

Ward 3 Candidates for the DC Council

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On a scale of 1 to 100: Do you agree with this statement? The primary public agency responsible for the socio-emotional problems of children and youth caused and exacerbated by the pandemic should be the DCPS public schools.	25
Teacher turnover in DC's public schools are among the highest in the nation, and the pandemic has made teaching even more challenging. What do you think can be done to address teacher turnover in DCPS?	
We need to change the culture of fear that pervades many of our school cultures in part through updating our evaluation system to one that takes a more holistic approach to teaching and relies heavily on student growth as opposed to snapshots of performance. We also need to greatly support teacher professional development through mentoring and training. We should also work to try to make it easier for teachers to live in the District and ideally near the schools they teach in.	
The pandemic has highlighted the need to provide equitable student access to technology as part of a 21st-century education. What will you do to ensure DCPS supports comprehensive technology planning and funding to support student learning?	
Part of this is funding and part of it is oversight. To date, DCPS has been very reticent to simply get this done. We need to ensure the funding is there and then provide strong oversight to ensure it is used promptly and wisely.	
DCPS school communities have concerns with the quality of building repair and maintenance including HVAC systems in older as well as newly modernized buildings. How can the Council address their concerns with DCPS facilities operations and maintenance?	
There are two pieces here. We need to adequately fund maintenance. The District consistently funds maintenance well below industry norms and we need to fix that to preserve the value of our 4 plus billion dollar investment in modernized school buildings and to ensure all our children are in safe, well run buildings. Second, we need tenacious oversight to make sure DGS promptly and cost effectively addresses issues as they arise.	
The financial outlook for the District has been impacted by the public health crisis, previous years of strong economic growth, and federal Rescue Plan funds. What do you think the three greatest fiscal challenges for D.C. public education will be over the next four years?	
We could continue to be wasteful in opening new schools where there is not demand and making all of the remaining schools in the area increasingly expensive to operate. In such a setting, even the same level of investment in schools will be spread increasingly thinly. Second, we could stay on a path where we refuse to target funding to need and find ourselves needing to allot \$20 million to fund a \$10 million need, again, needlessly driving up cost. And, third we could continue to decline to do meaningful planning to ensure efficiency in operations. The most certain path to squander dollars is to not have a plan for how to use them wisely.	

Check on the statement below that best describes your position:	
I think D.C. policies should prioritize the DCPS system of by-right neighborhood schools.	x
I think D.C. policies should prioritize parental choice.	
Explain: Parents do not have choices unless they have an excellent by right option. Ensuring an excellent by right option is the prerequisite. Otherwise, it is just a chance in a lottery. That matter-of-right option, however, should be complemented by a wide array of other excellent options. That would be real choice.	
On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the strongest How strongly do you agree with this statement: The most effective system to ensure equitable quality for students and communities is a system of well-planned and supported DCPS feeder schools of right.	1
On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the strongest, how strongly do you agree with this statement: PK4 students should be able to enroll by-right into their neighborhood DCPS elementary schools.	1
Will you support convening a student assignment and boundary review process to be completed by 2023?	No
Comments, if any: We need to revisit student assignment and boundaries, but I think 2023 is too soon. I think we need a little visibility on what enrollments will look like post-pandemic before making the next round of changes. I could see starting a process after the October 2023 audit, perhaps to be completed after the October 2024 audit.	
Should DCPS have budget protections because of its responsibilities as the school system-of-right?	Yes
Comments: Right now, DCPS is shortchanged in the budget process in a couple of ways -- underfunded for enrollment and maintenance and operations relative to the charter sector. At a minimum, DCPS should be placed on equal footing to the charter sector in funding for operations. Moreover, given the critical importance of successful by-right feeder patterns in every neighborhood, if needed, the city should be willing to make additional investments to make that a reality.	
The DC Council transferred responsibility for school security in DCPS schools from MPD back to DCPS; DCPS will control its security guard contract this year; and MPD School Resource Officers will be reduced. How should the Council determine whether students are more safe and secure?	
One measure will be data on incidents before and after the change. That said, however, the current period is plagued by pot-pandemic or end-of-pandemic trauma that could be contributing to more issues and make a 2022 to 2019 comparison potentially misleading. A second piece of any analysis will need to be extensive interviews with students, teachers and administrators in an effort to put any data in context.	
Do you support any changes in the way the District of Columbia governs public education?	Yes
What governance reforms would you support for DCPS?	
A DCPS education policy board, appointed by the Mayor, confirmed by Council, with authority to hire and fire the chancellor.	Would oppose
An elected DCPS education policy board of education, independent of the Mayor.	Would oppose

Other ideas you would consider or support for DCPS:	
I support making OSSE independent of the Mayor to improve transparency around all schools and giving added powers to the SBOE to play an increasingly effective role.	
What governance reforms would you support for the State Board of Education and the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE)?	
State Board of Education with authority to hire and fire the State Superintendent of Education.	Would consider
State Board of Education with authority to initiate policy--not just approve it--in areas it already has jurisdiction over.	Would support
Other ideas you would consider or support for SBOE and/or OSSE:	
I am reluctant to give the SBOE hiring and firing authority though I would want to find a way for it to play a greater role in the hiring and renewal process, perhaps by giving it a formal vehicle to comment on a proposed appointment or renewal when the Council considers it.	
What governance changes would you consider or support for the D.C. Council?	
An Education Committee for the Council of the District of Columbia.	Would support
Council control over the level of charter enrollment and the number of charter schools.	Would support
There have been efforts to encourage the PCSB to hold off on new openings given the impact on the existing schools and the city's efforts to help those schools succeed. Even strong charter supporters have recognized this issue. The Council needs to find a way to get control of this so that the city can craft a forward looking plan and adhere to it.	
Other changes you would consider or support D.C. Council governance of public education:	
There have been efforts to encourage the PCSB to hold off on new openings given the impact on the existing schools and the city's efforts to help those schools succeed. Even strong charter supporters have recognized this issue. The Council needs to find a way to get control of this so that the city can craft a forward looking plan and adhere to it.	
What governance reforms would you support for the Public Charter School Board (PCSB)?	
An elected Public Charter School Board.	Would oppose
Public Charter School Board appointed by Ward Councilmembers and 3 at-large members appointed by the Mayor.	Would oppose
Other reforms you would consider or support for PCSB:	
The Mayor in his or her appointments should take care to ensure the PCSB has balance and is not simply an advocate for a philosophy of education reform but rather is committed to the success of all the schools in the dual system. The Council should use the same guide in its appointment approval process. In addition, as note above, the Council should use both its oversight and regulatory authority to serve as a check on the PCSB if it loses sight of the overall goal to have a great matter-of-right option in every community, complemented by alternative options.	