

### Ward 3 Candidates for the DC Council

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<b>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.</b>	5
<b>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?</b>	
<p>Generally, workplace instability leads to disengagement and frustration, which in turn leads to burnout and departure. I understand that the causes of workplace instability across DCPS are myriad - too few resources, endless new demands due to the pandemic, IMPACT, and difficulty with school administrator-led culture, to name a few. Too often in the District, the view of educator turnover is seen as a problem for teachers, not for students. But it's a problem for both and one we have to address quickly, for its effects touch upon equity, learning outcomes, and student stability. The pandemic wasn't the start of educators being under-resourced by the District. When educators have to teach students who have been given substandard technology, teachers can't and shouldn't reach into their personal finances to bridge the gap. This underfunding unfortunately has demonstrated that some view teachers, and therefore the students they teach, as more of a budget item to be minimized rather than an essential investment in a safe, prosperous, and caring District of the future. I disagree. I hope that, if elected, I can help build back this trust in the Council. I will not support underfunding our schools and our teachers. We must give educators and students the necessary resources to make DCPS successful. Successfully addressing our teacher attrition crisis will require building back trust between teachers and administrators, reforming or replacing IMPACT, fully funding DCPS (including for capital upkeep), providing tax credits to help recoup what they've spent compensating for a lack of resources, and diluting our current unilateral school governance.</p>	

<p><b>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?</b></p>	
<p>First, no student should be at a disadvantage due to a lack of access to appropriate technology. I spent much of my federal career attempting to close the Digital Divide as well as working to expand access to the E-rate program (the Universal Service Fund’s Schools and Libraries program). To ensure that DCPS supports student learning via technology, I will ensure that we fund a device for every student and a computer for every teacher. This is the base level needed to make certain our students have the first part of access - devices. There are two more essentials to having devices: connectivity and training. I will propose that we have the necessary telecommunications infrastructure to support not just our classrooms, but that such connectivity is available outside of school hours so that those who do not have connectivity at home can rely on the connectivity of our schools. In addition to connectivity, we also need digital literacy for students and their families. This training must be available in person as well as online and founded in cultural competence.</p>	
<p><b>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?</b></p>	
<p>We need to fully fund our capital maintenance and improvement plans. Capital upkeep and maintenance of our schools is a serious issue. We keep hearing horror stories of leaky roofs, doors without doorknobs, and no running water. But the day to day effects of poorly maintained facilities takes an emotional toll on students and teachers. This hurts learning. We need to have our schools in a state of good repair. That means when a roof is nearing the end of its predicted viability, we replace it; if windows need to be removed and repaired on a regular basis, then we do so, etc. In this way, we can provide a safe environment for students and teachers and also prevent catastrophic failure. I recommend that for the purposes of equity, we bring our schools with the most at-risk youth up to a state of good repair first. We need to center upkeep and future-proofing when we talk about maintaining facilities. We need to ensure that our buildings and the systems on which they rely are not just safe and secure, but also resilient by design and fulfilling their mission of serving their communities. Over the next thirty to forty years, DC will see significant flooding due to climate change. We will see more extreme weather. That means that our buildings will need robust HVAC systems, good power infrastructure including some backup power, and water/sewage that won’t be affected by localized flooding. This will take substantial funding, strict oversight, and a fearlessness in holding DCPS and DGS officials accountable. I can and will ensure that we protect and improve on DCPS facilities to ensure that our children and grandchildren receive the best education we can provide in a safe environment.</p>	

<p><b>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?</b></p>	
<p>As a threshold matter, in a funding crunch, those who frequently bear the burden of decreased services are those who need them most. This is inequitable and unacceptable. The primary fiscal challenge is continuing to fund underperforming schools. With tighter fiscal constraints will come calls to disinvest from underperforming schools. We must hold fast if we want those at our “underperforming” schools to succeed. We cannot reduce funding for at-risk youth. The second biggest challenge is failure to address technology needs for students in need. As we saw during the darker days of the pandemic, the District did not come through with devices for students in need. The third challenge will be capital maintenance and improvement. Capital expenditures for public goods are often put on the back burner. We’ve seen this with DCHA; we’ve seen this with Metro; we’ve seen this in DC public schools. We simply cannot afford to defer capital upkeep of our schools. I would rather we as a District consider borrowing via municipal bonds than continue to fail to address our schools’ capital requirements.</p>	
<p><b>Check on the statement below that best describes your position:</b></p>	
<p><b>I think D.C. policies should prioritize the DCPS system of by-right neighborhood schools.</b></p>	x
<p><b>I think D.C. policies should prioritize parental choice.</b></p>	
<p><b>Explain:</b> We must improve our neighborhood schools. Until we do so - and follow Mayor Bowser's unfulfilled promise of "Alice Deal for All" - then parents will seek choice. Just this week, we saw the eruption from families hurt by lottery results. These families would not have to engage in a lottery if they believed their neighborhood schools provided their children with access to high-quality education.</p>	
<p><b>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.</b></p>	1
<p><b>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.</b></p>	1
<p><b>Will you support convening a student assignment and boundary review process to be completed by 2023?</b></p>	Yes
<p><b>Comments, if any:</b> In Ward 3, we need boundary reviews to ensure that students do not need to cross other school boundaries to get to their neighborhood school.</p>	
<p><b>Should DCPS have budget protections because of its responsibilities as the school system-of-right?</b></p>	Yes
<p><b>Comments:</b> ABSOLUTELY. Given the capital maintenance issues, the teacher attrition, and the achievement gap, it is clear that we are not funding our public schools at the level they need. As Councilmember, I would set a budget floor of our current budget +10% to ensure that we address these longstanding issues.</p>	

<p><b>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?</b></p>	
<p>The answer is data, data, data. Are students who are receiving trauma-informed interventions and disciplinary actions more or less likely to have future problems compared to schools with MPD school resource officers? We cannot judge what we do not measure, so we need more data on how the new security contract has operated. I've been impressed with the pilot program that ~20 schools signed up for. I would like to see the pilot broadened before implementing DCPS-wide, so we can figure out if and why anyone falls through the cracks. I believe trauma-informed practices instead of school resource officers will be a vital step in ending the school-to-prison pipeline. In addition, if we adopt the Police Reform Commission's recommendations, train MPD to engage in community policing, and work to seriously address the fruits of structural racism (e.g., poverty), I think we can substantially reduce the amount of negative interactions between police and Black and Brown youth.</p>	
<p><b>Do you support any changes in the way the District of Columbia governs public education?</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>What governance reforms would you support for DCPS?</b></p>	
<p><b>A DCPS education policy board, appointed by the Mayor, confirmed by Council, with authority to hire and fire the chancellor.</b></p>	<p>Would consider</p>
<p><b>An elected DCPS education policy board of education, independent of the Mayor.</b></p>	<p>Would consider</p>
<p><b>Other ideas you would consider or support for DCPS:</b></p>	
<p>I would like to see LSATs given more say. I would like to see DCPS give LSATs what is essentially "great weight" in the ANC context such that a principal must explain in writing their deviation from the LSAT's recommendations, akin to what already has to happen with regards to the LSAT as contemplated in WTU's collective bargaining agreement. This would make for a more collaborative process between the principal and the LSAT while also amplifying school community concerns and encouraging transparency, especially over the long run.</p>	
<p><b>What governance reforms would you support for the State Board of Education and the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE)?</b></p>	
<p><b>State Board of Education with authority to hire and fire the State Superintendent of Education.</b></p>	<p>Would consider</p>
<p><b>State Board of Education with authority to initiate policy--not just approve it--in areas it already has jurisdiction over.</b></p>	<p>Would support</p>
<p><b>Other ideas you would consider or support for SBOE and/or OSSE:</b></p>	
<p>I think that making OSSE an independent agency with strong oversight capabilities and data collection responsibilities would be successful. I would like to examine whether making OSSE an independent commission with staggered 3- or 5-year terms makes sense, with commissioners appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by Council.</p>	

<b>What governance changes would you consider or support for the D.C. Council?</b>	
<b>An Education Committee for the Council of the District of Columbia.</b>	Would support
<b>Council control over the level of charter enrollment and the number of charter schools.</b>	Would consider
<b>Other changes you would consider or support D.C. Council governance of public education:</b>	
<b>What governance reforms would you support for the Public Charter School Board (PCSB)?</b>	
<b>An elected Public Charter School Board.</b>	Would support
<b>Public Charter School Board appointed by Ward Councilmembers and 3 at-large members appointed by the Mayor.</b>	Would support
<b>Other reforms you would consider or support for PCSB:</b>	
I would also consider the following proposal: keep the size of PCSB at seven members with two appointed by Council for alternating four-year terms (selected every two years), three appointed by the Mayor for two-year terms, and two elected at large on alternating four-year terms (elected every two years).	