

## Ward 1 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>	85
<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>	
We should start by building on the work of SBOE and adopt the "Statewide Educational Data Warehouse Amendment Act," to consistently collect data on why teachers are leaving. But we already know from recent surveys that IMPACT is one of the top reasons teachers leave, and we must focus on addressing this key cause. We must do a better job of supporting teachers mental health, ensuring there are mentors who are representative leaders throughout the school system with backgrounds and life experiences that mirror our teachers, and address issues with workload.	
<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>	
We need a DCPS Technology Plan and if we have to pass legislation to do so, I would support that and the funding of the plan.	
<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>	
I have worked tirelessly with school leadership and the Department of General Services on addressing ongoing facilities issues in DCPS. Whether it's in our older buildings like Harriet Tubman Elementary School where I fought for a new HVAC system, or Cleveland Elementary School where I had to go classroom by classroom to determine whether they were adequately prepared for SY 2021-22, I have been on the front lines of ensuring government resources are getting to our school buildings. I have overseen the modernization of 6 DCPS schools serving Ward 1, serving on the School Improvement Teams and ensuring the the new buildings were delivered on schedule and on budget. This has been a top priority of mine since I became Councilmember.	

<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>	
1. Our DCPS school budgeting process is broken. Reforming that, and getting it right should be our top priority. I've raised this ad nauseum with the Chancellor in the Committee of the Whole. I've fought to increase per pupil funding, at-risk funding and funding for English Language Learners, as well as budget reform for our public schools to address the inequities that still exist under these funding formulas. 2. Adequately funding behavioral health programs in our schools. I've personally secured funding for school-based mental health through budget amendments in the past several budget cycles, but we also need to ensure that these positions are filled, and that we have other wraparound services and supports to go with them. 3. Addressing funding inequities between DCPS and the public charter schools, including charter school reserves and creating more transparency around where public dollars are going within the public charter system.	
<b>Check on the statement below that best describes your position:</b>	
<b>I think D.C. policies should prioritize the DCPS system of by-right neighborhood schools.</b>	x
<b>I think D.C. policies should prioritize parental choice.</b>	
<b>Explain:</b> The only way to ensure equity across our DCPS system is to focus on doing whatever it takes to keep families in the system. The lack of confidence in DCPS has led to public charter schools springing up everywhere in the city, offering parents not only academic choice but also geographic choice. It's becoming nearly impossible for DCPS schools to compete with PCS, and once we have lost a family to the public charter system, they rarely come back to DCPS. With that goes the per pupil funding and private investments that parents of means make in public schools.	
<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>	1
<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>	1
<b>Will you support convening a student assignment and boundary review process to be completed by 2023?</b>	Yes
<b>Comments, if any.</b>	
<b>Should DCPS have budget protections because of its responsibilities as the school system-of-right?</b>	Yes
<b>Comments</b>	

<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>This policy change was not just about who controls the contract, it was meant to address concerns about criminalizing behavior in children that is better addressed through de-escalation, counseling, restorative justice and wrap-around services. It is not as simple as just changing the contract. Rather we need to continue making investments in social-emotional learning, partnerships with organizations that focus on trauma-informed care and programs, and other supports to students and families that reduce conflict in our schools. I have pushed for these policies, and we will be able to demonstrate better student safety and security when we as a city fully commit to them.</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 support</p>
<p><b>An elected DCPS education policy board of education, independent of the Mayor.</b></p>	<p>Would support</p>
<p><b>Other ideas you would consider or support for DCPS:</b></p>	
<p>There are an incredible number of challenges with the current system we have. And also, we do not want to return to an overly-politicized dysfunctional school system where teachers are not being paid and classrooms do not have books. Both things can be true. That is why I have supported legislation that would examine the Mayoral Control system and make recommendations as to how to improve it. At a minimum, we need checks and balances in OSSE's role in charge of data and research on how we're doing. We are the only state where one person, the Mayor, controls it all. That needs to change. I support the legislation that has been put forward to make OSSE independent but it has been stuck in the Committee of the Whole. The opacity of DCPS means that there is little accountability for decisions and for actions taken that impact our students. The public and even the Council is regularly blindsided by decisions made by DCPS leadership, and that has eroded our trust in the Chancellor and everyone down the line at DCPS. I have not sat idly by watching, I have dug in through oversight and budget, and continue to press DCPS for answers. I also have supported legislation that has directed DCPS to implement critical policies like librarians at every school, and mandating vaccines for staff and students. We need changes to this system, and that may ultimately lead to an entirely new one. But whatever our governance structure, it must include transparency, accountability, predictability and stability. Neither of the systems we've had so far do all of these things.</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 support</p>

<b>State Board of Education with authority to initiate policy--not just approve it-- in areas it already has jurisdiction over.</b>	Would support
<b>Other ideas you would consider or support for SBOE and/or OSSE:</b>	
<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>	