the fact that we had a tremendous number of principal vacancies in the system. At that time, it was about 19. As I looked at the pool of candidates that we had available for those positions and the processes that the HR Department had in place, I did not feel confident that we were going to place high-quality principals into those slots. Furthermore, there was not the community engagement and investment, involvement, in the principal selection process.

So at that time, I made the decision to put the freeze on the hiring of permanent principals and I said that we would look at the pool and hire interim principals, but that those individuals would be told that we would be running an aggressive national campaign for the best principal talent, starting from this summer, that in the February time frame, we would be interviewing for principal positions in each of those interim positions, that the interim was welcome to throw their hat in the ring, but that we wanted the community and the school districts to see how those people compared to an incredibly strong pool that we were able to recruit nationwide.

So that is why I made that decision. We have been making steady progress on filling the principal vacancies with these interims and we anticipate that within the next 2 or 3 weeks, all of those positions will be filled.

On the teacher front, as of last week, we still had—well, overall, we are anticipating that we will fill about 440 teacher vacancies this year. About 220 of them were filled with teachers who are transferring throughout the system, as well as our two flagship

pipeline programs, the D.C. Teaching Fellows and Teach for America. Of the remaining 220 positions, we just held a placement fair last week where we invited about 200 candidates and we anticipate that the vast majority of them will be placed into those slots. But we anticipate having very few teaching vacancies on the first day of school.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. I have questions on special education that I would like to ask Mr. Reinoso and the Mayor. Mr. Reinoso, in your testimony, you mentioned many initiatives to improve the delivery of educational services in the District. However, I noticed that you did not mention the area of special education, which DCPS continues to struggle with addressing. With a special education population of 18 percent, DCPS spent a reported $114 million in 2006 to private schools to educate 2,111 special education students. What are some of the reforms you see as needed to address this population?

Mr. REINOSO. Thank you for the question. Special education reform is a critical priority for the administration, both at the State level and at the LEA level, with DCPS as the largest LEA. As you know, there are a number of court cases that involve special education in the District. Through the Mayor's leadership, the Mayor's Office has been coordinating since early on in the administration efforts to accelerate the meeting of targets set in consent decree for the Blackman Jones case and we will continue to evaluate that process and help ensure that it stays on track.

One of the critical issues that has to be addressed in special education—you alluded to it earlier—is the issue of data, the ability to track the special education population, the ability to track the hearing officer decisions and ensure compliance with those decisions, which is a core piece of that case. We also have some State-level compliance issues that we are working on and State Superintendent Gist and her team are building the State-level capacity to address these State level special education issues.

At the same time, as Chancellor Rhee mentioned, there is a very fair question about how many of those children have been tagged "special education" but really have more basic learning issues that can be addressed within the school environment, and so, to that effect, I know the Chancellor is working on her systemwide professional development plan and we will be targeting this issue, among others, moving forward, because we have got to provide interventions for our students before they get labeled "special education." We also have to create a culture of accountability in which principals at local schools view it as part of their core responsibility to address the needs of children who are special education students, also children who may be falling behind, but prior to reaching that designation.

So as the Chancellor moves forward on the development of her leadership institute, I am certain that the issues around special education accountability will play a critical role in developing the new principal accountability model that we will have as the State—at the LEA level and likewise we hope to create an incentive mechanism for the LEAs. Currently, as you know, there is a huge amount of money that is spent on special education and that spending is provided outside of the local education funding lines in

our budget. We hope to help align the incentives of the LEA with the State obligation for special education by providing a mechanism whereby some of the savings from reducing the number of placements in special education will be reinvested in the local schools, again, so that there is an alignment of incentives in dealing with these issues.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. A quick question to the Mayor. WAMU, Mr. Chairman, recently reported that a number of special education teachers have claimed that they did not receive the bonuses they were promised. I have also heard reports of other teachers not getting paid. What systems are you putting in place to ensure that all teachers are paid appropriately for their work, and also, what are you doing to ensure all hiring and retention tools are being used accurately and effectively?

Mayor FENTY. Well, first, on the report from WAMU, the Chancellor has informed me that the money for that has been released.

Second, we have addressed some of the issues about trying to make sure that payments get through to teachers. That is one of the reasons why it is so critical for us to have a personnel system that is completely automated rather than the antiquated one that we have right now. It is a wonder anyone gets paid on time, the way we are doing it just completely manually, and we have made enormous progress on that just since June 12.

The Chancellor, I think, is as much of an expert on exactly what needs to be done to recruit, train, and retain teachers. We will give her the resources necessary to do so.

Just on the general issue of special education, we think that the early childhood education is critical. We think that more technology so that we can better comply with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act is critical. We think that inclusion is critical. But this issue of teachers and special education is also linked.

There was a very pointed article in the *Washington Post* over a year ago which showed that we were being penny-wise and pound-foolish as we cut teachers. Many of them were special education teachers. We would immediately make ourselves out of compliance with Federal law, which then meant that instead of paying a teacher's salary, which could be anywhere between $40,000 and $70,000, we ended up paying to send one kid into a private school, which by itself is $40,000 to $70,000. So we think that strengthening the classroom, having qualified teachers, inclusion models, are ways of actually preventing us from getting out of compliance with the special education laws and also saving us revenue in the long term.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much. I have one more question for Ms. Rhee. I understand that there are a number of contracted organizations supplementing DCPS to meet the needs of the student population. In implementing your reform efforts, are you planning to hire additional outside contractors? If so, what services would they provide and how do you plan to make those contracts transparent?

Ms. RHEE. I think right now is a critical time for the District because, to be frank, we do not have the capacity that we will ultimately need within the District to be able to meet the needs of all children. So I do think that it is strategic and prudent of us to think about how we can gain some capacity by working with some

outside providers on a number of different things, for example, the professional development of teachers. We have a number of outside organizations who have a longstanding history of working here with us in Washington, DC, who have provided great professional development services to our teachers.

The most critical thing to me right now as I am looking from a systemic perspective is, one, that our providers be able to provide at scale so that we don't have a fragmented system where there are too many providers, but that we have a small number of providers who can provide across the District; and that, two, they have a track record of proven results for increasing student achievement in those schools.

I am looking to ensure that we are instituting performance guarantees in all of the contracts that we have from here on out, whether it be for things like food service or professional development. It is important that we are holding our vendors accountable for ensuring specific outcomes and that if they are not meeting those measures, that we end those contracts and find providers who are able to do that.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much for that. Mr. Mayor, I am impressed.

Mayor FENTY. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Let me say that we sit at the edge of meaningful reforms and you are the team that is charged with delivering the promise of hope to the District, and that is huge. I am still concerned that there are insufficient benchmarks and a lack of clear details. I know you are all dedicated to succeeding and I intend to remain focused on this issue and do all I can to help. The start of the school year is around the corner and I hope that by then, we will see significantly more progress. I am hopeful that the reforms you seek will improve DCPS.

The hearing record of this Subcommittee will remain open for 2 weeks for Members to submit any additional statements they may have or any questions they may want to have answered.

So at this point, I want to thank all of the witnesses for being here, for your valuable responses. I want to tell you that, from what you have delivered today, I am excited to see what is going to be happening and we will be certainly following you on that.

Mayor FENTY. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:50 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

GREAT EXPECTATIONS: ASSESSMENT, ASSURANCES AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE MAYOR'S PROPOSAL TO REFORM THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT,
THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE HONORABLE DANIEL K. AKAKA, CHAIRMAN
THE HONORABLE GEORGE V. VOINOVICH, RANKING MEMBER

TESTIMONY OF ADRIAN M. FENTY
MAYOR
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2007

Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Voinovich, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify today about the future of the District of Columbia Public Schools.

My name is Adrian M. Fenty, and I am the fifth elected Mayor of the District of Columbia. I took office on a pledge to improve the lives of all residents of the nation's capital, but especially the children.

As a society, we have an obligation make sure our children have the tools they need to succeed as adults. Our children deserve the best environment we can give them for learning, and our teachers deserve the best environment we can give them for teaching. But, as you know, our public education system in the District has not done right by its 75,000 students (including 55,000 DCPS students and 20,000 students attending public charter schools) for quite some time.

The situation is urgent because more than two-thirds of our fourth graders are reading below grade level. Fewer than half graduate from high school in 5 years. This means the vast majority of students in the DC Public Schools don't stand a good chance of having what has been vital to the success of nearly every person in this room – a college education.

I took office in January knowing it was time to do something radically different in the schools. Why? Because we've had study after study, dating almost back to when I was a DC Public Schools student, documenting how the schools are failing our children. This will end on my watch.

Securing control over the schools was the first priority of my administration. After several months of careful consideration, including some 70 hours of public hearings, the Council of the District of Columbia approved my school governance reform plan April 19 of this year. As you know, the bill was then approved by Congress and signed into law by President Bush on June 1. Let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, to Senator Voinovich, and to all of the members of the Subcommittee for moving that legislation through the Senate so quickly.

Today, I'd like to introduce you to my team -- the architects of a new future for the District of Columbia Public Schools. For the record, each of these individuals has a long track record of service either to the city, to young people, or to both. Each also has my complete confidence.

To start, I am very happy to introduce Michelle Rhee, our new Chancellor. She was confirmed by the Council just last week and she has hit the ground running. She's already identified some of the key problems that need to be resolved before school starts in the fall, and she and her team are already developing ways to fix them

On the budget front, Victor Reinoso, my Deputy Mayor for Education, has hired a team of auditors to take a close look at the school system's finances, so we can redirect more of our

money to the classroom. He will also harness resources from across the government to address obstacles to success in school for our kids.

Deborah Gist, my new State Superintendent, will head a State Education Agency for the District that is truly independent, addressing a long standing concern of some school activists.

Finally, Allen Lew, former head of the DC Sports and Entertainment Commission, will be in charge of facilities. He's sending construction professionals into every classroom in the DCPS system to make much-needed repairs, right away. They're going to fix the roofs, the ceilings and the toilets. Then, he will turn to a full-scale effort to modernize buildings throughout the system.

Across the board, we're going to set clear performance goals, improve the way we measure progress toward them, and demand results. The District Government uses a program called CapStat to measure performance by the numbers. With CapStat, we're able to look objectively at response times, expenditures and results. We plan to implement the same system for the school system and call it SchoolStat. Our residents deserve the same accountability from their schools that they have come to expect from the rest of their government.

As an aside, I recognize that our responsibility for educating our children doesn't end when they graduate from high school. So I want to thank the Subcommittee and especially Senator Voinovich for your work in re-authorizing the DC Tuition Assistance Grant Program. With the help of Congress and private-sector donors such as the Gates Foundation, we plan to triple the rate of our students who finish college - beginning with the class of 2014. Many of these young people are the first in their families to attend college. Just imagine the long-term impact this program will have on our city.

Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan once said, "If you can't get education right, nothing else matters." I agree with him. We're in the process of getting education right.

And in the process of getting education right, we'll be giving our young people the skills they need to get ahead in today's world. I see a future where the District's children leave school prepared to take on the challenges of tomorrow, and where they set an example for the rest of the world as a result.

Chairman Akaka, this concludes my prepared remarks. I'd like to thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and I am more than happy to answer any questions.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS: ASSESSMENT, ASSURANCES AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE MAYOR'S PROPOSAL TO REFORM THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE HONORABLE DANIEL K. AKAKA, CHAIRMAN
THE HONORABLE GEORGE V. VOINOVICH, RANKING MEMBER

TESTIMONY OF MICHELLE A. RHEE
CHANCELLOR
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2007

Good morning Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Voinovich, and members of the Subcommittee. I am honored to appear before you today and am grateful for your interest in the District of Columbia Public Schools.

My name is Michelle Rhee. Last week I was confirmed by the Council of the District of Columbia to become the first Chancellor of DCPS. In this capacity I have oversight of DCPS's 141 schools from the elementary through the high school level. I establish school curriculum, set performance standards for school staff and central office employees, provide the supports needed for teachers and students to succeed, oversee the school district's budget, and set policies for all of the schools in DCPS.

As Chancellor, I will work closely with my colleagues – the Deputy Mayor, the director of the Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization, the State Superintendent, and the State Board of Education – to ensure that the educational needs of the District's children are met.

I would like to begin by telling you a bit about myself. I have worked in the field of urban education for the past 15 years. My career in education began as a classroom teacher at Harlem Park Elementary School in Baltimore, Maryland. My experience there shaped the rest of my career. I saw that students who were performing far below grade level could quickly achieve at the highest levels if they were exposed to a quality academic program.

I did three main things as a classroom teacher. First, I had high expectations for all students. Next, I engaged parents and the community in what we were trying to accomplish. And last, we worked hard and long. Seeing the growth of my students showed me that the academic outcomes of our students had nothing to do with their ability and potential (which was endless) and everything to do with the education they were receiving in the schools.

To help more children realize this potential, I founded The New Teacher Project, one of the country's most well-respected education reform organizations. TNTP is dedicated to improving public education by increasing the quality and quantity of teachers who work in low performing schools and districts across the country. In its work with some of the largest urban school districts in the nation, The New Teacher Project has had a positive systemic impact in ways that were not thought possible.

Across the country, The New Teacher Project has brought in over 23,000 teachers to educate over 2 million children in urban school districts. I've advised some of the most successful superintendents in urban districts on teacher quality, including Joel Klein in New York City, Barbara Byrd Bennett in Cleveland, John Deasy in Prince George's County, Maryland, Arne Duncan in Chicago, and Michael Bennett in Denver. Having worked in so many school districts, including DCPS, I know first hand the challenges (and potential) our urban districts face.

This brings me to the first principle that will drive my work – the critical importance of having high quality education professionals throughout the school system. I believe that people are absolutely paramount to the success of the district. To achieve this goal in the District, I will focus relentlessly on building a corps of effective principals and teachers for our schools through aggressive recruitment efforts. At the same time, because we currently have many excellent educators in the system, it's critical that they are supported, recognized and rewarded.

In short, we must have outstanding induction, professional development, and career growth opportunities for staff at every level. Building human capital in this system will require improved working conditions in schools, a truly supportive central administration that gives educators the tools they need, when they need them, and professionalism on all levels. Finally, the role of the school principal is critical in identifying and growing talent. We must support our school leaders so they can become great talent managers..

Next, I believe we must transition from a culture of diffuse accountability to individual responsibility for student achievement. The Mayor has made clear that he will focus on accountability, and I intend to do the same. The way to do this is clear – through a combination of high expectations for performance and substantial support to meet those expectations. We will establish and communicate very clear expectations for everyone in the system, from teachers and principals who will be responsible for improving student achievement to students and parents to staff and administrators who will be responsible for creating an environment in which educators can focus on children. Everyone must understand what they are responsible for doing, how it is aligned to student achievement, and how their performance will be evaluated.

After we lay out these expectations, we must, as a system, ensure that all individuals have the training, support, and resources they need to be successful. And we must hold everyone accountable for providing a quality education to each student in this district. We expect most people to succeed, but where failure has a negative effect on student achievement, we will make immediate changes.

Last, I am going to insist on an instructional approach that is consistent and aligned throughout our schools, beginning with reading. By consistent and aligned, I mean that nearly every school will adopt the same highly proven programs and implement them with fidelity across grades and classrooms. Professional development will focus entirely on these specific programs, and will be delivered in most cases by a single specialized provider across schools. We will track progress in implementing the curriculum rigorously and consistently across schools and across classrooms.

However, consistency will not mean a one-size fits all approach to every single school in the district; clearly, we must provide some autonomy in instruction to high-performing schools. We have many schools that have shown strong academic results in recent years or are making solid progress towards their goals. Those schools will be able to continue with their programs and, in fact, we will look to demonstrated best practices in those buildings to inform our broader work and decisions.

In addition to these overarching priorities, there is one specific issue facing the District that I know we must attack head-on, as soon as possible. The existing special education system has failed too many students, and previous administrations have failed to deliver on promises to fix it. Parents and students have waited far too long for improvements. Until we address this critical need, we will continue to lead the nation in cost per pupil to educate while trailing the nation in test scores. The current special education arrangement is costing us dearly at the expense of every DCPS student.

We will rebuild this system. It will cost money up front. It cannot be done overnight. We must begin this effort by focusing on a child's needs well before he or she winds up on a long bus ride to a school far from their neighborhood. We must articulate a vision for inclusive, comprehensive special education services that meet the needs of our special needs populations in an efficient and effective manner and we must execute that vision across the system.

Finally, I will implement a high quality interim assessment program that will measure our progress as we go, not just at the end of the year. Parents will be able to use this data to know whether their children are on track. Teachers will use this data to better understand and respond to their students' strengths and weaknesses. School leaders will use this data to focus their professional development on areas where it is most needed. And central administration will analyze the data to identify where, as a system, we are seeing results and where we are falling short. We will not drive blind. We will have a constant, determined focus on student achievement that is supported by accurate and timely performance data.

Reaching out beyond the schools, I will ask our corporate, philanthropic, civic and artistic communities to contribute to DCPS at a new level of focus and intensity. In exchange, I will offer them the support they need to really make an impact in our schools. As I said when I was appointed, it is time that the wealth of this great city – economically, socially, culturally, politically – is reflected in its public schools.

We could talk about a lot of other things, but to summarize, the following components will be the core of my strategy for all students, regular education students and special education students:

- A relentless focus on the quality of the professionals working with them;
- An insistence on individual responsibility for success and failure;
- Common instructional programs measured by aligned interim assessments; and
- A campaign to engage students, parents, educators and the broader community in an intensive city-wide effort to drive achievement.

We have everything we need to do this – and we can do this if we take our collective talents, resources, desires, and minds and turn them into an undeniable collective will. For me that is truly the question before us today – do we have the will to move forward, to do what is right, and to deliver on our promises to our children? I believe we do.

Testimony of

Robert C. Bobb, President
D.C. State board of Education

Before the United States Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia

On

Great Expectations: Assessments, Assurances, and Accountability in the Mayor's Proposal to Reform the District of Columbia's Public School System

Thursday, July 19, 2007
2:30 p.m.

Dirksen Senate Office Building
Room 342

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich, and other members of the Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Robert Bobb and I am the President of the District of Columbia State Board of Education.

The D.C. State Board of Education was established by the District of Columbia Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007. Although the members of the new Board remain the same, the objectives of this board are narrower in focus than the objectives of the previous Board of Education.

The State Board of Education looks forward to discharging our new duties and responsibilities. In our new role approving and advising on citywide education issues, we will approve learning standards and graduation requirements; we will approve the accountability structure that will dictate how lagging and failing schools are supported and held accountable for their performance; and we will establish the criteria for operating all types of education institutions throughout the District of Columbia, including D.C. Public Schools, charter schools, private schools, supplemental education service providers, and the education programs administered at the college and university level.

You have named this hearing Great Expectations and I can think of no better unifying theme for our education reform efforts. The Board of Education recently approved extremely rigorous graduation standards for high school students. We must continue to have extraordinarily high expectations for our students that are supported by standards that are among the most stringent in the nation.

I also believe that we must have extraordinarily high expectations for ourselves. There are many different benchmarks upon which to measure the performance of a state or school District. I think we need to aim to have 10 percent more D.C. students scoring at proficient or higher on our standardized tests. I also believe that the District of Columbia should aim

for greater gains on test scores than the gains at all comparable large, urban school Districts across the country. And finally, I believe that all students in the District of Columbia should be able to read at or above grade level.

To get there, we will make it part of our workplan for this year to advance a concerted citywide focus on two issues most critical to our success: early childhood education and reading skills.

Early Childhood Education

If you were to construct the Dirksen Senate Office Building where we sit today, would you begin constructing this building on this floor? Of course not, you would start at the foundation. We need to provide our students with world-class education at the foundation as well, starting at birth.

There is a cohort of education experts who have said that the student achievement gap is the most important issue facing urban school District. But I listen to a different set of experts who say that we should be looking instead at the preparation gap. The preparation gap -- which is defined and measured as the social, motor and cognitive skills with which students arrive to begin their formal education -- is especially prevalent in urban areas where children have a predisposition to certain socioeconomic and health risks.

As outlined in the DCPS Master Education Plan, repeated research studies on early childhood education have shown that quality early care and education can have a significant and positive impact on a child's school and life success, and that the results are particularly strong for children with certain health and socioeconomic risks.

I believe we should convene the leading experts in the world to recommend how we can further define the preparation gap and come up with strategies to address the preparation gap. I believe that our efforts

should start with universal pre-kindergarten for all District children. But to fully address this challenge, we need to discuss education in terms of a real urban agenda that addresses the wide ranging pathologies affecting urban communities and impacting children before they enter school.

Reading

Next, we need a citywide movement to improve reading proficiency in the District. Academic research demonstrates that children who are not reading by the third grade are less likely to succeed academically and professionally for the rest of their lives. And reading levels in the District of Columbia are dishearteningly low.

When we address the reading crisis in the District, we will be addressing many other pressing challenges facing our city. For example, many children are misclassified as special education children not because of a learning disability, but because they cannot read. By improving reading skills, we will begin to reduce the daunting number of District children in special education which will help us reduce costs and focus special education services on those who with the most need.

By focusing on reading, we can also begin to address the extremely high unemployment levels in many of our communities. The unemployment problem in D.C. is not due to the lack of jobs; rather, the problem is that many of our job applicants do not have basic literacy and job readiness skills. By improving reading proficiency, along with an expanded and targeted focus on career and technical education, we will make inroads into the economic and joblessness crisis in many of our communities.

The nature of these challenges calls for a coordinated multi-faceted solution and I endorse the Mayor's plan to unite all education related services from birth to adulthood in one state agency to help us to address these problems comprehensively.

There are many positive examples for the District to follow to foster a citywide reading movement. For example, in Jacksonville, Mayor John Peyton put forward a wide-ranging initiative called Rally Jacksonville. Through this initiative, all newborns are provided with a free literacy kit upon leaving the hospital; all pre-kindergarteners are invited to receive a backpack with Jacksonville-themed children's books; teams of readers volunteer at child care sites across the city; teams of literacy experts advise those child care centers; all centers are rated on a new quality reading scale; and the city is running a book drive to collect and distribute one million books this summer.

I look forward to working with the State Superintendent of Education, Deborah Gist, to institute an initiative across the District of Columbia and to address the reading crisis in the District of Columbia directly.

Conclusion

Although both early childhood education and reading are issues of critical importance to the District of Columbia, they are also national issues. As the nation's capital, the District should be at the forefront of cities working to address the challenges and pathologies facing our urban communities. I appreciate the partnership of this Committee and this Congress as we jointly face these challenges.

This concludes my written remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS: ASSESSMENT, ASSURANCES AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE MAYOR'S PROPOSAL TO REFORM THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
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TESTIMONY OF VICTOR REINOSO
DEPUTY MAYOR FOR EDUCATION

THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2007

Good afternoon, Senator Akaka and Senator Voinovich, and other members of the subcommittee. I am Victor Reinoso, the acting Deputy Mayor for Education of the District of Columbia. Thank you for inviting us here today to discuss the exciting reform efforts underway in the District.

I am here to talk to you about our reform efforts from a broader perspective, and how, with the newly-created D.C. Department of Education, we are bringing all of the government's resources together to support public education in a comprehensive way that I believe will make us successful in raising student achievement.

The Mayor has made education the first priority of his administration. Recognizing that in order to truly reform and improve the delivery of educational services in the District, there must be coordination and alignment of resources, policies, strategies, and services at the cabinet level, the Mayor established the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education and through the District of Columbia Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 formalized this role by creating a D.C. Department of Education.

The Department of Education addresses a long-standing need in the District – the lack of central, coordinated, and aligned service delivery across all education levels, from birth into adulthood, pre-K through post-graduate work. In the District, we have over 50 local education agencies including DCPS and each public charter school, a public university, a public library system, and numerous providers of early childhood and adult education. Additionally, we have dozens of supplemental and out-of-school-time service providers, for services ranging from violence prevention training to college preparation and workforce training. Yet, in the past, these services have not been coordinated or focused on a single set of goals and there has been no District-wide plan to bring these services together, ensure that they are effective, and strategically link them to better results for the children and families most in need. A similar lack of coordination has existed among other child- and youth-serving agencies and services of the District government, from health to juvenile justice.

Instead of providing direct services or replacing the work and efforts that are ongoing within agencies, the Department of Education works to ensure that the Mayor's vision for education and youth development in the District is implemented methodically and supported consistently across agencies and stakeholders, public and private. Since the beginning of the year, we have been working on several projects aligned with the Mayor's vision that will lay the groundwork for policy decisions and implementation by the State Superintendent and Chancellor.

My staff completed a review of potential teacher incentive programs in place in other cities and states, initiatives directed by non-profit organizations, and innovations being implemented or planned by DCPS. We continue to build a strong working relationship with the Washington Teachers' Union, and we have reached out to leaders on this topic from across the country, including the New Teacher Center, the Teacher Advancement Program, the National Center on Performance Incentives, and the Broad Foundation. We have developed two school facilities initiatives to reduce the backlog of work orders in the school system and we have worked diligently on accelerating the process by which surplus school buildings are made available to public charter schools in need of space.

Strengthening the current system of early childhood care and education programs in the District has the potential to yield some of the best results for our long-term education reform efforts. Whether we are working to ensure that children are prepared when they enter elementary school or identifying issues that can impede a child's education and implementing the appropriate interventions, aligning efforts between early childhood and the k-12 system is an important focus of the Fenty administration. My office has completed a draft multi-year plan to enhance the quality and availability of early childhood education opportunities. The recommendations were reviewed on several occasions by a working group of experts representing numerous sectors.

In addition to this substantial education-related policy work, my staff is also coordinating and facilitating support from other District agencies in support of the needs of the public education system. We coordinated with the City Administrator and the Office of Property Management to provide additional technical manpower to address an overwhelming number of schools that were without heat during severe cold periods in January and February. In February, the Mayor learned of new concerns regarding potential lead contamination in the drinking water at schools. I immediately convened a working group comprised of staff from the EPA, DCPS, OCA, DCWASA, the D.C. departments of Environment and Health, and Serve DC to develop and implement an accelerated testing schedule that included providing bottled water to every DCPS school until each school could be tested and all fountains were determined to be safe or taken out of service for repair.

In preparation for the transition in governance and administration of the school system, we felt it was critical to conduct a comprehensive review of the school system's finances, operations, and management structure. With a generous contribution from the non-profit District of Columbia Education Compact, private firms were engaged to conduct these critical reviews which should be complete by the end of September. Rather than just doing another 'study' – we already have plenty of those in the District – we have structured the work to encompass key areas and produce actual deliverables that we can use to realign resources to support our main objective: high quality educational opportunity and increased student achievement.

By providing the Chancellor with an in-depth analysis of how the school system currently operates and spends its funds and recommendations for more efficient management and funding plans, we hope to give Ms. Rhee additional tools to enact reforms faster and more effectively. These consultants, at the direction of the Chancellor, have focused on three priority areas which will lay the foundation for her reform efforts:

- Opening of Schools – ensuring that schools open on August 27 fully-staffed and with the resources and materials teachers and students need in order to be successful.

- Building a culture of customer service – analyzing the weaknesses in the DCPS customer service model and creating mechanisms that will transform the school system, at both the central administration and the local school level, into a system that communicates effectively and responds efficiently to its customers and stakeholders.

- Establishing principal accountability – developing an accountability system for principals that is driven by student achievement, not compliance.

The District's public education system faces many challenges. It will take a collective strategic effort, along with the resources, human capital, and a strong system of accountability, to accomplish our goals. Under the leadership of the Mayor, we are acting aggressively to meet the

urgency of the situation, but also deliberately to address the complexity of the problem. We firmly believe that our efforts over the past few months, including the planning, reviews, surveys, development, and implementation of policies provide a solid framework through which we can and will succeed.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to speak about the Mayor's education reform initiative. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS: ASSESSMENT, ASSURANCES AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE MAYOR'S PROPOSAL TO REFORM THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT
MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE AND THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE HONORABLE DANIEL K. AKAKA, CHAIRMAN
THE HONORABLE GEORGE V. VOINOVICH, RANKING MEMBER

TESTIMONY OF DEBORAH A. GIST
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT

THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2007

Good afternoon Senator Akaka, Senator Voinovich, distinguished members of the committee, committee staff and guests. I am Deborah Gist and I serve as the State Superintendent of Education in the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), formerly known as the State Education Office. I am pleased to be here this afternoon to share my vision for the Office of the State Superintendent of Education that was created by the *DC Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007*. As specified by the requirements of the legislation, the OSSE is currently engaged in developing a detailed transition plan that will be submitted to the Mayor of the District of Columbia no later than September 10, 2007. This transition plan will provide a timeline and roadmap for the transfer of each state-level function to the authority of the OSSE.

It is important to note that the DC Public Education Reform Amendment Act accomplishes the goal of separating the local education functions from the state-level education functions, a goal that has long been sought by the US Department of Education and more recently by the US Senate. This structure allows for independent SEA oversight over all LEAs, fair treatment of all LEAs, equitable distribution of funds to all LEAs, and equal treatment of all LEAs under federal and local law. In 2006, Senate Committee Report 109-281 that accompanied S. 3660 noted the following for the record:

> "the current management and accountability structure in the District of Columbia Public School system commingles the functions of the local education agency and the State Education agency and vests both in the DC Board of Education. Under this structure, there are no clear delineations in funding, reporting, accounting, or staffing."[1]

The structure established in the District of Columbia by the *Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007*, will accomplish this goal in several ways. First, staff in the LEA and SEA will have separate reporting streams; the LEA through the Chancellor and the SEA through the State Superintendent of Education. As such, both the LEA and the SEA will be housed in different locations, with different staff performing their respective functions. On the state side, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education will be responsible for ensuring equitable distribution of federal funds, compliance with federal and District law, and independent oversight of all LEAs including the District of Columbia Public Schools and the public charter schools.

Under the structure established in the education reform legislation, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education will be able to move forward with a distinct agenda from the DCPS LEA. The Office of the State Superintendent will provide a structure whereby enhanced oversight, accountability and monitoring will replace a system with inherent conflicts of interest. As such, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education will have the responsibility (as defined by federal law) to provide supports and interventions for LEAs when they are noncompliant with the law. On the LEA side, the District of Columbia Public Schools will be able to move forward implementing their core mission, educating the children in the District of Columbia, absent the distraction of performing state-level education functions.

This new structure insures the independence of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education and its state level policy-making and compliance-related activities, while

[1] United States Senate Appropriations Committee Report 109-281 to accompany S. 3660, p. 19.

providing for oversight of the agency by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Education. This independence is achieved through the appointment of the State Superintendent of Education to a fixed term from which she can only be removed for cause. This is the key distinction that provides the SEA with the autonomy required to effectuate necessary reform. The structure established by the Education Reform Amendment Act calls on the "state" to provide the oversight and compliance characteristics necessary under federal law such as the *No Child Left Behind Act*. In this case, while the State Superintendent reports to the Deputy Mayor for Education and ultimately the Mayor of the District of Columbia, there is a level of autonomy granted to the State Superintendent of Education by the independent appointment.

Senate Appropriations Committee Report 109-281 directed the District of Columbia to:

> "develop legislation that is consistent with the following: implementing the State planning and accountability requirements of NCLB; best practices for State agency organization and functions; and Federal requirements for State roles and responsibilities."[2]

The *District of Columbia Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007* is consistent with each of these requirements. Specifically, the legislation places the Office of the State Superintendent of Education in charge of implementing the state-level requirements of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*. Second, the distribution of state-level functions established in the legislation is consistent with the structures in several states. In New Mexico and Texas for example, the Governor is responsible for the appointment of the Chief State School Officer while the State Board of Education is an elected body.[3] The structure established under the education reform legislation mirrors those state structures and is consistent with state level functionality and governance required in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee language. Finally, the *Education Reform Amendment Act* establishes a strong and clear framework with regard to implementation of federal law. Specifically, the legislation states:

> "The Office of the State Superintendent of Education shall serve as the state education agency and perform the functions of a state education agency for the District of Columbia under applicable federal law, including grant-making, oversight, and state educational agency functions for standards, assessments, and federal accountability requirements for elementary and secondary education."[4]

This language clearly identifies the responsibility of the state office to perform the duties required by federal law and demonstrates a consistency with other states in the nation.

With this new level of responsibility it is important for the objectives of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education to be clearly defined. The OSSE is currently in the process of designing a high performing state education agency that is reflective of best practices and focused on action, achievement and accountability. There is no question that we are currently engaged in a critical moment in the history of the District of Columbia and the time for action is now. Our achievement gap is wide, our overall academic performance

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[2] United States Senate Appropriations Committee Report 109-281 to accompany S. 3660, p. 20.
[3] National Association of State Boards of Education, Internet, http://www.nasbe.org/new_resources_section/State_Ed_Governance_Models_Chart_07.pdf, Accessed 13 July 2007.
[4] District of Columbia Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007, DC Act. 17-0038, Internet, http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/images/00001/20070423153411.pdf, Accessed 13 July 2007, p. 7.

is low, and too many of our children are not being adequately served. We must ensure that our children are prepared to be competitive with other students in the region, around the country, and throughout the world. We need to act to ensure that our students have access to postsecondary opportunities, that our standards are aligned with college and workforce readiness expectations, and that we have citywide strategies aimed at student dropout recovery and prevention.

To ensure the success of our actions, we will build an autonomous state-level education agency that is centrally focused on student achievement so that our students are prepared to succeed in fulfilling careers and throughout their lives. To enhance student achievement, we must ensure that we establish the right expectations for our teachers, and that we have a targeted strategy and set of regulations aimed at securing the most highly qualified teachers to work with our children in the District of Columbia. Achievement cannot be accomplished, however, unless we institute a culture of accountability around our goals. Perhaps the strongest tool at the state's disposal is the ability to hold all schools accountable to the performance and strategic goals that are set.

Additionally, I am confident that the requirements established under federal law, particularly the *No Child Left Behind Act*, provide the Office of the State Superintendent of Education with the tools it needs to support all local education agencies in the District of Columbia, to intervene when necessary and to hold all LEAs accountable for student and teacher performance. For the first time in the history of the District of Columbia, there will be a separate, autonomous state-level education office with the authority to provide this necessary oversight.

It is important to note, however, that many challenges will be faced as we move through our transition process. First, we need to ensure that the separation of responsibilities at the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is carried out in a thoughtful and thorough manner. Currently there are employees at DCPS who manage both state and local functions in a given day and specific attention must be paid as to how the responsibilities and time of these employees is ultimately divided. Second, we must ensure that the federal grants process meets the needs of the US Department of Education's corrective action plan for the designation of a "high risk" grantee. Also, we must pay specific attention to how we manage the special education functions during the transition process to ensure that we make wise decisions about the needs of our students. This includes developing the systems that will ultimately lead to high quality service delivery that reflect the needs and values of our community. It also includes enhancing transparency, services and efficiency. Despite these challenges, I am deeply committed to ensuring that the transition of state-level education functions is a success and that we act to utilize every tool at our disposal to make the necessary changes to increase student achievement and enhance our systems of accountability.

Transition Phases

The transition will be accomplished in four major phases. Phase 1 of the work, was focused on the mobilization of the transition governance structure and development of a plan to communicate the OSSE's transition work to appropriate stakeholders and the community. Phase 1 began in May and was completed on June 30, 2007. The accomplishments of Phase 1 include:

- Developing a new strategic vision for the OSSE;
- Establishing and convening transition task forces on specific content areas; and
- Developing a communications plan to ensure that information pertaining to the transition is appropriately communicated to stakeholders and the community.

Phase 2 began on July 1, 2007 and will extend into December 2007. The Phase 2 work will be focused on the organizational design of the office, work that has already begun, and the development of specific plans to integrate state-level functions into the Office of the State Superintendent of Education. Specific deliverables of Phase 2 include:

- Designing a new organizational structure and processes;
- Developing integration recommendations from the transition task forces;
- Executing the communications strategy developed in phase one; and
- Conducting task force analyses around integration strategies.

Phase 3, which will overlap with Phase 2 by two months, will be focused on the initial implementation of the transfer of state-level responsibilities. The initial implementation work of Phase 3 is scheduled to begin in October 2007 and will run through March 2008. During this phase, the OSSE will focus on accomplishing the following deliverables:

- Implementation of the task force initiatives;
- Executing critical stages of the integration effort; and
- Adjusting integration plans as necessary.

In Phase 4 of the transition process, final implementation of the integration effort will occur. This phase will be carried out through the remainder of 2008.

OSSE Priorities

During the initial transition process, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education will focus on three major short-term objectives. First and foremost, the OSSE will ensure that constant points of reevaluation will be built into the planning and implementation of the phased transition approach. This will allow for adjustments as we move forward to ensure that the transition objectives are met. Second, the OSSE will need to work with DCPS, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer and the US Department of Education to ensure that the state education agency meets the needs of the corrective action plan pertaining to the "high-risk grantee" status. This is a necessary step to ensure that federal funding and programs continue to flow to the District of Columbia for the benefit of our education programs. Third, the OSSE will focus its attention on the state-level special education functions. The OSSE has developed plans to implement its internal "stat" process on the special education functions in an effort to problem-solve around complex issues and increase efficiency. It is necessary that we meet the needs of this office from the initial moment of transition implementation. We will be working with Chancellor Rhee and her team to ensure that this process begins as soon as possible, and that the problems associated with special education service delivery in the District of Columbia begin to be addressed.

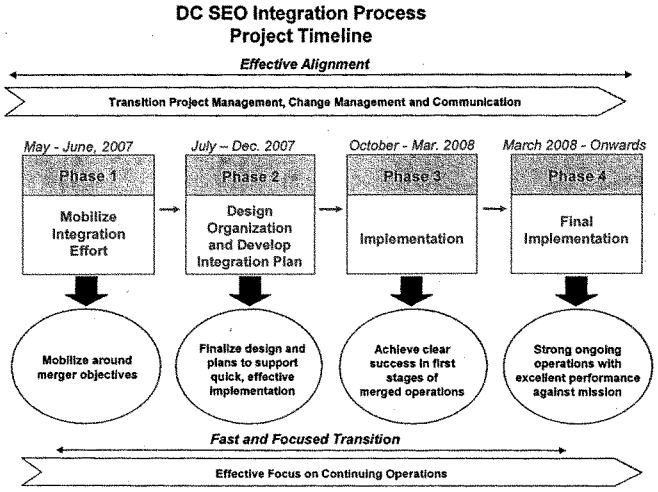
In looking at long-term priorities, it is essential that the OSSE focus its efforts on preparing students to meet the needs of the 21st century creative economy. We must ensure that the District's residents have strong basic skills as well as new sets of skills to meet the increased requirements for technical experience and innovation prevalent in the District of Columbia's

regional economy. The new jobs that are being created in the District of Columbia are technology and knowledge–based, particularly in professional and business services which make up 34% of the regional labor market. Recent research suggests that only 28% of jobs in the District of Columbia belong to residents of the District. This is in large part a result of the skills required to obtain these jobs.[5] It is also a result of a career education structure that is not designed to meet the needs of the local economy. The need for sound state-level education policy that is effectively executed and successful in helping to develop these skills in our students is an essential priority that the Office of the State Superintendent of Education will address.

To address this issue, the OSSE, with the advice and support of the State Board of Education, will focus on ensuring that state standards are aligned with college and workforce readiness expectations, that teachers are of the highest caliber and that students enter the classroom ready to learn and meet the expectations that we all share. The OSSE also has to ensure that there is focus on providing high quality early care and education and literacy programs to the citizens we serve. Operationally, the OSSE must ensure that efficiency of internal administrative processes are enhanced, that transparent methods of operation are achieved, and quality customer service is provided to the residents we serve.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on our transition efforts and priorities this afternoon and I look forward to further dialogue as we move forward with the transition effort. I look forward to answering your questions.

Attachment A
Transition Phases



Note: Timing of Phases 2 through 4 are contingent on a number of factors, including timely passage of enabling legislation.

[5] Fuller, Stephen S., Ph.D., *The District of Columbia Chamber of Commerce State of the Business Report 2006,* D.C. Chamber of Commerce, February 2006.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION FACILITIES MODERNIZATION

Testimony of

Allen Y. Lew, Executive Director
D.C. Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization

Before the United States Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia

On

"Great Expectations: Assessment, Assurances and Accountability of the Mayor's Proposal to Reform the District of Columbia Public School System"

Thursday, July 19, 2007
2:30 p.m.

Dirksen Senate Office Building
Room 342

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Allen Lew and I am Executive Director of the District of Columbia's newly created Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization.

At the outset, I would like to thank you and the other members of the Committee for moving so quickly to approve the Mayor's school reform legislation, under which my office was created. From this new office, I feel confident that my staff and I will be able to set a dramatically different course for the facilities of the DC Public School System.

As you may know, I was nominated to this post by the Mayor a little over a month ago and the City Council confirmed my appointment last week. Since being named, I have worked very quickly to assemble an interim team of staff and consultants and tasked them with thoroughly assessing conditions at our schools.

Today I will share with you our initial findings regarding the prior facilities management structure at DCPS and the benchmarks we wish to establish going forward so that our efforts can be accurately monitored and assessed in the months and years ahead.

The problems of DCPS facilities are well-documented so I won't recount them here. I will tell you, however, that I intend to establish a new culture for school facilities management that will be proactive and result-oriented. The current system has too many layers of bureaucracy and is too inwardly focused. We will create a leaner, flatter management structure that is more like those in the private sector than a traditional government model. We will treat the school system's students, parents and staff as our customers, our clients, and deliver school facilities that meet their needs.

In the immediate term, I am committed to resolving the long-standing problem of deferred maintenance in our schools. Specifically, we will tackle several thousand outstanding work orders over the next several months. However, we are also examining the full scope of work to be performed at each school, whether or not the problem was submitted as a work order.

To that end, Mayor Fenty has charged me with pushing forward to address critical quality-of-life issues for students and staff before the opening of schools in the fall. The first initiative is the "Summer Blitz" program recently approved by the City Council for 37 schools most in need of remedial repair. Unfortunately, due to flawed cost estimates and incomplete scopes of work prepared by DCPS, each of these projects had to be re-estimated, with scopes of work provided by our project managers and engineers, and then re-bid and procured. Despite this delay, we have selected contractors for each school and negotiated contracts based on solid estimates. The work on many of these schools began this week.

This phase of the work is focusing on the most significant building deficiencies: leaking roofs and non-functioning gutters, repairs to boilers and heating systems, air-conditioning, ventilation systems, and bathroom, kitchen and plumbing issues. Additional work will include replacement of drinking fountains, windows and other items.

While most of this work will be completed by the start of school, we will necessarily have to push into the Fall Semester to complete all of the items on the scopes of work. In my discussions with School Principals, I have been heartened to learn that they share the Mayor's view that, it is more important to do the work correctly the first time, and have the necessary warranties and maintenance plans in place, rather than rushing to meet a particular deadline.

At the Mayor's direction, we are also undertaking an accelerated program this summer to make "Targeted Repairs" at another 33 schools. This work program was originally anticipated to begin in Fiscal Year 2008 but has been moved forward so that the most serious problems at as many schools as possible are addressed this year. Again, some of the work in this program will not be completed by the opening day of school and will have to extend into the school year. However, my staff and I are committed to working with Chancellor Rhee and the School Principals to ensure that there is minimal disruption to classroom instruction.

For the longer term, I also am focused on recruiting the in-house staff necessary to run the large scale modernization effort and ensure successful, cost effective projects that are completed on a timely basis. We also will engage a management consultant to help us set up state of the art construction management systems – for accounting, procurement, personnel and project management – that are necessary for success. We plan to have this consultant engaged by the first part of September and to have the initial systems in place by year's end.

Within the larger charge to my office of system-wide school modernization, my staff and I are in the process of analyzing the school system's Master Facilities Plan. We plan to present to the Mayor and the Council a revised Master Facilities Plan as soon as practical. Going into this, we know that the Master Facilities Plan was designed as a 10 to 15 year program and we need immediate results. We also know that it is not fair to ask – or expect – that students and teachers can wait this long for relief.

It is my intention that the new DC Public School facilities are on par with the best in the world. We will engage the most talented architects and engineers in the nation to raise the design standards for DC Public Schools. We will develop these design standards and

best-practices with the help of groups like the American Institute of Architects. We will examine what works, and what does not, in the best school districts in the country.

We will hire District businesses and residents to build these facilities. We will develop internships and special programs for students interested in architecture, engineering, environmental conservation, historic preservation, business and, of course, the craft of construction. Perhaps most importantly, we plan to include students and parents at every stage possible in the modernization campaign.

As I mentioned previously, I know that our success will be predicated upon building the best and brightest staff, hiring the most qualified contractors and changing the culture in the school facilities operations. I did that with the development of the new Washington Convention Center and the new Washington Nationals Ballpark; we will use the same aggressive approach to instill a results-based, no excuses-bottom-line attitude to the tasks ahead.

In conclusion, I believe we have accomplished a great deal in just a month, but we certainly realize how very far we have yet to go. In the coming days we will announce the revised schedule for the summer programs as well as our plan for eradicating the backlog of work orders. With regard to benchmarks, by this time next year each school in the system will be functional with all major systems: heating, cooling, drinking water, bathrooms, roofs that do not leak and all other quality of life essentials, fully operational. In addition, plans for both new and modernized facilities will be well underway after an exhaustive and inclusive community design review process.

I am excited to begin the process with Chancellor Rhee, principals, parents and, most importantly, students and the larger community to develop and modernize school facilities that will be true centers of education and community life in our city.

BACKGROUND
GREAT EXPECTATIONS: ASSESSMENTS, ASSURANCES, AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE MAYOR'S PROPOSAL TO REFORM THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
July 19, 2007

Background on DCPS Reforms

From its inception, the DCPS System has experienced several different governance models. Until 1969, the school system was governed by a mayoral appointed school board. The first superintendent was appointed in 1862 by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. From 1969 until June 12, 2007, the school board ran the public school system. Beginning in the 1970s, DCPS began experiencing a decline in the achievement rates of its students.

In the past twenty years there have been five major reform efforts to address the failing public school system:

- D.C. Committee on Public Education (COPE), *Our Children, Our Future* (1989);
- COPE, *Our Children Are Still Waiting* (1995);
- DCPS Business Plan for Strategic Reform (2001);
- Council of Great City Schools, *Restoring Excellence to DCPS* (2005); and
- DCPS Master Education Plan and Master Facilities Plan (2006).[1]

The DCPS contracted an independent organization, the Parthenon Group, last year to study the DCPS system and provide recommendations for improvement. In December 2006, the Parthenon Group released their study and recommended that DCPS redesign the teaching program, curriculum, student testing program, human capital system, central office, support functions, special education program management, facilities maintenance system, and community outreach program. These same recommendations can be found in five previous reform efforts.

The Pantheon study was the statistical basis for the Mayor's proposal, DC Bill 17-0001. The central recommendation for these specific reforms was to shift control of the system to the Mayor and reduce the complex governance structures to improve accountability and accelerate change in a dysfunctional system. The study suggests four reasons for shifting to mayoral governance:

1. DCPS is in a state of Emergency requiring an immediate turnaround strategy;
2. The existence of slow progress in spite of consistent visions for reform of the system's 20 years of underperformance;
3. A complex public education system that lacks accountability and has hindered reform efforts; and
4. The need for a change to accelerate the system's ability to urgently improve student achievement.[2]

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[1] Council of the District of Columbia Committee of the Whole Report on Bill 17-0001, the "Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007," April 3, 2007

District of Columbia Public Education Reform Act of 2007 (DC Bill 17-0001)

In addition to the positions previously mentioned, the bill establishes the State Education Officer (Officer) as the Chief State School Officer responsible for all state-level education functions. The Early Care and Education Administration, the Early Intervention Program, the adult education and literacy programs will all be transferred to the State Education Office (SEO). This legislation also eliminates the local Board of Education and rolls those functions into the SEO to approve myriad policy initiatives proposed by the Officer.

This legislation also creates the Interagency Collaboration and Services Integration Commission for the purpose of coordinating services of all youth-serving agencies and ensuring implementation of best-practices programs; an Office of Ombudsman for Public Education, providing parents and residents an entity to which they can express their concerns and seek results; and an Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization (OFM) to manage the modernization or new construction of DCPS facilities.

Finally, DC Bill 17-0001 amends the District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995 by transferring oversight authority of Board chartered schools from the Board of Education to the Public Charter School Board. Further, the legislation provides that the chartering authority must review a school's charter at least once every five years for charter or legal violations for failure to meet goals and student academic achievement expectations. The SEO is granted appeal authority to review a charting authority's denial or revocation of a charter and determine if the action was arbitrary or capricious.

DCPS Reform Priorities of Mayor Fenty's Administration

A February 23, 2007 report titled, "*DCPS Reform Priorities of Mayor's Administration*," highlights the accountability measures and goals for reform of DC Public Schools. [3]

Goals

Goal I:	Ensure Challenging Curriculum and Instruction for All Students
Goal II:	Teachers and Principals Will Deliver High Quality Instruction to Every Student
Goal III:	Safe and Orderly Schools
Goal IV:	Develop a Strong System of Accountability Balanced with School Level Autonomy
Goal V:	Ensure Exceptional Service
Goal VI:	Build on Our Community's Assets

Measures of Success: Accountability

[2] Fact- Base for DCPS Reform, December 2006.
[3] DCPS Reform Priorities of the Fenty Administration, February 23, 2007.

The following are the Measures of Success to which the Mayor has said he will be held accountable. (The Chancellor would propose targets for each measure):

Student Achievement Outcomes

- Percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in reading in grades three through eight (35 percent must be at or above proficiency in reading).
- Percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in mathematics in grades three through eight (26 percent must be at or above proficiency in mathematics).
- Percentage of students performing at or above proficiency on writing assessment in grades four and eight (11 percent of DCPS 4th graders must be at or above proficiency in writing (10 percent of DCPS 8th graders must be at or above proficiency in writing).
- Narrowing of disparity based on race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status on all academic measures.
- Percentage of students graduating within 5 years (43 percent of entering 9th graders must graduate within 5 years).
- Percentage of Advanced Placement exams receiving a score of 3 or higher (28 percent must score at or above a 3).
- Increase in average score on the SAT, accompanied by increase in percentage of students who take the test (out of 2400). (2006)
- Percentage of students will meet or exceed the national average on the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading, mathematics and science.
- Student performance data will be communicated to parents and students on a regular basis and in a consistent manner.

Instructional Staff

- Percentage of effective teaching staff. Effectiveness will be measured by fair and rigorous evaluations, including objective student outcome measures and research-based assessment of instructional practice. Targets will be set after a district-wide teacher accountability system has been proposed, evaluated, and adopted.
- Percentage of teaching positions filled on first day of school, and at intervals throughout the year.
- Percentage of key instructional support positions filled at predetermined points during the year. This includes, but is not limited to, math and literacy coaches and new teacher mentors.

Conditions for Effective Teaching and Learning

- Percentage of "certified" classrooms. Standards will be defined for the "certification" of classroom readiness (necessary instructional materials and supplies). Data to be reported in such a way as to reveal any systematic differences between groups of schools (grade level, poverty level, performance level, etc.)

- Percentage of schools meeting DCPS standards for technology (Baseline standards to be determined.).
- Percentage of schools meeting standards for co-curricular activities. Minimum standards will be developed for co-curricular activities at all levels. (Co-curricular activities are extensions of the core curriculum and provide an opportunity for students to use critical thinking skills learned in the classroom outside of the traditional classroom setting. Examples include chess, Math Olympiad, National Academic League, Debate, Science Olympiad, Odyssey of the Mind, and Model UN.) Once minimum standards are set, the baseline percentage of all schools meeting the DCPS standard of co-curricular activities will be set and tracked moving forward.
- Percentage of schools receiving the top rating(s) on the DCPS SchoolStat Accountability System (see Appendix 1).

Safe and Orderly Schools

- Percentage of students indicating they feel safe at school. (Survey and baseline data to be completed by end of first year of mayoral control.)
- Percentage of parents indicating they believe schools are safe. (Survey and baseline data to be completed by end of first year of mayoral control.)
- Percentage of schools scoring at or above 90 percent on an annual safe school audit. (Audit and baseline data to be completed by end of first year of mayoral control.)
- Change in the number of state-reportable incidents of inappropriate behavior per 1,000 students.

World Class Service

- Percentage of employees, parents and community members who agree DCPS provides timely, accurate and responsive service on annual satisfaction surveys and polls.

Strong Parent and Community Connections

- Percentage of DCPS parents agreeing that DCPS is doing a good job and is headed in the right direction.
- Percentage of community members agreeing that DCPS is doing a good job and is headed in the right direction.

Opposition to the Plan

In February 2007, the Council of the Great City Schools reviewed and analyzed the Mayor's plan to reform DCPS, and compared it to actions taken or proposed by the current school board to evaluate the plan's effectiveness in addressing underlying school system problems. [4]

They found the following:

[4] Council of the Great City Schools, Analysis of Mayor Adrian Fenty's Plan for the District of Columbia Public Schools, February 2007

- The fundamental problems of low student achievement and dysfunctional finance and operating systems that were identified by the Council of the Great City Schools in two previous analyses of DCPS are not cured or solved in the Mayor's current proposal to restructure the school system. Mayor Fenty acknowledged in testimony before the D.C. Council that DC Bill 17-0001 does not address the basic reasons for the school district's low and stagnant student achievement or fix weak instructional practices in the schools.
- The Mayor's plan alters governance arrangements and the organizational structure of the school system but does not appreciably reduce multiple layers of bureaucracy overseeing the school system. To the contrary, DC Bill 17-0001 may make it harder to coordinate across agencies. The complicated new structure, in fact, could require the Mayor and/or deputy Mayor to have to personally reconcile operational disputes that should be settled at a lower level of authority. Finally, the plan could lead to yet more turnover in school system leadership.
- The Mayor's plan does not streamline the budget process to any measurable degree, reduce layers of budget approval or interference, or make it easier to align instructional goals with financial resources. The proposal may cost the city considerable amounts of money just to move the organizational boxes.
- The Mayor's plan creates a separate school facilities authority to handle building renovation and repair, but the plan lacks a critical mechanism by which infrastructure decisions are coordinated with the schools or discussed with the public.
- Similarly, the bill is not likely to streamline or accelerate operations. It appears that some operations may actually slow down under the proposed new structure. And the bill is silent on payroll, procurement, and human resources.
- Finally, the Mayor's bill places more accountability in the hands of the Mayor, but the bill is unclear about how the Mayor actually is to be held more accountable to the public than the school board has been.

Council for the Great City Schools 2004 Findings	DCPS and School Board Actions	Mayor's Plan
Low and stagnant student achievement.	Set rigorous new academic standards.	Does not address this issue.
No strategic plan for better achievement.	Developed a Master Education Plan.	Relies on school district's Master Education Plan.
No measurable goals for academic gains.	Set concrete goals for gains and school board bill names ambitious benchmarks.	Does not address this issue.
No internal accountability system.	Put superintendent on a performance contract, and strengthened assessments of principals and teachers.	Does not set accountability measures for city leaders.
No coherent curriculum, poor alignment, low expectations, and no rigor.	Adapted stiff new standards and trained staff on content and use. More work to do.	Does not address this issue.
Fractured and misaligned professional development.	Has begun to strengthen professional development.	Does not address this issue.

No mechanism to get reforms into classrooms.	Increased percent of certified teachers. More work to do.	Does not address this issue.
Weak use of data to inform instruction and training.	Developed the DC-CAS assessment system.	Requires SEO to develop tests and collect data – a new responsibility for it.
Weak strategy for lowest-performing schools and students	Clarified a strategy for lowest-performing schools and students.	Does not address this issue.
Dysfunctional and costly special education system.		

Legislation

- Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 (District of Columbia Public Schools Agency Establishment Act of 2007) http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/images/00001/20070423153411.pdf

- An act to amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to conform the District charter to revisions made by the Council of the District of Columbia relating to public education, Public Law No: 110-33, sponsored by Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC)

Additional Resources

- Council of the Great City Schools, **Analysis of Mayor Adrian Fenty's Plan for the District of Columbia Public Schools**, February 2007, http://www.dcpswatch.com/mayor/0702.htm or http://www.cgcs.org/

- DCPS Reform Priorities of the Fenty Administration, February 23, 2007, http://edreform.dc.gov/

- Council of the District of Columbia Committee of the Whole Report on Bill 17-0001, the "Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007," April 3, 2007, http://dc.gov/mayor/pdf/DC_Public_Education_Reform_Act_final.shtm

- *The Washington Post, Fixing D.C.'s Schools, a Washington Post Investigation*, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/metro/interactives/dcschools/

- Fact-Base for DCPS Reform, the Partheon Group, February 2006

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

FROM THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
HEARING ON SCHOOL REFORM IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

FOR ADRIAN FENTY
MAYOR OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

1. The Washington Post reported on July 12, 2007, that Chancellor Michelle Rhee offered salaries to two incoming aides that exceeded the cap for public employees. Further reports suggest that other incoming aides are being offered inflated salaries. Can you provide an explanation of why such high salaries were offered to these aides, what criteria you have established for determining the salaries of DCPS employees, and if you see the upward trend in salaries trickling down to teachers?

None of Chancellor Rhee's senior staff have been offered salaries in excess of the top amount allowable under the salary schedule for employees of the District government. While the Chancellor may have offered certain members of her senior staff higher salaries than their predecessors received under the previous Superintendent, it is within her authority to do so, so long as the statutory cap is not exceeded. The salaries she offered those individuals were necessary to attract the most competent and experienced candidates to a severely underperforming school district during a period where her demands on them will be exceptionally high.

In addition to setting the salaries for her staff, Chancellor Rhee sets the criteria for their performance. The Chancellor has stated that she intends to set clear performance-based criteria for continued employment for every DCPS employee – both in the central office and in the schools – and that those performance standards will be directly linked to student achievement in all cases.

In response to your specific question about teacher salaries, Chancellor Rhee is in the process of reviewing both the existing salary schedule and the feasibility of providing significant pay increases (in the form of incentive payments) to teachers whose performance is outstanding, again as measured in terms student performance. She also is considering a system of performance incentives for teachers who elect to work in the most demanding schools or in hard to fill positions.

However, I also should note that changes to teachers' pay system must be discussed with the Washington Teachers' Union as part of the contract renewal process. Chancellor Rhee already has begun having these discussions and she is encouraged by the union's receptiveness to this concept thus far.

2. Now that Congress has approved your authority over the District's school system, how do you see this change in governance affecting your day-to-day engagement with DCPS?

My objective in requesting that the City Council and Congress approve legislation giving me direct authority over, and accountability for, public education in the District was to use the full array of my powers to make radical improvement in the District's schools, and to do that as quickly as possible. In order to accomplish this goal, I have appointed four exceptional senior school leaders – Michelle Rhee, to lead the programmatic and management reforms at DCPS; Deborah Gist, to build a truly independent state education agency that supports educational programming from "cradle to grave" in the District and bring the city's federal grants management operations up to standard; Allen Lew, to spearhead our school facilities modernization effort; and Victor Reinoso, to lead the coordination and alignment of all District agencies and resources to improve educational outcomes and provide services and supports for our public education system. I believe each of these individuals is extremely well-qualified to take on the tasks I have set before them and I have a high level of confidence that they will be successful. However, I have been and will continue to be actively engaged in this effort because it is so critical to residents of the District.

Under the new school governance structure, Chancellor Rhee reports directly to me, and is a member of my cabinet. She attends my weekly senior staff meetings and we also have a second weekly meeting for the specific purpose of discussing "front burner issues" related to the school reform initiative. These meetings allow me to quickly resolve high-level policy issues relating to the schools and allow the Chancellor to identify situations where assistance is needed from other District agencies (for example, the Metropolitan Police Department or the Department of Health) and bring them to my attention. The Chancellor and I also are in frequent contact throughout the week. For example, we worked closely on a proposal to the City Council to streamline the process for terminating underperforming central office staff.

3. Part of establishing a system of accountability is establishing benchmarks and performance measures. I understand you have done this for your leadership team in DCPS. Can you please provide the benchmarks and performance standards established for your senior leadership team within DCPS?

My accountability system for the Chancellor is the same one that applies to all of the members of my Cabinet, each of whom serves at the pleasure of the Mayor. My expectations for all of the members of my Cabinet are to improve services to our citizens, to raise the caliber of agency management by instituting clear performance goals for all functions and holding managers accountable for achieving these goals, and to increase program efficiency and effectiveness. In the context of school reform, this means that I expect to see increases in student achievement, increases in attendance and graduation rates and increases in parent and community involvement. In addition, I expect to see more transparency in the DCPS budget process and improvements in the central office with regard to the supports it provides to school-based personnel. I regularly monitor the progress of all agencies in reaching their performance through my CapSTAT system.

Chairman Daniel K. Akaka
Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management,
The Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia

Questions for the Record

Great Expectations: Assessment, Assurances, and Accountability in the Mayor's Proposal to Reform the District of Columbia's Public School System
Thursday, July 19, 2007

Ms. Michelle Rhee

1. **As you mentioned in your testimony, human capital is one of the biggest challenges facing the District of Columbia Public School system. DCPS must focus on the recruitment and retention of talented employees and the improvement of underperforming employees. As you said, everyone in the system must be held accountable. The opportunity to work with a reforming system is strong incentive for many teaching professionals, but recruitment is not always so easy. In addressing the human capital needs:**

   a. **What recruitment incentives are you offering potential candidates and what are the criteria being used to award them?**

   I am working with the Washington Teachers' Union to create a teacher recruitment and retention program. It is crucial that we enable the city to bring the best talent to our schools. This will include a reworking of Human Resources practices so that school level placement is completed with timely response protocols. In the past, we have lost great teachers simply because their paperwork was not processed before they were offered other jobs.

   To recruit and maintain quality teachers, we must also have a compensation system that rewards effective teachers. With the union I will work toward pay-for-gains incentives based on performance measures that include AYP data and, for high schools, graduation rates.

   b. **What is the current attrition rate for teaching and administrative professionals in the schools?**

   Our needs are tremendous. This year alone we hired 420 teachers and 20 interim principals. I anticipate that this number will hold steady or increase as we develop higher levels of accountability.

c. **How do you plan to engage the teachers' union and get their input into any human capital reforms?**

As President of The New Teacher Project, I worked closely with unions all over the country, including the Washington Teachers' Union. Unions have already collaborated with districts to reward good teachers, and I will build upon those relationships and successes. This is already in process through my regular communication Union President George Parker regarding short-term and long-term needs for teachers and DCPS.

2. **You mentioned that education degrees and experience are not the only factors in determining whether a teacher will be effective or not. Student input and achievement must also be considered for a teacher's performance evaluation.**

a. **How do you plan to address underperforming employees inside and outside of the classroom?**

First, it is necessary to rework our accountability systems. This begins with job descriptions and expectations. Currently, they lack clarity in objectives, job responsibilities and connection to student achievement. Once this is clear for every job, consistent review is crucial. Employees who, with proper supports, are not doing their jobs to serve student achievement, should not be working for DCPS. I have already begun setting this expectation of accountability with the Central Office, teachers, and principals.

b. **How will you plan to take student and parent assessment into account?**

This year we will institute student, parent, and teacher surveys to assess the customer service of schools and the Central Office. My expectation is that we serve constituents with a high degree of stakeholder satisfaction. Initial surveys will establish a baseline for this, in the form of data summary sheets measuring satisfaction in schools and the Central Office. I will utilize this input to make our Central Office effective.

c. **How will student and parent accountability factor into a teacher's or principal's performance evaluation?**

We are here to serve parents and students, and we do this through communicating high expectations for performance and then providing innovative, research-based and effective instructional techniques to empower students to achieve what is expected of them. Students will be held accountable through AYP and other data, graduation rates, and other measures.

Teachers and principals are responsible for communicating with parents, and I have been asking parents in the community to hold schools accountable for high standards. This will be easier for parents to do once we improve our data and accountability systems, allowing parents to make choices based on school report cards across the District.

d. What penalties or corrective action will be taken for teachers or other professionals who do not meet performance standards?

The current collective bargaining agreement allows for 90-day corrective action periods, allowing principals to work with teachers who need help. I will use this provision and work with the Washington Teachers' Union to ensure that future agreements take additional steps to remediate and ultimately remove ineffective teachers from DCPS.

3. In a Washington Post report on August 23, 2007, a student interviewed about the District's public schools said, "My major concern is safety, because there's a lot of violence." Almost all of the high schools have metal detectors and police presence, but that does not seem to be allaying fears and concerns of students.

a. What steps do you plan to take to improve the overall safety of students in DCPS and reduce the level of violence in the schools?

The issue of school safety will require long-term solutions focused on setting clear expectations and enforcing them consistently, creating a culture in schools that counters the outside forces leading to violence.

Increasing the number of officers in schools won't make anyone feel safer. In fact, the opposite is true, because it addresses the symptom instead of the problem. Holding our students to clear and high expectations for behavior is a crucial beginning that all of our schools must be following.

Students are more likely to be successful and to resist the outside forces toward violence when they have relationships with a responsible adult who communicates and enforces high expectations. Successful advisory programs exist in other districts, in which teachers are assigned 12 students in an advisory period, and they are responsible for maintaining relationships with those students and tracking their academic progress over the course of the advisory period. We will implement a similar advisory program here in DCPS. Principals will also share best practices in regular round-tables, expanding the use of other school safety strategies that work in struggling schools across the District.

Finally, creating this culture also depends upon making improvements to our school facilities. Research shows that incidents of violence decrease when we improve our facilities, and I believe this is because we communicate our expectations through the learning

environments we create. Our students need to know we are serious about their achievement, that we expect great things from them. They know that we are not serious if we can't even keep the bathrooms clean, the electricity working, and the ceiling in one piece. I am determined to back up our words of high expectations through whatever action is necessary to create strong learning environments.

Finally, I will be revisiting our agreement with the Metropolitan Police Department, and working with Chief Lanier to consider current issues with the hearing officers' contract renegotiation. The new contract should enforce accountability, because there are strict and consistent protocols that should be followed but currently are not. Together we will tighten the system so that all students know that our expectations are not empty words, but lasting, enforced investments in student achievement.

b. What counseling and social services are available for students and teaching professionals in the schools to deal with these issues?

One of the greatest benefits of mayoral control of DCPS is that, under Mayor Fenty, we will have tremendous access to all of the social service agencies of the District. The resulting improvements in collaboration and coordination between DCPS and these city agencies, especially the Department of Health and the Department Mental Health, will help us to provide better wrap-around services to students who need them. By working with other social service agencies, DCPS can help to identify children who need assistance, and in turn, improve security in schools by preventing violence.

c. How do you plan to improve the overall learning environment in DCPS?

As I mentioned above, we send a clear message to students about what we expect, based on the facilities we build for them and the learning environments we create. At the very least, schools should be safe and modern, and in my first year I will focus on this goal in two primary ways. First, I will work with Facilities Modernization Chief Allen Lew to ensure that all schools have functioning heaters by this winter and air conditioners by the summer. Also, I will develop a systematic way to address the backlog of work orders that have accumulated due to the historically poor record of work order response.

I will also work to include parents and the community as our partners in creating learning environments that reflect our expectations for high achievement by our students. These high expectations will be communicated by our teachers, who will be trained in using various performance measures to better understand their students' needs and also to drive meaningful, effective instruction. In the best studies looking at urban public schools that have shown dramatic improvement, a wide

ranging curriculum challenges students to succeed. Principals and teachers in the District will share best practices to create rich learning environments and a college-going culture. This has a positive effect on scores *and* behavior. Expectations and diversity of curriculum must be corroborated by insisting that students do the hard work. In addition, we will increase after-school time for students to do this work, which also will have a positive influence on student safety. While all of this logic is sound and clear, in my first week visiting schools as Chancellor, I saw high school students copying out of texts and middle school students coloring in academic classes. This will change under my leadership.

4. **Please list the top five priority areas of professional development and training that you believe are lacking in the DCPS system.**

1. In general, teachers are not informed about the many ways we can use data to identify students' strengths and weaknesses and improve the quality of instruction students receive. Beginning this year, teachers will be trained to analyze student data and use that data to inform their instruction.

2. Currently, successful schools are not sharing best practices in any systematic way. Principals must be trained and supported with the time to share their best practices so that stronger principals can set examples and support less experienced and skilled principals.

3. Other cities that have implemented successful reforms have benefited from teacher centers that increase collaboration and support for teachers. I will be researching various models in other cities with the goal of creating teacher centers in the District.

4. Currently DCPS does not effectively utilize technology to increase communication between teachers, and professional development opportunities made possible by technology are severely lacking. Our data systems must be improved so that teachers in the District can utilize resources that teachers across the country have successfully used for years.

5. There needs to be a stronger orientation and induction period for new teachers. Teachers are the single most important factor in improving student achievement, but it is also a high burn-out profession when teachers are not supported from the start. We will implement program that supports new teachers and combat teacher burnout.

**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
FROM THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
HEARING ON SCHOOL REFORM IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PREPARED BY DEBORAH GIST
STATE SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

1. The special education system accounts for a significant portion of the per pupil cost in the District's school system. Can you provide an accounting for the number of students currently diagnosed as special education needs, the number that are able to be educated in DCPS, and the cost per special education pupil?

In school year 2006-2007, the District of Columbia served 9,269 special education students within the District's public schools—including both DCPS schools and public charter schools. DCPS enrolled 7,091 of these students; charter schools enrolled 2,178.

Also in school year 2006-2007, DCPS placed an additional 2,166 special education students in private schools within DC and elsewhere as a result of litigation. Finally, DCPS has placed 206 special education students in public schools to which we pay non-resident tuition or in private schools in surrounding counties[1].

Thus, the total number of students who have been identified as having special education needs who are either served by District of Columbia public schools or whose education is funded by the District of Columbia is 11,641.

In the District's public system (including both DCPS and public charters) schools are funded on a per pupil basis using a formula that has three components: 1) a foundation amount, 2) grade level weights, and 3) supplemental weights for students with special needs. In school year 2006-2007, the average cost for the city to educate a student with special education within the public schools was $18,370. The average cost to the District for a special education student in a private placement was approximately $76,000 ($57,000 for education costs plus $19,000 for transportation costs) in FY08.

[1] These students have been placed in foster care settings in surrounding counties by DC Child and Family Service Agency (CFSA) either because they have relatives residing those counties or non-relative foster placements are not available in the District.

2. Please list in area of importance your top short-term and long-term priorities as head of the State Education Agency.

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is focused on the following short-term and long-term priority initiatives:

Short Term Priorities:

- Special Education Redesign
- Federal Grants Management Reform
- Creation of a State-wide Longitudinal Data Warehouse

Longer-Term Priorities:

- Expanding Access to Quality Early Childhood Education Programs
- Improving Educator Quality
- Preparing Students for Post-secondary Education and Work

OSSE's efforts to address each of these priority needs, some of which already are underway, are discussed below.

I. SHORT-TERM / IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

A. Special Education Redesign:

- Objective: To completely reengineer state special education functions in the District to improve compliance with Federal disability law;

In the District of Columbia, failures of the public school system's special education system to provide federally mandated services to children with special needs have resulted in a substantial amount of litigation,[2] very costly judicial orders, and designation of DCPS by the U.S. Department of Education as a "high-risk grantee" for purpose of receiving federal funding under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Specifically, the Department has cited the District for failure to identify and correct non-compliance with the requirements of Part B of IDEA relating to the provision of timely initial evaluations and reevaluations to students; implementation of due process hearing decisions in a timely manner; and placement of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. The agency also has criticized the District for failing to effectively ensure compliance with the requirements of Part C of IDEA relating to early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

[2] Petties, et al. v. District of Columbia, et al. (Civil Action No. 95-0148 (PLF)). & Blackman, et al. v. District of Columbia, et al. (Civil Action No. 97-1629 (PLF) consolidated with Civil Action No. 97-2402 (PLF)).

As part of the process of delineating the roles of DCPS and OSSE to create a truly independent State Education Agency (or SEA) in the District, OSSE was given responsibility for ensuring that the District's meets its legal obligations under IDEA and also for ensuring compliance with the judicial orders that have been issued in the *Blackman-Jones* and *Petties* lawsuits (which relate to timely due process hearing decisions and service delivery and timely payments to private providers and reforms in the DCPS transportation system for special needs students, respectively). OSSE already has begun to develop a plan to remedy these specific areas of noncompliance.

Beyond these immediate reforms, OSSE's State Superintendent of Education, working in collaboration with the Chancellor of DCPS and the charter schools leadership, has begun work to completely reorganize and reengineer special education responsibilities and service delivery mechanisms in the District.

First, the due process function required under IDEA has been moved from DCPS to OSSE, to ensure that hearings, appeals and other forms of complaint resolution are provided in a timely manner by qualified and unbiased staff. In addition, on an annual basis, OSSE will determine the appropriate levels of per-pupil funding that local schools (whether they are DCPS or charter schools) need to provide services to students with a range of special needs, so that services that comply with IDEA can be provided locally, and by public schools, wherever possible.[3]

In addition, in accord with the requirements of IDEA, OSSE has assumed the following state special education functions, which will be implemented with the single, overarching goal of providing technical support to LEAs (DCPS and charters) that will enable them to better serve students with special needs:

-*Support Services* (provide technical assistance and training to LEAs to help them develop critical personnel and program capacity; administer the Federal State Improvement Grant);

-*General State Supervision* (establish performance goals and indicators for the provision of special education services overall, including standards for access to instructional materials; ensure the transition of children from Part C of IDEA to Part B; administer and monitor Child Find; and develop appropriate statewide assessments for special needs students);

-*Oversight* (monitor District LEAs to ensure compliance with IDEA's requirement for a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) provided in the least restrictive environment;

[3] This analysis will be conducted by OSSE as part of its annual update of the District's statutorily-required Uniform Per Student Funding Formula.

-*Fiscal Management* (budget and fiscal monitoring, which includes rate-setting and collaboration with the federal grants department to oversee the distribution of federal IDEA funding; Medicaid recovery);

-*Data Reporting* (manage the collection, analysis, enforcement and reporting of statewide special education data, with particular attention paid to the State Performance Plan (SPP) and the Annual Performance Report (APR));

-*Other oversight and management* (conduct oversight of and assistance to non-public schools, to include placements and payment and the monitoring of service provision; conduct State Monitoring and Enforcement (Compliance); and provide support for the State Advisory Panel on Special Education).

B. Federal Grants Management Reform

- Objective –Take immediate actions to address financial and other concerns raised by the U.S. Department of Education in it's "high-risk grantee" designation to ensure that the District continues to receive all available federal education funds

In April 2006, the District of Columbia was designated as a "high-risk grantee" by the U.S. Department of Education for all federal funds. As a result of this designation, the Department required the District to develop and implement a series of corrective action plans. A year later, the Department indicated concern that the rate of implementation of the corrective actions was not sufficiently aggressive to allow the District to reach its goal of achieving compliance with the legal requirements of the Department's grant program within the timeframes set forth in the correction action plans.

Failure to comply with these requirements could result in the loss of federal funding for educational purposes in the District of Columbia. Accordingly, meeting this deadline as well as all of the other federal grant conditions and requirements is one of our top priorities. In fact, we are in the process of reorganizing how the grants management function is performed, so that each federal grant is managed by an individual with substantive knowledge of each grant's purpose and reporting and other requirements and who will be directly accountability for compliance with them. We also are evaluating the competency of current staff to handle these assignments, and providing training or hiring new staff on the basis of these evaluations.

The District's "high-risk grantee" designation was based on repeat findings by the Department of systemic problems in the following areas:

- Finance and accounting systems;
- Internal control systems and procedures sufficient to satisfy the accountability requirements issued by the Department, including the administrative requirements for financial management and procurement, and
- Other matters pertaining to proper grants management.

In order to address these financial, accounting, and internal controls issues, we are working in close coordination with the District's Chief Financial Officer (who has placed a fiscal officer within OSSE), the Office of the Chief Financial Officer for the District of Columbia Public Schools, and the Public Charter School Board to put in place policies and procedures for conforming with the Department's regulations and also with best practices. We expect to make significant progress in these areas in the near future.

C. Develop a Statewide Longitudinal Educational Data Warehouse

- Objective: To develop a longitudinal data management system that will improve student achievement by making data an effective and efficient tool at the school and district level, enabling local, state and federal policy makers to identify academic and population trends, target resources where the greatest needs exist, and support programs that have demonstrated positive results for students.

State education agencies around the country are developing longitudinal data warehouse systems that track student movement, pinpoint student and teacher performance, and assist policymakers in directing resources to critical areas of need based on reliable data. Work on a statewide longitudinal data warehouse with these capabilities is well underway in the District.

Specifically, we are in the process of designing a data system that incorporates the ten essential elements identified by the Data Quality Campaign, a national organization that assists states in the development of data systems. This includes developing the capacity to collect and manipulate data elements and monitor the following:

- A unique, state-wide student identifier
- Student-level enrollment, demographic and program information;
- the ability to match individual test records from year to year to measure academic growth;
- information on untested students;
- a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students;
- student-level transcript information, including information on courses taken and grades received;
- student-level college readiness test scores;
- student-level graduation and dropout data;
- the ability to match student records between preK-12 and higher education systems; and
- a state data audit system.

This project is partially funded by a $5.7 million grant from the Department. An additional $19 million in local funds has been committed over the next five years for this initiative.

With the development of the statewide longitudinal education data warehouse, the state will be able to answer key questions that will guide educational reforms, such as:

- Which schools produce the strongest academic growth for their students?
- What is the state's graduation rate?
- What high school performance indicators are the best predictors of students' success in postsecondary education or the workplace?
- What percentage of high school graduates take remedial courses in college?
- Which teacher preparation programs produce the strongest teachers?[4]
- Which of our children are receiving services from other human service agencies?

A high functioning student data system will require the standardization of information contained in many different localized student information systems managed by various LEAs in the District. In addition, this statewide data system will need to be populated with information extracted from stovepipe enterprise systems into a single comprehensive relational database. Accordingly, we are working with a wide range of education stakeholders to ensure that the data we need will be available in the necessary formats.

Once completed, the statewide longitudinal data warehouse will enable the sharing of critical information spanning early childhood, K-12, postsecondary, and adult literacy education between the various educational entities in the District. In addition, it ultimately will link that data to other youth and adult serving systems, to provide a comprehensive picture of learners within the District of Columbia. This information will assist the District government in meeting the educational needs of its citizens through better planning, implementation, program evaluation, and stakeholder empowerment.

II. LONGER TERM PRIORITIES

A. Expanding Quality Early Childhood Education Programs

- Objective: To ensure that the District government supports high-quality, effective early childhood education programs that reach the neediest populations.

State support for early childhood development and education programs stems from the research showing that early intervention can provide young children with the skills to prepare them for success in school and life. Quality early childhood programs are a proven foundation to ensure K-12 educational success, in particular, for children most at risk[5] for school failure.[6] High-quality early childhood programs have also been shown to

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[4] The Data Quality Campaign, *Measuring What Matters: Creating a Longitudinal Data System to Improve Student Achievement,* Update 2006, Internet, http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/files/Publications-Measuring_What_Matters.pdf, Accessed 13 August 2007.

[5] According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 53.7% of children under the age of 19 in the District of Columbia live at or below the poverty rate.

[6] Lee, Valerie E., & David Burkam, *Inequality at the Starting Gate, Executive Summary,* Economic Policy Institute, Research for Broadly Shared Prosperity, November 25, 2002, Internet, http://www.epinet.org/content.cfm/books_starting_gate, Accessed 13 August 2007.

produce broad, long-term societal benefits, including increased employment and tax revenue, reduced crime, and reduced dependency on social welfare systems.[7]

Early childhood education in the District has been managed primarily by two entities – the Early Care and Education Administration (ECEA) within the Department of Human Services and the public school system. OSSE will ensure that there is coordination of policies and programs between these two previously separate early education systems, so that critical services for young children, including high-quality early-care settings (for infants); early intervention programs for at-risk children; and pre-school and pre-Kindergarten programs in high-need areas, are available.

Because expanded access to high-quality early childhood education options is a component of the citywide strategy to address K-12 student achievement, OSSE also will work to promote coordination between early education providers and DCPS to ensure that pre-school and pre-K programs have goals and expectations that are closely aligned with their elementary schools.[8] Specifically, OSSE will work to ensure that the District's Early Learning Standards for children entering Kindergarten (which were adopted in 2005) conform to the District's pre-K-12 learning standards and expectations, to ease the transition from one program to another.

OSSE also will study the findings of a recent independent report[9] on early childhood programs in the District, including the following recommendations:

- Establish strong accountability measures to drive continuous quality improvements across all programs serving young children;
- Expand access to pre-Kindergarten to all three-and four-year olds and work toward eventual expansion to infants and toddlers;
- Ensure adequate public resources to sustain quality programs and services, including accreditation of all early childhood facilities; and
- Make the incorporation of community-based early care and education programs into school facilities a priority.

OSSE also will set high standards for early childhood teachers and administrators and ensure that the resources, professional development opportunities and technical assistance to support high quality staffing in our child care settings and school-based early childhood programs are available.

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[7] Friedman, Dana E., *The New Economics of Preschool: New findings, methods and strategies for increasing economic investments in early care and education*, October 2004, Internet, http://www.earlychildhoodfinance.org/handouts/FriedmanArticle.doc, Accessed 13 August 2007.

[8] Early Learning Standards: Creating the Conditions for Success, A Joint Position Statement of The National Association for the Education of Young Children and The National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education, Approved November 19, 2002, Internet, http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/early_learning_standards.asp, Accessed 13 August 2007.

[9] National Economic Development and Law Center, *Ensuring a Vibrant City: The Economic Impact of the Early Care and Education Industry in the District of Columbia*, Internet, http://www.nedlc.org/Publications/ PDF_childcare/DC%20ECE%20EIR%20Full%20Report.pdf, Accessed 12 August 2007, p. 39.

Finally, OSSE is committed to providing more and better information about early childhood care and education options to parents and providing them with the tools they needs to become more engaged in their young child's education.

B. Improving Educator Quality

Objective: To ensure that educators working in the District, at all levels, have the training and skills they need to be effective teachers.

Educator quality has long been recognized as the most powerful school-based factor in student learning. However, the need for quality educators presents a great challenge to districts and states, particularly urban school systems such as the District of Columbia. Research shows that nearly one in five new teachers leaves the profession in their first three years, and further, more than 30% leave within five years, which means that there is a continuing need to identify and recruit large numbers of high-quality educators. Also, studies have shown that low-income and minority children typically have lower-quality teachers who are more likely to be uncertified, to have performed poorly on college and licensure exams, and to be teaching outside their field.[10]

Given the Mayor's high expectations for education reform in the District, as well as the requirements of NCLB that all students be taught by "highly qualified" teachers, the need to ensure a high level of competence among teachers, counselors, and administrators in the District's public schools is paramount. Accordingly, OSSE, in collaboration with DCPS, intends to develop policy guidance that reflects the importance of how educators are selected, prepared, assigned and developed professionally to school reform. This policy guidance will be informed by best practices in other states, including incentives for teacher candidates taking positions in shortage areas and underperforming schools and the establishment of alternate routes to teaching.

We also will consider the role of our local schools of education in ensuring educator quality in the District. OSSE has experience and relationships with our local institutions of higher education (through our designation as the State Higher Education Executive Office). We will leverage these relationships to build partnerships with local universities, the University of the District of Columbia in particular, to support educator preparation.

C. Preparing Students for Postsecondary Education and the Workforce

Objective: To ensure that students leave the District's elementary and secondary education system with the skills they need to succeed in college or the workforce.

Over the last five years, the District of Columbia has experienced significant economic revitalization with the creation of more than 270,000 new jobs in the region.[11] However,

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[10] Levin, Jessica & Meredith Quinn, The New Teacher Project, *Missed Opportunities: How We Keep High-Quality Teachers Out of Urban Classrooms,* 2003, Internet, http://www.tntp.org/files/MissedOpportunities.pdf, Accessed 13 August 2007.

[11] Greater Washington Initiative, Internet, http://www.greaterwashington.org/pdf/RR_2006.pdf, Accessed 8 August 2007, pp. 1-2

far too few of these jobs have gone to District residents. To prepare the city's residents to compete with talent from around the region, education policymakers must put forth high educational standards that are linked to future employability.

One of the major drivers of individual success in the 21st century labor market is the ability to obtain postsecondary education credentials. Research has shown that, in 2005, 75% of the new jobs created in the District required at least some postsecondary education.[12] Thus, to prepare residents for the current and future labor markets, we must ensure that they have access to high-quality secondary education and can succeed in postsecondary programs. Given that an estimated 29% of District residents enroll in institutions of postsecondary education upon high school graduation, but only 9% graduate within five years of enrolling,[13] the need for more support in this area is clear. Add to this the high school drop-out rate, and the need for more resources to support workforce readiness comes into sharp focus.

Because we have jurisdiction over the entire education continuum (i.e. early childhood through postsecondary and adult education programs), OSSE has a unique opportunity to provide the policy direction necessary to help prepare residents for the demands of postsecondary education and the labor market. OSSE views this as one of our core areas of responsibility. To meet this challenge, we will focus on two areas:

- increasing the number of students who graduate from institutions of higher education within five years of enrolling from 9% to 18% by 2012;[14] and

- focusing more resources on secondary and postsecondary reforms, including the development of innovative uses of federal and state career and technical education funds to ensure that career preparation programs are reflective of the trends in the regional economy and supportive of student achievement.

To achieve these objectives, OSSE will collaborate with the Public Charter School Board, DCPS, the Double the Numbers Initiative, local postsecondary institutions and the District's Department of Employment Services to support meaningful high school reform and create greater alignment between expectations and requirements for high school graduation and entry to postsecondary education and the workforce. We will support the development and expansion of high quality secondary/postsecondary linkage programs that provide students with a more seamless entry into institutions of postsecondary education (such as 2 + 2 Tech Prep career preparation models, Early College and dual enrollment programs). We also will support the development and expansion of career pathway models for adult learners through our literacy improvement efforts.

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[12] Fuller, Stephen S., Ph.D., *The District of Columbia Chamber of Commerce State of the Business Report 2006,* D.C. Chamber of Commerce, February 2006.

[13] Kernan-Schloss, Adam & Bill Potapchuk, *Double the Numbers for College Success, A Call to Action for the District of Columbia,* SEO, DCPS, DC CAP, and the Bridgespan Group in coordination with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, October 2006, p. 4.

[14] OSSE and a number of other education entities in the District, committed to this goal through the "Double the Numbers" effort.

Two additional efforts will be central to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to realize these goals: 1) making certain that the state K-12 accountability system includes strong interventions to turn around low-performing high schools; and 2) encouraging the creation of more effective alternative programs to reduce drop-out rates and to reach students who previously dropped out of the system.

Finally, we will seek to forge partnerships with the business community, DOES, and local apprenticeship programs, colleges and universities to foster improved cooperation and private sector investment to ensure the successful delivery of high-quality career preparation programs and work-based learning opportunities for students.

D. Enhancing the City-Wide Literacy Initiative

Objective: To improve literacy in the District, by supporting programs at all levels, from those providing early childhood education to adult literacy efforts.

The need to increase District literacy rates is critical, because the problem is pervasive:

- Many of our children live in poverty, a factor that has been linked to lower levels of reading proficiency than that seen in their counterparts whose families live above the poverty threshold.[15]
- The District continues to lag behind other large cities in 4th and 8th grade reading achievement.[16] Between 2002 and 2005, the percent of 4th grade students reading at proficient levels ranged between 10% and 11%, and approximately the same percentages for 8th graders. Nationally, that number averaged 30%.
- The District has unacceptably low student graduation rates. The Education Week database reports graduation rates in the District of Columbia as low as 59%, with most other school systems in the region in the 60%, 70% and low 80% range.[17]
- Many of our adults have limited education preparation. A 2005 Census Bureau survey estimated that over 24,000 District residents 25 and older did not complete ninth grade, and almost 37,000 have not earned a high school diploma, for a total of 61,000 adult residents whose basic skills are far below the level needed to get and keep jobs leading to self sufficiency.[18]

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[15] Institute for Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, *Commissioner's Statement*, Internet http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/statement/s4.asp, Accessed 13 August 2007.

[16] National Assessment for Education Progress (NAEP), 2005 Trial Urban District Results, Internet, http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nrc/tuda_reading_mathematics_2005/t0005.asp?tab_id=tab1&subtab_id=Tab_1&printver=#chart, Accessed 13 August 2007.

[17] Daniel de Vise, *The Washington Post*, "New Figures Show High Dropout Rate," May 10, 2007, Internet, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/09/AR2007050902411_pf.html, Accessed 13 August 2007.

[18] U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey, *DC Selected Characteristics in the United States: 2005*, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=04000US11&-qr_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_DP2&-ds_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_&-_lang=en&-_sse=on, Accessed 13 August 2007.

OSSE is committed to successfully combating the District's literacy problem through a number of school- and community- based, supplemental and intervention approaches for residents of all ages. We will work closely with the LEAs to support their efforts, including implementation of the literacy-related strategies contained in the Master Education Plan; a focus on early and family literacy; a program addressing the needs of English Language Learners and residents with limited proficiency. OSSE also will work to address the challenges of adolescent and adult literacy, incorporating the forthcoming work and recommendations of the Mayor's Adult Literacy Council.

Finally, as a comprehensive agency spanning the full literacy cycle, we will use a team structure to ensure that our policy work in setting standards, developing and implementing comprehensive assessments, developing and implementing a statewide data system and ensuring high caliber educators is coherent, consistent and aligned to support the heavy work that must be done.

Chairman Daniel K. Akaka
Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management,
the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia

Questions for the Record

Great Expectations: Assessment, Assurances, and Accountability in the Mayor's Proposal to Reform the District of Columbia's Public School System
Thursday, July 19, 2007

Mr. Allen Lew

1. The summer school maintenance and repair program cost an estimated $85.5 million in needed repairs. This was after you requested an additional sum of $10.5 million because of flawed estimates. It is understandable that one problem may lead to a larger problem.
   a. What systems are you putting in place to prevent significant recalculations in work order cost estimates?

   ANSWER: During the initial start-up operation for OPEFM, an outside Program Management firm was retained (the joint venture of McKissack & McKissack and Brailsford & Dunlavey, both of the District) to provide assistance with estimating, budgeting, contracting and project implementation for the various summer initiatives. OPEFM is currently procuring additional program management services to provide similar services for the FY08 Stabilization Program that will review all open work orders in all schools, establish a cost estimate and budget for each project and assist in managing the work throughout the year.

   b. What are you doing to make sure there is a reliable data tracking system for work orders?

   ANSWER: Prior to being moved under the jurisdiction of OPEFM, the DC Public Schools Office of Facility Management (OFM) initiated, via a contract with Gilbane Consulting and EarthTech, a web data management firm, an effort to improve the work order system. This effort is now being coordinated by OPEFM. Work is continuing to establish an Intranet system that will allow individual school personnel (Principal and/or lead Custodial Manager) to submit work order request. Additionally, the new maintenance operation will have staff responsible for routine building assessment. This ongoing assessment will result in additional small capital projects that will be tracked using this and other control systems.

c. How are you verifying the contractor bids and holding them accountable to the estimated costs provided?

ANSWER: As mentioned above, OPEFM is now monitoring these projects with outside Program Managers assisted by in-house staff. We will continue this process as the outside firms have more experience with estimating, budgeting and construction management than many of the former DCPS staff inherited by OPEFM. A primary focus of the office is to ensure that each job, particularly capital and new school construction projects, is properly estimated and monitored during construction/implementation. OPEFM has made a point to reach out to the contracting community and current vendors to stress the importance of fulfilling their contracts and to let them know that all projects will now be scrutinized for quality workmanship, timely completion and adherence to the contract.

After careful review of a troubled renovation project at Hardy Middle School, I decided to terminate the contactor after finding that the project was substantially behind schedule and over budget.

d. What systems are you establishing to allow for transparency in tracking work orders from submission to completion?

ANSWER: This process is part of the new work order tracking system that will soon be implemented. We also anticipate that as we launch the office's new website that all bid opportunities and awards will be posted to the site. Additionally, we are providing a web-page for each school so that parents and teachers can easily see how OPEFM is doing with fulfilling work order requests. The public will also be able to track the progress of ongoing capital or new construction projects.

e. Please provide a list of the schools that were repaired and the maintenance and repairs completed for each school. Please also provide a list of the outstanding work orders.

ANSWER: See attached report of summer work initiatives. The work order report will be sent under separate cover. As mentioned, the FY08 Stabilization Program will address many of these open work orders. An important part of this review is to reconcile work completed in FY07. As soon as the reconciliation is complete, OPEFM will submit the updated open work order report.

f. How much of the funding was spent on the 1500 urgent repair needs as compared to the other maintenance?

ANSWER: We do not have a discreet number, however, the vast majority of the work performed over the summer was directly related to correcting the most egregious life/safety/health code violations at the 70 schools that were covered by the various initiatives. For FY08, $120 million has been earmarked for similar work at the other schools in the system and system-wide programs to improve air conditioning at each school, window, roof and other component replacement programs.

2. The Master Facility Plan assesses the current state of each other system's 141 public schools, and establishes recommendations for corrective actions. In the past, the school facilities have suffered from serious neglect. What sustainability plans are being developed to address the ongoing need for new schools and school repairs?

ANSWER: OPEFM is instituting a system of routine maintenance and capital replacement programs. This is standard operating procedure for facility management. As we undertake new construction and improvement projects, each will be insured and carry requisite warranties that will be closely monitored and enforced when necessary. OPEFM is currently authoring new guidelines and procedures for component replacement, maintenance, cleaning and other facilities issues. These regulations will be published and posted to the new OPEFM website.

3. A number of the schools require yearly or ongoing repairs due to outdated heating systems such as steam, which causes significant hazards and damages. What cost-benefit analysis is being done to examine those parts of facilities that create ongoing financial burdens and need larger investments to repair?

ANSWER: As part of the ongoing school modernization campaign, a special emphasis will be placed on including energy efficient systems in schools to help qualify for "Green Building" LEED certification. These systems include HVAC (heating/cooling), windows, drainage, electrical and roofing. As mentioned above, with the implementation of the new standardize maintenance and repair/replacement program, the District will realize significant costs savings, due not only to more technologically advanced and environmentally sensitive systems, but improved operations.

As we continue to examine the Master Facilities Plan the cost benefit analysis will be performed to bear out the above assumptions. Nonetheless, now that the system is under Mayoral control and there is a new direction with regard to facility management and capital project/new construction planning, we are confident that savings will be found as we preserve existing buildings.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION FACILITIES MODERNIZATION

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OPEFM Heating Blitz Weekly Report

Date: October 5, 2007

To: Allen Y. Lew

Submitted By: Stephen Kitterman, McKissack & McKissack
Program Management Team

This report summarizes project activity for the OPEFM Heating Blitz during the week of September 29 – October 5, 2007

Weekly Update

Inspections

One hundred forty-three schools have been inspected (99%) with only Stanton preparing for first inspection. The seven schools that have temporary boilers will be ready for inspection next week. It is not clear if the boiler inspector will exercise his right to inspect these boilers. Table 1 summarizes boiler inspection activities.

Schools requiring reinspection have at least one boiler that failed the initial inspection and must be repaired to correct infractions. In many cases the inspector will not reinspect the failed boiler but will accept paperwork from the subcontractor that performed the repairs certifying completion. Many of the schools listed as requiring reinspections will be approved without a site visit by the inspector.

Schools requiring a second inspection have at least one boiler that was not ready for inspection when the plant was initially inspected. In most instances these boilers are single, double or even triple redundant boilers and are not required to provide heat on October 15. The decision to repair double or triple redundant boilers will be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the capability of the main and redundant boilers, the extent of the required repairs, and the timeline for plant modernization.

Assessments

Turner, Hess and the other Blitz contractors have assessed every school in their purview and are assembling pricing. Contractors are continuing to assess components as repairs are made and the systems tested. Significant work will take place over the long holiday weekend including switching schools from cooling to heat and testing the entire distribution system.

Repairs

Hess, Turner and the Blitz contractors have subcontractors working in each assigned school. The scope and value of repairs varies by school with less work taking place in recently modernized schools. Contractors are working in many schools this weekend and next to effect repairs and conduct whole systems tests when the schools are unoccupied.

Temporary Boilers

Van Ness was determined to need a temporary boiler bringing the total number of schools to seven. The remaining schools are: M. L. King, Ludlow-Taylor, Moten, Simon, Seaton, and Spingarn. Six of the

seven temporary boilers have been delivered and installed. The remaining boiler will be delivered and installed October 10. All seven temporary boilers will be installed and tested by the end of next week. Both Hearst and Stoddert operate with only one boiler and are being modified to accept a temporary, trailer-mounted boiler to provide redundancy. Boiler #3 from Savoy ES will be relocated to Hyde ES to provide redundancy. Savoy is undergoing modernization and will only need two boilers once construction is complete.

Table 1 Summary of Boiler Inspections

Total Facilities That Require Inspection	144
Schools That Have Been Inspected	143
Schools Awaiting First Inspection	0
School Preparing for first inspection	1
Schools requiring reinspection	41
Schools requiring second inspection	20
Total to be inspected or reinspected	62

Key Issues & Actions Upcoming

Boiler Inspections

Every school but Stanton has been inspected. As contractors repair boilers they provide the boiler inspector with signed paperwork. The inspector has the option to inspect the repaired boiler or approve it based on the repair contractor's signed paperwork. The inspector will continue to play a role in coming weeks clearing boilers that need to be reinspected and inspecting boilers at the twenty schools scheduled for a second inspection.

Assessments/System Testing

Most of the issues in the heating plant have been identified and have either been repaired or are scheduled for repair. The larger task of testing and assessing the distribution and terminal unit functionality is underway. Full system tests will be conducted on weekends when the school is unoccupied and will have time to cool down before classes resume. Due to the number of schools, half of which have chilled water cooling systems, the limited number of DCPS building engineers and the few weekends left to perform tests, many schools will be tested when the temperatures drop and the heating systems are activated for heating season. The building engineers have filled out building space reports that identify many of the items that need repair.

Budget

The rapid pace of the project is quickly exhausting the initial funding. As repairs proceed and systems are tested and retested, the overall scope of work will become fully defined and the project budget solidified. Total repairs will exceed the $6M committed to this project and could exceed $10M depending on the condition (mostly very poor) and extent of the repairs undertaken for controls systems. Turner's contract was approved by the DC council. Hess's contract is expected to be approved next week.

Thermostatic Controls

The control systems in most buildings have either been removed or disabled or are in such poor condition they do not function. A wholesale assessment of building controls should be undertaken to determine the potential for control remediation and upgrades. Some of the existing systems can be patched to function in a limited capacity for the short term. Control system upgrades and replacement costs will be expensive but necessary to moderate temperatures consistently throughout the buildings. The economic advantage to this investment will be cost savings from advanced energy conservation that could exceed $1M per year throughout the school system.

Schedule

While there is no law requiring heat on October 15 this date has traditionally been used as a target for switching from cooling to heating. To this end all schools, at this time, are projected to be capable of providing adequate heat for historically nominal October temperatures. In other words, every school may not have a second boiler available on October 15 to supplement the main boiler if the temperatures drop below freezing for a sustained period.[1] Repairs will continue at an accelerated pace until every boiler that is scheduled for repair is inspected and functioning.

Most schools suffer from uneven heating throughout the building and lack thermostatic control of heat in classrooms. Most of these issues stem from older, often poorly maintained equipment including valves, univents, air handlers, control systems, etc. Repairs to these systems are ongoing and will be completed, to the extent possible, in the weeks after October 15. Completion dates will vary by school and each school will be tracked separately.

Budget

The projected costs to complete Phases I and II have increased to $8-10M+ from $7-8 million. This cost should be considered a rough order of magnitude until the contractors complete the assessments and estimated costs and OPEFM considers which repairs should be made prior to modernization. OPEFM has committed $6.0M to the project to date[2]. By the second week in October the initiative will require additional funding. Turner Construction and Hess Construction have contracts valued at $1.975M and $1.25M, respectively. The remaining ten Blitz contractors hold contracts valued at $468K. Table 2 shows a breakdown of the project budget including pending change orders. Rough order of magnitude pricing for many schools has been submitted by the contractors and, once approved, will exceeds their original contract values.

Table 2 Project Budget

	Contractor	Original Value	Change Orders	Revised Budget	Total Committed	Invoiced to Date	Paid to Date	%	Balance To Finish
1									
2	**Turner Construction**	$ 1,975,000	$ 1,752,958	$ 3,727,958	$ 1,975,000	$ -	$ -	0%	$ 1,975,000
3									
4	**Hess Construction**	$ 1,250,000	$ -	$ 1,250,000	$ 1,250,000	$ -	$ -	0%	$ 1,250,000
5									
6	**Blitz Contractors**								
7	Century General	$ 52,000	$ 5,900	$ 57,900	$ 26,000	$ -	$ -	0%	$ 26,000
8	CRWP Eagle Systems	$ 26,000	$ -	$ 26,000	$ 26,000	$ -	$ -	0%	$ 26,000
9	Harrington	$ 26,000	$ -	$ 26,000	$ 26,000	$ -	$ -	0%	$ 26,000
10	HRGM	$ 104,000	$ -	$ 104,000	$ 26,000	$ -	$ -	0%	$ 26,000
11	IITS	$ 26,000	$ 160,000	$ 186,000	$ 26,000	$ -	$ -	0%	$ 26,000
12	IIU Consulting	$ 78,000	$ 89,159	$ 167,159	$ 26,000	$ -	$ -	0%	$ 26,000
13	Jones & Woods	$ 26,000	$ 5,900	$ 31,900	$ 26,000	$ -	$ -	0%	$ 26,000
14	Manhattan / Forney	$ 78,000	$ -	$ 78,000	$ 26,000	$ -	$ -	0%	$ 26,000
15	Rogers Brothers	$ 26,000	$ -	$ 26,000	$ 26,000	$ -	$ -	0%	$ 26,000
16	United General Contractors	$ 26,000	$ -	$ 26,000	$ 26,000	$ -	$ -	0%	$ 26,000
17									
18	Total	$ 3,693,000	$ 2,013,917	$ 5,706,917	$ 3,485,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 3,485,000

Notes: Hess contract is pending city council approval.

Background

The main purpose of the Heating Blitz is to ensure, by the beginning of the heating season (October 15), each school in the DCPS system is capable of providing consistent and reliable heat to each classroom so that on even the coldest days the learning atmosphere remains comfortable. The Heating Blitz is broken into two phases. Phase I revolves around discovery of existing conditions of equipment and infrastructure used in the generation and distribution of heat, assessment and pricing of the critical items needing repair

[1] The average low temperature on October 15 is 44 degrees which makes the probability of a sustained cold snap unlikely.

[2] Both the Turner and Hess contract values exceed $1,000,000 and are pending city council approval.

or servicing, and maintenance and repair of equipment. Most of the equipment involved in Phase I is located in the boiler rooms. Phase I will conclude when the boilers that generate hot water or steam and the ancillary equipment necessary to distribute the heated water throughout the building are fully functional.

Phase II will focus on the systems beyond the boiler room to ensure that each classroom not only has heat but is comfortable. Many buildings have dilapidated systems and controls that make it impossible to regulate the temperature in many rooms. As such, some rooms or entire portions of buildings are too hot or too cold. Phase II will address these issues as much as possible to ensure each classroom, cafeteria, library, auditorium and administrative office are habitable during the winter months.

Turner Construction and Hess Construction are the primary contractors with 74 and 56 schools under their purview, respectively. The remaining 18 schools were awarded to their respective Blitz contractors.

						Site Repairs				Life Safety	Enclosure Repairs			Interiors			Flooring		Paint				HVAC						Plumbing		Electrical		
School	Mobilized Date	Shoot Inspector	Installed Contractor	Work Type	HAZMAT	Asphalt Paving	Playground Equip	Fencing	Handrail Repair	Roofing Repairs	Walls	Exterior Doors	Windows	Drywall/Plaster Repairs	ACT Ceiling Repairs	Doors, Frames, HW	Ceramic Tile	Carpet	Vinyl Tile	Tile	Classrooms	Corridors	Cafeteria	Gym	Auditorium	A/C Window Units - Repair	A/C - Window Units - New	A/C - Central System Repairs	Exhaust Fans	Filter Changes	HVAC Insulation	Boiler	Fixture & Flush Valve Replacements	Leak Repairs	Roof or Storm Drain Snake	Hydro Cleaners	Lighting - Major	Lighting - Minor	Power Repairs	Comments
Bancroft	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		JL	MF							x																						x					x		
Montgomery	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		JL	MF																																				
Truesdell	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		JL	MF							x																													Letter contract and NTP in place pending Council approval.
Brookland	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		JL	MF							x																													
Tyler	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		JL	MF																																				
Hart	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		JL	MF																																				Letter contract and NTP in place pending Council approval.
Johnson	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		JL	MF																																				
Bruce Monroe	8/26/2007 12/31/2007	7/31/2007	PH	T		x					x			x		x		x			x						x			x		x				x		x	x	
Gage Eckington	8/26/2007 12/31/2007	8/1/2007	PH	T											x						x	x				x	x													
Meyers	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		PH	T																																				
Garrison	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		PH	T																																				
Seaton	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		PH	T							x																													
Clark	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		PH	T																																				
JF Cooke	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		PH	T									x	x																x		x								
Thurgood Marshall	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		PH	T																																				Letter contract and NTP in place pending Council approval.
Shaed	8/26/2007 12/31/2007	8/1/2007	PH	T	x									x	x						x						x								x		x			
Young	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		PH	T																																				
Marie Reed	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		JH	[illegible]																																				Parsons unexecuted contract. Letter contract and NTP in place pending Council approval.
Shaw	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		JH	[illegible]																																				Parsons unexecuted contract. Letter contract and NTP in place pending Council Approval.
Coolidge	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		JH	[illegible]																																				Parsons unexecuted contract. Letter contract and NTP in place pending Council approval.
Burrville	8/26/2007 12/31/2007	8/3/2007	JH	H							x	x		x		x		x	x		x																			
PR Harris	8/26/2007 12/31/2007	8/2/2007	JH	P				x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x					x		x				x					x		x		x		x	x	Parsons unexecuted contract. Letter contract and NTP in place pending Council approval. EDC (Subcontractor) unofficially performing work.
Wilkinson	8/26/2007 12/31/2007		JH	H		x	x																																	
Eaton			CR	T																																				

						Site Repairs				Life Safety	Enclosure Repairs				Interiors			Flooring			Paint					HVAC							Plumbing			Electrical		
School	Mobilized Date	School Inspector	Awarded Contractor	Work Type	HAZMAT	Asphalt Paving	Playground Equip	Fencing	Handrail Repair	Roofing Repairs	Walls	Exterior Doors	Windows	Drywall/Plaster Repairs	ACT Ceiling Repairs	Doors, Frames, HW	Ceramic Tile	Carpet	Vinyl Tile	Tile	Classrooms	Corridors	Cafeteria	Gym	Auditorium	A/C - Window Units - Repair	A/C - Window Units - New	A/C - Central System Repairs	Exhaust Fans	Filter Changes	HVAC Insulation	Boiler	Fixture & Flush Valve Replacements	Leak Repairs	Roof or Storm Drain Snake	Water Coolers	Lighting - Major	Lighting - Minor	Power Repairs	Comments
8/26/2007 12/31/2007	8/7/2007									x								x	x	x	x	x										x	x							
Hearst 8/26/2007 12/31/2007	8/6/2007	CR	T																								x		x		x	x			x					
Murch 8/26/2007 12/31/2007	8/6/2007	CR	T						x					x		x			x	x	x	x	x			x											x			
Lafayette 8/26/2007 12/31/2007	7/31/2007	CR	T		x									x	x				x																			x	x	
Mamie Lee 8/26/2007 12/31/2007	7/31/2007	CR	T		x											x		x	x			x					x													
Bowen 8/26/2007 12/31/2007	7/31/2007	CR	T				x			x	x	x								x											x					x		x	x	
Stuart Hobson 8/26/2007 12/31/2007	8/6/2007	CR	T							x			x						x		x	x				x												x	x	
Benning 8/26/2007 12/31/2007	TBD	CR	T																																					
CW Harris 8/26/2007 12/31/2007	TBD	CR	T																																					
Malcolm X 8/26/2007 12/31/2007	TBD	CR	T																																					